

Since Tony has started gaming, he has loved the competitive parts of the games he plays, constantly challenging his friends for more. “The feeling of beating my friends and older brother in...Kung Fu Chaos is what got me hooked into games. Single player games are fun, but the satisfaction from outplaying your opponents in the multiplayer games is what got me into gaming, and is why I still play.” This sense of competition eventually drew Tony towards a game called League of Legends. “I think I started playing League of Legends sometime during 5th grade. My friend showed it to me as something to play when we were sick of playing Minecraft, but after a couple of weeks, it was the only thing I would think about.”



“Although [League of Legends] can be hard to get into (especially now), I'd still recommend people at least try it because once you get the basics down, you realize how much there really is to the game. In my opinion, it has one of the highest skill ceilings of most competitive games, which means you always have room to learn and improve. Plus, with 154 champions in the game, every game is always uniquely fun.”



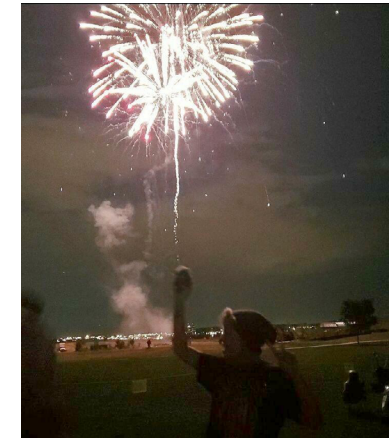
Tony Enhbold

Tony Enhbold is one of the Founding members of the esports club and is currently a co-president. There, he plays League of Legends and has helped his teams become victorious, winning a number of championships. Tony has always had a tight knit history with gaming going as far back as when he was starting school. “I've been gaming for as long as I can remember. My first memory of playing video games was playing Kung Fu Chaos on my Xbox back when I was in kindergarten. After playing console for a couple more years, I slowly transitioned into PC games, starting with Minecraft and League of Legends. Building my first gaming PC back in 7th grade is what really pushed me into competitive gaming, but gaming's always been a part of who I am.”

With this founded interest in the game, he and a couple more people who also enjoy games created Creek's esports club. “Even though I enjoyed the competitive nature of League, I never really thought about playing on an actual team until esports club was created three years ago. Since then, I've played on the team every year.” Since then, Tony has risen up in the club and has become the co-president, helping others push forward to their goal. “Being co-president of the club is a massive privilege. It has taught me a lot about responsibility and leadership, both of which are skills that I'll keep on using for the rest of my life. I'll always be grateful for this opportunity.”



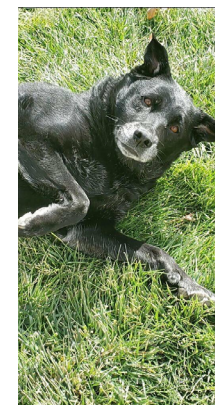
“One of the greatest pros and cons of this school is how big it is,” says Jamie. “Creek is huge, and it's easy to hear one thing about a specific group of people and believe it because you have no personal experience. For many years, Spectrum had a tarnished reputation, and people really did just think we were “the club where the annoying gay kids hang out.” This was certainly based on small perceptions of what former club members did, but it was, and still is, at the bottom line, a stereotype. It's no secret plenty of people look at the Queer community and like to slap ignorant labels on us. I think people need to get out of their own heads. I know it sounds blunt, but it's true. Do not assume you know us. Actively try to get to know us before you dare to judge us. Spectrum is not the only group who's dealt with this. We have a Black Student Union, we have an Asian Leadership Organization, and so many other activism and diversity clubs. They too, must be heard. It's not activism unless you're willing to amplify all of our voices.”



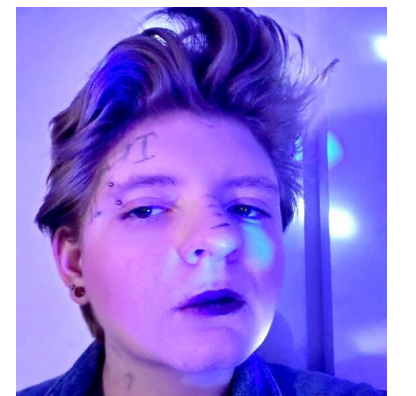
One of Jamie's favorite memories out of his four years of high school was “Last March on the night that it was announced we wouldn't go to school the Friday before spring break, two of my friends and I hung out. I know it sounds simple, but that's one of the fondest memories I have. Oftentimes, kids who are a part of marginalized communities and face mental health issues rarely get the chance to truly just be a kid. That was a night I got to just be a kid. There were no expectations on us to be perfect in any way, and that was one of the things that finally made me realize I deserve a deep breath, and I deserve to love myself no matter how hard things get. Everyone does.”

Jamie has been through a lot over his four years of high school. Out of all the things he has been through, self acceptance was one of the hardest things. “This covers a lot of things for me: My gender, my sexuality, my mental health, my interests, and more. I spent a lot of my life trying to be something I'm not because it was what the world around me wanted. Eventually, that became so exhausting and harmful to me, I decided to work not on ‘fixing myself,’ but loving and accepting myself. However, I would never call this an easy battle. One cannot simply accept themselves overnight, and I'm still learning that.” Jamie does a lot for students and others in the LGBTQ+ community. “It sounds cliché, but I hope being shamelessly and explicitly me has helped. I'm an open book when it comes to being queer, and I've discussed my journey to teachers and other students countless times. It's a vulnerability that not everyone is comfortable expressing themselves, so I hope in my doing so, people can connect their own experiences to mine and learn from them second-hand. I try to encourage and educate people, but I can't single handedly make someone realize and process their identity. I can only do my best to try and show them what those first few baby steps could look like.”

Jamie Ryan



“I'm just grateful I can share my two cents. It's been a wild time in high school, but I survived. And anyone who's reading this who needs to hear it? You, too, will survive. It'll be okay.”



Jamie is very proud of what he has done for the community. “Really, it's my greatest pride I've had so far, and some friends and teachers have even called it my legacy as a Creek student. Specifically, I'm most proud of how much I've learned from being the president of Spectrum. The leadership, organization, and communication skills that I have adapted to and learned has been amazing for me as a person. I know now that what it truly takes to be a leader is not simply big words and telling people what to do, but dedication and careful listening.” While it may have been hard at the start, Jamie has been able to use his voice to inspire and help others. “I want people to know that they don't have to be me to speak up on LGBTQ+ rights and issues. I am a queer activist—the oppression of the LGBTQ+ community is something I live with and face daily, and the desire to be free from the boxes I've been forced into inevitably brought me to activism and using my voice. However, I am just one of countless voices. We need to become better listeners. We need to listen to our trans women of color, because they are disproportionately murdered out of hate. We need to listen to the youth, because I know it's said all the time but the youth is the future. We need to listen to the voices we've tried to silence for so long. We need to listen to each other.”