

My Path: From Middle School to High School, to Tech School, and Beyond

Miah Batres

My name is Miah Batres, and I am a 12th-grade student at Champlain Valley Union High School. In addition to this, I am also a second-year student at the Center for Technology, Essex, as well as a 2-year dual enrollment student at Vermont State University. My story of how I got here starts during my first year out of middle school, which happened to be one of the whackiest school years for everyone.

9th grade for me consisted of going to school 2 days a week, staring at my teacher's low-quality webcams at home, and spending the majority of my time "at school" in my room on my computer. As time continued, however, things started to "normalize" a bit more. 5 day school weeks my sophomore year, full semester-long classes, and being able to actually see my teachers and peers that I was dedicating so much of my time to be around. My 9th-grade self was a stark contrast to myself now, and that person really represented who I was my whole life up until that point. I was extremely anti-social, wearing only hoodies and black clothes, hair covering half of my face, and terrified to be acknowledged by anyone around me. It is highly likely that I spoke to teachers more than I spoke to other students during this year.

However, as time passed, something inside of me changed. It is hard to pinpoint what it was looking back, but I began to see myself talking to people more, raising my hand in class, and saying 'yes' to opportunities and new challenges more than I ever thought possible. The summer between my 9th and 10th grade year, I decided to work

at the CVU summer camp as a camp counselor. Being forced to be upbeat, fun, and having my entire job centered around talking to new people was super eyeopening and perspective-altering for me. After that, I just kept on stepping out of my comfort zone, speaking when I otherwise would have stayed silent, and just generally interacting with others more frequently. During this time, my friends, family, and teachers have been so very influential to myself and my development. Having extremely social and outgoing parents, wonderful and supportive friends, and caring and uplifting teachers, it is no wonder to me that I have developed so much in a positive direction since I began high school.

Currently, I'm a senior and second year at the Center for Technology, Essex. I am currently in the Computer Animation & Web Design program. Outside of my program, I've also been enrolled in several college courses, such as English Literature, Pre-Calculus, and Drawing I & II. I'm the president and returning 2-year member of the CTE Student Council, and I helped organize and start the CTE Queer Alliance Club. I'm also a returning 2-year member of the Multicultural/Multilingual Affinity Group at CTE.

I'm the president and returning 2-year member of the CTE Student Council, and I helped organize and start the CTE Queer Alliance Club. I'm also a returning 2-year member of the Multicultural/Multilingual Affinity Group at CTE. Outside of Essex, I participate in the Theatre Department at my homeschool, Champlain Valley Union High School. I am the head lighting designer and head program designer for CVU Theater and have been involved for the last 2 years. I'm also employed at Jersey Mike's in Williston and enjoy making subs for customers and friends. I've been in the workforce my entire high school career, with over seven jobs under my belt since 2020.

In my free time, I enjoy spending quality time with friends and family. I enjoy traveling, often visiting Philadelphia, Toronto, Montpelier, and other cities. I practice my Spanish with my father and his extended family, who all hail from Guatemala, and continue to pursue more knowledge about my culture and heritage. I play video games with my friends online, using a computer that I purchased and built myself. I love playing with my dog Dr Kraumboucher, my cats Bean and Gumbo, and my bearded dragon Tsunade. I also love going to the gym and lifting weights, something that I can do with my entire gym-enthused family.

My skills and traits that I feel best represent myself as a student and worker would quite frankly be too long to list here, but since I'm having people actually *want* me to talk about myself, here we go. I have certified myself as a leadership figure amongst all areas of my life, weather it be at work, school, or in friend groups. I excel at delegating and crewing collaboration and teamwork with groups, and I am extremely confident in my ability to public speak and address large groups of people. I am a dedicated worker, frequently stepping up to take on more responsibility whenever I get the chance. I have an extremely diverse skill palette, with proficiencies in Adobe products, multiple programming languages, artistic talent across a variety of mediums, customer service and general social skills, strengths in working with groups or by myself, wide skills in food preparation and cooking, as well as skills in writing, public speaking, photography, 3D modeling, game development, video and photo editing, stage lighting and sound design, theater set building, general knowledge of nutrition and fitness, as well as many, *many* others.

Now I may very well come off as vain, boastful, arrogant, cocky, or other words that people use to describe my parents, but I promise that I put selflessness and humility at the forefront of everything I do in life. Though it is fun to act like my ego is bigger than the length of this essay, in all honesty, I am someone who struggles heavily with self-esteem and self-confidence issues. However, these issues that I have dealt with for most of my life have greatly decreased, and I have been able to improve my internal struggle with myself during my time in high school.

My plans for the future, much like my academic career these past few years, are grand and ambitious. I am officially committed to Champlain College in Burlington, with a major in Game Art. I plan on looking into double majoring in either business administration or finance, and will be spending the next four years attending Champlain College, as well as hopefully taking part in the study abroad program, potentially bringing me to Dublin! This summer, I hope to start my own little game studio in my basement, with the goal of publishing a fully fleshed out game by the end of the summer. Additionally, my mother and I plan on starting our own soup kitchen in Winooski! Lastly, I will be working a substantial amount at my current job, Jersey Mike's, and will be looking to gain a leadership position there!

With all that being said, I feel as though I can confidently say that my high school years have been fulfilling and meaningful. I want to thank every single person that has been apart of my life at any time throughout these past 4 years, as each and every person has impacted and shaped the person I am today. I will eternally be indebted to those who have helped me throughout my time on earth.

To everyone who won't be seeing me after graduation: this won't be the last you see of me!! I aim to have my name appear at least one more time in each of your futures, whether it be for fame or infamy.