



Talent Hotbeds

Winter 2010

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the winter issue of the semi-annual e-newsletter *Prep@Pingree Perspective*. Our objective in sending these columns is to communicate the perspectives people gain through their connections to Prep@Pingree.

Talent Hotbeds

by **Steve Filosa, Director**



One of the most fascinating reads I've enjoyed this winter is David Coyle's *The Talent Code*. His concise, inspiring study of talent weaves together the most recent brain research, behavioral research and real-life experience. Mr. Coyle examines the important role myelin - a microscopic neural substance that adds vast amounts of speed and accuracy to our movements

and thoughts - plays in developing our gifts and optimizing our performance in art, math, music, sports or just about anything. Mr. Coyle describes "deep practice" (the specific kinds of practice that increase skill at a fast pace), "ignition" (how we are motivated by our unconscious desires and primal cues) and "master coaching" (the qualities of the most impactful teachers, trainers and coaches).

Whether at a futsal game in Brazil or KIPP Academy classrooms in the inner-city, Mr. Coyle visits and studies what he calls "talent hotbeds." He considers passion a key element in the talent code and writes that passion is evident "in the way people carry their violin, cradle their soccer balls, and sharpen their pencils. It shows in the way people treat bare-bones practice areas as if they are cathedrals; in the alert, respectful gazes that follow a coach. The feeling isn't always shiny and happy - sometimes it is dark and obsessive, and sometimes it is like the quiet, abiding love in old married couples. But the passion is always there, providing the emotional rocket fuel that keeps firing the circuits, honing skills, getting better."

The voices that follow in this issue of *Prep@Pingree Perspective* all speak to Mr. Coyle's recognition of the integral role played by passion in the talent hotbeds that are cultivated each summer at Prep@Pingree. Whether it is our first alumnus German Disla's love of music, Josh Shain's commitment to his students or Forest Foundation's enthusiasm for nurturing and sustaining important organizations providing critical services for the betterment of society, all of these individuals represent the people who make Prep@Pingree thrive, throughout the Great Recession of 2009 and beyond.

Prepared For High School, College and Beyond

By **German Disla, Prep@Pingree '02 and '03, Pingree School '07, Gordon College '11**

Prep@Pingree prepared me because it put me in a real learning environment that was always challenging in so many ways. It took me away from all of the distractions and made me learn academic skills that are necessary for any prep school. Prep@Pingree provided me with the toolbox that I needed to enter high school and the world.



The mission of Prep@Pingree is to provide an ongoing academic and cultural enrichment program for talented, urban, middle-school students. Through an intensive five-week summer program and supplemental year round support, Prep@Pingree prepares admitted students for independent, parochial, and public high schools. Prep@Pingree balances rigorous

academics with
co-curricular experiences.



Places like Prep@Pingree helped me realize that there are NO LIMITS to the things that I can do. I can go as far as my mind and dreams take me. I know that if I work hard and am faithful to God and the things I believe in, I can and will get there.

Money has been something that I have seen most people be limited by. It has been truly a blessing to have attended an elite program and prep school at Pingree. Prep@Pingree, along with all who represent it, was the helping hand that really gave me a push start to the career I am studying for as a junior at Gordon College. Nothing can stop me from fulfilling my dreams and goals, not even money, and Prep@Pingree has helped me learn this.

It's Not Work If You Like It

By Josh Shain, Prep@Pingree Student Instructor '08 and '09, Pingree School '09, University of Virginia '13

I faced a difficult dilemma while working for Prep@Pingree in the summer of 2009 because I was asked to make a new video for the program. This created two completely different problems. The first was that a physical video would actually have to be made. The second was that I would have to spend two weeks detached from teaching the students.



The second issue proved to be far more challenging because I wanted to spend as much time with the kids as possible. I've hardly considered Prep@Pingree a job because I woke up every morning looking forward to the six hours that I spent teaching and learning from our students and staff. I always considered myself lucky to even have a summer job because many of my friends did not. But I considered myself especially fortunate because my "job" consisted of getting to know and teaching an incredible group of seventh and eighth graders.

What makes Prep@Pingree students so outstanding is their drive to succeed and overcome. The students already have many of the necessary tools for academic success. A summer at Prep@Pingree gives them the confidence and the edge they need to be successful. If everyone in the world were as determined and driven as these remarkable students, our planet would be a much better place. I am proud and honored to have Prep@Pingree and its students in my life.

Why We Invest in Prep@Pingree

By David Sullivan, Executive Director of Forest Foundation

Forest Foundation has been supporting Prep@Pingree since 2005. As Executive Director of Forest Foundation, I came across the program through Essex County Community Foundation's Greater Lawrence Summer Fund. I went into a meeting with the Director of Prep@Pingree thinking it was an inventive, "bridge-building" summer endeavor but came out of that same meeting with the realization that Prep@Pingree was far more than a summer program. It was a year long, collaborative, multi-faceted academic enrichment program opening doors and creating opportunities for under-served urban youth in Essex County.



Test scores, grades, and recommendations are all great factors in a student's progression toward the goal of college. But Prep@Pingree's great role and success is instilling young minds with a sense that there is so much more to achieve - and it's possible. "Why not a private secondary school? Maybe a boarding school with that killer theater program sounds good. How about that four year college with an awesome pre-med major? Great - it's all in front of you. Now we're going to help you work toward it!" That's what makes Prep@Pingree exciting to me and the Forest Foundation Board of Directors.

Forest Foundation has also partnered with Prep@Pingree for the last three years through our Summer Intern Program - employing college students for ten weeks at area non-profits. It takes special passion and the above mentioned

"talent hotbeds" to make good non-profits great. Whether it is operating funds or placing an exceptional college student-intern at Prep@Pingree, Forest Foundation has always believed that Prep@Pingree people will continue to impact the unlimited futures of the young folks who enroll in the program.

We hope this issue will spark a conversation between you and Prep@Pingree. Where do you find talent hotbeds? What does it take to cultivate one? Is passion the key to developing talent? Please send us your thoughts by replying to this email. Feel free to forward *Prep@Pingree Perspective* to as many people as you like. Thank you for your interest in creating opportunities for all students.