


Introducing Hall of Fame Inductee Valerie Brunner-Chamberlain



Valerie Brunner-Chamberlain
Class of 1994

South Huntington Hall of Fame

On September 24, 2016, our South Huntington School District will be honoring the outstanding achievements of distinguished alumni who will be inducted into our Hall of Fame.

The occasion will begin with a Celebration Breakfast and Induction Ceremony at Walt Whitman High School. The Homecoming Parade, Float Competition, and Football Game will feature our 2016 Hall of Fame Inductees. Additional information is on this website.

Valerie Brunner-Chamberlain, class of 1994, grew up surrounded by five sisters and two brothers, and with all that goes on in such a busy home, it took an experience outside of the home that set a course for young Valerie. "When I was about 7 years old a family friend took me and one of my sisters to the city. There was a homeless woman lying on the sidewalk and multiple people were walking by her like they didn't even see her," said Valerie. "I remember feeling very confused and upset. I was asking a lot of questions. I couldn't understand the concept that people did not have a home, a place to sleep. I remember feeling compelled to do something about it."

While at Whitman Valerie distinguished herself as an outstanding athlete. "I have incredible memories of being a Walt Whitman Wildcat playing soccer and volleyball. I learned that with motivation and dedication anything was possible. I learned to never quit."

Coming from a large family, college was not an option financially, and Valerie did not believe it was possible at all. At Whitman there were many teachers that positively affected her life, one in particular made an everlasting difference. "Coach Cardon ensured that I was connected with soccer coaches that were recruiting," said Valerie. "I was offered multiple scholarship opportunities until I eventually decided on Siena College. This would not have been possible without his assistance and encouragement. This opportunity shaped my whole life. I was the first in my family to go to college."

While playing soccer at Siena, Valerie received awards for Rookie of the Year and All-Conference. Siena also had an incredible Social Work program, which became the foundation for her career as a social worker. "I started working with the homeless population as an intern at St. Joseph's Homeless Shelter in Troy, NY," said Valerie. After receiving her Masters in Social Work from Fordham University, Valerie started working as a Case Manager at Family Service League's (FSL) Program Home providing support services and advocacy services to formerly homeless families residing in Suffolk County. Valerie was home and over the years has steadily risen in the ranks at FSL.

In March 2016, she was promoted to Assistant Vice President of Housing and Homeless Services and is now a member of FSL's Executive Team, where she currently oversees the largest family shelter on Long Island. "The homeless are the most vulnerable among us, especially homeless children," said Valerie. "Helping this population was the only reason I wanted to be a social worker. I will continue to dedicate my career to this underserved population."

Valerie married Long Island Chiropractor Craig Chamberlain in 2014. She is the recipient of numerous professional awards including an FSL Leadership Award for "consistently demonstrating a commitment to excellence, exceptional leadership abilities, and a positive attitude."

"The positive reinforcement and encouragement from the teaching staff at Whitman really made me believe that anything was possible," said Valerie. "I attribute much of my success to the education that I received at Walt Whitman HS. I learned so much on both an academic and personal level."