



November's Alumni Spotlight features Dr. Ryan Svoboda, Bourgade Catholic High School Class of 2006.

Ryan Svoboda attended St. Jerome Catholic Grade School before attending Bourgade Catholic High School. Like most, Ryan was highly active at Bourgade, participating in a variety of extracurricular activities, including service as his junior and senior class president. Outside of student council, he also participated in chess and golf, where he was able to build lifelong friendships and learn some important lessons about having fun and not taking things too seriously.

After high school, Ryan pursued his undergraduate degree at Arizona State University before receiving early admission into the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine. Ryan continued his veterinary schooling at Texas A&M, graduating in 2013.

Ryan was introduced to veterinary medicine at a very early age. His father, Dr. Wayne Svoboda, graduated from Kansas State University in 1986 before buying his own practice in Phoenix, AZ. While as a young child Ryan shared aspirations to be a paleontologist or a graphic designer, his interest in becoming a veterinarian would quickly blossom as he worked more and more at his father's clinic. Ryan and his sister's childhood not only had them navigating the corridors of their dad's clinic, helping with a variety of tasks, but also had responsibility at home to care for a menagerie of animals rescued from the hospital, including dogs, cats, tortoises, turtles, lizards, birds, and fish. Over time a passion began to ignite inside Ryan for veterinary medicine. With over 19 years experience and having covered nearly every position within the veterinary field, Ryan now serves as a Veterinarian and Medical Director for Hayden Road Animal Hospital, which he and his dad have operated together for over 5 years. Among their unique duties, the Svobodas provide care to over 20 different state and local police K9 units.

While a very rewarding career, Ryan's early exposure to the field of veterinary medicine gave him an inside look at the good parts of the job, and also the difficult ones. As one could imagine, the day-to-day practice of assisting people with the care of their animals may not always lead to the most joyful outcomes, often causing large amounts of emotional stress for the veterinarian. In September 2015, eager to find a healthy outlet for stress, Ryan, with little training, and his dad signed up for the Lifetime Tempe Super Sprint Triathlon. Since that race, Ryan became hooked and he has competed in countless competitions, including 6 half-Ironman triathlons. His biggest endurance challenge awaited him on November 24th when Ryan competed in the Arizona Ironman. In his first-ever full-distance triathlon, he finished with a time of 14:29:45.

To train for Ryan's half-Ironman races, he averaged 8-10 workout hours per week for the last 2.5 years. In anticipation of the November Arizona Ironman, Ryan began working with a coach in May of 2019 and his training jumped to 13-15 hours per week. The weekly training consisted of 4-5 miles of swimming, 100-120 miles of bike riding and 10-20 miles of running. While no blame can be placed on Ryan for not staying busy enough, he claims that with the Ironman over, he looks forward to the extra sleep that will replace his training regimen, until he decides on what his next race will be.

When asked about the importance that Bourgade played in his life, Ryan expressed that the sense of community taught him how to not get too caught up in the commotion of everyday life, and that family is an important part of shaping who we are. With that, it makes sense that among his accomplished veterinary work

and his intense endurance training, Ryan finds his greatest pride to be his wife and two sons. Their support continues to lead him down a path of success, and while the stress of running a business with family can sometimes be a challenge, Ryan finds it to be an incredible blessing.

A big thank you to Ryan for sharing with our community. We are extremely proud of him and all his accomplishments!