

Fly Me to the Moon

JAFROTC-Seeks Career in Rocket Science



Josh Garretson, a senior from Newton Falls, enrolled in JAFROTC program at the Trumbull Career & Technical Center has ambitions that could exceed the laws of gravity. He is interested in a career as an astronaut or as a rocket science engineer. Although he has many miles to travel to realize his ambition, there are staff members who already consider him to be out of this world. Recently, the Bob Evans Restaurant on Youngstown Road presented him with a Pumpkin Pie to recognize his achievement in school.

SGT Kelley Kibbey, one of the program instructors said, “Josh is a very analytical and detail orientated cadet. When a given a task he sees it through to completion. He is a quiet leader who sets an example for others to follow. He views a problem as a challenge instead of an obstacle. He personifies the profile of a future officer in the United States Air Force.”

Steve Panak is the Physics instructor at the TCTC. He addressed Josh's character as well as his intellect. "He is a gentleman who is respectful of others and displays a mature attitude toward school and life. He is always prepared for class and catches on very quickly.

Alaine Frankland is Josh's Chemistry teacher. She believes that he is capable of achieving his dream. She stated, "You can never discount the importance of perseverance. Josh is very focused; he does not take shortcuts in his approach to Chemistry. He has great potential in a science related field after graduation from college.

Garretson selected JAFROTC because he is very interested in Aerospace studies. Although he is considering a career in the military, his interest is not based on Rambo like fantasies. He stated, "The goal of the program is not to produce soldiers, but to produce future leaders who are solid citizens in their communities. As you advance through the curriculum, you acquire knowledge, patience and self-discipline. Those are three qualities that make a difference when you are in a position that demands leadership skills.

The vast majority of students who attend the TCTC like their program and recommend it to their friends. Garretson, however, traveled the extra mile in this regard. He recruited seven students to join. He told them about the color guard parades, drills and field trips, but he concentrated the majority of his sales pitch on how the AJRTOTC program will help them in the future. " Our conversations were about the importance of accountability, teamwork and what it takes to become a leader. ROTC also enhances your resume if you apply for college or a job. Admissions officers and employers respect the commitment necessary to complete the program.

The JAFROTC program has a strong community service component. Cadets are encouraged to become active citizens in their communities who pay forward. Garretson arranged for the cadet corps. to march in the Newton Falls 4th of July parade and to help collect donations for the town fireworks show. He also recruited volunteers who worked with him at the Thunderbird Air Show in Vienna selling lemonade and pretzels as a fundraiser for the program.

In response to the question about how his involvement with JAFROTC changed him as a person, Josh paused for a moment before answering. " I definitely have more self confidence. Additionally, I have seen the value of a chain of command to an organization. Most importantly, I have learned there is more to being a leader than simply telling others what to do."

Next year, Garretson will enroll at Ohio State University. He believes that his academic record, his experience in the program, and the recommendation of his instructors will

provide him with the chance to earn an AFROTC scholarship. This will pay for the cost of his room, board and tuition. He will major in Mechanical Engineering.

As a kid, Josh remembers gazing at the moon and wondering about the technology that it took to get there. To realize his aspirations of becoming a rocket scientist or an astronaut will realize the dreams of his childhood. The road will be arduous, the competition will be keen, but the words of his teachers will ring true. Perseverance, character, and intellect form the bedrock for success. Whoever owns them will surpass the expectations for the ordinary man. So go ahead, Josh, fly us to the moon.