

#1

The Art of Forgiving and Meeting New People

“Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning”.

This is a story about second chances and forgiveness.

Throughout your life, you begin to understand people. You realize that there are people who you will associate with, and people who you just simply won't. Everyone is guilty of it at some point.

Now you can go off and blame social groups or cliques or whatever the case may be, but those are all excuses. I was just as guilty as everyone else. But throughout senior year, I found myself talking to new people. The weird thing is I never would have talked to these people outside of the scenarios where I had to. These students, many of whom I had never even met before, I talked to because I *had* to.

That's when my perception of people began to change. You shouldn't judge someone you've never had the chance to sit down and talk to. Even if you gave them a chance in the past, it doesn't hurt to give them another shot. There were so many people I couldn't stand in the past that I now talk to just about every day.

Now I don't think everyone needs to be friends with everyone. It just doesn't make much sense to be “besties” with everyone. I think people can and should have a few good close friends, the type that are there for you, the ones who would be a bridesmaid or groomsman at a wedding, your “ride or die” so to speak. But there is still something nice about having other acquaintances in your life. We learn from each other everyday. I have learned so much from people who I've only really met and gotten to know in the last few months. Imagine if this was an experience with every new person you'd met. The things you'd learn. Some of these people I've even become really good friends with that I talk to everyday. Others, while we may not talk all the time, we have our own things in common, experiences that have bonded us together.

The one thing I have to say is to not judge others as harshly. While I myself am still guilty of it sometimes, I take small steps to grow out of it. Remember that everyone has their own life, their own story. Take the moment to try to get to know them. Maybe even forgive them. Forgive them for their peculiarities, their habits, even their personality. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. You may find yourself uncomfortable at first, but once you settle in, you never know what could happen.

#2

TO YOU, BERLIN

People always talk down on Berlin but is it really all that bad? I've been in Berlin since I was four, so you know I'm a real Mountaineer. I'm here to discuss the positives about being a Berlin student.

I'll start off by talking a little bit about my elementary experience at Berlin. Most of my cousins are from Averill Park or some bigger school such as Niskayuna. So I grew up with my cousins asking if my school had this or that but I'd most of the time answer with "no." and they would say things like Berlin is just a poor school and how they wouldn't want to go here. I started to think this way saying how Berlin wasn't a good school. But as I grew up I realized I was happy that me and my cousins all had different experiences. I came from a school where everyone knows everyone. They had come from a school where it wasn't as tight and close to the community. I'm grateful I went to Berlin. I've met some amazing people that I'll never forget. I wish I could go back and tell my younger self how lucky I was to be able to go to a small school. One thing I didn't realize in elementary is that most of the kids that I played with on the playground were like siblings to me. We were raised together, we did after school activities together, we knew each other, even if we didn't think we were close, we just knew each other. That's what Berlin's about, community. For fourteen years I've gotten to know each and everyone of my classmates. That's something big school's don't have.

Berlin gives the opportunity for students to learn one on one with teachers. This gives us an educational advantage and has helped me a lot in my education especially when it comes to math.

I didn't get to experience the normal high school years. At the end of my 9th grade year covid ended up causing our school to close. In the middle of 11th grade is when mandates were lifted. So my senior year was the first high school year that had no covid regulations. It just finally started to feel normal again. But covid had changed Berlin a lot, especially in the technology department. Berlin was quick to provide everyone in the elementary, middle, and high school students with devices. It wasn't the ideal way of learning but we were able to move forward with our education. Berlin has come a long way since I started. I never thought we'd have a track or even redoing our schools. But it happened quickly, Berlin has gotten a lot better since I was a kid.

Berlin might not have been the best school. But it's the only school I've been to and it was a good school for me. I had so many good memories and good times here. I will miss being a student at Berlin.

#3

hiraeth: (especially in the context of Wales or Welsh culture) deep longing for something, especially one's home.

you find an inevitable beauty in the eyes of the unknown—
belonging to the collective masquerades:
where they smolder in the coldness that covers atavistic obsession,
denying delicate familiarity.
the character of renewal,
contested with foreign details—
wrapping the pristine heart with strings of incertitude.
modernized narratives shaping new words,
that now shed their definitions:
inheritance of a myopic lust for autonomy.
reaping the pallid flakes of time,
with calloused hands—
ripped from the earth's deepest roots:
endowing a bountiful harvest of revitalized flesh and bone.

descending into retired fiction:
worn by utter mayhem—
left to be buried beneath the vigilant vestiges of my dawn.
a conscious question,
disgorged with malicious tongues and wretched throats,
by the reflective contours of my primitive praxis.
all i didn't know—
all i wanted to know,
organized before me with intoxicating scenery:
unraveling the stage of nature.

what a bewitching parade,
birds rejoicing and integrating—
chanting their song of life.
greenery painting the fields,
stretching the mountains with indomitable disposition:
with a soft remedy humming in the backdrop,
breathing the embers of life—
that exhumes the respite of corporality.
remnants of archaic proclamations,
a hiraeth for forgotten worlds:
cured of esteemed postulation—
adrift through the shifting sands,
forever longing for a compassed fate...
anchored to the draft of a new advent.

#4

That's All, Folks

Dear Bowlers,

I regret to remind you of my imminent departure and graduation, as most of you don't want me to leave. I can't fail at the last minute, especially with my future plans. After all, colleges don't seem to like applicants not graduating high school. I can see why, but that's neither here nor there. This team needs to survive long after I leave, so it falls on you to actually do that. I can't be there to keep the strings together, which means that somebody else needs to do it. Marbot can't be expected to do it on her own.

We're a new team, and I genuinely believe that those who remain will keep the team afloat. I expect nothing but the best when trying to do so, as I want to come back to see us bowling year after year. Keeping the team around is the only thing I ask of you. However, I want to see the best in all of you, even though I was far from perfect in doing so. I don't want to see the team throwing themselves into the gutter over missed shots, as it's not who we are. We need to see constant improvements, especially so when considering that our team hasn't been properly established within the league. I need to see some form of improvement every year, and I want us to be within the top three in the tournament by year 10.

I would love to see our team on top when the Wasaren League Tournament comes for us in 2029, even though it appears to be far away. It's why I ask for consistent improvement every year. I plead for it at every tournament, but it means that I *have* to ask you to do one more thing, which is to improve everything that you can. In fact, it will be the other thing I ask of you. Did I lie about having one thing for you to do? Yes. Yes I did. However, this other task isn't easy. It will be a crucial task, and one that must be accomplished and even surpassed. Therefore, *you* are the only ones who can effectively complete what I set before you. The coaches can only do so much before it becomes something only you can take on, and none of us want it to get to that point.

However, this means that your ability to effectively bowl, win, and consistently improve will fall almost entirely on you. Marbot and Slaver did the absolute best they could with the shortages and the other factors they couldn't control. I genuinely see no fault in them, and I don't see an ounce of it in our players. We have flaws, but that's normal with new teams entering a sport. I'm certain that they will do everything to bring out the greatest in our current players, and I'm certain they will do the same with incoming players. I don't doubt their ability to elevate your skills, and I don't doubt *your* ability to do everything to improve yourselves. I also believe that you, as seasoned players, can bring out the best in any new player alongside the coaches.

The seasoned players, be it sophomore, junior or senior, are mentors to the young and new players. However, as mentors, you need to set the example that I struggled to set for you. You can do what I couldn't, and help to take the pressure off of the coaches by taking any or all of the incoming players under your wing and help them improve themselves. In doing that, you also help to foster the camaraderie that holds many of the seasoned teams together across the rest of the sports. We have a great foundation, and you can continue to build the team up. Somebody has to pick up the torch, since I can't hold onto it anymore. With the old guard moving on, it's now time for you to lead the charge and step up.

I've always held the team in a high place, especially towards the end of my final season. I will continue to hold you guys in such a high place, even after I inevitably move on. My time with you was relatively short, only because of when the team was established. Despite that, the sport continues with you at its helm, and I hope to be there as much as possible in the coming years. You are the roots that will keep the sport alive, and you give it energy to push into the next season.

It's been an amazing four years, and I wish I could stay longer. However, I don't think that'd be looked upon kindly by some people. So this is goodbye, at least for now. I'll do my best to be around, so I hope I'm still a sight at some future matches. Until then, you need to keep it up so I have something to return to in the winter.

All the best!

#5

To the ones who made a difference in my life,

I honestly thought that I would be able to just open a new document and be able to talk about the moments that the people at Berlin made that makes this piece so meaningful to me, but it isn't that easy, there are so many different things, some little, some big that has made Berlin one of those places in my life I know I'm going to miss.

Some of the things off the top of my head are the small things like teachers willing to give me extra help after school, spending countless hours being patient with me to make sure I learn confidently to teachers willing to lend a helping hand to me when home life was tough. I always felt that they wanted me to succeed even though I didn't always believe I could. Like a big example of that is during last year's Algebra 2 class, I was never good at math to begin with but something about this class really killed my confidence and on top of that I had a regents that I had to pass at the end of the year. To say the least I practically had no hope in passing I never thought I could but Cornell always had faith in me with being able to take the time to practically teach me the same thing 3 times for almost every lesson, I have got to say his optimistic attitude was what I think was the real reason on how I passed that regents. The people here have done so much for me, stuff I would never expect them to do but they do because they want to see us succeed.

I know that teachers don't always get the thanks they deserve, I myself am included in taking all they do for granted but I want it to be known that there wasn't any place in the world I would have wanted to be in than in the stressful math classes that Cornell would try his best to help me understand after school. Even the 7th period study hall in my junior year with Marbot I got to say was probably the reason I survived my junior year I may have never have used that study hall productively but I looked forward to coming in to talk about the book we were reading. That study hall was not only the reason I passed English that year but also the reason why I love reading again. I can't forget of course the math classes that Ellis taught, the way he would try his hardest to make geometry fun. On top of that Ellis was also one of the most supportive teachers I knew for the students he showed us that things aren't always what they seem or what we originally thought. Whether it be Euclidean geometry or the fact that there are different ways to learn and how learning doesn't always have to be boring textbook work. The chemistry class where Mr. Mellor would blow stuff up showing us how cool and exciting chemistry could be if you gave it a shot. My Art History class that Colbert teaches made me want to scratch my eyes out, but at the same time was the most fun I had that year and taught me so many things I never would have known. On top of that Colbert showed me a new love for something I don't think I would have had if it wasn't for her, I may not do art as a career someday but I will always do it for fun. There's just so many more memories from all throughout my Berlin experience that I wouldn't have enough time to get it all on paper.

I guess all that this paper was really meant to say at its core is that there might be times where you feel underappreciated or you question why you ever became a teacher. I want all of you to know that you have all made a difference in my life and have been there for me when I felt I had no one. You are the reason why I want to help people in my life to one day hope that I made the same impact as you all did for me.

#6

The Memory Of My Best Friend

A Sonnet

Middle school is when I met my best friend.
Many times I've hurt him 'cause I went too far.

One day I swear I will be his end.
But these memories make up who we are.

Sometimes we rough house a little too hard.
We walked through the hall and he met his match.

Oftentimes his safety I disregard.
His face hit the door frame and fell with a smash.

To this day I still feel super sorry.
But that doesn't mean I feel regret.
I didn't mean to make his vision starry,
but it was funny and I'll never forget.

My eyes get watery as it gets warmer.
Graduation is just around the corner

#7

Mountaineer Magic

I have gone to Berlin since I was in pre-k. I have noticed so many amazing things in our community since then. There are so many wonderful things about our school. We have incredible teachers, students, and counselors here at Berlin.

Mr. Connally is one of the extraordinary staff members here. He does a lot for his students, fellow staff members, and the Berlin area. One of the many things that makes him stand out from the rest of the BHS staff is the care he shows for his students. He will always be a teacher you can count on if you need to talk about your problems or struggles. When I was in his class, he would notice if you or the class as a whole was having a bad day. He would let you have a period to let you calm down from that bad day. This helps his students regain their energy and focus for the rest of their school day.

Another outstanding teacher at our school is Mrs. Colbert. She is so considerate of her students and fellow staff members. She is great at helping students who are struggling or don't understand something. She is very understanding of students and how they are feeling. Having Mrs. Colbert as my art teacher for the past 2 years has been not only a privilege but an experience I'm so thankful for. She has always been there to listen and she always puts a smile on my face when I need it most.

There are several phenomenal students here too. These students are always very kind and polite to others in our district. They support their peers. There are many students that I could talk about, but I'm going to talk about two of them.

Hannah Mace is very kind to classmates, teachers, her teammates, and her coaches. She is supportive of her community. She shows respect and consideration to the people around her. Hannah is a delightful person and a friend to everyone. Everytime I interact with Hannah, she is always happy and tries her hardest to bring happiness to others. She always finds a way to make someone feel appreciated.

Another outstanding student is Connor Sniger. He shows pride for his community. He shows respect to his teammates, coaches, and is always a person to go to if you need a laugh or an ear to talk to. He shows kindness to his coaches and teammates. Whenever I see Conner in the hallway, He is quick to give a smile and a hello. He always seems to be happy and having the time of his life when in school. He shows appreciation to his teachers and fellow classmates.

In addition to the wonderful people, the school offers many great opportunities to their students as well. These opportunities include field trips such as museums, sports games, bowling, ice skating, and more. They also include opportunities such as sports, learning how to cook, sew, and much more. Every year the school offers at least one field day to the students throughout the year. These field days offer the students a day of school where they are outside having fun with friends. As a person in the community who loves my sport, teachers, friends, and my classes I can say that I'm beyond grateful and fortunate to have all these great opportunities.

All of these qualities of the Berlin community is what makes us so great. All of these qualities are what makes a mountaineer truly have mountaineer spirit.

It's Almost Over

Welcome. To whom it may concern. To whom this might interest. I will be your guide. I will be taking you through my perspective and the moments where I've seen or shown examples of *gratitude, pride, respect*, and lastly I would love to honor many individuals in this school that have been an amazing help throughout my time being here. Keep reading or you might miss a spot that you are in. We all have heard many times of people bashing *Berlin*, even our own students. Myself included. Many of us are guilty but it's time to step up. Let's build a peaceful community together. One where there is nothing to bash including your peers, our school, staff because we all see each other and are in school all the time together until you're a senior which goes by so fast. Believe it or not this is where you will be stuck until you graduate. So enjoy it! Of course if you move you will no longer be a part of the community. But, hopefully we all can make an effort to better the community we are in to allow more people to enjoy sending kids here knowing they will be in a safe and healthy learning environment. Hopefully hearing these things from a student will help build a more positive community and more appreciative one. If you have made it this far [you might as well keep reading] or you might miss out on some hopefully helpful tools that I have seen throughout my time as a student here at *Berlin Central School District*.

Let's get started. As I shower you with many thoughts from my weird/wandering mind I hope you take the time to understand some things from my point of view. Let me first talk about *gratitude*. For those who may not know, it means the quality of being thankful. Can you think of a moment of *gratitude* even if it takes some time to travel deep into your memory? Well I sure can. There are many I can think of but, i'll talk about one moment to keep this a little shorter. I'm not sure if you know this but, you see these specific people in school that actually feed you and do their absolute best with what they have every single day of the year. Those people are *our* lunch ladies. Probably if not some of the sweetest people in the building. I've heard many times where people including myself say how bad the school food is but there actually are days they make some amazing food. And is it really that bad? Almost everyday I thank them everytime I step up to order food there to show *gratitude*. Feeding hundreds of kids and staff everyday with what they have. So next time you go to lunch not just in school but thank the person making your food it will definitely put a smile on their face because they are not appreciated as much as they should be.

Pride! I'm going to talk about is the *pride* I have in our school's athletic program. From being embarrassed to play sports in elementary for a team, thinking I wouldn't be good to ending up having one of the most difficult positions on the soccer team I take pride in being in one of the more difficult positions because if I never took the opportunity starting soccer in 7th grade I would've never known that i'd be pretty decent as a Goalkeeper. It was a lot of days training watching videos to become able to understand the position and getting over the fear of getting hurt. But I take pride in all of the work no one saw me do to be as good as I am and still continue

to better myself. I loved the many different coaches I had and being able to understand things from other points of views and learning and moving on from taking constructive criticism and also criticism. I learned from being around older kids, and being that young one to become stronger mentally and physically. I take *pride* in being a Mountaineer for being able to look back on all this very soon and realize nothing will be worse the next day if you keep focusing on what you want to accomplish and instead day by day focus on accomplishing at least one goal and be consistent. Stop letting things that happen currently affect the future days to come because the clocks are always ticking and it's your choice to build the experience of life that you want so stop making excuses and blaming other people. If you dream of it then keep working for it until it's in your possession and you've made it.

Alright if you've made it this far you might as well finish reading. *Respect!* One of the most important things that should've been taught by your parents or whoever raised you because this is a very important thing to know and have. First let me give you a dictionary definition for; *respect*. A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements. Let that sink in for a moment— ————. Have you ever seen, shown, or been given a sign of respect throughout your life or in our school? Mostly should be yes there's respect everywhere unless you weren't taught to respect. If yes, that's amazing. If no, that's alright you must've just never been taught but there's always time to learn. Respect goes a long way. I've had many times in our lovely school, well I want to call it that as much as I say otherwise, to where I have seen, shown, and given respect. There are a few staff I would love to mention that have been a great help no matter what happened between us. Those few people are Mrs. Davies, Ms. Monty, Mrs. Marbot, Mrs. Lamontagne, Mr. Christian, Mr. Covell, Mr. Mellor, Mr. Weaver, Mr. Conolly, Mrs. Connolly, Mrs. Honsinger, Mrs. Burshwinger, Mr. Paravella, Mrs. Wetmore, Mrs. Day, Mr. McFall, Mr. Viner, Mr. Gould, Mrs. Colbert, Mrs. Brownell, Mr. Darha, the janitors to coaches of my sports and to many more that are not on the list I would like to say a final thank you for always putting up with stuff and giving me a hand in school and also a sorry for the things I put some of yall through. I respect all of the women and men in and out of school for dealing with myself. May sound silly but honestly do respect everyone for all of the things they have done they were a lot of help, and still a lot of help. If someone helps you out or does something kind for you, remember to show them respect.

In conclusion all I want to say is just enjoy school the best you can not everyday is full of sunshine and rainbows there's always a rainy day that will hit. Just remember to take it day by day and you will one day be on a boat getting carried away on your own voyage. 2023 Senior signing out.

#9

Connecticut Mountaineer

Every school looks perfect except the one you are enrolled in. Other districts have cleaner bathrooms, nicer staff and peers, cooler field trips and dances, everything your environment lacks. As a Mountaineer I constantly see everyday what is wrong with my school.

Taking a step back, I am grateful for being accepted as a Berlin Mountaineer. I became a Mountaineer in fifth grade. Until this year I kept considering myself the new kid because everyone here is like family. It took some time and although my Berlin family is weird I am happy to have them.

The same community that picks apart Berlin is the same community that praises Berlin and is there when times are tough, like the covid years that took away important years to the students and staff. Back in 2017, my mother was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer. I was in disbelief and told myself she was lying. Something she told me that I will never forget was, "You will believe me when my hair starts falling out." I didn't think too hard about it but was weary about it. Months later she started getting skinny, weak and as she told me, her hair started falling out from chemo. One of my closest friends at the time knew what was going on and so she asked me what my mom liked from candies to her favorite color. I was confused at the time but when I got to school she showed up with a bowl that was wrapped. I thanked her and gave the bowl to my mom. My mom was happy and smiling and because of what my friend did, regardless of what happens will always be special to me because she made my mom happy. The bowl included an "M" in it and it still sits on my mom's dresser with her other belongings. Once my mom passed from her cancer in 2018, many people from my community reached out to me for support. School during covid was a disaster for me. I ended up in summer school and had Ms.Hart. Although Hart doesn't work here anymore she is still important to me. Hart helped me with my focus and made me feel important. I wasn't just impacted by Hart but as many other staff she is important to me. The Berlin community is strange but it is strong and passionate.

Berlin has given the students here phenomenal experiences. As a student I have been to the Metropolitan museum of art. Seeing African exhibits to seeing temples was one of many memories Berlin has given me. I've been to other museums and zoos but the Metropolitan museum of art was my favorite. I've been to two proms and the venues were breathtaking. My first prom was at Bloom Meadows with mountains in the view and my second prom was the Franklin Terrace Ballroom that felt endless with how big it

was there, both proms had amazing food that I couldn't stop eating. Without Berlin I wouldn't have these unforgettable memories that I cherish.

A good portion of the students here in Berlin are hard working, curious and thoughtful students who care and try for their education. During my study halls I have observed other classes, although most of those classes are English classes I have also attended a marine biology class. While being in those classes I have seen students who overachieve in good ways and students who are curious and feel comfortable asking questions. I'm happy my peers feel comfortable asking and trying instead of being quiet and scared to look stupid. I have seen students research horseshoe crab blood and the benefits, I have also seen them grow and care for starfish, jellyfish, coral, sharks, eels and more that continuously amaze me. In the English classes I have read my peers' works and it's crazy to see how big their imagination is and how far it takes them. Every school has slackers but looking around to see those students who try and how far they go with the resources Berlin has given us including help from Questar and other programs.

Every other school does look perfect, but Berlin is imperfectly perfect. Everyone tears apart their district. As Landon Parham said in his book, *First Night of Summer*, "Life isn't just about darkness or light, rather it's about finding light within the darkness." Even if your school really does suck it only lasts around twelve years.

#10

