

# GL Tech grad talks to students about technical ed benefits

*Sun staff report*

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Alum Erika Larsen speaks to GLTHS marketing students.

TYNGSBORO - While home for the holidays, 2013 Greater Lowell Technical High School graduate Erika Larsen made a special visit to speak with students about life after graduation and how her successes stemmed from choosing a path in career technical education.

Larsen, a Tyngsboro native, currently works for IRONMAN - the leading endurance event company in the world, which organizes both triathlons and road races across the globe.

"Erika was a student that sat in the same seat that you all did," marketing teacher Kellie Ready said prior to the start of the presentation. "She's done wonderful things with her education."

Larsen made the choice to go to Greater Lowell, despite all her friends heading to Tyngsboro High School. Although she entered the school without a clear path, she soon found her place in the marketing shop.

"I came here and I was a very small fish in a very big pond," she recalled. "I wasn't sure what I wanted to do ultimately in life, but the teachers in marketing always told me to reach for the stars."

And that she did - Larsen, with a little push and guidance from teachers along the way, participated in DECA, joined the varsity basketball team, and worked at Lowell Five for two years on co-op.

Her determination led her to Syracuse University, where she majored in sports management. Out of her comfort zone, much like when she started at GLTHS, Larsen immersed herself in a variety of clubs, activities and internships to find her grounding.

"Had I not attended Greater Lowell, I know that I would not have gone to Syracuse," Larsen said. "It's the support, encouragement and preparation that I received at Greater Lowell that not only motivated me to apply to Syracuse, but

that gave me the confidence to know that I would be able to succeed. Greater Lowell led me down a path to attend a great college and obtain an awesome career, to which I'm so thankful."

In 2016, she studied abroad in London and realized her passion for traveling. From there, she earned an internship with the IRONMAN Foundation in Tampa, Florida, which eventually landed her a full-time job as an athlete services coordinator with the company in their Nashville, Tennessee office. Now she's pursuing her passion for sports and travel.

"You guys can do anything - the world is yours," Larsen concluded. "The marketing teachers and everyone I interacted with here really pushed me and I thank them every day for what they did for me."

Following her presentation, students took turns asking questions about her time at GLTHS, IRONMAN and her plans for the future: Question: Do you have a piece of advice for someone going into the marketing shop?

**Larsen:** Try to imagine yourself three to four years from now. Think about what kind of job you want to have and think about all the things that marketing can help you do.

**Question:** With all your friends going to Tyngsboro High School, do you ever regret coming to GLTHS?

**Larsen:** My parents knew how great of a school Greater Lowell is - they were like, you're going to do greater things there. I don't regret coming here whatsoever. It was scary leaving all my friends, but it was the best thing for me.

**Question:** What do you use as motivation to keep yourself going?

**Larsen:** That I'm always growing. There are times that I don't want to travel, but the fact that I'm always meeting new people, I'm constantly learning, I'm constantly on my toes. That's huge for me. When I'm exhausted and don't want to do anything, I push myself to keep going because I know I'm going to learn a lot.

**Question:** In 20 years, where do you see yourself?

**Larsen:** I love sports and I love the active lifestyle. I travel all the time, I work a lot of hours. To do anything other than that would probably be strange for me. Maybe working for a professional sports team.