

Start to plan a meaningful summer now!

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

On both the Common Application and the University of California application there is a section to list and describe your accomplishments, including summer activities. If it is on the application, it is safe to assume that it is important in the admissions process.

Younger students still forming their interests should have the most leverage to explore rather than select something that 'looks good' on a college application. For example, a student may want to volunteer for an animal rescue foundation over the summer but may show little or no interest in becoming a veterinarian. Knowing what you don't want to do is as important as knowing what you do want to do. As a student develops a deeper interest in a particular area of knowledge, career, or research they should focus on depth rather than breadth and aim to immerse themselves in several substantive activities related to that interest, both in and outside the school environment. For example, if a student believes she wants to become a doctor, she should take advanced placement science courses as well as demonstrate an active interest in clinical medicine by volunteering in a healthcare environment or doing research.

It is important that a student's interests not be judged as good or bad depending on whether it fits an adult's idea of meaningful or career focused. That's a surefire way to kill passion before it has a chance to take root. Also, I recommend students be encouraged to pursue their interests rather than prestige; when they do so they often enjoy far better admission results.

You do not have to travel or spend a ton of money for your summer to have an impact. Here is a list of possibilities:
Online courses: I had one student who was on a tight budget. She enrolled in an inexpensive online design course and was guided through the creation of a 3-dimensional model of a bedroom (complete with furnishings, complementary fabrics, window treatments, rugs, the works). Her summer project became part of her college portfolio, and she was successfully offered admission to several excellent architectural programs.

Employment: This is an often underrated experience that is highly valued by admission offices. Students usually get a job in the summer and learn many vital life lessons and sometimes gain valuable leadership experience – if they can

continue the job into the high school year on a part-time basis, all the better. I had one student who held down a part-time hostess job in the summer and then received a promotion to lead hostess for upcoming school months. Her new position required that she train new employees, often individuals older than herself. This is impressive to colleges, and she was admitted to several strong schools of business.

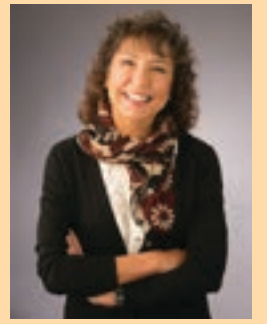
Internships/Programs: Internships and programs are tremendous opportunities for students to build specific skill sets and gain valuable experience in a field they want to explore more fully. There are many language immersion, service, humanities, math, science, computer science and engineering programs to choose from and costs vary greatly. It is best to get an early start researching these opportunities as many of the more competitive internships and programs have December and January deadlines. Another bonus of applying to more selective internships is that the application is similar to the college application (many selective programs require one to two letters of recommendation, school transcript, test scores and one or more essays). A 10th or 11th grader who com-

pletes this type of application process often has a head start on the college application process. High school students who get a later start on summer plans should not despair; each week I hear about another great opportunity a student finds by exercising due diligence with a deadline still in the future.

Community Service: Time is more plentiful during the summer and students who are drawn to volunteerism can expand this interest over the break. That said, it is best if the project is planned well in advance and executed over the summer. It is also best if something lasting can be achieved for the nonprofit organization where the student volunteers. The impact on the community should be both positive and lasting.

Teen Tours and Travel: Frankly, most of these programs are exorbitantly expensive. They can be a terrific investment if you keep in mind that the experience needs to be transforming in some way (like language and cultural immersion for a student who wants to major in international affairs) or has an otherwise special feature (like a strong community service component).

College Research and Visits: Early summer is a perfect



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time to develop a balanced list of good fit colleges and explore each college fully. You can research colleges carefully at home and, if possible, plan to visit a few in order to develop an appreciation of the differences among institutions.

Acalanes heads to state playoffs; Mats come up short

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"Our coaches were saying that usually in that defense, we follow the crosser, but they knew something was going to come back to the other side, so I just waited and once I saw that ball in the air, I made the interception," Rogers said

Littlejohn also had two sacks. "Deonte has been a great player and just a year ago, he was playing freshman football," assistant coach David Ortega said.

Coming into the game, the key was to slow down Escalon's running attack. "We knew it was going to be hard to stop their offense the way they overload and run the wing T," Burnsed said. "They run that way, and they do a great job, and it took us a while to get it going. The time of possession was crazy, but we scored almost every time we got the ball."

The Dons have relied on team defense all year having had 18 different players with at least one tackle for loss, led by

Andrew Davenport and Deonte Littlejohn, each with 15 tackles for loss. The team also had 29 sacks led by Drew McKenzie (5) and Collin Malmquist (5)."

Early in the game, Acalanes stopped Escalon on two key fourth down plays deep in Acalanes territory and that set a precedent for the rest of the game. "We knew we had to play a full game and our kids understood that," Ortega said. "We lack a little bit in size but we're fast and we like to get into people. I'm really proud of them because we've come a long way. From the start, this has been a team with a goal, and they've been achieving their goals and believed the whole time that they could get there."

Though already planning for the logistics for the championship, Burnsed took a moment to share his personal feelings: "This is really special, especially with a great group of kids, Acalanes and the community here. I think it's awesome."

Miramonte

It's been a year of streaks for Miramonte – winning their first six games, losing their next three and then coming into their North Coast Regional Championship game against Pleasant Valley High School with a three-game winning streak, all of them North Coast Sectional games.

Pleasant Valley, a much higher ranked team, was bigger in size and numbers and that proved to be the difference in the game. Still, Miramonte was only trailing 17-12, behind two Carson Blair to Jack Quinnild touchdown passes, entering the fourth quarter before losing by a final score of 31-12.

Miramonte head coach Jack Schram knew it was going to be a difficult challenge to take on the much higher ranked Pleasant Valley team. "They're very dynamic in everything they do," Schram said. "They spread it and go unbalanced and do a lot of different things. In the end we needed to play a better game than we did but we had our

moments. We took our first drive and went 80 yards for the touchdown. We then had a couple of good, sustained drives but we had a couple of interceptions when we had opportunities to really seize the momentum."

Senior linebacker, Gabe Roman, felt the team left it all out on the field. "We knew it was going to be a hard fight. We started off well and even when we struggled a little bit later in the game, we responded back well," Roman said. "With their larger roster, they were able to keep more guys fresh whereas we had a lot of guys going both ways. Unfortunately, it got away from us at the end. "Even though we lost the game, it was a good representation of how our season went in that we never gave up. Obviously winning the NCS title game and just coming up short of going to the state championship game was upsetting but I was happy with the success we had this year."

The size difference took away Miramonte's ability to

run as effectively as they had done during the season. "We couldn't run the ball effectively against them, and then they made some adjustments in the second half when they went down to a five min box instead of seven," Schram said. "When we saw that in the past, we had been able to run against this type of defense but tonight we weren't able to, and once we fell behind by more than one score behind it really put the pressure on us and we gave up more sacks than we had all season."

Schram made it a point to salute the team's seniors: "I told them how proud we were to win the North Coast Sectional championship, and this was the first time Miramonte's been invited to the regional championship, so it was all on their leadership. Coming off of last year's disappointing NCS championship loss, we came one step farther and now the challenge for this year's juniors is to win another NCS championship and win the regional game next year."

Troop 243 in Lafayette honors newest Eagle Scout

Submitted by Paul Mason



Photo provided

Renton, who was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout at a Court of Honor on Nov. 14, after earning 21 merit badges, completing a community service project, and holding several leadership positions.

Having just turned 15, Finn is one of the youngest Eagle Scouts in the country. Finn's community service project took place at Campolindo High School and included constructing a canopy to protect students from the elements, fixing the goat pen, and mulching the vegetable garden.

Finn was also a recipient of the Lafayette Green Award for his environmental work in getting gas-powered leaf blowers banned in Lafayette. Finn's favorite merit badge was scuba diving, which he earned while living in Lima, Peru. He believes that cooking, financial management, and leadership are the most valuable skills he has learned during his Scouting journey.

Boy Scout Troop 243 in Lafayette recently honored its newest Eagle Scout, Finn

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Hope springs eternal for Lamorinda basketball

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"Tim is good defensively and we're looking for him to make more of an impact offensively," Dyer said. "Luke had some good minutes in our scrimmages so we're looking for him to continue to improve on that. Will, a volleyball player, has good size and has been making progress."

Defense remains at the forefront of Dyer's priorities: "It's team defense. Even

though it's an inexperienced group, these guys have won a lot on the lower level and have used the same system we use on varsity, so it's just a matter of translating how to do it at the varsity level playing against better guys, and it just takes a lot of work to be good defensively."

The team is going to have to find its success through character and determination. "We might not necessarily have the talent that we had

the last five years, but we have a really good group in terms of chemistry and connectivity," Dyer said. "They've all got to be able to chip in, scoring-wise, because we're not going to have a dominant scorer so it's finding out who's going to get the 6 to 10 points a game consistently throughout the year to be an everyday guy. We have to be really well connected as a team and that's where we're going to try to continue to do better."



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