



A Scientist finds his way

Shawn is a committed environmentalist, a sci-fi fan, a caring citizen and a scientist. The kind of guy you can greet with "Hey Shawn, what's new?" and learn of the recent naming of the chemical Element #118, Oganesson or the latest discovery about the Black Hole. Reining in that splendid mind long enough to exchange light chit chat is a skill Shawn is getting better at, but more importantly he has found like-minded individuals with whom he can converse in a meaningful way about matters that are important to him.

People who know more about the state of the planet are likely to have specific worries about the future. When the Building Futures Project of The Nemasket Group first met Shawn in the summer of 2014 he was struggling with some of these concerns and what he would do when he graduated from High School. As Shawn grew older he began to identify the need to find others to talk with about such things and to participate in projects where he would make a positive difference. With the support of the Building Futures Project he volunteered at the Connecting for Change Conference in New Bedford, helping with recycling education. He worked part time at Lucky Field Organic Farm for two summers, in the fields and greenhouse. He completed a job internship at How on Earth, Mattapoisett, with other young, informed people who enjoyed sharing ideas about sustainability. He volunteered for the Buzzard's Bay Coalition, taking data for their water resources lab and at the Lloyd Environmental Center through the Seagnet project surveying identified beach areas to identify and record information on bird mortality.



Shawn with other members of the BCC Astrophysics Club

In his senior year, Shawn went on many job tours that targeted his interests and where he could meet people who shared his same passions. He went on a tour of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute/National Academy of Science and met the inventor of the "supercomputer" at UMass Dartmouth Physics Department. Shawn met with the Interim Chairperson of the BCC Astronomy Department and President of the Astronomy Club. He would often visit and speak with the manager of a local hydroponics store. Shawn found that being a member of a community dedicated to a cause helped him to put worries aside and to change thought into action.

Shawn's deep love of chemistry influenced his curiosity about both the earth and the cosmos. When he was invited in his senior year to sit in on a class at Bristol Community College on astrophysics with Professor Eli Dorsey, Shawn had found his niche. The topic of the lecture was The Life Cycle of a Star, not something many of us think about but for Shawn, Dr. Dorsey and his students, studying the grains of dust in a nebula is as down to earth as planting seeds in a greenhouse. It turns out there are many people who enjoy following the heavens as measured by the number of "star parties" held at BCC, UMass Dartmouth and other planetariums. Shawn now belongs to the Astronomical Society of Southern New England, a club made up of people from all backgrounds who share an interest in the sky.

For the students supported through the Building Futures Project having a sense of purpose and belonging, and opportunities for growth and learning, will lead to the "good things in life". This will also occur if people are in valued roles (scientist, environmentalist and college student) and if they are in places where everyday life is conducted (college). Shawn's first year in college hasn't always been easy. He needs help staying focused and developing good organizational skills. He struggles focusing on areas outside of his science interests. At BCC for example, English 101, has been a challenge. Shawn is now taking one course at a time, while enjoying being part of an intellectual community which appreciates his conversations. Shawn and friends are planning to build a reflective telescope which won't belong to the college but rather they will use it for their own purposes. The sky's the limit as Shawn continues to seek new opportunities.

Pat Charyk

People who fill roles that are valued by others (example: photographer, employee, co-worker, voter, musician, volunteer, college student) will be granted the good things of life.

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If you would like this newsletter sent electronically, please contact Amy Cornell at 508-999-4436

Save The Date

Martin Luther King's Birthday Celebration

Wednesday, January 17, 2018
10:00 am—12:00 pm
Central Congregational Church
2 Webster Street, Middleboro, MA

Please join us as our individuals participate in
Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" Presentation

Light Refreshments, Music and Presentations

Please register with: Raquel.Pereira@massmail.state.ma.us



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2017 Holiday Stroll. The day was filled with local vendors selling crafts along with great food and opportunities to buy chances for our great Holiday Baskets and Chance Auction items. We hope to see you all at the 2018 Holiday Stroll.

