

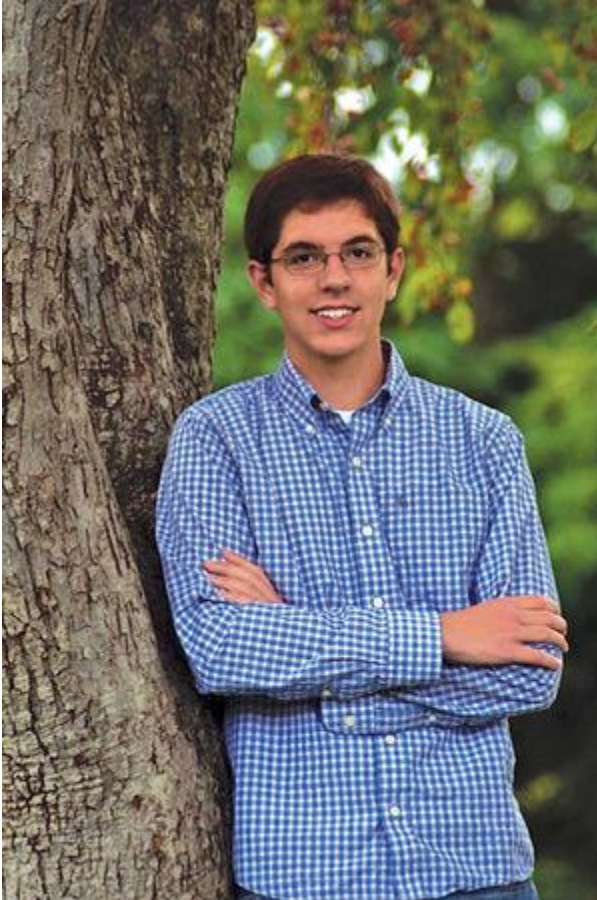
# Local student accepted to MIT

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By Thomas Franz✉

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Chippewa Valley senior Jack Novak has been accepted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. (Photo provided by Jack Novak)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — Jack Novak was sitting in the parking lot of his favorite restaurant when he received arguably the best news of his academic career.

At 6:28 p.m. Dec. 16, Novak, who will never forget that exact time, opened a message on his phone that told him he was accepted to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

“I cried. I read the first sentence of the letter and I started crying,” Novak said.

Novak, a senior at Chippewa Valley High School, said he was driving at the time, but pulled over to a local Chipotle restaurant to read the message.

“Everybody thinks that’s funny because they know that’s my favorite place to eat,” Novak said. “I wanted to be alone when I checked, and I had to pull over because I wanted to know right away.”

The road to MIT has been a long time coming for Novak, but it has also been filled with great adversity.

Novak's father died when he was in first grade, and his mother battled a long illness during his sophomore year at Chippewa.

"Obviously, that's very tough for a kid to go through, losing a parent, then having the surviving parent become ill, but they didn't miss a beat," Chippewa Valley counselor Denise Verner said of Novak and his siblings. Verner has been Novak's counselor at Chippewa for three years.

Novak is on course to have completed nine AP classes by the end of this year, and he currently holds a grade point average of 4.102.

Even with those accomplishments, Novak said he didn't think MIT was possible until he took his ACT exam.

On his first and only attempt at the ACT, Novak scored a 35, one point short of perfect, and that sparked the possibility for Novak to attend the prestigious school.

"It seemed so far out of reach," Novak said.

Although Novak hasn't formally accepted MIT's offer to attend, he plans to do so, and he expects to visit the campus for the first time in April.

"I started falling in love with the campus. It looks beautiful online," Novak said. "The human capital of that place, and all of the great minds that have been there, the thought of it is just amazing."

Outside of the classroom, Novak is involved in several groups at Chippewa.

He is the vice president of the school's National Honor Society chapter, and he is also a member of the school's student council. Novak has been a member of Chippewa's quiz bowl team for two years, while also competing in several math competitions. He also participated in the International Club, which allowed him to teach Spanish to district elementary students once a month.

In his time at Chippewa, Novak pointed to two instructors, Mrs. Mills and Mr. Eovaldi, who teach math and government, respectively, as two teachers who have especially helped him in his academic progress.

"Mrs. Mills is everyone's favorite. She always makes sure we know what we're doing, and she pushed us, definitely. She's helped me understand everything," Novak said. "Mr. Eovaldi shares his life philosophies with us, and teaches his students that they are independent, and they shouldn't be influenced by others so much. That, combined with the knowledge he shared, was definitely life-changing."

Verner, who has been a counselor at Chippewa for 14 years, said she could not remember any Chippewa student being accepted to MIT in that time. Verner said Novak is a great example for the district's education and the students in it.

"I think it sends a message to our staff and student body that the education we're providing to students, and the students who are attending here, are exemplary," Novak said. "To prepare to be admitted into a school like that requires a high quality education. He did this himself, but you need teachers behind you to get to that point."

Novak said he is thinking of pursuing biomedical engineering at MIT, with the possibility of attending graduate school afterward.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.*

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