

SPRING  
2011

# ARISE news

**ARISE's Class of 2011 seniors have been accepted at the following schools:**

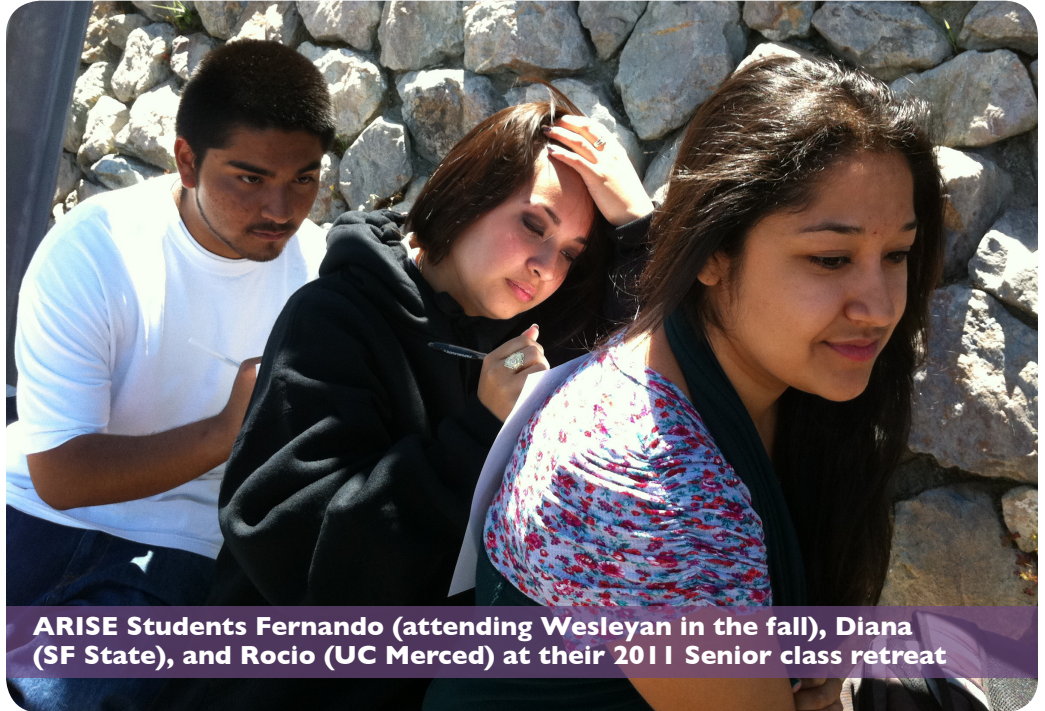
**California State Universities:**

Chico, Dominguez Hills, East Bay, Humboldt, Long Beach, Northridge, Sacramento, San Diego, San Jose, Sonoma

**University of California:**

Merced, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz

**Private:** Bryn Mawr, Dominican, Menlo College, Middlebury, Mount St. Mary's, Notre Dame de Namur, Occidental, St. Mary's, Smith, USF, Wesleyan, Williams, Whitman, Vassar (waitlist)



**ARISE Students Fernando (attending Wesleyan in the fall), Diana (SF State), and Rocio (UC Merced) at their 2011 Senior class retreat**

## ARISE Alumni Reflect on First Year of College

When Claudia talks about her early days at ARISE High School, she reflects with amusement on her resistance to the school's rigorous expectations. "My entire point was that they would make us work too hard," she recalls, "and that no other high school students had to do what we did at ARISE. I would give [Principal] Laura Flaxman such a hard time!"

This past fall, three years of hard work at ARISE behind her and three weeks into her first semester at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, Claudia typed out a text message to Flaxman. "I texted Laura," she recalls, "and I told her, 'Oh thank you so much for preparing me so well for college.' Being here at college putting all the skills we learned at ARISE to use, and seeing that I'm not having as tough a time as other first-year students, I was like, 'Laura, I owe you one!'"

"Before ARISE I hadn't had to make a 40-minute presentation on what I had learned in Math or Biology, to demonstrate what I was taking away," says Claudia. "Doing things like that got me really comfortable speaking in front of people. [Now at Willamette],

some students are afraid or intimidated to speak up, but because I'm so used to it, I feel really comfortable participating and asking questions."

This sense of empowerment is one echoed by James, a fellow member of ARISE's first graduating class last spring and now a first-year student at California State University, Northridge. "You really have to take initiative in college," he explains. "At ARISE we had teachers knowing us on a personal level, but professors? You're not on their mind, they don't know your name."

James quickly took it upon himself to make them know it. "I go up to my professors and introduce myself, ask them questions," he says. "You need to do it for yourself, it's a must, and then once you get to know them it will go a long way for you." After reaching out to his math professor, James says she later "pulled me to the side and told me, 'I'm going to help you as much as I can.' She was so cool about it."

**"I feel proud to represent ARISE"**

While the Class of 2010 has transitioned smoothly to the next level, acclimation has not been without its obstacles. "I knew it might be difficult because Willamette is a predominantly white campus," says Claudia. "Also, I had never been away from Oakland for more than a month. I had to both get used to my surroundings and learn how to relate to a completely different group of people. Some had misconceptions about me and about Oakland in general, but I felt comfortable helping others see a different side of Oakland. I feel proud to be from Oakland and to represent ARISE here."

Both James and Claudia credit ongoing support from the ARISE family – former teachers, administrators, and classmates – with helping them through their first year. "Teachers and staff at ARISE are willing to help us reach our goals in high school, in college, and beyond college," says Claudia. "It's a really great support system."

Texting among ARISE alumni and former teachers and staff is common, and former principal Romeo Garcia even traveled to Salem to visit Claudia at Willamette. And, of

course, the ARISE grads have each other. “Four of my best friends were in my graduating class,” says Claudia, “and we all went away to college. If I’m ever having a tough time I’ll just call them and I know they’ll be understanding, because they’re going through exactly the same things.”

Nor have the alumni forgotten their peers still at ARISE. During Northridge’s spring break, James returned to campus and met with current seniors. “I spoke with the students and told them about college so far, how I feel it’s a great experience that everybody should go through. I told them, ‘If I can do it,

any of you can. There are so many advantages here at ARISE – so many. They bring in so many resources, take you on college tours -- you just have to take advantage of all these opportunities.’ That was my main advice.”

“It’s so powerful to have them here,” says Flaxman, “because these students were in [our current seniors’] shoes not long ago, and they know them very very well. To see them come back and hear that not only did they all get into college, but they are all doing very well, we now have these proof points. These alumni can really motivate them and show them that college is totally within reach.”

“I honestly felt like they were really listening,” reflects James. “Since I was their peer, it was that much easier for them to interact with me like that.” James has high hopes for the Class of 2011, a big smile appearing as he talks about all the colleges where they’ve been accepted. (See box, front page.) “It’s really good, I’m really proud of what the school is doing. The way they prepared me, I know for a fact that this year’s seniors are ready and prepared to succeed. I feel like they’re putting their all into it.”



“So much was given to us by the ARISE staff,” says Claudia (pictured above during ARISE’s 2010 Graduation). “I’m looking forward to giving back this summer, working as a college mentor for low-income high school seniors in the East Bay.”

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 23-26 • 1-4pm  
10th Grade Bridge presentations

June 6-10 • 9am-4pm  
Senior Institute proficiency presentations

June 14 • 5-7:30pm  
Exhibition Night

June 17 • 2pm  
Graduation at Laney College

June 23 • 6-8pm  
Mentor Appreciation / Fundraiser

*We’re looking for community members to serve as panelists for our Bridge and proficiency presentations. **RSVP to [Kate@arisehighschool.org](mailto:Kate@arisehighschool.org) to attend any of the events listed above.***

## ARISE Welcomes New Leaders

In January, we announced that co-principals Laura Flaxman and Romeo Garcia were “happily passing the torch to two incredibly talented and dedicated leaders: G Reyes and Kate Sugarman.” Schools are not always able to hire “from within” for the principal role, but we are thrilled to have done so here: Both Reyes and Sugarman were teachers in ARISE classrooms, so their transition has been seamless.

“I have been amazed to watch the evolution of ARISE over the past three and a half years,” says Sugarman, who was a founding teacher. “The level of expectations and quality of student work have been steadily rising. ARISE is becoming a beautiful community of learners, artists, and scholars, and it has been a privilege to be part of that process. I look forward to all the great things this group of students, parents, and teachers will accomplish.”

## SUPPORT ARISE!

As a public school, our budget covers only our most basic resources, and even those are at risk as we enter 2011-12 facing roughly \$100,000 in budget cuts. You can help us continue offering our kids essential college-prep activities such as college tours. Consider a tax-deductible contribution at [www.arisehighschool.org](http://www.arisehighschool.org) or by check to:

“ARISE High School,” 3301 East 12th Street, Oakland, CA 94601-3424. **Thank you!**

## ARISE HIGH SCHOOL

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ARISE is a member of the OSF network