

FRA Alumni Spotlight: Amanda Haszinger

What year did I graduate? 1997

How did FRA prepare you for college and life?

Because False River Academy was such a close-knit school, being part of a team was a way of life. This ranged from decorating lockers for the football team to building prom our junior year. We learned the importance of honoring obligations to our classmates and our teachers, and we discovered we could rely on support from others. I can remember being a part of yearbook and each person was assigned pages to make a collaborative unit. That was such a great experience, because not only did we work together to achieve a common goal, but I was able to interact with students in other grades and, as a result, my FRA support group extended beyond just the other students in my class. Practically everyone on staff served as both a mentor and a mentee, so everyone had the chance to both assist and to lead.



I sometimes think, had I been at a much larger school, I would've had more of a tendency to blend in with the crowd. Because of my FRA experience, it never occurred to me to shy away from volunteering in class, sharing my thoughts, or helping a classmate even when I was attending those large LSU classes. And when I started dental school, the familiarity of small classes was comforting. It felt like home, knowing all of my classmates. It even gave me the confidence to run for, and get, an office my first year.

What do you love about FRA?

Like most small schools, teachers and fellow students become family. I remember talking to every single person in my class. There wasn't anyone with whom I didn't interact. Today, I have good relationships with the FRA faculty and staff--past and present--as well as my classmates, and even my classmates' families. My closest friends from school are still my closest friends today. I am in touch with these friends every single day. I don't recall a life without these people in it, and they wouldn't be part of my life if not for FRA. To have such a support system come from experiences that began when I was five years old is truly amazing!

What would you tell a student or family who is considering an education at FRA?

My best advice to a family looking for an academic home is to consider what you want for your children. Do you want them to feel a part of something special? Do you want them to get an education--the same education that has proven, time and again, to produce successful, conscientious members of society? Do you want them to learn leadership, teamwork, responsibility? There were other great schools for my parents to choose from; however, I owe so much of who I am to False River Academy. This school provided the academic background and crafted the character I needed to succeed not only in college and dental school but in opening and running my own dental practice. I cannot begin to imagine how my life would have been different if I had not attended False River Academy, and I am glad that I do not have to.

What is your favorite memory of FRA?

Honestly, when I tried to come up with only one to mention—impossible. I remember so many wonderful times: building prom our junior year, Chivalry Week, Angel Tree shopping with Student Council, pranking each other at dance camp, dressing up for homecoming week, basketball...softball...dance! Beta Convention is also something I think of fondly; I still remember the theme: "Unity through Diversity".

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

I'm a little jealous. I wish the things that False River offers now were available when we were there. I'd love to have gotten college credit while still in high school!