

## Cardinal Carter's Staykov heads to Waterloo with almost perfect average



**By Brock Weir**

Before he embarks on his post-secondary career this September, Chris Staykov is clearing his head, spending time working on his grandparents' farm in Bulgaria.

It's a well-earned rest, fuelled by his love of healthy eating by helping harvest the fresh, organic vegetables from their garden, but soon enough he'll have to get back to the books – something he has already mastered well before university.

This past month, Chris, a student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Cardinal Carter Catholic High School, capped his high school career with an impressive average of 99.67 per cent.

"I am very content that my hard work paid off," says a modest Chris, speaking to The Auroran over FaceTime from Bulgaria, where he lived until the age of two. "Ever since Grade 7 or 8, I started realising grades mattered more and more. It was too soon for university, just high school and I wanted to get into the IB program at Cardinal Carter. Since that age, I started working really hard, even, I would say, in subjects I don't find as important as the ones I wanted to focus on. I still tried my best in those as well."

Chris has a natural affinity for the maths and sciences.

Although universities do place a specific importance on language, English and French, as subjects, are ones that never really sparked his imagination. He persevered, nevertheless, while also focusing on the subjects that made him realise his goals.

He is headed to the University of Waterloo to study Engineering, specifically their Systems Design and Engineering program, which will make good use of his math and problem-solving skills.

“System design is all about analysing and how to make systems more efficient and solving problems within them,” he says. “It might not be a direct application of math but there is a lot of problem solving, especially in calculus efficiency programs when you're trying to optimize things and I have always found that to be quite intriguing.”

Although he hasn't yet decided on a career path, he will undertake a co-op placement in Waterloo, which could help clarify his goals for the future.

As he set his goal for good grades, it is easy to see from the final result, that he is well equipped to achieve his goals ? but some might wonder whether grades occupied all his time during his high school career. Rest assured they did not.

Chris was an active volunteer at the Aurora Farmers' Market ? a volunteer opportunity he encourages all teens preparing for high school to consider when looking for opportunities to collect community service hours ? as well as serving on Carter's Legacy Council, Free the Children, and UN Assembly, and Ontario Students Against Drunk Impaired Driving (OSAID) groups.

“Start making grades important from Grade 9,” he advises those spending the summer getting ready for high school. “Don't tell yourself that universities are only going to look at Grade 11 or 12. They might, but by the time Grade 11 and 12 come around, and you don't have a strong foundation in 9 or 10 from working hard, it is going to be much harder to catch up.”

Also placing among the Top Graduating Scholars in the York Catholic District School Board this year is Kristen Victoria Harrington, who leaves St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School with an average of 98.83 per cent.