A Passion for Problem-Solving

Student Profile: ***Carson Granese '25***

A childhood love of LEGO® bricks, an affinity for building, and experience with block-based coding in his early days at Shorecrest provided the perfect foundation for Carson Granese '25 to become involved in Middle School robotics.

When he was in sixth grade, the FIRST LEGO League theme was Into Orbit; and Carson's team, developed the LMS3000—a suit for astronauts designed to solve fluid build-up and prevent edema. The tight-fitting suit included massage pads to stimulate the flow of fluids.

"Part of the process requires the kids to seek out and interview real world experts, and Carson's team talked to people including Yvonne Cagle, a NASA astronaut who had actually been to space," says teacher and coach Chris Scoby. "Carson was shy and unsure of himself when he came into robotics in fifth grade, and speaking in front of people was a no-go. But through the process of preparing for these interviews, he became empowered. He dug deep because he wanted to ask really great questions of these experts. As his confidence rose, he just blossomed."



The team project won a Global Innovation Award at the regional competition; and Carson went on to immerse himself in coding, programming, and problem-solving. "I just find it super interesting," he says, an understated way of explaining a growing passion that has prompted him to pursue a number of unique summer programs on his own.

"Between freshman and sophomore years I went to NYU to a Machine Learning and AI Camp, which was super cool because it was before AI became really big. Later that summer I went to UCF for a Competitive Programming Camp. It was the first time I had heard of competitive programming. First, we would learn things, then the next day there would be a competition. I was the worst one there because I'd never done it before, but that didn't really bother me. It was just incredibly fascinating."

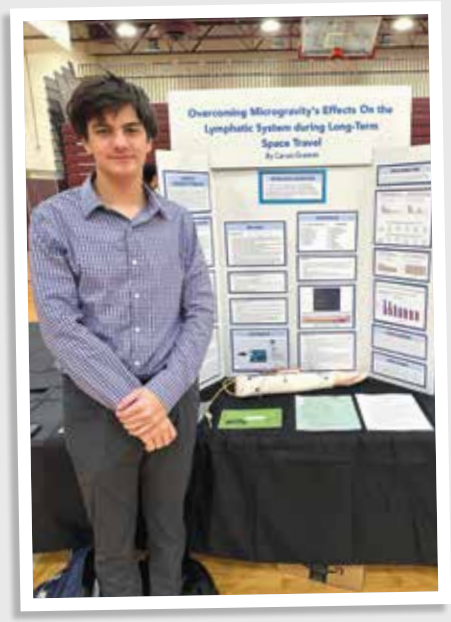
Between sophomore and junior year, he did an engineering-focused camp at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Indiana just to learn more about engineering.

"Carson found what he loves and is trying to get as much exposure as possible," says Anna Baralt, who's coached and mentored him since fifth grade. "He's very, very knowledgeable, and once he sets his mind to something, he is a determined kid. He always sets very high goals and expectations for himself, always pushes himself. You have kids who are doing this because they want the praise. He's doing it because he loves the challenge."



Carson recently embarked on an independent study as part of his STEAM certificate requirements. Inspired by that early team project in sixth grade, he received permission from the team members to take their joint effort—which was completely theoretical—in a new direction and to a different level. Focusing on the science behind the theory, he has conducted substantive, original research into how the body functions. The resulting project, Overcoming Microgravity's Effects on the Lymphatic System during Long-Term Space Travel, earned first place in the Computer Information Systems and Robotics category of the Regional Science Fair as well as a Spotlight Award for innovation from Robotic Parking Systems. He's working on a garment that uses vibrational motors and force-sensing resistors to maintain lymph circulation; and looks forward to continuing with the project, including the possibility of entering it in other competitions.

His extracurricular resume highlights a wide range of interests and a desire to excel. "I've played sports all my life, so I'm pretty competitive," he says. "I love science. I play baseball; I'm a Student



Ambassador, and I belong to the Fishing Club." He's also involved with Upper School robotics and the Model U.N., where the team participated in the Philadelphia Model United Nations (Phil-MUN) Conference. And, as a volunteer for Tampa Tech4Good, he created an e-book, "The Cloud Simplified: A Guide for Nonprofits."

When asked how Shorecrest has shaped the person he's become, he says, "I've had some absolutely amazing teachers who were super motivating and helped me really want to learn. I think even if there's a subject you don't really like, a good teacher can help you enjoy it." His mother, Meredith Granese '93, credits the School for "giving him the room to explore. It's all about the process of learning. Shorecrest lets them try, and it's OK when something doesn't work. Carson's definitely not afraid to make mistakes."



The college search process has begun, with Carson seeking an institution with an excellent computer science program before moving on to a career involving AI or cybersecurity.

Those who have taught and coached him have complete faith that he will find success wherever he goes.

"Carson has a desire to learn all of these different things on his own," says Upper School computer teacher Melissa Estremera. "He's going to be a self-starter who's going to create a business that we're all going to stand up and notice."

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