







## **BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

## Pursue Their Dredws

Produced by QB Editorial

Twentysomethings sit within some of the most challenging years of their life, bringing with them all they've learned at home; knowledge, skills, and preparation from attending a top-notch school district; and participating with a highly engaged and philanthropic community. We asked seven BHS alumni from between the graduation years of 2013 and 2017 how it's going, where they are today, and what advice they would give to younger students about pursuing their dreams.





 $Sunny \ Hill \ Elementary \ School \ gifted \ program \ teacher \ Lori \ Ford \ and \ Christopher \ Nevarez \ Azdar.$ 

Education: University of Illinois at Chicago (2016-2020). Dream job? I am attending Chicago-Kent School of Law. This makes me the first one in my family to attend and graduate from a four-year university, as well as the first to attend graduate school. And I do this as an undocumented student who is under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). I attended Sunny Hill Elementary School in Barrington District 220. Where do you live? I have moved to the City of Chicago for law school, but previously lived in Carpentersville, Illinois. Steps taken? I made sure to build a strong application throughout K-12 by being involved in community service, sports, clubs, and maintaining a strong GPA. Then at UIC, I continued my involvement and graduated from the UIC Honors College Summa Cum Laude. After that, I worked for a year on census and voter engagement work as I applied for law school. All of this I did while making sure to not allow my legal status to be a barrier to achieving my goals. What inspires you? I have been a part of marginalized communities for my whole life and see the need for adequate representation in the legal field. I hope to be a lawyer who is concerned for those who usually lack resources and appropriate assistance. Too many times, individuals fall victim to a broken legal justice system, and I plan to fight that throughout my career. How can you inspire others? I hope to inspire Latino youth and more specifically those who have fears or reservations because of their legal status or socioeconomic background. When we set our mind to something, seek the proper help, and put in the work, then the path is made easier to achieve our dreams. It is powerful to

see those with similar backgrounds and experiences in positions that we aspire to be in, and so I hope to be one more example of what is possible for those building their dreams. How did growing up in the Barrington area influence you? Barrington provides excellent support and resources for any student who aspires to grow. The staff work to ensure that students are led towards a path that will bring them success and further lead them to bigger things. Teachers and staff like Mrs. Lori Ford, Mrs. Jill Bauer, Mrs. Veronica Sánchez, Mrs. Beatriz Rodríguez, Mrs. Amy Winkleman, Mr. Joe Sanchez, Mr. Cary Waxler, and so many others worked to encourage me to excel inside and outside of the classroom. Their complete dedication to student success, happiness, and well-being is a testament to their selflessness and love for their profession. It takes a village to raise a child and I was blessed with the absolute best family and an excellent support system throughout my academic career. I would be remiss if I did not attribute all my successes to God, thank Him for the family He created for me, and thank Him for the people He has blessed me with throughout my life. Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? Take advantage of the resources that you have at your disposal and be ready to search for, or create, opportunities when they are not readily available. We should live life day by day, but with a million years in sight. This means we move day by day and adjust as life occurs, while always having a vision and plan as to where we wish to go. Connect: cnevarezazdar@kentlaw.iit.edu.









Education: Hayes and I met our sophomore year (2015) at Vanderbilt University. Dream job? We were living in downtown Chicago pursuing corporate careers (consulting for me; sales for Hayes) when the pandemic hit. Our jobs turned fully remote, and we considered buying an RV and traveling the country. On July 2nd (during topdemand for RVs), we took a chance and flew out to Colorado to buy one sight-unseen. Our test-drive was the 18-hour trip back to Barrington. After renovating most of the interior, we packed up and set out on the road with our tailless cat, Bambi. The first leg was over to Maine. After there we worked our way down the East Coast all the way to the Everglades, up the Florida Panhandle, and back up through the South to Nashville, and then out to the West/Pacific Northwest Coasts. We've seen 34 states and put more than 16,000 miles on the RV (while staying employed!). Where do you live now? We're not really sure; a little bit of everywhere. Right now, we're based in Nashville to re-group before heading back on the road this fall! We live on the road through a mix of Walmart/Cracker Barrel parking lots, rest stops, State/National Parks, and RV campgrounds. Steps taken? The biggest step was to seize the opportunity and be comfortable with the unknown. Like a lot of plans, we listed out the ideal scenario: living/working on the road, being able to pay bills, see the sights, and enjoy it all. We had to stay diligent with our work, invest in our connectivity (Wi-Fi), and stay grounded in our responsibilities. What inspires you? The ability to work remotely has given us the opportunity to live mobily. Moving into a less-than-100 square-foot space, we had to drastically downsize, which in turn made us aware of how much "stuff' we really don't need or want, especially at this phase in our lives. How can you inspire others? The capability to work full-time living on the road for pleasure while we're still young is inspiring because it is a way of life that neither of us considered practical. We probably won't live this way continuously, but the ability to do it while young is a blessing. How did growing up in the Barrington area influence you? The Barrington area has a lot of green space and expansive land. It helped me to develop an affinity for nature, a curiosity of wilderness, and the ability to appreciate the outdoors. Travel insights? At the very beginning of our journey, we met Tom Staley who is a professor of James Joyce. He was walking by our table at dinner and my Godparents introduced us. He asked us what we were doing, we told him. He responded, "Oh, so you're Mobile, Agile, and Hostile," and then walked away without another word. We have lived by that motto. Mobile: you need to be able to pick up and move along. Agile: you better be able to pivot without notice and change direction. Hostile: you need to stick up for yourself and not be passive in certain situations or who knows what could happen. Having our cat, Bambi, with us in the RV made it home. For nine-ish hours of the day, we are in close proximity working on our computers and taking meetings. It can get stressful. Lucky for us, Bambi provides endless amusement, and she's just as entertained watching the world go by from the dash. We found a passion for grilling-out most every night as a way to wind down from the day. One of our favorite parts about life on the road is that there are new experiences around every turn. We saw the country through grocery stores, local oddities, and back road stops. Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? Stay curious about the world and your place in it. We've been lucky to have so many different experiences in our 20s while still laying a foundation to build from, for the future. If you want something, go make it happen; it's your rig and you need to decide where to park. It's OK to deviate from the plan, as there's more than one way to get to the same destination. Happy trails!



Education: I attended Harper College for general education courses and graduated from Northern Illinois University with a dual degree in Business Communications and Spanish/Hispanic Studies. Dream job? Recruiting for The Walt Disney Company for both the domestic and International College Programs. Where do you live now? I live in Barrington with my dad and little brother. Steps taken? In the spring of 2018, I participated in the Disney College Program in Orlando, Florida, to see what the Disney experience was about. I fell in love with the people, and the experience of working for the Mouse. I also decided to commit fully to learning Spanish to a full bilingual proficiency and changed my Spanish minor to a major. Since graduating college, I have started my career and have started to look for recruiting roles to gain more experience in that field. I also plan on applying for master's programs this upcoming year. What inspires you? I have always loved working with people, and employment opportunities have the ability to change lives. When I worked at Disney three years ago, each day I had an overwhelming feeling of gratitude, and I know that feeling would be amplified if I was recruiting other college students for the program. For me, the Disney College Program changed my life. I met people who are now lifelong friends from around the globe. I would not be the same person without this experience. Giving someone a job is great for many reasons, but there is something about the Disney experience that is different and, dare I say, magical. My experience made me rethink my path in life, and although I don't expect everyone to have the same epiphany, knowing there is a chance that I could change a life in any way inspires me. How can you inspire others? Knowing that I have the potential to give that experience to someone else makes me feel like I am truly making a difference in someone's life. How did growing up in the Barrington area influence you? I believe everyone growing up in Barrington has a unique relationship with the general experience. For me, my parents got divorced right before I started middle school. There were many moments where I felt like a little fish in a big sea, and survival mode was always on. I dealt with a lot of loneliness and bullying as young as 5 years old. As I got older though, I really grew to appreciate the amount of opportunities that were available to me at Barrington High. I also made a few really amazing friends who are still in my life today. I was really lucky to have a few faculty members who believed in me and wanted me to succeed. I can attribute my love for the Spanish language as early as 6th grade when I was 12 and sitting in Sra. Groat's class. She was the best! I will forever be grateful for her. I will never forget some of the lessons she taught us, and my love for working with kids, to being a Snowflake leader my junior and senior year of high school. I think every Barrington kid has experienced some judgement, the classic, "Oooo, you're from Barrington," (I did, especially in college) but I will always say, "Yeah, I am from Barrington. That place made me who I am, and those parts of me are irreplaceable." Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? Nothing is ever too big to accomplish. If you set a goal in your mind and you are committed to it, there is absolutely nothing that can stand in your way of obtaining it. Connect: mrosekresin@gmail.com.



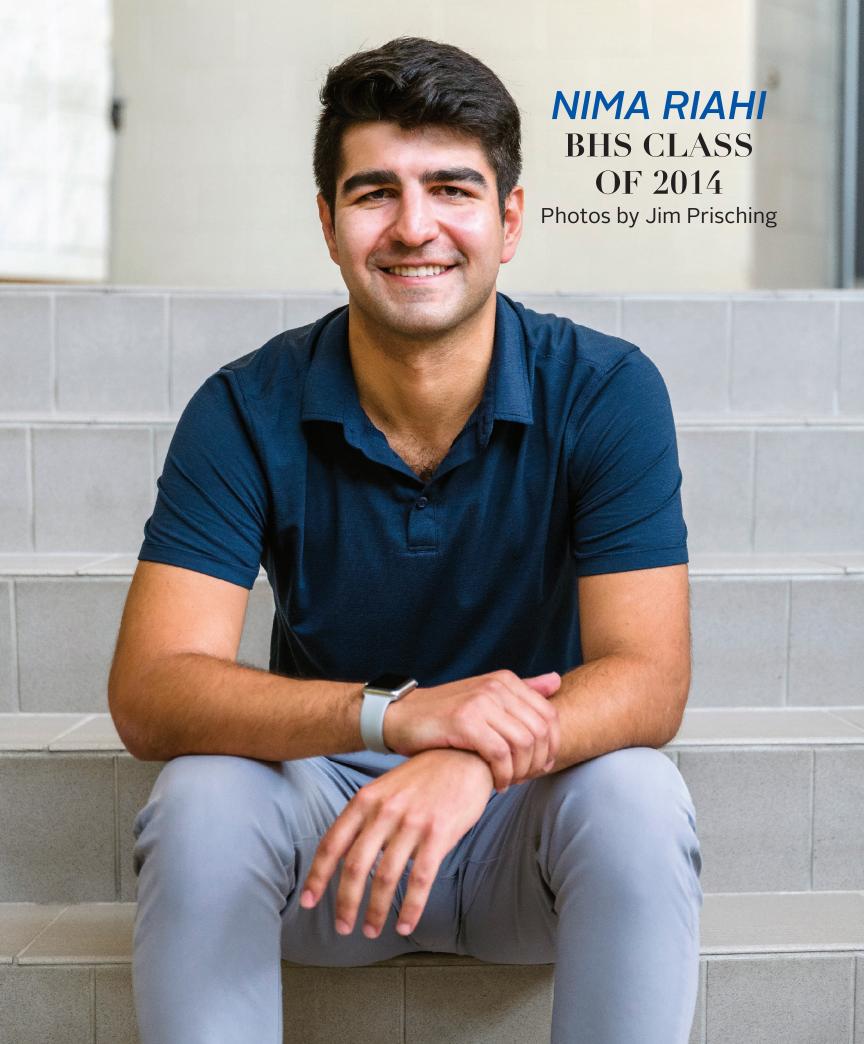






Education: I went to the University of Notre Dame. Dream job? I am pursuing becoming a Major League Baseball player. I am currently a professional baseball player with the Chicago Dogs in the American Association. Where do you live? Hawthorn Woods. Steps taken? I was with the New York Yankees from 2017-2020. I played at every single level in the minor leagues. Once COVID hit, hundreds of professional baseball players were let go by their respective teams, and I was one of them. Soon after, I joined an independent team, the Chicago Dogs. I visualize myself becoming a Major League Baseball player every night. What inspires you? Becoming a professional baseball player has been a dream of mine ever since I can remember. Now that I am there, the Major Leagues is the only thing on my mind. It is definitely a challenging endeavor, and only so few get the opportunity to achieve it. The way I see it, I am already closer than most people ever get. That inspires me to work even harder to get to where I want to be. How can you inspire others? I hope that other people see the work that is necessary to put in each and every day to achieve their dreams. There are so many opportunities to do whatever you want in this world. But it takes a lot more than hope to go do it. You've got to be the hardest worker that you know to earn what is difficult to earn! How did growing up in the

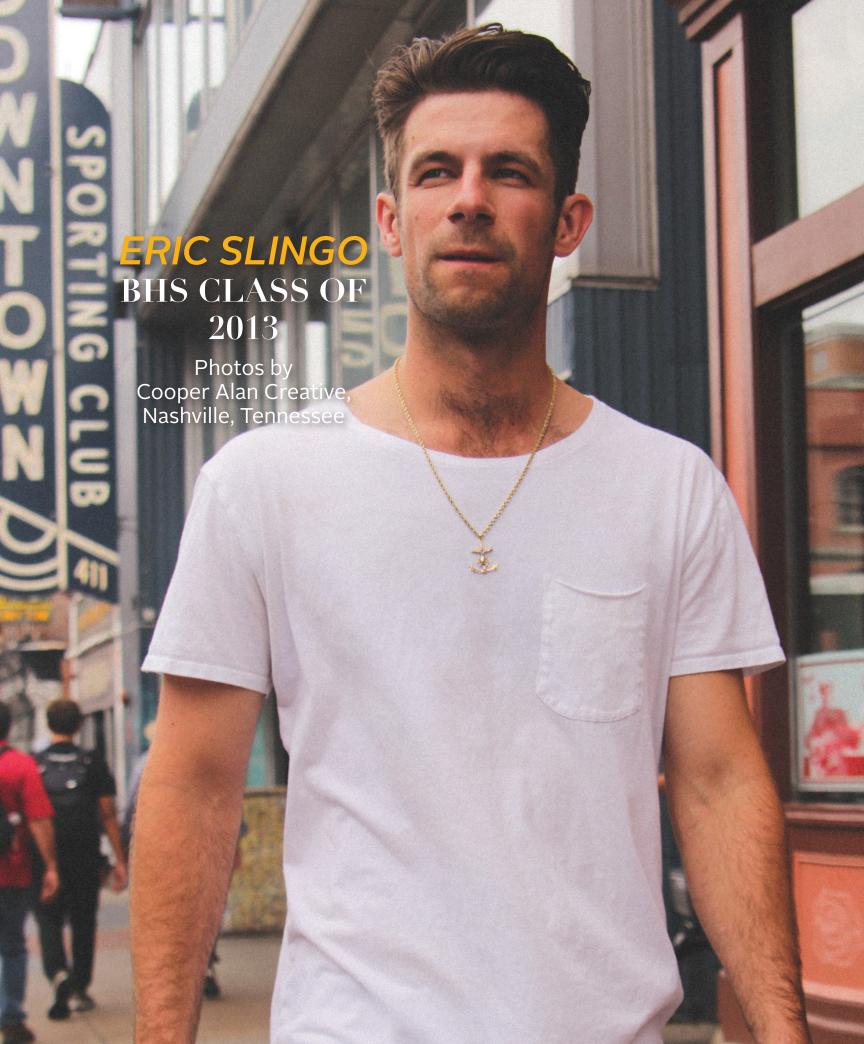
Barrington area influence you? I was able to learn alongside fantastic coaches throughout my time in Barrington. The most influential has been Steve Petersen. He coaches for Evolution Baseball Academy where I do all my training in my off-season. He created a hitting tool called "The Power Pipe" that I use on a daily basis. I also met my best friends in Barrington who've supported me through my entire journey. I would not be where I am without all of them. It is truly a blessing to play a game for a living. While the pay and the lifestyle may not be as glamorous as it seems, I wouldn't trade it for anything else. The Good Lord granted me abilities that have allowed me to travel the world and make great friends. When it is all said and done, I will not have any regrets. I thank my family, especially my parents, for always being by my side no matter what. Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? You've got to work!! Nothing will be handed to you. It will not be easy. Once you think it's about to be easy, it will get harder. Do not listen to doubters or people who say you're being "unrealistic". They don't know you! Lastly, always keep things in perspective. Achieving your dream isn't what defines you. It's what you do along the way that defines you.



Education: My undergraduate was at the University of Denver. Master's Degree: Applied Quantitative Finance at the University of Denver. Law School: Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. Dream job? I am currently pursuing a career as a corporate attorney. I recently accepted an offer to join global law firm Ropes & Gray in their Private Equity Group upon graduation. Where do you live? Old Town, Chicago, Illinois. Steps taken? The law school application process is one that is relatively time consuming. First, I had to study for and take the LSAT, which is designed to assess reading comprehension, as well as logical and verbal reasoning proficiency. Then you have to go through the traditional essay and application process. Once in law school, you find yourself in a very competitive and demanding environment. Not surprisingly, law school involves a lot of reading and writing. I would say the best way to get through law school is to make sure you are organized. Law school can seem overwhelming at first, but if you just take it one day at a time, it becomes much more manageable. After my first year of law school, I had the opportunity to clerk for Judge Franklin Valderrama, who currently serves as a federal judge for the Northern District of Illinois. After my second year of law school, I worked as a summer associate at Ropes & Gray, which led to an offer to come back full time. What inspires you? I have always wanted to be someone who people can come to when they have a problem. As a lawyer, you are the person that people come to when they need to have a very serious problem resolved. With those types of requests, there is pressure that comes with that, and serious stakes are what I have always wanted in a career. In the end, being able to help others in a time of need is what has inspired me to become a lawyer. How can you inspire others? My hope is to get involved in pro-bono work to provide free legal services to impoverished individuals, underserved communities, nonprofits, and small businesses that might otherwise lack access to legal services. How did growing up in the Barrington area influence you? Barrington influenced me in the sense that it provided me with a springboard to go out and chase my goals and aspirations. When you see how other people my age from Barrington are doing, you see a lot of successful young professionals, athletes, and creatives. It's not a coincidence that Barrington has provided a place for people to grow up to go on and achieve those things. Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? Don't let other people doubt your capabilities, and don't let setbacks get in the way of pursuing your goals. Work hard and good things will come.

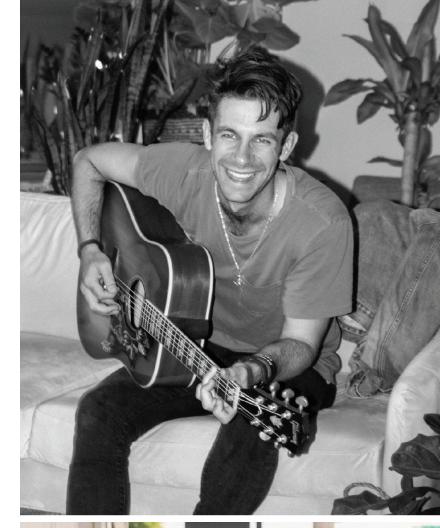






Education: Purdue University. Dream job? Music Artist. Where do you live now? Nashville, Tennessee. Steps taken? I didn't pick up a guitar till senior year of high school. After graduating from Barrington in 2013, I went to Purdue to study engineering. Throughout my time there, music nagged and nagged at my soul, and by the time I graduated, there was no question, I was moving to Nashville to pursue music. Since moving, I've been blessed with so many amazing opportunities. I couldn't be more grateful for the people in my life who have helped me get to the point I'm at right now. I've spent a lot of time playing shows, writing, touring, and getting to know people down here. On August 3, I put out a five-song project called "Where the Heart Is" EP, which is all about how I was living life on the run. What inspires you? A chance to connect and tell my story to others. I grew up with zero faith in my life. Faith was never the priority in any of my family member's lives or any of my friend's lives. My dad passed away in 2009 when I was a freshman. I searched the world for peace. I searched for it in relationships, in friendships, even in music. I couldn't find it. Eventually, in early 2020, I gave up. I had no more strength left. I couldn't handle the anxiety, depression, loneliness, stress, worry, whatever. I started drinking more, and I honestly started going down the path of doing drugs. Alone and weak, I started asking questions about God. And He responded every day. On August 3, 2020, I gave my life to Jesus. On February 6, 2021, He brought me to complete inner peace, so much so that I had no idea what I was feeling, and I've been there ever since. That night, after He brought me to peace, I felt like He told me, "Go tell your story. And go tell it through music." For the time being, that's what I'm here to do. To tell my story through music. How can you inspire others? I hope to have a positive impact on everyone I interact with. Whether it's at a live show, whether it's through someone just listening to my music, or whether I'm crossing paths with someone on the street. I'm here to share the love that I've experienced with everyone. How did growing up in the Barrington area influence you? I'm just very grateful for the opportunities I had growing up. Whether it's family, friends, education, or whatever, it's all led to me being where I'm at now. The education, teaching, and coaching we have in Barrington is not something to take for granted. After spending quite a bit of time traveling and meeting people from all over the world, I've learned that many, many people don't have the opportunities we have growing up in Barrington. Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? Anchor yourself in what doesn't change. And for me, the only answer to that is Jesus. Chasing a dream is emotionally draining. There are highs. There are lows. Even in the highs, it's going to leave you wanting more. When your dream is what you anchor your life around, it's going to take its toll on you. But keep chasing your dream. God knows your heart's desire better than you do and He's never going to tell you to stop pursuing your dream. He may lead you to pursue a different dream in the future (that will fulfill your heart even more than you can imagine), but He'll never tell you to stop pursuing the one you're pursuing now. Connect: info@ericslingo.com, or DM on Instagram: @ericslingo.

Eric Slingo performs his music on Sept. 30 at 7 p.m. at the BHS Auditorium for the 2021 Alumni Legends event. Tickets are \$10, and can be purchased at the door. https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=126236













Education: I've been training with the team at Management By Morgan (MBM) in Chicago for several years. As my talent agency and acting coaches, they've helped me grow as an actor and I've appeared in several short films they've produced, as well as some live theater with my fellow MBM actors in Chicago. I've appeared in and earned a cast credit in "The Grasshopper", a feature length movie by indie film writer and director Brad Bischoff that's ready for market. Dream job? My dream job is being a professional TV and film actress, as well as having the opportunity to model. Where do you live? I'm from Barrington, but just relocated to the City of Chicago. Steps taken? The first step I took for this dream was finding representation that believed in me. It's all about who you know in an industry like this. Connections are everything, and showing up is everything. Talent is important, too, so I brush up my skills by taking acting workshops and auditioning anytime I can. If there's opportunity, you take it! What inspires you? What I love about my career is that it's meant to inspire people organically. My goals with this passion are to reach people, of any age, too, and connect with them. If I can make people laugh, smile, cry, or whatever emotion it may be, it's worthwhile to me. This to me is incredibly inspiring. How can you *inspire others?* I can portray stories, and characters, and real life ones, too. I can be someone who you can relate to, and that's all I want. If I can inspire someone, just by being someone to connect with, then I'm fulfilled at the

end of the day. Like I said before, connections are everything! If I have a big enough audience, the impact I can create can be monumental. Giving back to others is what makes life worth living, and there are many ways to do so! How did growing up in Barrington influence you? Growing up in Barrington has influenced my career choice greatly. They had many opportunities in the theater world. I participated in speech tournaments since 4th grade, and then took theater in high school. I knew I loved performing and making others laugh through these opportunities! Advice you'd give younger students on pursuing their dreams? All in all, if you have a dream, no matter how BIG the size, promise yourself you will try to chase it. There's nothing wrong with going after what seems impossible, especially if this dream fuels your soul purpose. Also, find yourself a support system. This will help you more than you know, and it's important having people who believe in you around, and you should too! And never give up. It's hard to see the bigger picture when you're just starting out something, but you must believe that this dream was put on your heart for a reason, and that alone should be what inspires you to chase it. Work hard, put in the steps to get there, and ask for help when you need it. Connect: Film and TV: Management By Morgan, 630-284-9648. Commercial Print: The Rock Agency, Chicago, 312-741-3883. Follow @laurenstamos.