

# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

## *Matt Kaiser, Class of 2014*

The summer of 2013 was an interesting time for soon-to-be Bear Creek senior Matt Kaiser. While Matt's friends were planning their senior year and putting the finishing touches on college applications, he was dreaming. He wasn't dreaming of attending a top university, playing college sports, or even getting a secure job with a good retirement fund. Instead, Matt was dreaming of something different: of becoming the top real estate broker in Washington state.

Matt's unconventional journey began on a brisk morning when, with his resume in hand and wearing a freshly pressed shirt, he approached the front door of the top Windermere agent in Kirkland. He knew that if he wanted to be the best, he needed to learn from the best. After leaving his resume with the man's assistant, Matt waited, hoping for some sort of a response.

A few weeks later, the agent invited him in for a meeting. Matt shared his goals and desire to be successful in real estate, and the agent liked what he heard. Unfortunately, the agent became busy and months went by without further communication. Refusing to let his dream go, Matt continued to search for a real estate position. His persistence and courage paid off in the form of a meeting with the CEO of Keller Williams Bellevue, followed by an invitation to attend their "Ignite" course, a program designed to help new agents succeed in real estate. Despite having to miss school for the course, Matt jumped at the opportunity.

Matt soon realized the next hurdle would be getting his real estate license. Obtaining the license would take a lot of what many high school kids don't have: time and money. Gifted the tuition for the course, Matt studied 2-3 hours every night for six months, in addition to juggling a demanding senior year schedule which included his schoolwork and varsity basketball and baseball team commitments.



In the spring of his senior year, Matt called the Kirkland agent he visited initially and told him that he was about to graduate and would have his real estate license shortly thereafter. Impressed that Matt had continued to pursue his goals, the agent offered him a position. Matt worked closely with the agent, learning as he went along. A month into the summer, their team's experienced manager quit and Matt received a sudden promotion. He relished his new role prospecting for leads, setting up listings, tracking transactions, and making sure clients were happy.

A few months later, he departed for Baylor University. While most of his fellow students were thrilled to be starting college, Matt was frustrated he had to leave a job he loved. Every day at school, Matt longed to return to real estate. While home for Christmas break, he wrestled with what to do next. In January, Matt flew to Texas as scheduled, but rather than opening his suitcase, he packed everything up and moved back to Seattle.

After his return, Matt threw himself into his chosen career, not regretting his decision to leave Baylor. After two years, Matt's mentor told him, "I've taught you pretty much everything I can, what's left to learn will come with experience." It was time for Matt to strike out on his own.

In the latter half of 2016, Matt opened up his own real estate business, Matt Kaiser Realty, in association

with Realogics Sotheby's International Realty, in downtown Kirkland. With his own business, Matt loves helping his clients achieve their real estate goals.

Matt credits The Bear Creek School with helping him achieve his dream. "Bear Creek instilled in me the ability to think critically, and to know how to think, not what to think,"

he reflects. Matt believes that the world-class education he received at Bear Creek helped him develop his talents for processing challenges quickly and creating unique solutions to real world issues. He adds, "I have a passion for excellence that was nurtured at Bear Creek."

Matt notes that he has learned firsthand that taking risks can

bring great reward if made intelligently and backed up with hard work. A line from one of Robert Frost's most famous poems, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference," sums up the way that Matt chooses to approach his life.

## CLASS NOTES CONTINUED

### Class of 2010

#### Eli Sanger

Eli continues to work at Boeing, recently receiving a promotion to a lead role in his group. In September, he and his fiancée Briana were married.

### Class of 2010

#### Michael Davisson

Michael spent much of 2016 working for the Bernie Sander's presidential campaign and is continuing his involvement, working to get progressive congressional candidates elected.

### Class of 2012

#### Paisley Showalter

Paisley recently began her career in human resources as a Human Resources Assistant at the Center for Infectious Disease Research in Seattle. This organization is a non-profit which focuses on malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis and the interaction between these diseases and the human pathogen. She enjoys working alongside the scientists who are tackling these infectious diseases.

#### Nick Van Baak

Nick's been working as an assistant debate coach for Bear Creek's forensics team while pursuing a psychology degree at SPU. He plans to put that degree to use as a counselor, ministering particularly to the depressed and suicidal populations. As far as we know, he has not yet taken over the world.

### Class of 2014

#### Jon Kok

Over the summer, Jon had the opportunity to partner/ intern with Jacob Imam '12 at Ignition Partners, producing video interviews of Bellevue HS football players, parents, and alumni about recent events regarding bullying, harassment, the Academic Institute, and other issues relating to the football team. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's of music with elective studies in media. The summer project developed his skill sets in sound mixing and mastering, video editing, and music production in a professional environment for a major cause. He continues to play percussion in Wheaton College's Symphonic Band and serves the Lord fervently through children's ministry, youth group, AWANA, and worship services at Bethany Chapel.