

VCHS Alumni Feature Article – Emily Novak '17

Emily Novak, a proud graduate of Vail Christian High School's Class of 2017, has made an impressive journey from VCHS to medical school. With a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Point Loma Nazarene University, Emily embodies the dedication and passion VCHS strives to instill in its students..

During her time at Point Loma Nazarene University, Emily's commitment to academic excellence was evident. She engaged deeply in undergraduate research and was a mentor to high school students, sharing her knowledge and sparking interest in the sciences. Her hard work paid off as she graduated with honors through the university's Honors Scholar Program. Summers were spent volunteering at Vail Health, reflecting her dedication to giving back to her community.

After earning her degree, Emily chose to take a gap year, immersing herself in critical research on Acute Myeloid Leukemia at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in La Jolla, California. This experience was pivotal, as it allowed her to combine her scientific knowledge with hands-on patient care. Emily discovered a profound insight during this period: "Science is cool, but what I really care about is the journey of the patient." This realization has been a driving force in her career.

Currently, Emily is in her third year of medical school, pursuing a medical degree at Loma Linda University School of Medicine with the goal of specializing in anesthesiology. Her experiences have shaped a strong desire to work with underserved populations, ensuring that all patients receive the care and attention they deserve. Her commitment to this cause is a testament to her character and the values instilled in her during her formative years.

Emily transferred to Vail Christian High School at the start of her junior year, coming from a public school in Tahoe. She recalls the academic challenges she faced at VCHS, particularly in AP Biology and AP Chemistry. Serving as the VCHS Science Department teaching assistant, she was inspired by her teachers and mentors, who ignited her passion for science and set her on the path to nursing or medical school.

"VCHS is very unique, has high expectations for students and taught me how to study and work hard," Emily reflects. "The discipline and work ethic I developed there were crucial for my success in college."

Emily's journey serves as an inspiring example for VCHS students. Her advice is heartfelt and impactful: "Everyone's path is different and the sooner you stop

comparing yourself to others, the better off you will be. Don't let others steal your joy. Strive to be different and unique. Be okay to be yourself."

Emily Novak's story highlights the importance of hard work, passion, and believing in your own path. Vail Christian High School is proud of her achievements and eagerly anticipates the positive influence she will continue to have in the medical field and beyond.