

**Oxford Hills Technical School Alumni Spotlight:
Logan Boucher**



**Technical Program: Computer Technology
College: American University, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and
Audio Technology**

**Employer: Amazon Web Services, Washington, D. C.
Position: Cloud Support Engineer**

We increasingly hear about the importance of an education in the trades and technical fields. Students who attend Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School have the opportunity to begin that education right here. By enrolling in one of the twenty programs available at MRV #11 Oxford Hills Technical School (OHTS), they are able to take advantage of technical training without leaving their school.

The Oxford Hills community has long understood what other communities have not - that a technical education offers many opportunities to enter meaningful, respected, and well-paid careers. We wish to highlight our alumni who are currently working in technical fields and trades which they began learning while in high school. Our alumni enter their fields from many educational pathways: certifications, four year college degrees, two year college degrees, apprenticeships, and on the job training.

Our first Alumni Spotlight is Logan Boucher. Logan is a 2012 graduate from OHCHS and completed two years of the Computer Technology Program though Oxford Hills Technical School. He was also the Salutatorian of his class and the Student of the Year for the OHTS. We asked him a few questions about what he's learned from his technical program and his career. Our interview with Logan is below:

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

Personally, I consider moving to Washington, D.C. and establishing a life here to be my greatest personal accomplishment. While growing up in West Paris, I always wanted to try living in a city and building a life there. Although I wanted to accomplish this goal, I found the idea of transitioning from small town life to city living to be intimidating and a bit scary. I struggled a bit socially after making the move, but I am glad I made the decision and followed through with achieving this personal goal. I have learned a lot by living in D.C. and have met some really fantastic people during my time here!

In regards to my professional life, this past August I spent a week at Amazon's headquarters in Seattle, Washington attending a conference for software engineers who work at Amazon. While I am not a software engineer, I found the experience to be very educational and it felt like a big accomplishment to be invited to such a conference and to be around so many talented individuals. While there, I saw some brilliant engineers speak about the projects they are working on and the process of building them. It was privilege having the opportunity to hear these engineers speak in person and I definitely consider my attendance of this conference a professional highlight.

How did you become interested in your field?

I have always loved using computers when I was a kid and over time I became decent at fixing them. Eventually, I became the person that my family would go to whenever they had issues with their computer.

In high school I enrolled in the Computer Electronic program to further explore my passion for computers and to formally develop my skills. During my time in the program, I decided that I wanted computing to be a part of my career. This led to me choosing to major in Computer Science in college where I learned about programming.

During my Senior year of college, I took a course that briefly touched upon the subject of Cloud Computing. I ended up learning some more about it on my own outside of class and found it to be a very interesting subject. Later on that year, I attended a recruiting event hosted by Amazon Web Services (AWS), a subsidiary of Amazon.com that provides on-demand cloud computing platforms to individuals, companies, and governments. They were recruiting for a role that would allow me to work hands on with cloud computing technology and required me to troubleshoot various technologies in the cloud. I ended up being offered the job and have worked at AWS ever since.

What do you enjoy most about your current career position?

I get to work with the latest cloud computing technology in a variety of contexts. Every day, I work with different systems and solve different problems. Due to the variety of the work, I learn new things daily and get to apply the things I learn in real time. Since my job primarily involves me fixing problems that customers are having with their systems, I get to see my solutions have impact almost immediately which is a really gratifying feeling.

What have been the biggest challenges in your career? Did your experiences in your technical program help you to overcome obstacles you've faced as an adult? If so, how so?

I have been involved with some projects where my work has been challenged and I have had to receive constructive criticism from my peers as well as customers. Learning to accept the feedback I had received was a challenge, especially if I felt like my initial work was of high quality. In the long run though, the feedback helped me improve my work and develop my skills as a professional. Now, I welcome feedback whenever I present my work.

I would say my time in the technical program helped me with accepting feedback from peers. While I was taking Computer Electronics, I often had to work with classmates to fix a variety of different computers. Sometimes I wouldn't know how to fix a particular problem or I would make a mistake. Sometimes it would be my classmates who caught these mistakes and I had to take feedback from them on how to correct the mistake I made. While it could be hard to hear that I had made a mistake from my peers, it helped me improve my troubleshooting skills. Learning

how to handle such feedback in an academic context has helped me with handling feedback in my current professional role.

In what ways has your technical school experience had an impact on your career and who you are today?

I learned how to troubleshoot computers in the Computer Electronics program and my current job requires me to troubleshoot on a daily basis. The critical thinking and problem solving skills that I initially developed in my technical school classes are skills that I use daily in my current job. I would not be successful in my current role without those skills.

What advice would you give to younger alumni or current students who aspire to follow a similar career path?

Don't be afraid to challenge yourself and put yourself forward for opportunities. There's currently a large demand for people with technical skills and a lot of companies are looking to hire new talent. You may be just the person they need!

What was the best activity you did in your tech program?

My favorite activity was getting to build fully functioning desktop computers from collections of parts. It was a great experience getting to build things with my own hands that actually worked at the end of the process.

Do you have a favorite memory to share about your tech instructor?

After I got some experience building computers I convinced my Dad to let me build a computer for him and his business. I purchased the needed parts and once they arrived my tech instructor, Stephanie Grover, helped me build the computer. It was very memorable when the computer started successfully for the first time as I had used the skills I learned in class to build something real for my Dad! My Dad still uses the same computer to this day (although he is due for an upgrade).

Do you have a favorite or funny story about your time in your tech program?

I'm not sure if I have a specific story, but I do have a lot of fond memories of joking around with my classmates.

What do you enjoy doing with your free time? Family? Hobbies? Interests?

I enjoy hanging out with my friends and playing music in my free time. Currently, I play in two bands in the DC area and I am enjoying getting to play shows live again after taking a break from music during college.

What would you say to a student who is considering a tech program?

Give it a try! It's a lot of fun and you learn some really useful skills.

What is one thing that you know now that may not have been so clear when you were a tech school student?

I didn't realize how much the troubleshooting skills I was learning then would help me in the future.