

# William Tennent grad has not missed a day in 13 years

By Phil Gianficaro News columnist | Posted: Wednesday, June 18, 2014 12:00 am

His school days totaled about 2,100, from kindergarten to 12th grade, or crayons to commencement.

And Kyle Gresh attended them all. Didn't miss a day. Not one single day. When a new school day dawned, he was the rooster refusing to permit it to slip by undetected. Runny noses and sore throats were no match for his thirst for knowledge. On days when he almost couldn't breathe, the classroom provided his oxygen.

"I just think you miss so much of school if you miss even one day," Gresh said at William Tennent High School on Tuesday. "I wanted to take advantage of every opportunity school had to offer every single day."

Oh, there were moments when Gresh's Ripkenesque streak was in peril, when he got walking pneumonia in eighth grade.

"It wasn't contagious, and I felt OK, so I went," he said.

There was also the day he was rehearsing after school with the William Tennent jazz band. He wasn't feeling well, his forehead burned like a torch, and the hot stage lights left him lightheaded. While others might have set down their sax and blown off the rest of rehearsal, he held on until the final note was struck.

He learned he had a 104-degree temperature. A visit to the doctor assured the Greshes it was nothing more. After some medicine and a large dose of TLC from his mom, Melody, the sun rose on another school day, and the rooster was there.

And then there were Gresh's friends, well aware of the streak, who urged him to cut classes just once. They never had a chance.

Kyle Gresh has joined and thrived in every club and organization available to him. He's a member of the National Honor Society; president of the Future Business Leaders of America; volunteers at Southampton Estates, a retirement community; and does so much more. He graduates summa cum laude on Friday with a grade-point average knocking on the door of 4.0. Barring some unforeseen circumstance between now and Friday, he'll have run a perfect school attendance race, from



Kyle Gresh

Kyle Gresh, a senior at William Tennent High School in Warminster hasn't missed a day of school since entering kindergarten. in Warminster

McDonald Elementary to Klinger Middle School to William Tennent High.

“What Kyle shows is the dedication of the student, that he wants to learn and take advantage of what's offered in the Centennial School District,” Tennent Principal Ryan Mulford said. “I'm sure it's something his parents instilled in him, this love of learning.”

He's right.

“We think education is important, and it's a commitment,” said Gresh's father, Stephen. “He's up at 5:30 every morning because he's got things to do. He's got that level of commitment, and we stress it. Frankly, if there was a little more of that in this world, there would be fewer problems.”

Gresh's doctors' appointments were scheduled on non-school days. Haircuts were at night or on Saturday. Visits to the dentist were in the summer or on days school wasn't in session. No school-year vacations to Disney. During the school year, such things were frozen.

“School has always come first,” Gresh said.

Young Gresh is old school in many ways. Among his musical tastes is The Clash. His work ethic is of a prior generation: Wake in the morning, leave your aches and pains at the door, and go to work. No complaints, no excuses.

In a world where tales about teens in trouble grate on the ears, there is this kid at Tennent with the sax in his hands, hitting all the right notes.

As nearly 2,100 school days wind down to a precious few, and as he prepares to study finance and computer information systems at Gwynedd Mercy University, there is something Gresh says he'll miss at Tennent: Being there.

“I'm sad because I'll miss this place,” he said. “But because of having been here, I know I'm going to do great things.”

Isn't that just perfect?