



Natalie Nash 2008

Alpha Report January 2013

Over the years, Providence Heights Alpha School has had the honor to teach a number of bright boys and girls and watch them develop into exceptional students. Natalie Nash, who graduated from Alpha in 2008, is one of these intelligent, young scholars that one is tremendously proud to acknowledge. Throughout her academic career, Natalie has earned an outstanding number of awards and achievements that demonstrate a range of interests and exceptional quality of work and character.

While at Alpha School, Natalie participated in theater, service club, cross-country, and forensics. However, the activities that most shaped her career were the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) Fair and the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fairs (PRSEF). Natalie's interest in PJAS and PRSEF began in the seventh grade and continued throughout her high school career at Vincentian Academy.

My Alpha School experience was truly incredible and definitely helped me get to the place I am today. I would say the most fulfilling activity that I have ever participated in was definitely the science competitions, PJAS and PRSEF, and it was the Alpha School that gave me the opportunity to take part in them." Natalie went on to say, " Obviously, I am a very scientifically oriented individual; therefore the enriched science program that Alpha provided definitely helped me develop my strong interest and background in science," says Natalie.

Natalie's mother, Audrey Nash, concurred, "Natalie has certainly had many accomplishments, and she attributes many of them to her experiences at Alpha.

Especially the PJAS/PRSEF guidance she received from Mrs. Cessar. She is an exceptional teacher, and has truly influenced Natalie's future in a very positive way."

In both freshman and sophomore years at Vincentian, Natalie won First Place Awards in Physics at PJAS.

In 2011, after viewing a video of a woman with Cerebral Palsy, and demonstrating how technology was helping her deal with her disability, Natalie's PJAS project combined her interest in Computer Science with her new found passion, helping the disabled. Her project, "*Optimizing Keyboards for People with Disabilities*" won her a First Place Award in Computer Science in 2011. In addition, this earned her an invitation to Los Angeles to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair where she won a First Place Award.

In 2012 for her project, "*Navigation for People with Visual Impairments*" was presented at PJAS, again winning a First Place Award, earning recognition from 11 science societies and another invitation to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. There she received significant honors and awards, one of which was a fellowship from the Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Web Valley. In which she and three other students from the United States were chosen to attend a three-week fellowship in Transacua, Italy (pictured above) and also was awarded an internship at CMU's Quality of Life Technology Center.

As for what Natalie is up to now and what we can expect from her in the future Natalie tells us, "Right now I am in my second semester in the Schreyer Honors College at Penn State University, majoring in Computer Engineering, and potentially double majoring with something bio-related. I have also been doing a lot of research in the Assistive Technology field, which using computers to help improve the quality of life for the elderly, and people with disabilities. This is what I want to devote my life to in my future career, therefore I definitely feel like Alpha has provided me with the necessary background I needed to accomplish what I have done already, and what I plan to do in the future."