



THEY MAKE THE ROAD *CCPA juniors keep blazing trail toward college*

As we've shared in recent Communicator editions, Coliseum College Prep Academy's current 11th-graders – our school's first graduating class – have been taking major steps into their collective future. Be it taking classes on the Laney campus alongside current college students, or gaining worldly know-how through extended out-of-state Summer Search residencies, the Class of 2012 is out ahead of the curve, preparing for college in unique ways.

2010-11 has also been the pilot year for CCPA's We Make the Road Program, another key part of our juniors' journey. The program, which "aims to help students become more aware of what direction they wish to walk in and start making the road to get there," connects kids with internships such as Rosa, Deysi, and Cristina's work at UC Berkeley's Stiles Hall, the venerable community-service office dedicated to helping lower-income Bay Area high school students reach college.

Among the CCPA juniors' duties has been creating and updating a tumblr.com blog site connecting high-schoolers with college admission resources. "We're posting information about UC Berkeley and other colleges, about application deadlines and scholarships and financial aid," says Rosa.

"One of our goals," says Deysi, "is to inform other high school students who don't have the same information we do here at CCPA. We want all students to have the same opportunities." As a bonus, the kids

are becoming more knowledgeable about the process themselves. "Since we're trying to help other students, we're also informing ourselves so we know what to expect [next year when we apply]."

The internship is also preparing them for life out in the job world, says Rosa. "Just having the experience to know what having a job is like, to have that feeling of responsibility you have at a job is important."

"It's also just good to be around students who are at an actual college campus," relates Cristina, "so when you start it's not something so different. We'll be used to it already."

As the first CCPA students to intern at Stiles Hall, the three juniors hope to leave a legacy and a roadmap for their younger schoolmates.

"If they continue reading the tumblr blog, when they get to pick their internships in the future, they can follow in our footsteps, and the cycle continues."

Three other 11th-graders are also getting a technological edge at their internship, at Oakland Technology Exchange (OTX) in West Oakland. "This internship has benefited me in different ways," says Darien. "I've learned how to use different

software, for example Microsoft [Excel]. I also learned how to take apart a computer into little parts ...this helps me to become more aware about how to fix computers." His peers, Jesus and Antonio, have learned to use Microsoft PowerPoint for presentations.

Across the Bay, Yusuri and Freddy are interning at the Civic Engagement Center in San Francisco. The Center supports public service efforts such as the Japan Relief Fund. The kids' role there is wide-ranging. "We have a different schedule each time we go," says Yusuri. "Sometimes we shadow our mentor, Dale, do book work, or something new could pop up and we help with that."

Both Yusuri and Freddy hope to become more confident public speakers and to gain networking know-how. Their mentor teaches a civic engagement course at Berkeley, which the kids observed and later

gave presentations to share what they learned. "We're gaining skills to express ourselves and to network, which will help us have more opportunities in the future.

"The internship is helping us gain knowledge of how the real world is," reflects Freddy. "We're learning about what things are happening out in the world and how we can help out and come together. When we come together, we can do great things."

"The fact that CCPA offers [the internship program] is a great help and opportunity for kids to experience new things and get to know what you really like, so that when the time comes, you already know what you're interested in."

– Rosa, Class of 2012



Out-of-Class Adventures Spark Curiosity in 6th-Graders

While recent Communicator newsletters have focused on our 2012 graduating class – CCPA’s first – and their inspiring college-prep activities, our youngest students have been venturing out on formative experiences of their own. Our 6th-graders’ horizon-expanding field trips have included the Vida Verde overnight outdoor education trip, as well as visits to San Francisco’s Academy of Sciences and Aquarium of the Bay.

While the newness of the out-of-class experiences was valuable in itself, the kids’ teachers made a point to deepen the visits by connecting them to classroom content. On both trips, they were able to see, up

close, the fossils they’d been studying in class, as well as penguins, stingrays, and frogs, which they had also been reading about beforehand. “When you experience it in person, your grades can get better,” says Sophia, “because you have a different point of view.”

At the time of this interview, Sophia and her classmates Carlos and Jesus were looking forward to their next big trip: Vida Verde overnight outdoor education camp. “I’m looking forward to seeing new creatures out in the wild. I think I’ll really like it because it’s along the beach,” says Jesus. “We can learn how to take better care of the environment,” adds Carlos.

They did express some trepidation about being cut off from television, phones, and other technology. “To get away from technology, that’s hard,” mused Sophia. “But it’s good though, right? Yeah...Just let it rest, leave it behind.”

“Whatever you experience as a child, when you grow up it can kind of help you out in life,” says Sophia. “CCPA’s a good school. They want you to go experience a lot of things before you go off to college.”

SUPPORT CCPA!

In this era of unprecedented state cuts, CCPA’s already tight budget is being cut by more than 10 percent entering 2011-12, putting our rich out-of-classroom experiences like Vida Verde at risk.

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Coliseum College Prep Academy

1390 66th Ave. • Oakland, CA 94621

510-639-3201

Aaron Townsend, Principal

aaron.townsend@ousd.k12.ca.us

www.coliseumcollegeprep.org



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