

Chad Bernstein

Class of 2002, Young Alumnus Award



Dr. Chad Bernstein is a husband and father of four amazing kids, the Co-Founder/CEO of Guitars Over Guns, and a professional musician who has been instrumental in the evolution of the “Latin Funk” sound of Miami. Through the universal language of music, Chad galvanized the artist community to use music as a bridge to reach and empower our most vulnerable youth.

Chad received a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Miami in 2012, turning the focus of his dissertation to Guitars Over Guns’ research-based methods. This set the stage for Chad and his father, Bob, to collaborate on the organization’s creation in 2008. Today, Guitars Over Guns has a \$2,000,000 budget serving nearly 2,000 students a year in Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

In 2015, Chad was honored as a CNN Hero, and has since been featured on the *Steve Harvey Show* and in *People Magazine*. In 2019, Chad received the Ruth Shack Leadership Award, an honor held in Miami’s highest regard; and in 2020 was named an inaugural recipient of the Elevate Prize, selected from among thousands of global changemakers.

Chad serves as a Governor on the board of the Recording Academy, while remaining one of South Florida’s premier Latin, jazz, and funk artists. He performs with the Latin Grammy-nominated Spam Allstars and Miami-based band ¡Suénalo!, and has worked with Pitbull, Shakira, will.i.am, Natalie Cole, Frank Sinatra, Jr., Chaka Kahn, John Legend, Phil Ramone, Pee Wee Ellis, and Jencarlos Canela, among others.

A proud member of New Trier Class of 2002, Chad’s student life was mostly spent on the third floor of the music wing, participating in Jazz Band, Symphonic Band, Orchestra, Jazz Improv, Pep Band, Lagniappe, and trombone and piano lessons. He fondly remembers the Cultural Immersion trip to China with Jazz 1. When not making music, Chad could be found playing hockey, lacrosse or wrestling. For his Senior Project, Chad recorded his first CD, engineered by fellow New Trier students and featuring science teacher Nick Drozdoff. He is humbled to be named to New Trier’s Alumni Hall of Honor.

