



LEAF senior Ethan Rilling remembers how his band, The UltraViolet Triplets got started. “My friend, Ben, who I have known since 3rd grade, and I had always talked about starting a band but it wasn’t until we started attending LEAF and met a friend that could play guitar that the whole thing really got going. Ben can play 11 or 12 instruments and can sing, Micah

can play the guitar, and I play the drums. Our band really got going when we did a project in humanities class about antisemitism around the world and we thought this has got to stop so we created a song. I think it is our best song. We performed the song for the Model UN class here at LEAF and then we performed it at exhibit night. We wrote about 15 songs. We hope to play a few songs at prom in May. We are very excited about it.”

Ethan initially wanted to attend LEAF because it “was like a family environment. My brother was attending LEAF so I knew a lot about it. I didn’t want to go to a big school. Plus I was in a charter school before LEAF. My mom really wanted me to come here because she liked the competency based, project based focus of LEAF.”

Reflecting on his experience over the years, Ethan says that his favorite project was assigned to him by Humanities teacher, Chris Becker when he was in 9th grade. Chris challenged the class to create their own civilization. “We studied a lot of information about how other civilizations have worked. We then had to create a new civilization and make up the laws. It was really fun for me, definitely my favorite project.”

Not only did Chris Becker assign Ethan’s favorite project, he also became one of his favorite teachers. “I never liked reading or talking about philosophy and history before Chris’ humanities class.”

Other staff members who have made a difference for Ethan include STEM teacher, Sean Marden who Ethan was really able to connect with. “I liked math before his class but he was a really great teacher. He was into soccer, economics, and math.”

Ethan had STEM teacher, Joe Quimby his sophomore year. “Joe was very knowledgeable about science and sports. Our class had a lot of fun in his class joking around. Joe was very good at his job. I have a lot of respect for him. He made it easy to do well in his class. He actually came to watch one of my football games at Fall Mountain. “

Humanities teacher Hillary O’Malley supported his reading and writing skills. “I didn’t like reading at all but she knew her stuff and she helped me become a better writer. She gave me good feedback that I use today in my college classes.”

Speaking of college classes, Ethan has taken a lot of college classes at River Valley Community College while also being a student at LEAF. “I started out taking 1 course at River Valley Community College my sophomore year and now I am taking 4 college classes. I hope to take a few more over the summer. I expect to end up with about 40 college credits. An associates degree is 60 credits.” How does Ethan manage his busy schedule? “It is important to keep up with the work. As long as you stay organized and keep up with the work, it is not too bad. I get dual credit, both high school and college credit for the classes I take at River Valley Community College.”



At LEAF Charter School, students are able to receive credit for classes and activities they participate in outside of the school building. These credits are called Extended Learning Opportunity credits or ELOs. Ethan received ELO credit for participation in a variety of football activities during his high school career. Ethan first received credit for playing on the Keene High School football team where he played his freshman year. Then he tried his hand at coaching younger football players with the Keene Knights his sophomore year. Junior and Senior years, Ethan has been a member of the Fall Mountain Varsity Football team. “Football is a very physical sport. I wanted to be a tight end or linebacker. I worked out very hard to be in better shape. I got a personal trainer and put on 20lbs of muscle. My work paid off and we had a great season this year. I started every game at Fall Mountain because I worked my butt off. We were thought to be one of the worst teams but we banded together and made it to the state championship. Our first championship was our best game. We won 21 to 6 because we wanted it more.”

Ethan is heading off to college in the fall. He has been accepted at 10 out of 10 colleges he applied to. Ethan has been accepted at Franklin Pierce University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, American International College, Dean College, University of Maine Orono, Southern Connecticut State University, New England College, Colby-Sawyer College, and the University of New Hampshire.



“My top choice is Franklin Pierce University. They have given me a huge scholarship.”. Ethan plans to major in sports management with a minor in business. “ They offer a 3 +1 sports management degree.” Students complete their undergraduate degree in 3 years and complete their master’s in 1 more year. “I hope to complete the bachelors in 2 years and then do my masters. I also hope to play football at Franklin Pierce and have an internship with the Patriots.”

Ethan’s favorite memories of his time at LEAF include playing ultimate frisbee outside during the LEAF hour long lunch and the trip to Canada his sophomore year. His French class went to Montreal. He really enjoyed the museums, looking at the architecture, and walking around. “We ate in a restaurant but we had to order in French, we were not so great at French. We went to a huge mall with a roller coaster inside and we rode the roller coaster 3 or 4 times. Going on a trip like that builds bonds. We also ate at Tim Horton’s a lot!”

What advice does Ethan offer to incoming LEAF students? “Keep up with the work. With project based learning you really have to keep up with the work. You need to prove to your teachers you know your stuff. Also, do college classes and get dual credit. At River Valley Community College high school students can take 2 free stem classes per year. You can start your sophomore year. Take college classes because you can save money.”

“Knowing your teachers, having small classes, and having teachers who know you” are all ingredients to the “real sense of community” at LEAF. Everyone is “pushed to do their best. LEAF made it easy for me to talk in class and ask questions. It is an easy place to learn. I don’t really like talking in classes but it was easy at LEAF. With smaller classes, you are not a stranger to anyone.”

5 fun facts about Ethan:

- 1). He likes football and loves sports.
- 2). If he could have his dream job, he would play in the NFL.
- 3). He is accident prone.
- 4). He works at a daycare with the other members of the UltraViolet Triplets.

5). He loves video games. His favorite game is Madden.