

**Alumni Profile for Janice Park
Nysmith Class of 2007**



Highly-Distinguished Scholar and Future Physician

In the years before I graduated, I took Musical Theater as my elective and really enjoyed being a part of *The Music Man, Jr.* in 7th grade and then taking on the role of Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof, Jr.* in 8th! I was also in the Chess Club, the Art Club, and Nysingers, which was a choral group that performed Broadway songs mostly. Outside of school, I took piano and violin lessons and joined the Loudoun Symphony Youth Orchestra as well.

After graduating from Nysmith, I attended TJHSST for high school. Some of the major activities I did included working in the Neuroscience senior research lab, being on the crew team for 3 years as a coxswain, and continuing to play violin in the Loudoun Symphony Youth Orchestra. I was also a member of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl team, and we won the regional competition twice while I was a member, going on to win 7th at Nationals one year. I was a National Merit Scholar and took 11 AP exams, which allowed me to come into college with 40+ credits. (Nysmith's advanced teaching definitely gave me an advantage in those AP classes!)

I went on to the University of Virginia as an Echols Scholar (recognizing high-achieving applicants) for undergrad and graduated in 2015 with high distinction as a part of the Distinguished Majors Program in Biology. I wrote my thesis on the potential use of stem cells to treat blindness in patients with diabetes, which I had been investigating in an Ophthalmology lab. Other highlights of my undergrad career included singing in the Virginia Women's Chorus (and eventually becoming Assistant Student Director in my fourth year), volunteering at the Cancer Center playing violin in a quartet once a week, and working as a Healthcare Administration Intern at the Charlottesville Free Clinic for one summer. I was also inducted into the Raven Society, an honor society at UVA which recognizes academic excellence and involvement in the university community.

I was very fortunate to be accepted to the University of Virginia School of Medicine (UVASOM), where I have been learning to be a physician for the last couple years! It feels so rewarding to finally be on track to my dream job. Because the curriculum is so science heavy, and I'm not quite willing to part with the humanities, I have found ways to stay involved with music, history, and the arts. I was accepted to the Hook Scholars Program in the UVASOM, which allows four students in each year to pursue more opportunities in the medical humanities through research and electives. I am also the leader of the Sloane Society, which encourages medical student participation in arts and humanities events in the Charlottesville community, and recently joined The Arrhythmics, our very own (not very serious, but very fun!) medical student a cappella group. It has been a crazy ride since my days at Nysmith!

Regarding my summer jobs, in my latter years of high school and throughout undergrad, I spent most of my summers researching in a science lab. I also interned at the Charlottesville Free Clinic the summer after my third year of college. This past summer (my last!), I did medical history research for the Center for Biomedical Ethics and Humanities at UVA through the Hook Scholars Program.

When thinking about how Nysmith impacted my life, many of my teachers imparted their love of learning to me during my time at Nysmith, and for that I am forever grateful. Very few things make learning easier and more fun than true curiosity about a subject, and the excitement and enthusiasm that the teachers at Nysmith showed was infectious. They really set me up to be a life-long learner, and happily so.

When asked what advice I would give to current Nysmith students and parents, two things come to mind. First, I know and understand very well that grades and test scores can feel like they are the be all and end all. They're scary, they can factor into certain components of your (or your child's) future, sometimes they don't end up the way you want them, and sometimes they feel completely arbitrary or unfair. Don't let them bog you (or your child) down. A 4.0 GPA is not the end goal--what you got on your report card will be unimportant in the years to come. The end goal is to learn a lot and be a better person for it! You'll get lots of good grades and some bad grades, but all in all, school is supposed to be a learning experience, not a competition. Focus on taking in concepts and ideas in a way you enjoy, and the grades will follow. They're just numbers; you're at school to become a learner, not a number.

Second, don't lose sight of the things you enjoy doing. You can keep adding activities that look great on your resume, but if you're not truly passionate about them, they'll start to become a chore. Have at least one or two activities that you don't do for your resume, but you just do for you--whether that's a sport, music, exercise, reading for pleasure, photography, making videos, what have you. Keep an activity in your life if it keeps you grounded and refreshed. If you get really excited about something, that will end up showing through on your resume anyway, and you'll be able to talk about it with sincerity in interviews down the road.

Favorite Nysmith...

Field trip: Gettysburg

School play: *The Fiddler on the Roof, Jr.*

Book you read for one of your classes: *Othello*

Classroom story involving one of your teachers: I still remember that every time the Tennessee Titans won a game, Mr. Stephens would give everyone a 5/5 on our grammar quiz that week. When I was in 7th grade English with him, the Titans only won a game once or twice. We could never tell if he was actually a fan of the Titans or whether he just picked the worst team in the NFL to tease us.

After-school club: Nysingers

Memory: Oh, there are too many to count, let alone pick just one! :)

Do you still know all the words to the 50 states song? Yes!! I still sometimes sing it in my head if I ever feel the need to rattle off all 50 states.

What state were you? I presented on New York!