

Alumni

OLIVIA BIONI, class of '05



Olivia Bioni, 2009



“GRADUATING FROM DAWSON WAS REALLY SIGNIFICANT FOR ME. I JUST LOVE THE SCHOOL SO MUCH, AND MY LIFE WAS DRAMATICALLY IMPACTED WHILE I WAS THERE.”

It was 2000, and Olivia Bioni had just started fourth grade at a local public school - “and I hated it,” she remembers. Now a recent high school graduate, and nine years later, Olivia still remembers how badly she wanted to attend the brand new school that had just opened - The Alexander Dawson School.

“I enrolled after classes had already begun, and it was past the enrollment deadline, but the School let me in,” she notes, “I will always be thankful for that.”

Because the School was in its infancy, extracurricular programs were beginning to build, so Olivia got involved with intramural soccer and also ran track for a season. She decided to participate in the band, where she played the clarinet and the bassoon.

Olivia loved science and math, often unpopular subjects with many students. “The teachers just made it so interesting,” she says, with a smile.

Mr. Keilty, who teaches science at Dawson, was one of Olivia’s favorites. “He knew how to take boring subjects, like plant life, and make them fun,” she says. “I will never forget the silly voices and faces he would make when teaching some of the lessons; he just made you want to learn.”



Fourth Grade, 2000

Eighth Grade, 2005

Olivia also remembers having a fantastic time in math classes at Dawson. “Who would think math, of all subjects, could be fun?” Olivia asks. “Mr. Hennemann really cared about the subject and about his students. He truly wanted us to succeed, and you could tell when he taught us every day.”

Olivia attended Dawson for five years, until she graduated from eighth grade. “Graduating from Dawson was really significant for me. I just love the school so much, and my life was dramatically impacted while I was there,” she says. “In fact, eighth-grade graduation was more significant for me than my high school graduation,” she adds.

After leaving Dawson, Olivia began high school at Palo Verde. For her, the transition was easy. “I was so completely prepared, if not overly-prepared, for high school. Freshman year was a breeze from an academic perspective. That was nice, because the social and emotional transition is so huge, I was glad I didn’t have to struggle and work hard in academics, too. It would have been overwhelming to balance all of those aspects,” she says. “Dr. Smith did a great job preparing eighth-graders for that transition. He let us know that high school was a whole different ballgame, and it definitely was,” Olivia adds.

“I believe Dawson gave me the skills I needed to be successful,” she continues. “While other students were complaining about homework and amazed at the amount of work we had to do, it was not a big deal for me. I had been used to working hard at Dawson, so high school was not really all that different,” she says.

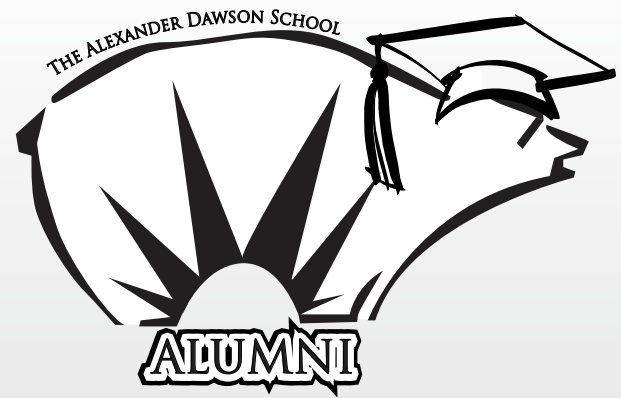
While in high school, Olivia was president of the International Thespian Society, was awarded “Outstanding Theater Student” her senior year, and was honored with “Best Female Actress” for her performance as Hamlet. In addition, she was named an AP Scholar for her excellent performance on Advanced Placement (AP) tests. She graduated in June 2009 with “High Honors” and a 4.8 grade-point-average.

Even though she left Dawson more than four years ago, Olivia still comes back frequently to visit. In her mind, “Dawson has become its own separate era” - an important milestone that, so far, has been unmatched.

Olivia is hoping this might change, though, as she gets ready to begin her freshman year at Colgate University in New York, where she plans to major in biology and minor in Chinese. “I want to graduate and go to medical school so I can become a Doctor of Osteopathy - a hybrid of Eastern and Western medicine,” she explains.

While flying across the country to begin college would be a scary proposition for many, Olivia is excited. “I’ve had the date on my calendar for so long that time just seems to creep by. It’s hard to believe it’s almost here,” she says.

As she prepares to leave Las Vegas to begin another chapter in her life, Olivia leaves one piece of advice for Dawson eighth-graders: “The transition to high school is hard, but be confident in yourself; you have what you need to succeed, you just have to use the skills you have learned at Dawson.”



DAWSON LAUNCHES ALUMNI PROGRAM

Since its founding in 2000, The Alexander Dawson School has educated more than 1,400 Las Vegas students. As our students graduate and move on to various high schools and then college, many lose touch with classmates and childhood friends.

The School has launched a new Alumni Program, complete with an alumni section on our website and a Dawson Alumni Facebook page. These resources allow Dawson graduates to reconnect with each other, share significant moments in their lives, and remember the school that helped them establish a strong educational foundation for future success.

If you graduated from Dawson, we are interested in hearing from you. Check out our website at www.alexanderdawsonschool.org and click on the “Dawson Alumni” page under “About Dawson.”

On the website, you will find a form you can fill out to let your fellow alums know what you’ve been up to since graduation. You can also find a link to become a “fan” on Facebook.

The next issue of *Petroglyph* will feature a Class Notes section with information about Dawson graduates. To make sure you are included, please visit our website and fill out the form found on the “Dawson Alumni” page.



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