

**Gary Carbonnell
Gatineau, Quebec
Graduated: 2000**

I remember being involved in Improv, Rugby, Soccer Music Theater, and Frigo! I spent many days and nights in the halls at QHS and what sticks with me today are the nights of rehearsals, aggressive practices in the rain, public nights of showing off what we had worked hard to accomplish. However, I mostly appreciated the connections and experiences made during the in-between quiet moments, such as the anticipation before opening night, and the conversations when no one was around.

I moved to Montreal and attended John Abbot College in the Professional Theater Program. This was quite the controversy in my family. The thought that I was studying to be a professional actor did not sit well with one half of my parental dynamic. However, I had full support from my father. While after several years of living the “hard life” of ramen noodles and no name kool-aid I did not produce the acting career I dreamed. This is still a major turning point in my life. The CEGEP program taught me how to speak in public, approach people with confidence and hold my head high and shoulders wide while looking someone in the eyes. So I wouldn't change my time for anything in the world.

After College, I moved to Florida for 8 years, where I made my career, met my wife and started my family. In 2010, I moved back to Canada with my wife and 1st born in tow. My second stage of my educational journey has been more about life training. I had to follow a 3 years apprenticeship in Pest Control during my years in Florida, prior to taking any courses for licensing and certification. Ever since 2003 I have pursued as much knowledge as possible in my field and participate yearly in continuing education courses as requirements for my license. I also attend quarterly sessions and Conferences in advanced first aid, which allows me to work as a ski patroller in the Gatineau.

I love learning, but do not like being taught. This is a tricky balance for anyone who has ever instructed me. I am a hands on kind of person and prefer to fail and learn from mistakes than be told what to do. I find no educational value in doing something you are told but rather learning from trial and error with guidance and support close by if needed. Mr. Rompre and Mrs. Barker understood this.

I came to QHS in Sec 3 after moving around A LOT in my life and it was the first place I called home as a kid. It was the first school I ever let my guard down in and participated in events, clubs and sports teams. Prior to QHS I never really knew where I fit in. When I arrived at QHS, there was a whole group of people secretly feeling the same way, just because of the language barrier when we walked outside that door. I didn't learn to speak French until well after I left QHS, but I am thankful for those around who were feeling the same way as me and even more thankful to those who did speak and took me under their wing.

My participation in QHS extra curricular activities is what got me through the years and really taught me the most important life lessons I still carry with me. It is not important how fast you learn, or how you learn, or what you learn, or even if you learn, it's important that you give the effort you can give and that in itself will be rewarded. I've learned nothing in life is impossible, but it can be difficult. Great things do come to those who try, even those who fail, you never know who will be there to pick you up.

I feel small schools have kept me grounded but they don't necessarily prepare you for the real world, that hustle and bustle of moving through crowds and manipulating yourself in a self-absorbed society. I found a small school had empathy, compassion and a sense of community. To me education should be about teaching our future generations just that, how to build a community and be an active

participant in it, not just how to learn and behave in a way to go, unnoticed and breeze through stages of their life.

I am absolutely doing what I set out to do, not without compromise. I did not set out to become an exterminator, nor own my own business, but it is what I was dealt and I have found the best life has offered me. I set out after high school to live my life to the fullest and I believe I do that on a daily basis creating new adventures for myself and my family. After 16 years learning the Pest Control Trade I have opened my own business in the Ottawa, Gatineau region.

My message: LISTEN!! RESPECT!!

Respect is the only quality you have to learn in life. If you learn how to properly respect, people, places & possessions, You WILL deliver the other necessary qualities to survive any situation put in front of you! I miss QHS..... we were told and didn't believe it, but they were the best days of our lives. I miss the halls and the secrets they could spill from all the memories made!