



Luke Tribuzio  
2020-2021  
Senior Profile

“My mother found out about LEAF and told me about it. I had been in a very strict school which was very limiting. I couldn’t go by the pronouns or name that I liked. I couldn’t dye my hair. We had a very strict schedule and it was hard to interact with other students.” LEAF senior Luke Tribuzio remembers the first time he visited LEAF. “It was a very heartwarming, friendly environment. People were very interested in saying hi to me and showing me around. LEAF was not as formal as I was expecting, which was good. It was more homey , more like a big family than a facility.” Luke enrolled in LEAF Charter School at the end of his sophomore year. Reflecting on the projects he has created over the years, Luke has a few favorite memories. “My first exhibit night stands out as a highlight.” At the end of every semester, LEAF students invite family, friends, and community

members to come see the work they have completed. “For a 3-D art class, I made a 3-D dragon and a terrarium out of recycled materials. It was the first time I was really interested in projects. I was given lots of freedom to create what I wanted to create. For a history class, I dressed two mannequins for two different time periods.” He also has a fond memory of dressing up like a pirate on pirates’ day.

Speaking of history, one of Luke’s favorite classes at LEAF was a history class he took with humanities teacher, Chris Becker. “Chris just does history well. Best history class I ever had! It was very engaging and was more informational than other history classes I have had. Chris went deeper and gave us a more detailed story. If we were interested in a particular subject, he would bring in more resources. We also had very open discussions about current events which I appreciate a lot.”

Another class that made a big impact on Luke was a class called Our Planet, Our Footprint which was taught by STEM teacher, Marty Castriotta. “Marty is a delightful character and an interesting person. I had never had an ecoscience class before OPOF. I had never been part of a conversation talking about what is actually happening right now. What is not working? What do we actually need to change? What are the ways to make a difference right now?”

Two staff members that have made a difference for Luke are Student Support Specialist, Dolores Moran-Colby and Community Connections Coordinator, Judy Hoffman. “Dolores is very sweet and I really like her energy. I got to know her when she offered a time for students to get academic support and work on classwork. I enjoyed talking with her and even after the academic support period, I still went and just talked with her. Judy is very kind, uplifting, and makes me very happy. I appreciate her energy. She helps push me along and encourages me to “go do it”.

Luke has participated in a theater prop making internship with director Sean Robert at World Under Wonder theater. "It was fun to work with Sean. I learned a lot about prop making. Sean helped me to keep an open mind to possibilities I hadn't thought of previously."

Luke's interest in theater and cos-play has been supported throughout his time at LEAF. During one Skills Week, Luke approached founding director Dakota Benedetto to teach a class on cos-play and makeup special effects. Dakota encouraged Luke and he ended up teaching and sharing his love for cos-play with his fellow students. The class covered how to get started with cos-play, how to make a costume, and how to create special effects with makeup.

If he could have any job in the world, Luke would do three things. He would work in a theater designing costumes, making props, and doing make-up. He would do commission work for cos-play. Finally, he would also open a little shop to sell the little clay creations he makes.

Next year, Luke plans to take a gap year to just work and prepare for college. He wants to wait until COVID is over and students can be assured of in-person learning before he continues his education. He eventually wants to go to cosmetology school.

Luke leaves the following advice for incoming LEAF students: "Don't be afraid to be yourself. The environment is very open and inviting. People who want to try something new can do that at LEAF. The staff are very supportive. LEAF allows students to experiment with fashion, hobbies, really anything."

LEAF is really different from other schools. "In some schools you can feel very alone. I was nervous about introducing myself as Luke and using the pronouns I prefer because I had never been allowed to use my preferred name and pronouns. At LEAF, you know the staff will be there for you. They are there, ready and willing."