

Terra Nevitt is looking to a career in human and environmental rights

By: AMANDA DOTSON

Terra Nevitt was born in Forest Grove, Ore., to parents Jeffery and Kristine Nevitt. The family moved to Raymond when Terra was three years old, where she grew up in their family home in Riverview.

Terra graduated from Raymond High School in 1997 with about thirty other students. "Though I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, most of my memories involve blue skies and sunshine," she said.

Nevitt says she has fond memories of lying on the grass during lunch periods and recesses and of playing card games in the library. She also says, however, that her best memories are of spending time outside of school, exploring the area.

"(My) most cherished memories of elementary school and high school involve my activities outside of school including many walks into Long Island's ancient cedar grove, summer canoeing adventures, long drives to the tops of logging roads, and escapes to the beaches and rivers that surround our beautiful area."

Terra also says that her activities at school and in the community have taught her a lot about life and helped her decide her career path. "Growing up in the small community of Raymond taught me that happiness has little to do with material possessions," she said, "and individual success has everything to do with being part of a community that strives for the well being of every member."

"In a small town it isn't easy to isolate yourself. For better or worse, you end up being personally invested in the lives of everyone around you. Such an environment breeds empathy and teaches you that for all of your personal accomplishments, you won't be able to find any joy if those around you are suffering."

Terra learned a lot of these lessons by watching the efforts of her mother and others as they worked towards the development of Raymond "economically, technologically and aesthetically."

"I witnessed a fierce determination to build schools, a community center, historic pride, a theater, a trail, a garden and a bridge to the future for our small corner of the country."

It was because of what she learned growing up in Raymond that Terra has found herself working for organizations fighting for human and environmental rights.

"While those jobs rarely pay, I have found that where ever you go there is always someone in need of a babysitter," Terra added. "Fortunately, my background has left me secure in the belief, as corny as it sounds, that no amount of money will make you happy so long as you are aware that millions in this world are suffering."

After graduating from RHS, Nevitt moved to Seattle and attended school at the University of Washington. She says she has frequently changed her focus of study, starting with chemistry, then drama to political science. She graduated from UW in 2000 with a Bachelor's degree in Society and Justice.

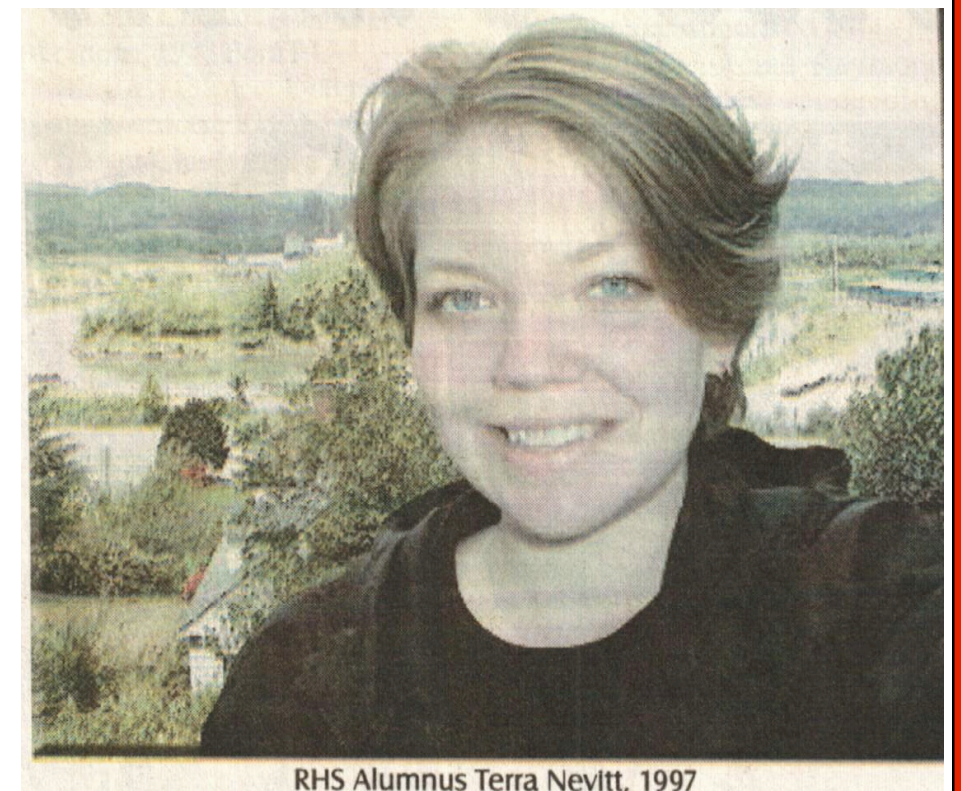
From Seattle, Terra left for an excursion in Europe and eventually spent ten months in Viareggio, Italy where she was a nanny for two Italian girls. When she returned from Italy, Terra moved to Washington D.C. and began law school at George Washington University.

"Law school keeps me pretty busy," Nevitt said. "I am the senior managing editor of the public Contract Law Journal and the president of the GW National Lawyer's Guild. There are an incredible amount of amazing opportunities for law students in D.C."

Terra spent a semester working on environmental issues for Senator Maria Cantwell and a semester working in the Judiciary Committee office of Senator Richard Dubin. She has just finished her second year of study at GW and is currently working for an organization called USPIRG (Public Interest Research Group), for which she says she assists the legislative director in lobbying on behalf of the environment, con, summers and democracy. She says she also does legal research for two law school professors. Terra will graduate next May and hopefully to find an opportunity to do environmental or human rights work abroad.

"I still have a lot of life learning ahead of me, but there are two pieces of advice that I can offer," Terra said. "The first is to try to find happiness in the moment, be excited about the future, but live for today. I often find that I am so excited about what I'm going to do next week or next year or in my next job that I don't fully appreciate what is currently going on. So, in my life I strive to find happiness in what I'm doing today, rather than waiting for it to arrive tomorrow.

"The other piece of advice I would offer is to try everything and go everywhere that you can. There is so much in this world to learn about and every experience good or bad can teach you about what kind of life will make you happy."



RHS Alumnus Terra Nevitt, 1997