

High Meadows Instilled in Me a Passion for Learning

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Charli (right) shadowed Academy Award-winning director of photography Linus Sandgren (left) during the filming of "First Man" in Roswell.

You're likely to see the name 'Charli Shapiro' someday at the movies! Charli, a 2017 High Meadows graduate, is a sophomore at Roswell High School and an accomplished filmmaker. She recently earned a Student Emmy Award from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in the Best Short Form – Fiction category for the film *Brute Force*. She directed, edited and co-wrote the film. She credits High Meadows teachers for instilling a passion for learning and helping her get comfortable speaking with people. She used those skills in 2016 to introduce her film *In Our Eyes* at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival, where she was the youngest director. Read what she says below about High Meadows and [visit her website](#) to learn about her work.

Meadow Memories

“I attended High Meadows from [sixth-eighth grade](#), and it was a gift I appreciated every day,” Charli said. “I was excited to wake up to see what’s happening and be in nature to learn. The teachers were very helpful. I enjoyed looking out on the Meadow at carpool seeing the sunrise and kids walking. I also loved class meetings each week because I connected with the group and knew what was going on. The eighth grade Colorado trip was amazing because we got to bond with classmates without the stress of school.”

Things I Learned at High Meadows School

“High Meadows instilled in me a passion for learning, and I have used that in high school and in my work,” Charli said. “I got support from High Meadows teachers and Ms. Wolf to explore my interest in filmmaking. They also helped me be more comfortable speaking with people, which was great because I had to make a speech at the Emmy’s last year to accept my award.”

Transitioning from Private Middle School to Public High School

“It was very interesting going from a place where everyone knew me to one where people didn’t,” she said. “But I was prepared for the academics which gave me space to figure out the learning style. Through High Meadows, I had a background on most subjects and was able to advocate for myself if I needed more. I’m in the film club at Roswell High School and got to film the 11 football games this year. I also designed my own curriculum in two classes. For one, I wrote a film script and produced it. Now, I am in a Directed Study. I love the freedom to learn about what interests me.”

My Next Role

“I am in the scripting phase for my first feature film,” Charli shared. “It’s about drug addiction, the teenage mind, and how it affects a family. One day, I hope to be the youngest director of an Academy Award-winning film. One of my favorite directors was 32 when he won the Oscar for La La Land. I want to beat that!”

A Parent’s Perspective of High Meadows

Dave and Ilene Shapiro are Charli's parents. Dave shared his thoughts about how High Meadows fostered Charli's learning and growth.

Public or Private? Why We Chose High Meadows School

"We chose High Meadows because it had a more nurturing environment than our public middle school, but soon realized it offered much more," Dave said. "There are many amazing teachers there who supported and encouraged Charli. I heard them talk many times about students becoming self-advocates and wondered how they expected that would develop. Now, I know. Charli uses those skills at school and in her work. I saw it in other graduates at this year's Alumni Night. I was very impressed that they were so eloquent and confident in themselves."

Charli's Tenacity

"Charli, her mom, and I went to a film screening in Los Angeles of La La Land (now among her favorite films), which was directed by one of Charli's idols, Damien Chazelle," Dave said. "For this film, not only was he selected as the youngest person to win an Oscar for Best Director, but Linus Sandgren, his Director of Photography, also won that year's Academy Award for Cinematography. So smitten was Charli by this movie that, for the rest of the school year, we listened to its soundtrack almost every day on our ride to HMS. Later that year, we watched the movie First Man being shot in Roswell, on which the director and director of photography again collaborated. By personally introducing herself to the two of them and their production assistants, Charli was asked to help on set. She got to listen on the production headset and learned how to load film. She was asked to work side-by-side with Damien and Linus and had the opportunity to discuss why they chose various options for the film. I have to believe that because they were so impressed with her overall knowledge of production, they chose her to shadow the two of them on set. She was 14 years old. Moral of this story: when it comes to self-advocacy, High Meadows has taught her well!"



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Our School

Age 3 through 8th Grade
Authorized IB World School

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