



QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

Hard work, good advice, pay off for QCHS twins

Jared and Jason Susnoskie have been awarded full ROTC scholarships. They'll be attending Penn State.

By Gary Weckselblatt

For Jared and Jason Susnoskie, chance meetings have had a significant impact on two futures filled with an abundance of promise.

The Quakertown Community High School seniors and identical twins recently learned they are among only 200 seniors nationwide to earn the coveted Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps full scholarships, sought by approximately 12,000 students each year.

The brothers have been accepted to Penn State University, the top choice for both.

"We had been checking online everyday," Jason said. "Finally, we got the call."

On the line was David Rizzo, Penn State's professor of military science, with the great news.

"My heart just dropped out of happiness," Jared said. "To be recognized on this level is pretty incredible," Jason said.

Their mom, Lisa Susnoskie, an aide at Trumbauersville Elementary School, "was almost in tears," when the boys told her, Jason said. When they called dad, "You could hear him screaming on the street. They were both incredibly

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Ryan Stetler,

English teacher and cross country coach



Jason, left and Jared Susnoskie, with their official scholarship Army scholarship offers in hand, flank Penn State's Nittany Lion.

proud of us."

The youngsters didn't achieve the awards overnight. Their accomplishments took years of work.

Tony Wolf, recruiting operations officer for the University of Iowa Army ROTC program, told U.S. News that the majority of high school scholarship recipients are in the top 25 percent of their class, belong to an honor society and participate in organizations or sports. The scholarships are not based on financial need.

Academically, the Susnoskie's GPA's are just under 4.0 in a rigorous curriculum loaded with honors and Advanced Placement courses. They're members of the National Honor Society. Jared is vice president of the school's Future Business Leaders of America. Both are lifeguards at Quakertown Community Pool. They run cross country, track and are on the bowling team, with Jason the 12th ranked bowler in the region.

They're also section leaders on the state champion marching band, where Jason plays the baritone and Jared the clarinet. Leadership skills have been developed as part of the school's Fire Responders Club and National Guard Camp. Two years ago, they were founding members of the high school's Explorer Post (for First Responders) sponsored by the Quakertown Borough

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and the school district. School Resource Officer Bob Lee is the leader of the Post.

Wolf, the officer with the University of Iowa Army ROTC program, said students should be working on building a resume early in their high school career. And that's just the advice the youngsters received in a serendipitous encounter almost four years ago with Dr. Bill Harner, then the district's interim superintendent.

Middle school baseball practice at Strayer had just ended and the Susnoskie's were waiting for their ride when Harner, a frequent visitor to after-school events, started a conversation.

The brothers asked for another meeting, and Harner sat with them in his office and answered their questions about academics, leadership and physical readiness.

The superintendent encouraged them to participate in extracurricular, co-curricular and community activities to develop character, leadership and concept of service.

"From that day forward, they developed an exceptional action plan and faithfully stuck to it," Harner said.

"I don't know what we'd be doing without that meeting," Jared said. "The way he helped us schedule our classes and get involved with extracurricular activities basically changed" ... Jason finished the thought, "our whole mentality about college."

Harner often plants the idea in students that the United States Military Academy, his alma mater, is a great place for an education. The Susnoskie's bought the sales pitch.

"That's where it all started," Jason said. "He really got it started with the military aspect of things."

"It definitely had an impact" on the brothers taking the ROTC route, added Jared.

In fact, they first learned of the ROTC program by chance while attending a presentation about West Point at Lehigh University as ninth graders. Before that happened, however, Harry Harp, Lehigh's Army Civilian for recruiting and



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Superintendent Bill Harner

enrollment operations, spoke about the school's ROTC program.

"I had blinders on," Jason said. "I just wanted to go to West Point. That kind of changed my mind."

Jared was sold at Penn State's Cadet Show Day, where students shadow an ROTC student to see what cadet life is like. "It felt like family there," Jared said.

That shouldn't come as a surprise. "Most of our cousins attended Penn State," Jason said.

In addition to Harner, the twins said English teacher and cross country coach Ryan Stetler has been a major asset as "a great English teacher" who taught them "a lot of life lessons."

Stetler returned the compliment. "It has been a pleasure to witness Jared and Jason's transformation these past three years, from uncertain sophomores -- attempting to find their paths -- to the self-assured, resourceful, and well-rounded young men they are today," he said. "I'm certain they will embrace the opportunities their ROTC scholarships will provide them and Penn State University is gaining themselves two quality young men next year."

Jared plans to major in finance, while Jason is looking at architectural engineering. Any advice for fellow students?

"You don't have to be what other people want you to be," Jason said. "Have a plan and excel at it."

Have your goals and check them off as you go along."

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