

WELCOME TO BENZIE COUNTY CENTRAL SCHOOLS FEATURED FRIDAY ALUMNI. Today, we would like to recognize Class of 2012 graduate, Nathan Hejl. Let's just say, that Nathan has been very busy and accomplished great things in the last 6 years.

Nathan is a 2012 graduate of Benzie Central High School. Nathan grew up in Lake Ann after his family relocated to the area to be closer to family following his father's retirement from the Coast Guard. He attended Lake Ann Elementary and Platte River Elementary before continuing on to Benzie Central Middle/High School. In high school, Nathan participated in Student Council, Key Club, National Honor Society, Theater, and BCTV. Among his proudest accomplishments in high school, Nathan helped to revive the defunct School Store and BCTV programs. This entrepreneurial mindset set the stage for Nathan to pursue a degree in business following graduation.

Nathan attended Michigan State University (MSU), earning his undergraduate degree in Marketing from the Eli Broad College of Business. Nathan gave presentations about life as a college student each year during the Benzie Central Middle School's annual field trip to MSU. While in school, he worked for Lansing-based Jackson National Life Insurance Co., a multinational insurer and subsidiary of U.K.-based Prudential plc. Nathan worked part-time for Jackson during the school year and interned with them during summers. After his sophomore year, he interned in Hong Kong with the corporate marketing team at Prudential Corporation Asia, sister-company to Jackson and one of the largest insurers in Asia, where he was exposed to marketing research as a career path. Later that summer at the MSU Alumni Club of Hong Kong summer reception, he ran into Dr. Richard Spreng, Director of MSU's Master of Science in Marketing Research (MSMR) Program, who encouraged him to pursue a master's degree in the field. Now, nearly four years later, he is a graduate of the MSMR program beginning his career in marketing research.

Nathan lives in Cleveland, Ohio and works for Sherwin-Williams as a Marketing Analyst with the Marketing Research team at their downtown Cleveland Headquarters. Nathan manages the consumer, professional, and employee panels to collect feedback, primarily through online surveys and focus groups. The information is then analyzed and reported to Sherwin-Williams senior management and used for the purpose of improving decision making related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing. In his free time, he enjoys trying the local food scene in Cleveland (Yes, hometown of Iron Chef Michael Symon and his restaurant empire!) and preparing as a soon-to-be puppy Dad to a Shiba Inu dog named Mochi.

Lastly, as a piece of advice, Nathan shares "Follow your dreams and realize that growing up in rural Northern Michigan will give you a unique perspective on life that is highly valuable. You are fully capable of competing and working with others on a national and even international level. Never settle for less than you're worth and always give thanks to those who helped you achieve your dreams. Thanks Benzie Central faculty and staff for all of the lives you've impacted!"

Nathan, we are so very #OneBENZIE proud. “Oh the places you will go” comes to mind when reading about your journey. Thank you for sharing your story with us. We wish you continued success and happiness, always!

