

Curtis Williams graduated in 2003. Curtis worked right after high school and initially didn't have a big plan for a career. He enjoyed spending time with family and friends. He was surprised to find his health declining and he needed to make some changes. He went back to something he loved...wrestling. He returned to the mat after 15 years, as a student instead of a coach. It was humbling to train under the head coach and assistant coach, who he had once coached when they were in 7th grade. Seeing them guide him through this process was like coming full circle. It wasn't easy getting back into shape, but the students there were incredibly supportive. In a short time, he built a bond with them, and knowing they were watching his every move kept him motivated. He couldn't give up... he had these growing teens looking up to him, and that gave him the inspiration to push past the limits he thought he had.

After that he felt ready to take on something bigger and his work at sea really took off. He spent the first three months of this year in the Bering Sea, facing some of the hardest conditions of his life. Offloading in Dutch Harbor was no joke...the cold and wet really tested him, but he pushed through each load, staying in a mindset he had never been in before. Those 94 days were the toughest of his life, but they taught him what he is truly capable of. He is currently working in hospitality at American Cruise Lines. He carries that same drive every day. He has been honored to receive the Star Performer award twice, and he loves sharing his stories with guests, connecting with them on a deeper level. This whole journey has been about pushing his limits, growing, and seeing what he is made of.

Curtis says his time at Sunnyside really shaped him, not just academically but also in terms of confidence and personal growth. He was fortunate to be part of Cross Country, Wrestling, and Track & Field, and those experiences were some of the best times of his life. Training hard with his teammates and competing pushed him in ways he didn't expect. It helped build his confidence, especially when he started earning awards. He was named MVP in wrestling three times, which he felt he didn't deserve. But his coaches saw something in him that he didn't see in himself at the time.

Curtis reflects: "Sunnyside was special for so many reasons. Being part of the first freshman and sophomore class meant we had to grow up fast. Going varsity as a young school was tough, and it felt like we were constantly proving ourselves. But through all that, the Sunnyside family built a bond like no other. That sense of community and pride is something I carry with me to this day. I still go back to help with the wrestling program, which means a lot to me, and I even had the honor of helping with organizing our 20-year reunion. Personal shout out to Gina Vue for being so encouraging and trusting me to aide in the process! Sunnyside will always have a special place in my heart. It's where I learned the value of hard work, resilience, and staying connected to the people who helped shape me. No matter where I go, I'll always stop to talk to a fellow Wildcat."

Curtis offers this advice to current students, "Be yourself and not what other people want you to be. Believe in yourself; do not let your shortcomings in high school limit you from trying. As you get older your body and mindset develop beyond your imagination. Be a leader and not a follower please 😊  
Go Wildcats!