



Jefferson High School

Tom-Tom

Daly City, California

Seniors' success attributed to many

Looking at this year's senior class, Jefferson High School should be very proud of the Class of '08.

Never before has the school seen so many graduates going on to a four-year university. A bar is set. More than 100 Jefferson graduates this year will step foot into a four year institution this fall. And a handful more plan to continue their journey through the community college system.

Was it just luck or did something else propel the Class of '08 to be such a successful story?

It could be that the newcomers are able to build those trusts that students rely on. Only one out of four main counselors has been a counselor since the Class of '08 entered Jefferson back in 2004. Maybe the counselors developed

good relationships with seniors. Marcia Villareal helped with the prom organization. Shannon Paras has helped towards placing us in the right direction.

Even though the other three (Tricia Davis, Donna Kaplan and Charles Taylor) are new, the relationships built with students were solid. The teachers that were there, not surprisingly, are still there and we hope that their dedication continues. The trust that was built allowed us to continue onto the next level. You will not be forgotten.

Signs of the strength of the senior class also show in tutoring as three seniors are supervisors at Homework Centers at Jefferson and Ben Franklin Middle School. Furthermore, out of 10 tutors at the Homework Center at Jefferson, only two are not seniors.

Whatever the reason, the senior class is a major success story.

One thing that some seniors greatly got help from was the School Within A School (SWAS) program. An earlier and smaller version of Small Learning Communities (SLCs), it gave struggling students of the Class of '08 new venues of learning that ultimately led to the huge turnout of prospective college students for this fall.

One man stands out in many of the seniors' minds: Spencer Holeman. Holeman was always around to help with advice and guidance and opened up many doors for the senior class, with his very generous contributions. Without him, many seniors would maybe not be as committed as they are now.

Another program that helped seniors this year was the College and Career Center. With a new staff, Anne Carew, Shannon Noonan, and most of all Jackie Amparo, someone turned the lights on when you walked in.

The College and Career Center held FAFSA nights for parents and students, sponsored scholarships, conducted campus visits and really pushed the idea to the whole Class of '08 that college was not just for the rich white kid, but for anyone who wanted to go.

We believe that it is those people who have been with us through this journey that deserve the credit. The freshman teachers that motivated us when we came to Jeff with a bad perception, a counselor who got past the past and moved forward, the summer programs that opened our eyes to the opportunities that were available. The benefactors, the outreach programs gave us that helping hand. All contributed to our pursuit of a higher education.

You can expect that in 10 years, the Class of '08 reunion will be full of lawyers, doctors, engineers, and business entrepreneurs. So let the seniors leave with the battle-cry: "OOHH-EIGHT!"

Notes:

Spencer Holeman - Exec. Dir. of Children's Empowerment, Inc. (CEI)

Homework Center - CEI's after-school tutoring program

SWAS - CEI's program for Sophomores

SLC - Smaller Learning Communities based on SWAS