



Roger Alcain

Class of 1997

Where do you live now? What do what do you love about it?

I currently live in Spain, about an hour outside the city of Barcelona, in a small, rural town near the mountains, called Sant Vicenç de Torelló. I absolutely love being here. A lot of it reminds me of Kona. Lots of farms and farm animals, nature, greenery and generally a quiet town. The quality of life in Spain is a lot different than most of the places I've lived. It feels relaxed, like living at home. It's a wonderful place to raise a family.

Describe your career path since graduating from Konawaena High.

After graduating in 1997, I moved to Denver, Colorado to attend college. While I was in college, I worked full-time during the day as an office manager, part-time on the weekends delivering pizza, and did most of my classes in the evenings, so I could support myself and live on my own. (Dorms were not an option at my school.) I stayed for about five years, before I decided it was time to move on and explore a different city. I transferred schools and headed to Chicago so I could finish my degree in Marketing and Advertising at Columbia College. But it was here that I started working full time in the Hospitality Industry. What first started off as a job to put myself through college, ended being a full time career.

I was working for a restaurant group that had just opened a new restaurant around the time I moved. It became very successful, very quickly, and soon I found myself in a management position after starting as a host. From there, I had an opportunity to open a location in New York City, and was able to move there and eventually run the restaurant. I was in Chicago for a total of about 8 years, with a couple of them overlapping, as I was living between Chicago and New York for work. I eventually made the decision to stay in New York full time and leave the company I was with. I continued to work in hospitality in New York, and my last restaurant job ended up being at a place

called Noretuh, which ironically, is a restaurant that serves elevated Hawaiian-inspired cuisine, who's chef is from Hawai'i. It was a bittersweet experience to end my restaurant career of over 20 years working in a place where I could share what I know best and a part of our culture with New York City and the world.

After the pandemic, my partner and I decided to move out of the city and head upstate to Syracuse, as he had taken a job opportunity there. My career then shifted from restaurants, to doing home renovations. We owned an investment property in another part of New York State that I worked on, along side running it as a vacation rental.

While I was in between careers, we ended up adopting our daughter at birth, and my career then shifted to being a full-time parent. I was very lucky to be able to stay at home with her for the first couple of years. Shortly after she was born, my partner had another job opportunity that took us down to the Miami / Ft. Lauderdale area of Florida, where we stayed for about two years. But ultimately, we knew that it would be best to be close to family, to have the support of raising our child. And for that reason, we finally made the decision to move back to Hawaii and establish our lives here.

Now that we are here, and not going anywhere anytime soon (hopefully), I've pursued a career in teaching English as a second language. I've always loved teaching and feel like this is something I was meant to do. I teach all ages from toddlers, to teenagers, to adults who need to improve their Business English speaking skills. It's a very satisfying career.

What was your most memorable experience at KHS?

My most memorable experience at KHS would probably be the Pep Rallies in the main building during footballs season, and the May Day celebrations. The Pep Rallies were always so fun and full of energy. And the May Day celebrations are something so special and unique to Hawai'i.

What advice would you give to Konawaena High School students?

My advice to any of the students at KHS is this: Spend your money on experiences and travel. The world is much smaller than you think. Don't be afraid to go and see the things you want to see, no matter how far away it is. It is all attainable. Meet as many people as you can along your way through life. Networking and making genuine connections with people will take you far. It's what has gotten me to where I am today. But most importantly, remember where you come from and be proud. If there has been one thing that has always made me stand out, not matter where I was in the world, it was being from Hawai'i. As much as it may seem like we are such a small dot on the map of the world, you'd be surprised how much interest people have in where we come from. And I've always used it as an opportunity to share our story, our history, with people who usually have no idea. Don't limit your dreams. Think on a global scale, and you'll quickly realize how much opportunity there is. The world truly is your oyster. Whether you decide to make Hawai'i your home base, or somewhere else, a wider

perspective of the world through experiencing it, will only be beneficial to you. So go out there and explore! And always, ALWAYS bring the spirit of aloha with you. It will get you far.

Have you been back to campus since graduation? If yes, for what occasion?

I had been back to campus back almost 8 years ago or so, for a celebration of life. But, my family lives above the school, so whenever I come home, I get to drive by every day and see it. I will admit, the last time I actually walked through the campus with some other classmates, the halls and main building seemed so much smaller than I remember. But nevertheless, it was a nice trip down memory lane.