

# Alumni Saint Spotlight



**Michael Knoll (BC 2012)** is a Lighting and Compositing Artist currently working for Nickelodeon on a 2D animated show. In his role he adds the finishing touches to complete animation that bring the characters, props, and backgrounds together. Giving characters depth with highlights and shadows, recreating camera movements, and adding blur to give a realistic effect, are just a couple of ways that he gets to add his personal touch to the shots that come across his desk. Prior to working at Nickelodeon, Mike was a VFX Artist and Composer at a company called Stoopid Buddy Studios for 4 years. Their claim to fame is Robot Chicken, of which he had the privilege to work on several seasons, a commercial spot, and each season's special episode. Robot Chicken is a stop motion animation television show that airs on Adult Swim. During his time there, Mike worked on hundreds of shots, cleaning up dust, debris, and wax, removing character rigs, tracking digi mouths onto characters, recreating title cards, and adding explosions, fire, lasers, blood, fireworks, and many other awesome effects. Robot Chicken wasn't the only show Mike got to work on while at Stoopid Buddy. Other projects included SuperMansion, Denny's commercial spots, Blark and Sons, The Chef Show, Woke, Crossing Swords, Duffy and Marvel's M.O.D.O.K. Mike enjoys helping those around him and has used his own success to help others, including helping alumni from Temple get internships which turned into full time employment after graduation. During Mike's time at Temple he was a founding member of a film organization called Wandering Studios. One of the goals he had for the organization was to connect with other film organizations throughout Philadelphia in order to one day create avenues for future members to pursue volunteer work and internship opportunities.

## **How do you feel your education from Central Catholic and Berks Catholic helped get you where you are today?**

The communities of both CC and BC helped to shape me into the person that I am today. Whether it was Mr. Scollick helping me to work through a difficult couple of measures during a musical rehearsal, working with classmates in a Physics class to build a vehicle powered by a mousetrap to be entered into the Widener University Mousetrap Competition, or spending extra time both in and out of the classroom fine tuning a video project for Mrs. Burt's film and media class, there was always something new to be explored with an immensely supportive community setting me up for success every step of the way. The opportunities that I was presented with during my time at CC and BC

taught me how to pursue my curiosity. I attribute much of the path that I am on to having taken Mrs. Burt's film and media class during my senior year of high school, which would not have happened if Central Catholic and Holy Name had not merged to form Berks Catholic that year.

### **What advice would you give to current Berks Catholic students?**

Keep an open mind as you move forward through the coming years of your life. Embrace the unknown and unfamiliar. The career path that you have chosen at this point may not be the one you end up in. When I was a senior in high school, I thought I was going to be an engineer. I applied and was accepted to Temple University as a Civil Engineering major, but after spending a school year having a blast with my best friend working on video project after video project for Mrs. Burt's class I decided to switch my major to film and media arts on my first day. I thought I would be staying in Philadelphia after graduation until a close friend suggested participating in Temple University's LA Study Away program. Although he decided the program wasn't for him, the time I spent in Los Angeles showed me the career and life path that I was supposed to follow.



Network. Network. Network. In college this is important, but in your career this is key. Networking isn't only about going to networking events to meet new people that you might not cross paths with on a regular basis. Networking can be better described as forging meaningful relationships, both professional and personal. In my case, a coworker at one of my internships connected me with the supervisor of the VFX department at Stoopid Buddy. I worked the night shift for about 2 and a half of my 4 years there. This meant odd hours and only working with a handful of people. One of the night shift Lead artists, with whom I became close friends, ended up being my recommendation to become a candidate for the position at Nickelodeon. The impressions that we make on people matter. Networking is much more than exchanging business cards. It's about making meaningful connections throughout your life.

### **Tell us a little bit about yourself and what you like to do in your spare time.**

I am a graduate of Temple University where I majored in Film and Media Arts with a concentration in screenwriting. After graduation, I moved to Los Angeles, California where I currently live with several friends that I graduated from college alongside and my cat, Chip. In my spare time you can find me connecting with friends while playing games online, practicing yoga, weightlifting, hiking, playing board games with my roommates, or seeking out my next adventure!