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May—June 2004

Castro Valley AVID Middle School Teacher Awarded

Awarded teacher ‘tilts’ youth in right direction

By **Sophia Kazmi** (Reprinted with permission from the *Contra Costa Times*)

CASTRO VALLEY—When the California League of Middle Schools board asked the nominees for the state educator of the year award to prepare a speech, Canyon Middle School teacher K. J. Forbes recited a poem he wrote.

He called it “Any Middle School, California,” and it discussed what middle school kids see at school “and the things they don’t see.” He writes poems to his two young daughters in the mornings at his Danville home, so writing and reciting one for a larger audience wasn’t a big stretch.

The following evening, much to his surprise, Forbes won the award. He was so unprepared, he was dressed in shorts and a Chico State shirt when they announced his name.

“I guess it went over well,” Forbes said, referring to the poem. Forbes, one of 11 nominees, was a unique candidate, said Anita Murphy, assistant executive director of the California League of Middle Schools, a professional organization made up of about 7,500 teachers and administrators from California public and private schools.

“He is very special, and it really showed through his comments,” she said. “He brought out an extra dimension.”

Almost a month after that fateful March night in San Jose, the eight-grade history and college-prep teacher and video-journalism adviser is still coming to terms with his award. In December, Forbes won the Bay Area regional award, which put him in the running for the state award.

As a teacher, such rewards are not expected, Forbes said. He said he teaches eighth-graders because he loves the energy the students have,

and he appreciates his students’ honesty. He believes he can make a difference in students’ lives by teaching on that level.

“A middle-school teacher can tilt a student sort of on the edge in the right direction,” he said.

That’s why he enjoys teaching AVID Advancement Via Individual Determination, a college-prep class aimed at students with grade-point averages from 2.0 to 3.5. The classes feature tutoring, guest speakers and other activities.

He credits his wife, Janis Parent, for inspiring him, as well as his parents, who always encouraged him and his five siblings—who all became teachers—to make a difference in the world.

Adding to his good fortune, Forbes was named the Castro Valley School District’s teacher of the year.

Forbes said it’s nice when students just appreciate his work. “What a teacher wants out of life is to see that their kids made it: It’s all we hope for as teachers.”

Welcome New AVID Schools—

Region IV would like to welcome the following sites who have made a commitment to starting AVID in fall 2004:

- ♦ Bret Harte Middle
- ♦ Harvest Park Middle
- ♦ Ingrid B. Lacy Middle
- ♦ Excelsior Middle
- ♦ Napa High

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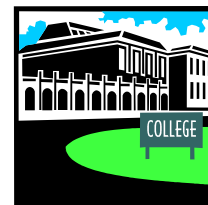
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Important Notes...

- ♦ In Colleges That Change Lives, Loren Pope writes about 40 liberal arts colleges and universities where teaching is a priority. These schools have many faculty members who attended or taught at Ivy League schools. When they arrived at one of these 40 colleges to teach, however, they found that teaching was “what they thought it was supposed to be like.”



These forty colleges share certain characteristics:

- Learning is collaborative, not competitive
- There is a discussion of values in the classrooms and elsewhere on campus
- There is a sense of community and connection that goes well beyond 4 years of attendance
- Students are there to learn, not to just get a degree
- Students want to tell the story about how the college has changed them

The focus campus-wide is on the transformation between orientation and graduation, rather than on the accomplishments of admitted students. These 40 colleges/universities have formed a consortium. They will be in California in August to meet with prospective students and parents. The dates and times of the visits are as follows:

August 10, 2004; 7:00—9:00 p.m.
Doubletree Sacramento

August 11, 2004; 7:00—9:00 p.m.
South San Francisco Conference Center

If you would like a copy of this book for your AVID classroom, e-mail Gail Schroeder at gschroed@cccoe.k12.ca.us.

- ♦ The **WACAC Conference** set for June 7-9, 2004 at Sonoma State University will have a number of interesting sessions for AVID teachers and counselors. Some of the workshop titles are as follows:

- Beyond the Scores: How to Use College Entrance Exams in Pre-College Advising
- Cash for College: Financial Aid Resources
- Changing the Culture: Challenging Families to Consider a 4 Year College
- Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Colleges Share a Book Cover and Much More
- Diversity and Affirmative Action: How the Landscape Has Changed
- Educating Your Community about the 2004 PSAT and SAT Changes

To register, go to: www.wacac.org. After May 31st, registration is at the door. AVID Region IV will pay for the registration and conference expenses for five people – either AVID counselors or teachers of AVID seniors. E-mail Gail Schroeder at: gschroed@cccoe.k12.ca.us, if you are interested. If you attend, we will be asking you to present some of the information to your fellow AVID teachers in 2004-2005.

- ♦ The **New SAT**, which will be given for the first time in March 2005, focuses on critical reading, mathematics and writing. The new PSAT will be given in October 2004.

Why is the SAT changing?

To better reflect today's classroom practices, to make the test more closely related to the skills students will need to succeed in college, to reinforce the importance of writing skills, and to help colleges make better admissions and placement decisions.

Will the new SAT be harder?

No



What are the major changes to the SAT?

Verbal—the name will be changed to critical reading. Analogies will be eliminated. Short paragraph reading passages will be added to existing long reading passages.

Math—content will be enhanced to include additional topics and will include some content from third-year college-preparatory math. Math content on the PSAT will also be enhanced, but it will not include Algebra II because most students will not be familiar with that level of math. Quantitative comparisons will be eliminated.

Writing—will have multiple-choice grammar and usage questions. A student written essay will be added.

College Board will be offering workshops on the new SAT in fall 2004. The workshop dates will be set by the end of May. In fall, the AVID program will pay the sub costs for sophomore and junior AVID teachers to attend these workshops. Stay tuned for further information.

School News...

- ♦ All AVID students at **Hayward High School** attended the St. Mary's College Fair on May 8, 2004. On May 13-17, 2004, all juniors will go to Southern California to tour colleges, and meet up with Hayward High alumni at most of the colleges. In conjunction with Teacher Appreciation Day, each section of AVID students nominated one teacher who has made a difference in their lives. These teachers were recognized at a luncheon on April 29, 2004.



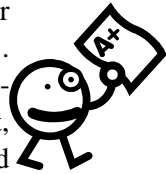
Back row: Matthew Freschi, Lillian Paluchi, Amy Symons and Peggy Hearne. Front row: Dr. Charles Martin and Michelle Stone. Not pictured: Mike Dwyer

Hayward High School's AVID Exemplary Teacher Award Winners (left) and AVID Team (right)



Back row: Jesse Formaker, 11th grade; Paul Gonçalves, counselor. Front row: Shannon Moon, coordinator, 9th/11th grade; Tanisha Fitzgerald, 10th grade.

- ♦ **Carlmont High School's** AVID program celebrated student achievement on February 24, 2004, and honored many students for their first semester academic success. Tanya Rodrigues, former AVID student and current UC Berkeley student, guest speaker, was both inspiring and motivating. They had many AVID students on the Honor Roll in the first semester—GREAT WORK! In March the students headed off to Sonoma State and SF State for college tours and held a candy sale. In April, they had a Spring Car Wash.



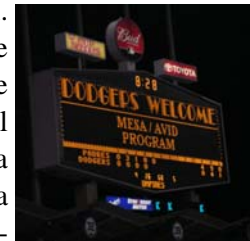
- ♦ What's better than taking 30 students to L.A.? Taking 40, of course! **Woodside High School's** AVID students' annual spring break college-visit trip was



bigger and better than ever this year. More students attended, more schools visited, and more fun had by all.

The group of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, up by ten students from last year's group, took tours and learned about the ins and outs of college life from student panels and admissions officers at Cal Poly, UCLA, Harvey Mudd College, and Cal Tech during the four-day whirlwind tour. The message could not have been clearer: competition is up, admissions are down, but

our school still wants people like you. Said one sophomore, "This trip really motivated me to get serious about improving my GPA and getting into a great college. And I saw that students who work hard can achieve their goals." Other students got clearer insight into what kinds of classes studies in the fields that interest them would entail. Everyone appreciated having the opportunity to see such a diverse range of schools. Of course, all work and no play make for a dull spring break trip, so a Dodgers' game and a trip to Disneyland rounded out the experience. All in all, the trip was a great success thanks to the fundraising efforts of the students and the organizational heroics of program coordinator Margarita Navarro.



- ♦ **Encinal High School's** AVID students visited Sonoma State University on May 12. The student-led tour was good, but what made the field trip the best we've had was the effort the university made to tailor our visit to our specific needs. Following the tour, an admissions representative reviewed entrance requirements and financial aid with our students. After that, a panel of SSU students from the EOP program, some of whom were former AVID students, spoke to our group and fielded questions. The phone number for arranging group tours to Sonoma State is (707) 664-3029.



Congratulations Seniors!

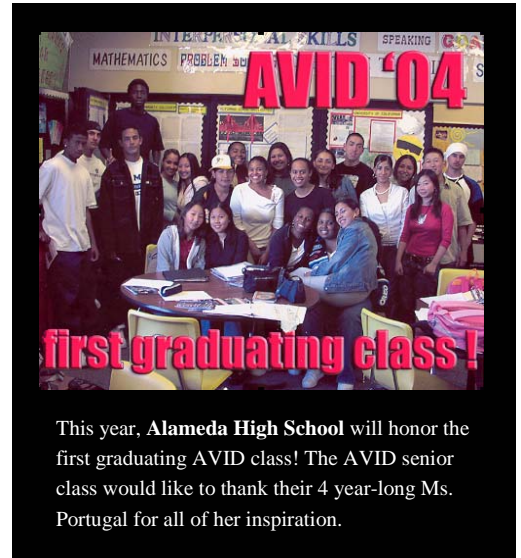
Class of
2004

School News...

Will C. Wood High School

- ☺ **Patricia Dias**—has worked hard to complete college requirements. She has been accepted to both CSU San Francisco and Sacramento.
- ☺ **Brian Padmos**—keeps a B+ average and has been accepted to CSU Sacramento.
- ☺ **Thomas Redding**—has been responsible for broadcasting morning music to the school and organizing the patriotic observance each morning. We will really miss him. He will be attending Solano Community College with the goal of transferring to UC Berkeley.
- ☺ **Estela Rios**—our first senior to complete the Senior Seminar elective. She will be attending CSU Sacramento.
- ☺ **Devin Robinette**—a hard working girl who maintains a B+ average while being very active in student council. She was accepted to Arizona State University.
- ☺ **Ashlie Williams-Tam**—our “quirky,” fun-loving and thoughtful senior. We will miss Ashlie’s sense of humor. She will be attending Sacramento City College.

“We are truly proud of your achievements. Your individual determination has helped you prepare for the future. We wish you the very best, and want to share our enthusiasm with all of you. As you welcome new challenges, keep an open mind to all of the opportunities being offered to you. Have fun and enjoy your lives as college students!”—Best regards, Alameda High School AVID Team.



This year, Alameda High School will honor the first graduating AVID class! The AVID senior class would like to thank their 4 year-long Ms. Portugal for all of her inspiration.



Student Quotes from Hillsdale High School:

- ◆ “AVID helped me accomplish my goals.”—**Jenny B.**
- ◆ “AVID taught me the importance of college and taught me strategies to succeed in high school when I felt that I couldn’t.”—**Vanessa Aguirre**
- ◆ “The skills that I have learned in AVID over the past four years have helped me become successful in high school, and will help me continue to be a success in the future.”—**Brian Fitzgerald**
- ◆ “Through the taking of many Cornell notes, and the notebook checks, and not to mention the treacherous task of learning to deal with one another, and not to mention those hard goodbyes, we have stood together and our strong bond represents unity between all of us”—**Katy Herbert**
- ◆ “Once we graduate, we begin our college experience where we will use our AVID skills to achieve higher goals.”—**Marisol Farjado**
- ◆ “AVID helped me open my eyes and realize that I too could go to college.”—**Miguel**
- ◆ “AVID is like another family away from home, because you receive the love and support you need to succeed.”—**Stephanie Castellanos**
- ◆ “When I first started AVID I knew one or two people in the class, but as time progressed we grew from being strangers into a tight-knit family.”—**Amber G.**
- ◆ “They continuously asked me how well I wanted to do in high school and if I planned on attending college the fall after my senior year.”—**Renee Gonzales**



The Woodside High School AVID Class of 2004 was extremely successful with college admissions this year. Students were accepted to the following schools: Santa Clara University (9); University of San Francisco (7); San Jose State University (19); San Francisco State (14); CSU Humboldt (2); CSU Hayward (2); CSU Chico (3); San Diego State (2); St. Mary’s University (7); UC Santa Barbara (2); UC Riverside (2); UC Santa Cruz (8); UC Davis (7); and UC Berkeley (3).

