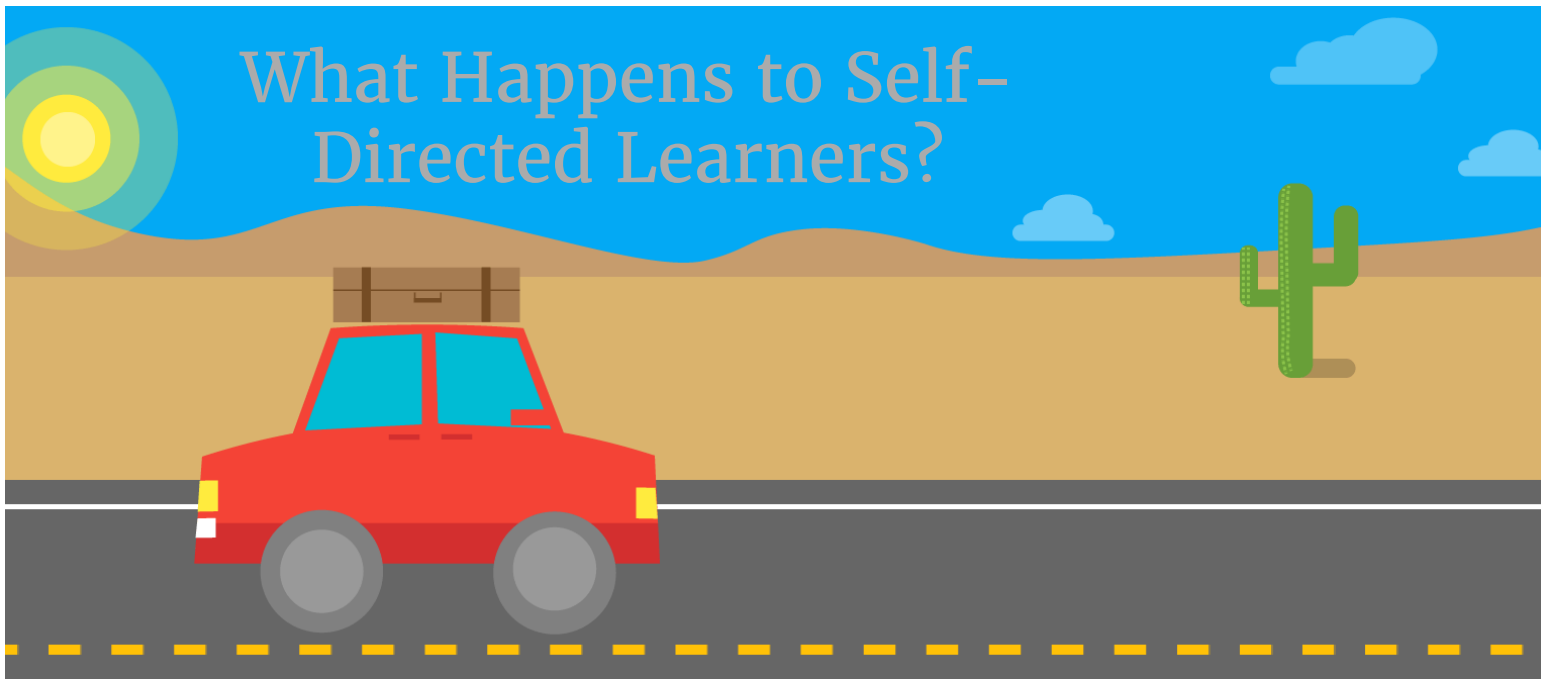


# What Happens to Self-Directed Learners?



## *North Star Alumni Report One: Moving on from North Star to Young Adulthood*

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**By Kenneth Danford**

For more than twenty years, I've been coaching teens and families to withdraw from traditional schools and embrace self-directed learning as a better way to live and learn. I have conducted over two thousand meetings with parents considering this approach, and in almost every meeting, I have faced the question, "Does self-directed learning really work?" I find this question both frustratingly simple and impossibly complicated to answer. In a word, the answer is "Yes!" and I can provide an avalanche of anecdotes and thoughtful analysis about learning to establish the case.

On the other hand, hard data is scarce, as we don't have test scores or traditional school statistics in our records. Even more, there are no "control" data: we can't know what would have happened if the same teen had chosen a different path. Further, the question is motivated by a certain degree of irrationality. Parents will say, "Sure, this self-directed thing has worked for other people's children, but I need to know if it will work for my child, right now!" That's an impossible question to answer, of course, and we are not in the business of providing guarantees.

However, over the past year at [North Star](#), we have begun trying to count up our anecdotes

in a meaningful way. I would like to share our conclusions with the hope that they may be helpful for all of us working to promote more freedom for children. While the data stem from North Star's support for homeschooling and unschooling, I believe our experiences will resonate for all of us engaged in developing alternatives to traditional school.

I will present the story in two parts. In this article I will describe the experiences of teens that used North Star as an alternative to high school and moved on to college, work, or other young adult opportunities. In a second article, I will describe the experiences of teens that used North Star for a year or two out of school during their middle school or early high school years and returned to high school when they left North Star.

## What is North Star?

Founded in 1996 in Amherst, MA, North Star is a program that makes living and learning without school a viable option for any interested teen in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. Now in its fourth location in Sunderland, MA, North Star coaches teens and families to utilize the legal mechanism of homeschooling to become independent learners and then hosts a community center to provide its members with a range of academic and social opportunities.

North Star functions much like a community center, with approximately forty different classes, each meeting once per week, such as Writing Workshop, Theatre, Rock Band, Science, and Social Issues. North Star members also enjoy more than a hundred one-on-one tutorials each week, from math to writing to guitar lessons to drawing and much more. North Star hosts a social space where teens can gather, as well as a quiet library and a kitchen that is open to everyone. Each North Star member has a weekly meeting with an advisor to discuss how this approach is working and what other challenges the teen may want to undertake.

Teens are welcome and encouraged to use North Star as they desire. North Star has three membership levels: Full-Time (3-4 days per week), Part-Time (2 days per week), Limited (1 day per week.) When teens are at North Star, they may fill their time with classes, tutorials, and advisory meetings, or they spend their time socializing in the common room, or they may sit quietly in our library. Most teens do a combination of these activities and their use shifts over time. North Star staff members and teens frequently announce activities and invite specific members to join them, but we always take "No" for an answer. Additionally, teens are free to come and go from North Star at will, without signing in or signing out. This commitment to respecting teen choices is the bedrock of our organization. For more on North Star's philosophy of self-directed learning, please read our [Guiding Principles](#).

North Star is not a school: being a member does not satisfy state compulsory school requirements, and North Star does not offer credits or diplomas. North Star supports its members under age 16 to register as homeschoolers with their local school districts.

North Star members who desire an official high school diploma take the HiSet (similar to the GED).

For the 2016–2017 academic year, North Star has approximately 75 members, and approximately 50 members attend each of the four days per week that North Star is open. Teens are free to come and go from North Star at will. Most are engaged in other community activities throughout the week, such as sports, youth groups, paid jobs, volunteer work, and community college courses. Each family corresponds directly with its local public school superintendent around the academic homeschooling process until the teen reaches 16 years old, while North Star staff supports each family as needed.

The building itself is a 4800 square foot two story office building with 13 rooms for classes, tutoring, and offices. There is ample outdoor play space in the back and on one side. North Star is located on a public bus line connected to the town of Amherst and the University of Massachusetts. The building is within walking distance to a public library and a couple of convenience markets.

North Star has sustained its commitment to make self-directed learning available to every interested family, welcoming all teens regardless of their family's financial circumstances or their prior school records. The annual membership fee ranges from \$3,000 for one day per week to \$7,500 for three or more days per week. Approximately 40% of North Star families receive a fee reduction. Total fee reductions account for approximately 33% of billed fees.

North Star has nine core staff members who are paid reasonable salaries, and there is an extended staff of another 25–30 college students and other volunteers. The annual budget for North Star is approximately \$400,000.

## The Data

At a basic level, what we have done in this research is try to describe the categories of teens that join North Star, and what they do when they move on from our program.

For Intake, we have two questions. First, at the time of joining, was the teen coming from a “School” or were they already legally “Homeschooling.” Second, how were they doing in this prior situation? Our goal to have a relatively small but inclusive set of presenting categories has led to: “Managing Well,” “Mental Health Issues,” “Resisting or Refusing,”

and “Major Learning Differences or Physical Health Issues.” We recognize the arbitrary and limiting nature of labeling in this way, but for the sake of the project we feel reasonably comfortable with this manner of describing our population. These intake categories have been assigned by current and former staff members based on our memories. As of 2015, we have begun assigning categories at the time each member joined.

For life after North Star, we have attempted to track what our members do when they first leave North Star, and then what they do in their subsequent activities as they grow older. (Our oldest alumni are now in their mid-to-late thirties.) Options here for First Activity include: “Community College,” “Four-Year College,” “Certificate or Training Program,” “Regular Work,” “Unusual Work,” “Self-Employment,” and “Don’t Know.” For subsequent activities, we also have “Graduate School” and “Professional Work.” This information has been obtained by current and former staff members that frequently remain in touch with our alumni as a normal practice, and also through deliberate outreach by phone, email, Facebook, texting, and in-person contact for the sake of this research.

North Star has a total of 473 alumni as of October, 2016. Of these, 195 returned to secondary school or independent homeschooling when they left North Star, and we don’t know the first activity of 11 alumni. These numbers mean that 267 alumni moved on to some sort of college, work, or other young adult experience when they left North Star. Here is what we have to report on these 267 alumni:

## **Data for 267 Alumni Who Moved On to Young Adult Activities**

### **Intake Data:**

#### Activity Prior to North Star:

Enrolled in school:	76%
Independently Homeschooling:	24%

#### Intake Category:

Managing Well:	58%
Refusing or Resisting School:	22%
Mental Health Issues:	16%
Major Learning Differences or Health Issues:	4%

### **Exit Data:**

## First Activity After North Star: (n=267)

Community College:	49%
Four-Year College:	17%
Certificate or Training Program:	6%
Ordinary Work:	20%
Unusual Work:	3%
Self-Employed:	5%

## Long Term Activities After North Star:

*(adds up to more than 100% because many alumni have done more than one of the activities listed)*

Community College:	53%
Four-Year College:	38%
Certificate or Training Program:	14%
Graduate School:	16%
Ordinary Work:	40%
Professional Work:	26%
Self-Employed:	17%
Unusual Work:	10%
Don't Know:	8%
Discrete individuals who did at least one of: Community College, Four-Year College, or Certificate-Training Program:	81%

## Intake

I have met with approximately 100 families per year. They investigate North Star for a variety of reasons, ranging from a desire to keep their happy kids thriving to a desperate search for any approach to address their children's misery. In each case, I explain that North Star can support them to do something unusual: to try living and learning without school. I explain that we are a community center, not a school. We offer classes and tutoring, but no grades or diplomas. The center is open four days per week, and many members come fewer than four days as we work together to build an interesting weekly routine involving North Star, personal interests, and the wider community. I explain that North Star will help families with children under age 16 submit a homeschooling plan to their local superintendent. I also tell each family that North Star works with every interested family

regardless of their financial situation or the teen's prior record in school.

This optimistic and inviting message attracts about one-third of these people to join North Star. Before I move on, I want to comment on the other two-thirds who do not join. These introductory meetings are often the first time that these teens and parents have ever heard a positive presentation of the concept "School is optional," and I frequently hear appreciative feedback that, "Even though we didn't join North Star, that meeting completely changed my child's outlook on attending school. Thank you."

## **Relationship to School Prior to Joining**

The data show that 76% of North Star members have come straight from a school, while 24% were already homeschooling. Of those already homeschooling, the vast majority have been families looking to see whether North Star has any useful opportunities for their already successful homeschooling approach. We have mixed success with this group. Some, however, are on the verge of ending their homeschooling careers as their children are 13–15 years old and considering going to high school. We do extraordinarily well with this cohort, and in fact, many of our current staff have emerged from the parents of these teens.

## **Intake Categories**

Who joins North Star? Is it a place for genius children? Those who already display self-motivation? Or is it for troubled teens and drop-outs? We have confronted these stereotypes since the day we opened in 1996. After much reflection, we have come up with three major presenting stories:

*Managing Well in School or Independent Homeschooling (58%):* These youth are doing well in their current setting, but are seeking more freedom and support to pursue their interests. In school, these teens may be on honor roll, attend regularly, and have few discipline problems. Their main complaint is feeling bored in school or not having enough time outside of school to pursue their interests. In a homeschooling setting, these teens are thriving, but investigating North Star as a potential addition to their routine and seeking a larger social community.

*Refusing or Resisting in School or as an Independent Homeschooler (22%):* These teens have stopped trying to succeed in school. They may have stopped attending, or are skipping days on a regular basis. In school, they are refusing to do homework. Sometimes they are acting out and developing a negative behavior record. As homeschoolers, they experience conflict with their parents about basic family expectations.

*Mental Health Issues in School or as an Independent Homeschooler (16%):* These youth are

struggling with conditions such as anxiety or depression. They may be self-harming, and sometimes suicidal. They may feel bullied and unsafe due to past experiences. In school, these teens are not attending regularly due to these issues and find this situation to be self-spiraling, adding additional anxiety and tension to their lives. As homeschoolers, they are having difficulty getting out of the house and sustaining any progress with hobbies and interests.

*Major Learning Difference or Health Problems (4%):* A small group of teens arrive at North Star without fitting into any of the above categories. The most common reason is they have some physical health disease or condition that is making regular attendance and participation in school or homeschooling impossible, despite the teen's desire to succeed. One common example is sleep disorder. Also, North Star has had several members diagnosed to be on the autism spectrum, which best fits in this category.

## **Intake Conclusions**

Nearly 60% of our members present themselves as feeling bored or constrained by school or looking for an addition to their homeschooling experience. Many have explored other local schools, and feel ready to try the North Star approach of self-directed learning. These are largely teens with hobbies and interests, solid academic skills and school attendance records, and supportive families. North Star is making a new option available, one these families would not have chosen without North Star. The independent homeschoolers in this group, which are most of the homeschoolers who join North Star, are seeking a larger community of teens, adults, and activities to help them sustain an already successful homeschooling approach.

The next 40% are not succeeding in school or with their homeschooling experience, and the families arrive with some degree of concern or desperation. North Star offers these families an opportunity to explore a lifestyle that eliminates the school-based stress or conflict in the child's life. A handful of independent homeschoolers join when this process is going poorly for their families.

The small remainder of members present themselves as teens who are not thriving in school, but are trying to manage school and wishing they could do so. North Star allows these families to consider an entirely different approach. A handful of independent homeschooling families join North Star because their teen is not connecting with a large number of peers or adults, and they hope that North Star might be the right community for their family.

It is critical to understand that most of these teens in all of the categories who were in

school prior to North Star would have remained in school if North Star did not exist. Only a small handful of these families would have discovered and chosen homeschooling or self-directed learning. Most would have muddled through school in the fairly ordinary way that most teens do in our culture. A few of the Managing teens might have changed schools in pursuit of a better setting. Many of the teens in the Mental Health Issues category would have had some therapeutic settings offered by their schools. A minority of the Refusing or Resisting teens might have dropped out of school at age 16. But overall, most of these families would have dealt with their school counselors to remain in school and graduate with a traditional diploma at age 18.

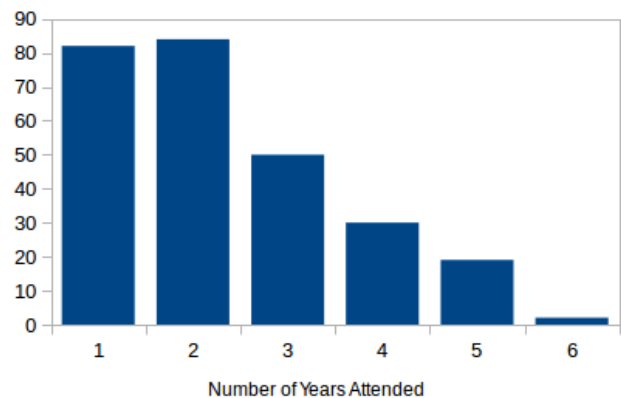
For those who were already independently homeschooling, the majority were managing well and simply investigating whether the North Star community was a worthwhile addition to their routines. Some of these families were struggling with homeschooling for a range of reasons, or felt they had simply reached the end of their homeschooling process with their child. These teens would have likely enrolled in a local school if North Star did not exist.

## Exit Data

### First Activity After North Star

Members join North Star at ages ranging from about 12 years old to 18 years old. The average length of membership for those who stay until they move on to young adulthood (267 members) is just over two years. (Mean = 2.34 years, Range = 1 to 6 years) We have not tracked the month of each member joining, so joining for any part of a year counted as 1 year. As of 2016, we are recording the month each teen joins North Star. (In writing this report, we also ran data reports for alumni whose membership was counted as two years or more. We found the results to be very similar to what we are reporting here for the full group.)

Number of Years Alumni Attended North Star  
(n=267, mean=2.34)



What do our members choose when they leave North Star?

### Higher Education



*Community College (49%):* North Star is located near two welcoming community colleges: Greenfield Community College and Holyoke Community College. GCC has no age requirement, while HCC prefers students to be at least 16 years old. Both welcome teens through a process called Early Admission, and teens over 16 years old can obtain a GED or equivalent and enroll as an adult independent student. Many of our academically-inclined members begin taking classes while they are still members of North Star, combining one or two community college courses with two or three days per week at North Star. Moving on to full-time community college enrollment at age 17 or 18 years old is a natural outcome. It is also a low-stress and low-cost alternative to the full-blown college search process that most high school seniors experience.

*Four-Year College (17%):* The data show that when teens move on from North Star, about one in six make the transition directly to a four-year college. While attending a four-year college is in the long-term plans of a majority of our members (see the next section), only a few stay at North Star through age 18 and proceed directly to a four-year college experience. North Star alumni have attended a long list of four-year colleges (see Appendix), but the open-ended nature of North Star's model means that most of our alumni have intervening steps in their educational careers between leaving North Star and enrolling in a four-year college.

*Certificate or Training Program (6%):* Some of our members move on to a one-year certificate program or other formal trade school. This category also includes those who join the military or AmeriCorps or other similar programs.

Taken together, 72% of North Star alumni move on to Community College, Four-Year College, or a formal Certificate or Training Program as their first step after North Star.

## **Work**

For those that move on to the work world as their first activity here's what we know:

*Ordinary Work:* About 20% of North Star members move on to a standard job as their first activity. We include jobs that high school-aged teens can obtain with little to no formal training, such as restaurant work, landscaping, private childcare, and more.

*Unusual Work:* About 3% go on to jobs that require special skills, such as professional circus work or opportunities in music, theater, and the arts, or work with animals. These are teens employed by others to do something most of us consider out-of-the-ordinary.

*Self-Employed:* About 5% of our members have set up their own businesses at young ages. This group includes entrepreneurs in information technology, business, or restaurants, or

artists-musicians who work for themselves, among others.

Taken together, about 28% of our members move on directly to the work world when they leave North Star.

## **Cumulative Activities After North Star**

North Star's oldest alumni are now in their mid-to-late thirties, and have moved through many different activities in their adult lives. In this section, we accumulate the data we have on the 267 alumni who moved on to young adulthood from North Star. (Years since leaving North Star for this set of alumni: Mean = 10.6 years, Median = 10 years, Mode = 5 years)

Many of these alumni have gone to Community College and a Four-Year College, or may have done some College and also a Formal Training Program. Many alumni have had periods of their lives when they did Ordinary Work and other times when they have been Self-Employed. We have created a database that currently tracks alumni to their Second, Third, and Fourth Activity after North Star. Thus, some alumni may be counted up to four separate times in this section.

## **Higher Education**

*College and Formal Certificate or Training Program:* The data show that at least 53% of North Star alumni have attended Community College, 38% have attended Four-Year College, and 14% have participated in a formal Certificate or Training Program. (A list of the specific colleges and programs is in the Appendix.)

As many alumni are counted in more than one of these categories, a secondary review of the data shows that these numbers involve 81% of alumni at least once. This compares solidly with recent statistics with the overall percentage of Massachusetts high school graduates who enroll in college. (2013-14 **76.2%**; 2010: **73.2%**; National data for 2015: **69.2%**)

In making a comparison of North Star data to this societal data, we consider it worth noting that (a) North Star has no admission requirements and welcomes all interested teens regardless of their prior school performance or current academic inclinations or abilities; and (b) North Star does not promote attending college over choosing work or other alternatives.

*Graduate School:* To date, 16% of North Star alumni have attended graduate school. This percentage will grow as some alumni currently still in undergraduate studies proceed in their academic careers.

## **Work**

We've made an attempt to categorize the kinds of work North Star alumni have undertaken, but the boundary lines between these categories are a bit arbitrary.

*Ordinary Work (40%):* These are jobs that teens and young adults can obtain with little training or specific skills. Examples include restaurant work, landscaping, retail sales, private childcare or after-school program work, and more. Alumni are counted in this group when they report having a full-time job as the primary activity of their lives. Many hold these jobs happily and successfully for years, as stable and valued employees of a company. At least 40% of our alumni report having some period in their lives that fits this category. Many alumni have had periods of "Ordinary Work" that haven't been reported to us in between or after other life experiences that have been reported, as some alumni quite likely have a bias to consider this work as not worth mentioning to us. I also suspect that "Ordinary Work" is a likely life outcome for many of the alumni of whom we have lost track over the years.

*Professional Work (26%):* These are jobs that require a college degree, completion of a formal training program or receipt of a training certificate or license. These jobs held by North Star alumni include doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, financial planners, and more. We've included a small handful of "white-collar workers" who have done so without degrees, primarily in the field of computer programming and technology. Currently, 26% of the alumni report doing such work. We expect this number to rise as alumni in their early-to-mid twenties continue their college studies and working careers.

*Self-Employment (17%):* Alumni have started restaurants, cleaning businesses, landscaping companies, computer programming and technology companies, and more. At least 17% of alumni report having times of primarily working for themselves.

*Unusual Work (10%):* These are jobs in which the alumni are doing work that sounds less common and involves some particular skill set. These jobs involve working for others, not independently. Examples include circus work, arts-music-theater work, working with animals, professional athletics, massage-healing arts, and working for pay while traveling for an extended period of time. At least 10% of the alumni have had such full-time work.

*Don't Know (8%):* We've lost touch with about 8% of the alumni in this group of 267 North Star members as they moved on from their First Activity After North Star. While we could make some guesses to categorize them, we are still considering how we might track them down. While I wish this number were 0%, the fact that we've lost touch with some teens and families seems unavoidable.

## Analysis of Work Data

North Star alumni are in every field, from midwifery to mortuary services. They are doctors, lawyers, bankers, realtors, teachers, psychologists, and school administrators. There are many involved in the healing arts. We have musicians, artists, and comedians. There are labor activists. Many are involved in technology. The list is long.

The simple conclusion is that choosing self-directed learning during the high school years has had no limiting role on our alumni, collectively. Further, we propose that having 27% of alumni involved in Self-Employment or Unusual Work demonstrates that self-directed learning may encourage independence and a commitment to following one's passions for a career. We don't know how to compare this percentage to traditional high school graduates, but we welcome some comparable statistics.

## Negative Outcomes

It seems natural to expect and acknowledge that some alumni have moved to young adulthood with difficulty. We know of at least three untimely deaths among our alumni, and of one who has spent time in prison.

A few of those who arrived at North Star with mental health issues or major learning differences continue to struggle as young adults and are not living independent lives.

It is quite likely that North Star has not "helped" all of its members. However, I cannot identify any cases where our approach diverted a teen into a more difficult track than they were on when they joined us.

In my [TEDx Talk](#) at Amherst College in 2013, I said, "In all of our years at North Star encouraging hundreds of teens and families to live without school, we have harmed no one. And that's not how I felt when I was teaching junior high school." I stand by that comment as I conclude this report.

## Final Thoughts

At a minimum, I hope this report provides evidence that teens and families can choose a self-directed learning approach with no fear for their long-term educational and career opportunities. In fact, this approach may encourage independence and a pursuit of happiness.

North Star's slogan is, "Learning is natural. School is optional." I often say, "There is

nothing you can do with a traditional high school diploma that you can't do without one. The reason to choose to attend high school is because that is the way you want to live your life during your teen years." I also say that the choice to opt out of schooling to embark on self-directed learning is not the huge risk that our culture makes it seem to be. I tell parents that opting out of school is like choosing "E: None of the Above" on a standardized test question.

Sometimes, "None of the Above" is the right answer. Making that answer an option for every teen is the mission of North Star and the [Liberated Learners network](#).

*Read Part Two [here](#).*

## Appendix

Following are lists of specific Community Colleges, Four-Year Colleges, Certificate or Training Programs, and Work Experiences of North Star alumni. These lists include outcomes from alumni in both Report One and Report Two.

### **Community Colleges and Certificate or Training Programs**

Those places with two or more alumni have the number in parentheses; those with more than five are at the top.

Greenfield Community College, MA (94)

Holyoke Community College, MA (60)

American Musical and Dramatic Academy, NY

Berkeley City College, CA

Berklee online, MA

Berkshire Community College, MA (2)

Boston Dance Company, MA

Branford Hall, CT

Bunker Hill Community College, MA

Cabinetry Training, MA

Cabrillo College, CA

California College of the Arts, CA

Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, PA

City College of San Francisco, CA

Community College of CT

Community College of Vermont

Concordia College Montreal

Cosmetology Certificate, MA

CT Center for Massage Therapy  
Culinary Institute of America, NY  
EMT Training  
Flatiron School, NY  
GCC Outdoor Leadership Program, MA  
Hallmark School of Photography, MA  
Harvard Community Extension, MA (2)  
Johnson College, TN  
Kapiolani Community College, HI  
Landing School of Boatbuilding, MA  
Landmark College, VT  
Le Cordon Bleu, France  
Maine College of Art  
Maine School of Masonry  
Marinello Cosmetology, MA  
Massage Training (2)  
Middlesex Community College, MA  
Midwifery Training  
Millersville Community College, TN  
New England School of Photography, MA  
North Shore Community College MA  
Northwestern CT Community College  
NY Institute of Photography  
Royal Winnipeg Ballet Academy, Alberta  
Sage Mountain Herbal, VT  
Santa Barbara City College, CA  
Simon's Rock College, MA  
Springfield Technical Community College, MA (2)  
TEFL in Nicaragua  
Train Engineer Certificate, MA  
Tunxis Community College, CT  
Americorps (2)  
Peace Corps  
Air Force  
Army  
Coast Guard  
Marines

## **Four-Year College**

University of Massachusetts Amherst (49)  
Hampshire College, MA (9)  
Mount Holyoke College, MA (7)  
  
Amherst College, MA (2)  
Antioch, OH  
Art Institute of Boston, MA  
Bard College, NY  
Bates College, ME

Becker College, MA  
Beloit College, WI (2)  
Bennington College, VT (2)  
Brandeis University, MA  
Brown University, RI (2)  
Bryn Mawr College, PA  
California State University Los Angeles  
Central CT State University  
Clark University, MA (2)  
Colorado State University (2)  
Columbia University, NY  
Earlham College, IN (2)  
East Tennessee State University  
Emerson College, MA (2)  
Evergreen State University, WA  
Fashion Institute of Technology, NY  
Framingham State, MA  
Goddard College, VT  
Green Mountain College, VT (2)  
Guilford College, NC  
Haverford College, PA  
Ithaca College, NY  
Lehigh University, PA  
Lesley College, MA (2)  
Lyme Academy of Fine Arts, CT  
Macalester College, MN  
Maine College of Art  
Manhattan School of Music, NY  
Marlboro College, VT  
Massachusetts College of Art and Design  
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (2)  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Mitchell College, CT  
Montserrat School of Fine Arts, MA  
New York University  
Newbury College, MA  
Northeastern University, MA (2)  
Pitzer College, CA  
Reed College, OR  
Rhode Island School of Design (2)  
Sarah Lawrence University, NY  
Shimer College, IL  
Smith College, MA (2)  
Southern New Hampshire University  
Springfield College, MA (3)  
St. John's College, NM  
Sterling College, VT  
Texas A&M  
The New School, NY

Unity College, ME  
University of Alaska  
University of Auckland, New Zealand  
University of Colorado  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
University of Massachusetts Lowell  
University of Southern Maine  
University of Vermont  
Warren Wilson College, NC (3)  
Wellesley College, MA  
Westfield State University, MA  
Whitman College, WA  
Williams College, MA (2)  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute, MA

## **Graduate School Programs**

Berklee College of Music, MA  
Brandeis University, MA  
Brown University, RI  
Endicott College, MA  
Fordham Law School, NY  
Fordham University MFA, NY  
Fulbright Scholar in Jordan  
Hartt Music, CT  
Indiana University  
Lesley University, MA (3)  
Lincoln College of New England  
London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art  
London School of Economics  
Middlebury College, VT  
Rice University, TX (2)  
School of International Training, VT  
Simmons College, MA  
Smith College of Social Work, MA  
UCLA Thelonius Monk Institute, CA  
UMass Medical School  
Universidad Rafael Landivar, Guatemala  
University of California Berkeley  
University of Chicago, IL  
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs  
University of Connecticut (2)  
University of Kentucky  
University of Massachusetts (5)  
University of Washington  
Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand  
Watson Fellowship, Bryn Mawr, PA  
Westfield State University, MA



## **Self-Employment**

Alternative Energy Business  
Antiques Dealer  
Artist (5)  
Auto Repair  
Carpenter (3)  
Cartoonist  
Cell Phone Sales  
Childcare  
Comedian  
Computer Animation  
Copy Editing  
Craftsperson  
Custom Gowns  
Dog Day Care  
Filmmaking  
Generator Systems  
Green Cleaning Business  
Horse Shows  
Illustrator  
International Business  
Jewelry Making  
Labor Activist  
Landscaping (2)  
Massage Therapist  
Music DJ  
Music Recording Studio  
Musician (7)  
Painter  
Photography (6)  
Pilates Instructor  
Pottery  
Puppeteer  
Restaurants  
Shared Business Space  
Software Engineer  
Summer Camps  
Theatre Company  
Yoga Instructor

## **Unusual Work**

Acting  
Art  
Buddhist Monk in Japan  
Circus

Glassblowing  
Fashion Design  
Hair Design  
Homesteading  
Horse Breeding, Training  
Make-Up Artist  
Mindfulness  
Mixed Martial Arts  
Music Composer  
Rock Climbing  
Tennis  
Travel  
Yacht Repair

## **Professional Work**

Acrisure Insurance  
Adafruit, Apple  
Art Education  
Art Teacher  
Astrocamp  
Ballet  
Big Y, Department Manager, River Valley Market  
Biostatistician Seattle Children's Hospital  
Boat Building  
Business Consultant  
Business Manager  
Chef  
Chemist, PPG Industries  
Community Cable TV Manager  
Computer Networker  
Computer Programmer (2)  
Costumer, Metropolitan Opera  
Counseling at UMass  
Counselor Gandara Center  
Daycare Teacher  
Doctor, Brigham, RI  
EMT  
EMT, American Medical Response  
Engineer, Wind Turbines, Pika  
English Professor  
Farmer  
Freight Train Conductor  
Greenfield Recycling  
Hairdresser  
Halliburton, Bloomberg  
Health Care Information Technology  
History Work  
Hospitality Work (2)

Human Resources  
HVAC  
ISO Engineering  
Journalist, Al-Jazeera English  
Journalist, Majority Report  
Journalist, Southern Magazine  
JP Morgan Chase  
Justice Resource Institute  
Labor and Community Activist  
Labor Organizing Unite Here  
Law Clerk, Federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals  
Librarian, Arlington Public Library  
Librarian, GCC  
Librarian, Hampshire College  
Manager of Cape Cod Inn, Restaurant, Catering  
Manager, Green Love Eco Clean  
Manager, Roadhouse Restaurant  
Masonry  
Mortician, CAN  
Music and Arts Teaching  
Nurse  
Nutritionist  
PCA, Dementia  
Pilates, Physical Therapy  
Professor, University of Michigan  
Psychologist  
Puppeteer  
Reading Specialist, Watertown  
Sawicki Real Estate  
Snow Farm Crafts Education Director  
Snow Farm, Starworks  
Social Worker  
Software Developer  
Software Engineer (3)  
Software Programming  
Staff, North Star  
Superintendent of Public Schools, Greenfield MA  
Symantec-Dell  
Teacher, Spain  
Teacher, Students with Disabilities  
Teaching Art, YMCA and Camp  
Translator, Chinese magazine  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
USDA  
Valley Free Radio, Daily Hampshire Gazette  
Verite  
Verizon Sales  
Videographer for Rap Artist Mike Stud  
Warner Brothers

Wayfinder Experience  
Web Developer, Yiddish Book Center  
Youth Work

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