

Student graduates college in one year

Medical school is next for teen ready to 'settle down'

By Kate Larsen

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BOULDER, Colo. — Alexander Oshmyansky knew the alphabet by the time he was 1. Six months later he was speaking in complete sentences. And in the eighth grade, he took the SAT — scoring in the 98th percentile.

So it may not surprise many people that this 18-year-old will graduate from the University of Colorado next week with a degree in biochemistry. What is surprising is that Oshmyansky spent just two semesters on the Boulder campus and will go on to medical school in the fall.

"I'm ready to settle down," Oshmyansky said of his upcoming graduation. "It's been exhausting." Oshmyansky, called "Osh" by friends, earned three years' worth of college credit while attending high school.

He completed his high school graduation requirements after his freshman year at Dakota Ridge in Littleton. Although he could have finished early, he stuck around.

"I didn't want to be one of those weird little kids walking around college," Oshmyansky said.

In high school, he occasionally attended class, took a lot of advanced placement tests, earned about 100 hours of college credit, acted in school plays and earned the title of homecoming king twice, a title he self-deprecatingly called "nerd king."

This past summer, he taught himself organic chemistry and took the medical school entrance exam.

In addition to taking five classes per semester at CU, he kept busy with other interests. Last fall, he performed in the play "Godspell" on campus. Oshmyansky also was in the President's Leadership Class.

His mentor in the leadership program was senior Cathy Choy. "Not like he needed me or anything," Choy said. "This kid's got his stuff together."

Although he has been at CU less than one year, he's not upset about leaving so soon. Oshmyansky wants to get on with medical school and his career.

"Whatever the purpose of us being on this planet is, part of it is to keep human beings alive," he said. "I can't think of a better way to help with that than to go into medicine or medical research."

He's anxious to get to Duke University or possibly Washington University in St. Louis, but Oshmyansky will be missed.

"I can't even imagine it," said Fran Oshmyansky, Alexander's mother.

"Now I'm not crying, but at first I was pretty bad."

By 18, Fran, a Russian immigrant, was married and had Alexander.

"We kind of grew up together," she said.

Fran had a lot to do with Alexander going to CU instead of Stanford or Harvard.

"He was only 17 and at that age I think it was better for him to stay close to home," she said.

But now he is ready to move away, his mother said.

"He's grown up and very mature," Fran said.

Before he goes, Oshmyansky will spend the summer working in a lab on "new ways of making DNA constructs." But he still will find time for everyday activities, like watching a lot of television.

"I'm a total bum," he said.