

Student's forum

This Week's Question:

What is your hobby? Tell us about it.

Answers to Last Week's Question:

How many people do you count as friends?

Like most people I have many friends, but the "true" friends I can think of two.

H.M.

I live in a very remote Alaskan Village of 150 people and out of those folks I believe that roughly 145 are friends with another 50 or so in and out of the state.

J.A.

I have many friends, but the ones I count as "true friends" are few.

M.E.

I have a lot of friends, people I have fun with, I hang around with and that I have

known from school but not very many true friends that I can trust. I have one true friend that I have known since we were both little girls, I consider her my confidante, my sister, my true friend. Even though we do not live in the same city anymore I know I can count on her for anything and at anytime. We do not always agree and have different points of view on many things but we can discuss and argue and then we meet half way, although many times I am usually the one that gives in.

B.C.



Send all submissions to students@heraldpublications.com

The Essential Role Of MBEF To Public Education

By Darren Sepanek

School districts throughout California and around the country rely on nonprofit educational foundations to help support programs that state and federal funding do not cover. The Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) is no exception. In fact, approximately eight percent of MBUSD funding comes from the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF).

MBEF is a nonprofit organization that raises money to improve and enhance the education provided in Manhattan Beach public schools. State funding for education in California is inadequate for many basic programs and is certainly insufficient to fund enrichment programs. MBUSD will receive only \$5,156 in unrestricted funding per student for the 2009-10 school year--an amount far below what other states provide for their students.

MBEF helps fill the gap between what the State provides the District and what it costs to provide a well-rounded, quality education for students. Without the contribution MBEF makes to the District, many programs that contribute to an exceptional education and help place MBUSD in the top five in California would simply disappear.

The passing of Proposition 98 in 1998 was designed to secure certain levels of school funding from the State. However in bad economic times, the State has the right to reduce funding, with the intent to reinstate previous levels when those dollars become available again. Early in 2009, the State of California slashed school funding, forcing districts throughout the state to make immediate and drastic cuts.

In the spring of 2009, MBEF and its volunteers came to the rescue of MBUSD and worked tirelessly to raise \$1.3 million. This was on top of the \$2.8 million raised in the annual pledge drive. In the end, MBEF was able to donate \$4.1 million to MBUSD which paid for 84 educators, including classroom teachers (to maintain small class size), college and career counselors, librarians, science and reading enrichment teachers, computer teachers, music teachers and assistants, educational advisors, an elementary physical education

teacher, and others.

MBEF relies primarily on private donations from parents and the community. Their slogan "If you have a child, you have a reason" targets local parents, but anyone with an interest in Manhattan Beach knows that this top-ranked school district is a critical element in what makes this a desirable place to live (and helps maintain high property values). To further prove this point, other areas with top-ranked school districts also enjoy high property values - Palo Alto, San Marino, La Canada-Flintridge and Palos Verdes are but a few.

"Without the generous donations of the local community, our public schools would not be able to maintain the level of excellence we have all come to enjoy and expect," said MBEF President Erika White. "School funding is a tenuous situation at best and we don't see things easing up any time soon. We ask everyone to consider donating something. It's critical for our students. It's important for our community."

The MBEF annual appeal generates 85 percent of the funds raised each year. MBEF also hosts the popular Manhattan Wine Auction, which typically generates over \$500,000. Corporate matching funds generally provide over \$250,000 each year as well.

"MBEF is currently raising funds for the 2010-11 school year with one major fundraising drive," said MBEF Executive Director Susan Warshaw. "We began in the late summer and will continue through January 31, 2010. We are having a major Pledge Day on November 12. Our donors have the ability to spread their donation out over time, but we need to know where funding will stand for the coming year. The intention of the Pledge Day is to have people commit their pledge even though they may choose to provide their donation in multiple payments over several months. Look for us in front of schools and around the community on November 12 and please consider making a donation to our public schools. They rely on community support now more than ever." To donate to MBEF, please visit www.mbef.org or call 310-303-3342. •

Building the Perfect College List

By Michelle Lanphere Green

Building a college wish list is no easy task. If you are like the typical college-bound senior, you will likely submit 6-8 (or more) applications to colleges. You may have heard the words "Safety", "Match" or "Reach" to describe colleges.

On each college's website, it is possible to see the academic profile of a "typical" freshman student. Students may have higher or lower grades and test scores, but this can be a good indication how a student might "fit" if they attend that college.

A "Safety" most likely will always accept you based on grades and test scores. Local community colleges are always a student's "safety" school.

With honors programs offered by these colleges and guaranteed transfer options to the UC's and CSU's, they can provide a great college option for students, and are also affordable, to boot. Other safeties can be the less populated Cal State colleges that aren't as impacted as the programs at schools like CSULB, San Diego State and Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. If applying to the Cal States, those applications should be turned in, as soon as possible.

A "Match" school is one where you will most likely be accepted based on your GPA and standardized testing profile. Researching the SAT or ACT score range listed on the college admissions website can give you this information. Your chances improve, as your scores go above the 50 percent mark. If you got a 580 Critical Reading, and 620 Math, and a 600 Writing on the SAT, with a score range is somewhere between 540-

640, your chances are much more likely that you will be admitted. If the typical GPA of a freshman admit is 3.80, and your GPA is closer to 3.00, it may lessen your chances of admission.

A "Reach" school is one that is a reach for you, and possibly, even for any applicant. The typical admit may have the highest academic qualifications, test scores and numerous leadership, sports, or extracurricular activities. A reach college usually has a low admit rate - somewhere between 10 and 30 percent of the applicants are accepted.

You may wonder how many colleges should be safeties, matches and reaches? The best answer is that there is no absolute number that works for every college applicant. Generally, if you apply to 6-8 schools, it is wise to have 3 or 4 Matches, 1 or 2 Reaches, and 1 or 2 Safeties on your list.

Keep in mind you may change your major, or add a minor. Some academic departments require that you apply with a specific major before admission, like Nursing and Engineering. Ask yourself if the school meet all of your needs, academic and extracurricular, before adding a college to your list.

Do your research. Check out those virtual visits online, and visit in-person, when possible. The most important part of building your list is to feel confident that you would be happy and successful at any of the schools on your college list.

My College Admissions Coach offers personalized help for students and their parents as they navigate the college search and admissions process. Follow my new blog at: <http://collegeoptions.blogspot.com/>



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