

LEAF senior, Braeden Scott has experience in both traditional public high schools and LEAF Charter School. He shared his experience and insight about the differences. “It is scary to me the resemblance traditional schools have to correctional institutions. Traditional schools are like jails because you are locked in, they have cinder block walls, and everything is controlled by bells. They are filled with stress and drama. If you are looking for an escape from that, LEAF offers an alternative. LEAF has shown me your high school experience doesn’t have to be stressful. The motto at LEAF is ‘realize your potential’ and that means you can choose your path - but with that freedom comes great responsibility. At LEAF, you can definitely go far and start a very exciting future for yourself without feeling stressed all the time.”

“I have had a unique senior year experience. I have been relaxed and productive. Without LEAF I wouldn’t have gotten to the level of competitive swimming that I have achieved. I was able to focus and be supported studying for the SATs. Teachers are willing to work with all the students one on one. I am more confident with myself and ready for more challenges. LEAF helps you find out where you are and where you want to be. Now I am more independent.”

Braeden joined LEAF in February of his junior year. “I did well in a traditional public school. I was 2nd in my class academically but the changes during the pandemic hit me hard. Traditional public school wasn’t working for me anymore. I got the support I needed at LEAF. When I first started at LEAF I was really quiet but now I am really connected. I am even considered a bit of a jokester. I have made a lot of friends here at LEAF. They enjoy being around me and appreciate my personality.”

“I had a strong bond with Special Education Coordinator, Scott Schaedler right off the bat. I wanted to reach certain goals and Scott supported me on that path. Scott helped me develop skills. He helped me break down assignments and due dates. Scott saw the effort I was putting in. He encouraged me to study hard for the SAT. I took the SAT and I got a good score. My SAT score led to the US Coast Guard reaching out to me and that led to my interest in the military lifestyle at Norwich University where I will be attending next fall.”

“Every teacher at LEAF has made a difference for me. It is awesome to have teachers who are willing to work with me individually for 30 to 45 minutes a day. I never got that kind of support in the traditional public school I attended.”

Humanities teacher, “Alysa Younger worked with me to prepare and practice for the SAT essay.”

Humanities teacher, “Chris Becker’s approach to history is pretty awesome. He also taught me how to clear my thoughts so I could focus on my essay writing. The teachers are ready to meet me where I am. For example, I approached Chris when we were studying current world issues and told him I was really interested in foreign affairs, specifically the US Involvement in Iraq. I asked if I could do a more involved and deeper project on this subject and he has been very supportive, providing me with material to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. I am very interested in this subject and I am putting in more time to work for an advanced competency.”

Nature walks and humanities teacher, “Kevin Bose was someone I really connected with and I have enjoyed

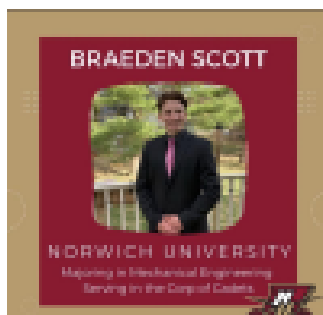
playing guitar with him. He is someone who understands challenges in life and is someone I can talk with. The nature walks class has been good for my mental health. It is great to be able to get outside, go on hikes, and get some sun exposure.”

“I have been working with outdoor skills teacher, Marty Castriotta on building an outdoor classroom. One of the highlights of this experience was using a blow torch. I remember thinking when I first started at LEAF, “well, whatever happens...I get to use a blow torch!” I am still working on the outdoor classroom and I hope we will complete it by graduation. I want to see something that will outlast my time at LEAF.”

Music teacher, “Sammy Burhoe got me hooked on guitar. Guitar is a tool I can use to express emotions. It’s ok to feel emotion. We are all human. Emotions don’t prevent you from reaching your goals.”

Community Connections Coordinator, “Judy Hoffman helped me find and apply for a summer program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute between my junior and senior years. In this program, I was able to explore a lot of engineering careers. This program helped me know what I want to go to college for.”

STEM teacher, “Rob Leinau has helped me with an on-line Advanced Placement Calculus class. I also approached him about extra chemistry work because even though I took a chemistry class in the traditional high school I was at, I wanted to learn more. He invited me to assist him in teaching the class. I have helped prepare for the classes, led lessons on study skills, and taught a rocketry unit during skills week.”



Next fall, Braeden will be attending Norwich University in Vermont majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He has big plans for his time at Norwich and after. Eventually he hopes to enlist in the Air Force and become a member of the Special Forces. He wants to reach the highest level on the most elite team. He is excited to be with his “Rook brothers and sisters” who are people who will be living the military lifestyle with him. They are like-minded students who want to push themselves and challenge themselves.



While at Norwich, he plans on joining the Cold Weather Mountain Company. As a member of this club, he will learn survival and rescue skills in cold weather conditions high in the Green Mountains. He also plans to receive his EMS certification and hopes to get a license to be able to drive the school’s ambulance. He will also be a competitive swimmer on the Norwich Swimming and Diving team.

Congratulations Braeden! Everyone here at LEAF wishes you well in all your future adventures!