

Yesterday's students.

Today's **business**  
**professionals.**



NATIONAL ALUMNI DIVISION  
**BUSINESS**  
**PROFESSIONALS**  
of AMERICA

# In Their Own Words

Confidence  
Inspirational  
Competitive  
Leadership  
Professionalism

**Sterling** Brooker | TEXAS

I first heard about Business Professionals of America in my sophomore year of high school. In all honestly, I joined because my mom made me. But I can honestly say I was pleasantly surprised with the organization and wanted to continue to be a part of it the remainder of my high school career. BPA has given me opportunities to develop skills in the professional world that I would not have had and has offered me the chance to progress as a young professional. One of my most memorable experiences in BPA I would say was going to the National Leadership Conference my senior year in Chicago and being elected as a National Officer.

{ The three words that most define BPA to me are Unity, Opportunity and Unique.



# In Their Own Words

Empowering  
Possibilities  
Memorable  
Connections  
Giving Back  
Friends

**Symone** Gamble | TX. SPAIN. CA

I'm originally from Frisco, Texas, and started my career working in international finance in Barcelona, Spain. Now, I work for Google at their headquarters in California supporting web and mobile app developers in online advertising – helping turn their passion into profit. 70% of my time is spent serving as a project manager looking at new ways to scale out operations in both the US and emerging market.

While I was in BPA I competed in Global Marketing which was my first exposure to anything international. It ignited a fire in me to want to know more about places abroad. That thread followed me from studying and working abroad to now helping people in international markets. Also, since Google is located and operates in so many countries, I constantly have to know how to communicate effectively and grow teams. Serving as BPA National Officer definitely helped prepare me for what I do now. It was a skill my manager was impressed by and pointed out during the interview and hire process.

Business Professionals of America gave me great relationships and the confidence to be bold. It gave me leadership skills and business knowledge that I apply every day in my job. BPA was more than fun... it was an important investment in my future!

{ When I look back, BPA was the jumping off point that started everything.



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**Clay Long** | IDAHO

I grew up in northern Idaho in a small town of just under 1,000 and a high school of about 100. I first heard about Business Professionals of America my freshman year of high school. It was listed as a club to join and I knew if it had the word business in the title, it was for me. After graduation from college with a B.S. in Business Administration, I accepted a position with the NBA D-League working on corporate sales for the Idaho Stampede. I have since gone on to attain my M. Ed and completed a principal internship at Mountain View High School.

In the summer of 2015 I accepted an Assistant Director of CTE position with the Nampa School District and now work to oversee all of the Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and teachers for the school district. Getting to work with amazingly talented students and colleagues has been one of the most memorable experiences with BPA.

{ BPA has provided me many opportunities including networking, public speaking, writing and interpersonal skills.



# In Their Own Words

Professionalism  
Service  
Expertise  
Leadership  
Achievement

**Courtney** Nason-Farrell, CPA |  
MASSACHUSETTS

I first heard of Business Professionals of America when I started the Academy of Finance my sophomore year of high school. My teacher was the chapter advisor and suggested I join. I was hand-picked to attend the Fall Leadership Conference and saw how passionate the state officer team was about the organization. I wanted to join because it provided me the opportunity to meet new people, strengthen my leadership skills and compete in various events. BPA has provided me the opportunity to travel to areas around the United States, compete in new and different events, and push to be a state officer.

{ My most memorable experience was placing in the Top 3 and standing on the podium at Nationals. It was the moment I'd been waiting for and it finally happened!



# In Their Own Words

Fun  
Friendship  
Committed  
Innovation  
Limitless

**Lyndsay** Robinson | MASSACHUSETTS

I joined Business Professionals of America when I was a sophomore in high school because I had a fear of speaking in front of people. My teachers knew of my career aspirations and that I had to overcome my fear if I were to follow them. I wanted to become involved with the organization because I trusted that my teachers would help me achieve my dreams. I wanted to be a lawyer since I was seven but I was not sure it was possible when I was in high school because I was shy and socially awkward. I was counting on BPA to change my life and it did.

I graduated high school as the valedictorian and class president. I attended college where I majored in politics and minored in Russian area studies and recently started law school at the University of New Hampshire. BPA was the foundation for all my success in life.

The real-life experiences that Business Professionals of America gives students at a young age truly set them apart from the rest of their peers.



# In Their Own Words

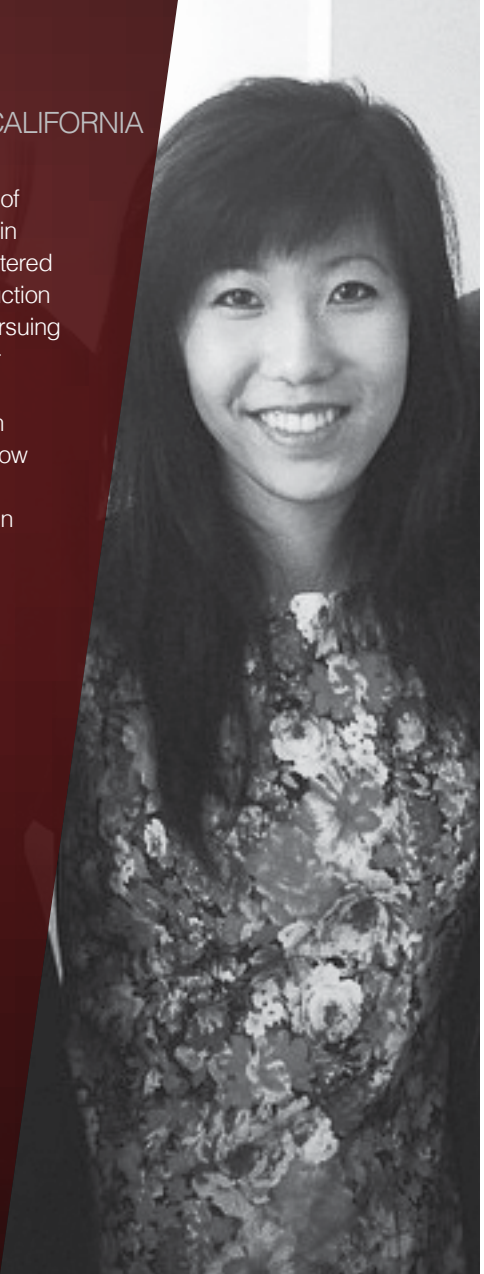
F.U.N.  
Friendship  
Committed  
Innovation  
Limitless

**Rowena** Zhang | MINNESOTA, CALIFORNIA

I'm currently a sophomore at University of California – Berkeley intending to major in Business Administration. When I first entered high school I took a class called Introduction to Business since I was interested in pursuing the business field. One day, my teacher mentioned Business Professionals of America and encouraged people to join the chapter. Back then, I didn't really know what BPA was and decided to check it out. Eventually, I got very very involved in BPA and it was a lifetime experience.

BPA taught me almost every aspect of professionalism from how to write professionally to how to network in both private and public settings. In addition, BPA provides a wide-range of opportunities and allows students to discover and explore many different areas. People in BPA are always so supportive and welcoming. We help each other grow and develop into professionals together.

{ My most memorable experience was serving as a National Officer. It allowed me to serve and help the many members of our organization.



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**Anthony Alexander** | DELAWARE

I am currently a finance professional in Boston, something that if you asked me 15 years ago, I would have laughed at because I was all about music and playing the saxophone. I first heard about BPA when my sister brought me into her accounting teacher's classroom after school and said "My brother is good at math, he's joining." I literally had no say in the matter and just went with the flow. That year we competed together in the Financial Analyst Team where we got third place. It was the best feeling in the world getting the medal placed around my neck, being handed that huge trophy and standing on the podium seeing nothing but a flurry of my state's flags in the crowd. This drove me to go back the next year and keep competing which led to me being elected as club president, earning many awards, and eventually earning a scholarship to Johnson & Wales University to pursue business.

BPA changed my perspective on my limitations in school and gave me confidence in everything that I did.

{ BPA not only opened the door for me, it tore it off its hinges. I owe all of my successes to BPA and competing.





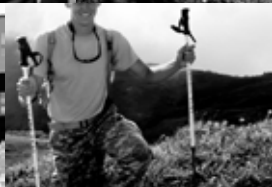
# In Their Own Words

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**Andrew George** | U.S. ARMY,  
FORT SILL, OK

I am a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army and an alumnus of Taconic High School and Massachusetts BPA. I first heard about Business Professionals of America my first year of high school and was very interested in the opportunities it offered. After hearing about the leadership opportunities it offered through state office, I really wanted to become involved. My most memorable experience with BPA was having the privilege to represent Massachusetts BPA as state president at national conferences. Serving as state president was the best leadership experience I could have asked for before going on to serve in the military. Most of my skills I used in BPA I carried into the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets where I served as the Regimental Commander, charged with the daily operations and responsibilities of 1,080 cadets. The challenges of working with those senior to me in command in BPA helped me work with a 2-star General and other field grade officers when running the Corps of Cadets.

{ BPA provided me with the opportunity to stretch my leadership abilities and explore what myself and my peers are capable of as far as management of large groups.



# In Their Own Words

Leadership  
Courage  
Achievement  
Motivation  
Professional

**Takiyah Durham** | OHIO

I first heard about BPA during my junior year of high school. During that time, I was at a turning point in my life where it was imperative that I make a decision as it related to my career path. My goal was to gain employable skills such as ethics, teamwork, collaboration and communication skills and I heard BPA would help me reach my full potential. After learning about all the opportunities BPA could offer, I was eager to join. I knew that being a student today could result in being a great business professional tomorrow. I knew BPA could help me accomplish my goals and in that moment my life changed.

While serving as Regional VP, I met many great individuals and gained leadership skills that helped me grow throughout my career. Being an officer brought out many leadership skills I didn't know I had. Serving as an advocate for my peers and working directly with BPA staff is something you can't put a price on.

{ Having a group of strangers believe in you and help you work towards your true potential is something I will never forget.



# In Their Own Words

Fun  
Friendship  
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Innovation  
Limitless

**Jim** Lyons, CPA | INDIANA

Business Professionals of America is a well-respected organization and my experience as a member provided me with excellent opportunities to practice my professional skills. I have always been fascinated by the professional world and Business Professionals of America was my chance to get that 'taste' while I was only a high school freshman. I stayed involved because the organization truly represented what I wanted to become in my career: a successful business professional.

I graduated from Purdue University and was a BPA member for all throughout college. I am currently an International Tax Manager at Deloitte and a CPA.

I think it was clear that BPA provided real leadership experience – not just resume building material – and that really helped set me a solid footing for beginning my career.

{ BPA trained me to be a successful professional by providing a safe, guided environment to let me achieve to discuss in interviews.



# In Their Own Words

Success  
Advancement  
Leadership  
Motivation  
Achievement

**Kristin** McManus | MASSACHUSETTS

I have been involved with BPA as a student, alumni, state officer advisor and chapter advisor for over 15 years. I joined BPA at age 14 as a young and awkward person trying to find my way through high school. I am no longer the shy and reserved young girl who couldn't fathom speaking at a podium in front of several hundred people. BPA helped me to gain confidence, leadership skills and grow as an individual beyond my expectations. I have been able to travel around the United States and meet people from around the country. I have developed relationships with people whom I call my "BPA family" and we have shared in life's trials and triumphs together.

Now, as a teacher, I have had the pleasure of working with 12 years' worth of state officer teams and I have watched my own students smile with pride on the state and national stages after winning an award. I have witnessed them apply leadership skills that they learned while at various BPA conferences.

{ I credit BPA with many of the opportunities that have shaped my life.



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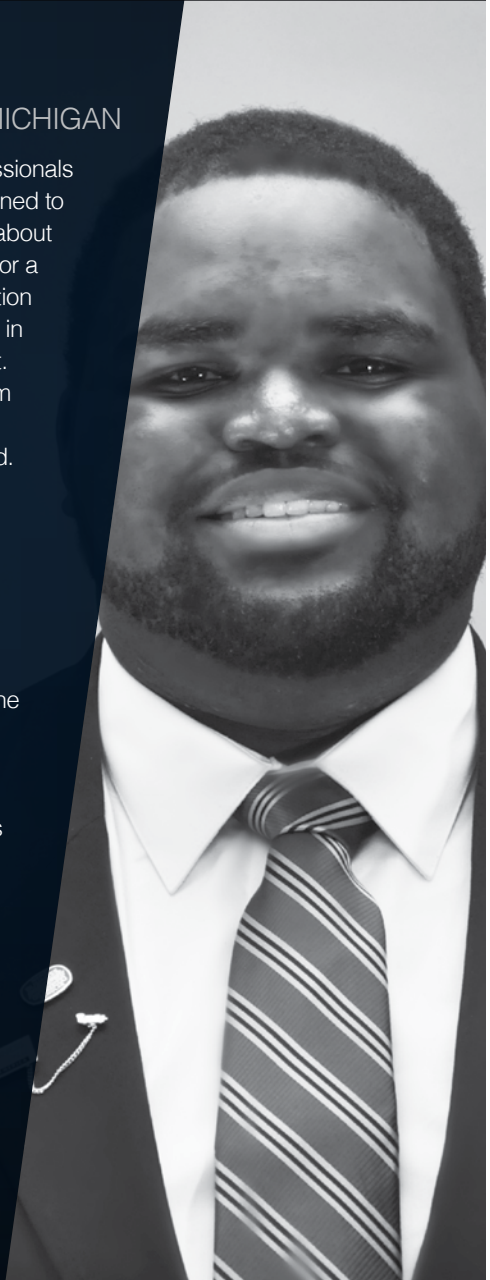
**Devin** Alexander | FLORIDA, MICHIGAN

My first encounter with Business Professionals of America was in high school. I happened to walk by a room with students meeting about holding a half marathon to raise funds for a trip. I was so intrigued by the conversation they were having that I decided to walk in and volunteer to help out with the event. After about a week of working with them and learning about the organization, I began to fall in love with BPA so I joined. Being able to work with individuals that were passionate about their future and to have an organization that cared just as much as we did and wanted to see its members succeed was something I couldn't pass up.

Having the opportunity to compete in the various educational competency areas has allowed me to enhance my skills and become a stronger professional. Being able to meet so many individuals and create friendships that I still have to this day is probably something I would not have had without this organization.



BPA has allowed me to discover myself as an individual at such a young age.



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**Rachel** Wagner | DELAWARE

Business Professionals of America opened doors to me that I would have never had the opportunity to do so myself. Through BPA, I have traveled across the country to five National Leadership Conferences. I have networked with other students who share a love of business and professionalism; I have gained valuable information from professionals in workshops. I have had the opportunity to serve as a leader in middle school, high school, State Association of BPA and now on the National Level.

When I think about who I was before BPA and who I am now, I'm not sure I would be the same person at all without this organization. BPA taught me about leadership, about the workforce, about communication and most importantly how to believe in myself. BPA events bring together students and unite them under the value of service, skills-building and leadership.

{ BPA made me push my boundaries and realize that if I wanted to be a leader, I had the ability.



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**Marissa** Wunderlich | MINNESOTA

BPA has provided me with several great opportunities. The many places I have gotten to go, but so much more than that, the many wonderful people I have gotten to meet. It has also given me experience in what an interview might be like and other work related functions. I first heard about Business Professionals of America when I attended orientation at South Central College. At first I wanted to join because I heard that the National Conference was in Washington D.C. that year. Later, after I attended a few of the meetings, I realized that there was a lot more to BPA than just going to conferences and Washington D.C.

BPA helps prepare people for a proper working career. It teaches people how to act professionally and gives many tips along the way on how to be successful in everything that you do, not just professionally either. BPA cares about the students that the organization serves and it cares about the community outside of the organization, which is why it encourages the participation in community service.

{ I am not so sure that I would be prepared or good at my job, nonetheless even have my jobs, if it had not been for BPA.





**BUSINESS  
PROFESSIONALS**  
*of* AMERICA  
Giving Purpose to Potential

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