

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today, we would like to recognize class of 2008 graduate, Joe Smeltzer. Joe graduated from Benzie Central High School in 2008. He grew up near Frankfort on the family farm and spent much of his formative years outside. He enjoyed many different local activities including skiing, pond hockey, bon fires, and days on the local beaches. While at Benzie Joe was involved in a multitude of extracurricular activities including National Honors Society, Key Club, Soccer, Cross Country, Student Council, Track and Field, and multiple musicals and drama productions.

After high school Joe went on to attend Kettering University (formally General Motors Institute) in Flint Michigan to study Mechanical Engineering. While at Kettering, Joe participated in many intramural sports, was a peer tutor, became a member of Tau Beta Pi national engineering honors society, worked as a Resident Assistant in the dorms, assisted in freshman orientation and integration programs, and studied abroad for 3 months in Konstanz Germany. Kettering offered some unique opportunities to Joe through their co-op program which allows all of their students to gain large amounts of internship like experience while attending. The school uses a quarter style schedule and students attend school for three months then go to a full-time internship for three months and continue to switch back and forth through out their career. Taking this route, Joe was able to gain two and half years of valuable work experience at companies like Trelleborg Automotive and General Motors.

After graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2012, Joe went on to work full time for General Motors in Detroit as a Studio Design Engineer. This role is a liaison position between creative design personnel and engineers within GM. They serve as the moderator between the two groups and endeavor to integrate all of engineering's requirements inside designs aesthetically pleasing surfaces. He has worked in the Advanced Design studio for almost 5 years now working on future projects that are planned to be released in the future; within 4 to 7 years. One project Joe worked on that was recently released to the public, was the GM Fuel Cell platform called Surus, (more information [here](#), be sure to look at the photo gallery).

Outside of work, Joe plays on multiple soccer teams year-round, volunteers with A World In Motion STEM programs, mentors a FIRST Robotics team, and helps run a program within GM to help engage, develop, and connect GM's interns, co-ops, and new hires. Joe lives in the metro Detroit area and visits Northern Michigan often through out the year with his recently adopted dog Morgan.

Joe has two pieces of advice to give to current students, first "Excel at what you're doing right now. Keep your goals in mind but, don't sacrifice the present in pursuit of the future. People will notice the hard work you are putting in and it will only help you." And the second is, "If you get the chance to study or travel abroad, take it. It was one of my most cherished experiences."

