

Reach High Scholars Program

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RHS Graduate Embraces Global Mindedness with Fulbright Scholarship to Taiwan

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At the end of July 2016, Charles “Charlie” DeBenedetto (RHS '12) left Raymond for Taiwan to pursue a job teaching English as part of the prestigious Fulbright Program.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. flagship international exchange program and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. It is one of the most prestigious awards programs worldwide, providing highly competitive grants for educational exchange in over 155 countries. Each year, more than 1,500 Americans are selected from an extensive applicant pool, receiving Fulbright grants to study, research, or teach abroad.

DeBenedetto’s departure for Taiwan comes after his graduation from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in May, where he majored in Asian studies and international affairs in addition to completing a minor in music. DeBenedetto also graduated *summa cum laude* and was a member of *Phi Beta Kappa*, the most prestigious honors organization in the nation.

DeBenedetto, the son of John DeBenedetto Sr. and Maria Maranello of Raymond, NH, was a member of the RHS class of 2012, and was an active member of the Reach High Scholars Program. He attended the Summer School at Phillips Exeter Academy during the summer of 2010, and went on to attend the Advanced Studies Program at St. Paul’s School the following summer. While at the ASP, DeBenedetto took an Introduction to Chinese course, which served as the

catalyst for an interest in Asian culture and global affairs that he would continue to cultivate both in his time abroad and at HWS.

In addition to attending rigorous summer enrichment programs, DeBenedetto took advantage of the college visits and PSAT/SAT prep courses offered by RHSP. DeBenedetto, a first-generation college student, reflects fondly on his experience with the program and the positive role it played in his life: “The Reach High Scholars Program was extremely influential because I knew that college was a good thing, and something I should aspire to go to, but –if left to my own devices – I would not have known what to do and how to prepare to make sure my application shone.”

DeBenedetto goes on to offer advice to current and future RHS students: “To new and future members, I would say embrace RHSP. You might not know where you want to go or who you want to be, but through college you will be exposed to more new opportunities and life options than you ever thought possible. You owe it to yourself to give yourself the chance to learn more about yourself and be the best you that you can be.”

Since graduating from RHS, DeBenedetto has certainly taken advantage of every opportunity presented to him. He became involved in many aspects of academic, extracurricular, and residential life at HWS, serving as a residential assistant on campus and an America Reads tutor at a local public school. In the summer of 2014, DeBenedetto also attended the Technos International Week—an expenses-paid educational tour of Japan—before studying abroad in Taiwan the following fall of that year. The following summer, he earned a Critical Languages Scholarship for Intensive Summer Institutes from the U.S. Department of State, which allowed him to spend the summer in China and enroll in an intensive Chinese language program.

Though focused on the work immediately before him in Taiwan, DeBenedetto is still looking toward his future with clear goals and aspirations in mind. After my year teaching English in Taiwan through the Fulbright program,” DeBenedetto writes, “I’m planning on going to grad school to earn an MA in either Asian Studies or International Relations. After that, I’m going to backpack to DC and try to land a job in either the government or an NGO that tries to make the world a better place.”

For more information on the Fulbright Scholarship visit <http://eca.state.gov/fulb>. To learn more about the Reach High Scholars Program, see their website at <http://reachhighscholars.org>.