

# Student's forum

## This Week's Question:

*What do you like to read in the newspaper?*

Send all submissions to

[students@heraldpublications.com](mailto:students@heraldpublications.com)

## November 12 a Big Day for MBEF and Students

By Darren Sepanek

The Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) relies on private donations to supplement funding from the State of California. The Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF) is the major source of this private funding. In fact, MBEF provides enough money to pay for teacher salaries in all seven Manhattan Beach public schools. For the 2009-10 school year, MBEF will provide \$4.1 million in grants to MBUSD which will pay for 84 teachers and staff and accounts for eight percent of the District's total funding.

MBUSD begins preparing its budget in January when it gets funding information from the State and is required to confirm teaching positions in March for the upcoming school year. As such, the District needs some level of assurance from MBEF in January or February regarding anticipated grants for the coming school year.

The primary source of capital to MBEF is parent donations. One major pledge drive generates 85 percent of the proceeds raised annually. MBEF has designated Thursday, November 12th as "Pledge Day" at all District schools to encourage parents to pledge or donate to MBEF well before the annual appeal ends on January 31, 2010. Volunteers will be stationed at each school, handing out donation/pledge envelopes. MBEF will also conduct an email campaign encouraging parents to donate online. It is anticipated that the results of Pledge Day will give MBEF an early indication of the strength of its annual appeal, thus enabling the Foundation to better assist the District in its upcoming budget planning.

"Everyone wants to avoid the uncertainty and stress we experienced last spring due to the state's financial crisis," said Nina Patel, Vice President of Fundraising for MBEF. "We want to encourage parents to pledge

their strong support now so that we can get ahead in the planning process and assert as much control in it as possible. This kind of planning will help the schools, the teachers and our children."

Based on historical data, the status of this appeal is in line with previous years. However, this annual appeal needs to raise \$1.3 million more than last year's goal of \$2.8 million.

In reaction to severe last minute State budget cuts, MBEF conducted a supplemental appeal in the spring of 2009, raising an additional \$1.3 million for the District. This brought the total raised for the 2009-10 school year to \$4.1 million. Drastic times called for drastic measures, but the Foundation does not want to make it a practice to hold supplemental appeals. This year, it is running one appeal with the

goal of generating at least \$4.1 million in order to help the District maintain the status quo (barring any additional State budget cuts). Donations and pledges on or before November 12 will make it possible for MBEF to determine how much it can commit to the District for the 2010-11 school year.

"I think our community is one of the smartest and most active when it comes to trying to find creative solutions to education funding problems," said Susan Warshaw, Executive Director MBEF. "MBEF, our community and school administrators all want to be proactive, not reactive, in this process. Whether it's addressing lawmakers in Sacramento, raising \$4.1 million in the local community or determining how to maximize available resources, we are all working hard at the local level to make a difference for our children. It's really the quintessential American story about local folks making a big difference in their community."

For more information on MBEF, or to give online, visit [mbef.org](http://mbef.org).

## Completing Your College Applications Without Stressing Out

By Michelle Lanphere Green

After building the perfect list of schools, the hard work of completing the applications, begins. The first step should be researching each school's application deadlines and requirements. Creating an outline of the deadlines and tasks can keep you organized and on-track through this process.

Getting acquainted with what the colleges require is critical. What is the application deadline? Do they need your current transcript of grades? (You can get this from your school registrar.) Will they also require "mid-year grades" at the end of your fall semester? There may be a fee for these official transcripts, depending upon your high school policy. Order transcripts early, to avoid the rush and to guarantee you get them on time.

Do you need a recommendation from a counselor, a teacher, a coach or a personal recommendation? How many will you need? If so, you should have already asked them nicely, well in advance, that you are hoping they can recommend you to your colleges. Providing them with a resume of your activities, your goals and GPA will help them complete the recommender in this task. (The UC and CSU schools do not require recommendations, but private colleges need them.) Can recommendations be sent on high school letterhead, or completed online? Make sure you find out what is the proper way to return these to the admissions office and let the recommenders know, so they do it right and on time.

Most applications are submitted electronically at each college's website. Some schools offer a "snap app", with reduced fee or fee-free. Hundreds of colleges now take the Common Application. If any of your colleges are on the list, you can fill out fewer applications

and essays by using this service, which can be a big timesaver.

When you sign up for your account at the college websites, don't forget to keep your username and password in a safe place. As the pieces of your application are turned into the colleges, it is advisable to check if anything is missing. Many colleges allow you to check the status of an application online, including when they received recommendations, scores and grades.

Spend some time deciding which extracurricular activities you want to highlight in your application. There is usually a section where you list how many hours per week you were involved in sports, music/arts, clubs, community service, leadership and work experience.

Sending official test score reports for the SAT, SAT II and ACT is also required. The College Board and ACT will forward your score reports to your colleges for a small fee. Don't wait till the last minute to request these. You can even send them to colleges before you fill out applications.

Essays help colleges see a clearer picture of you. Give yourself enough time to not only write on the topic. Watch your grammar, punctuation and avoid typos. Asking friends to proof your essay and application is smart, but be careful that they offer constructive feedback, but not actually write or rewrite your essay. Your voice is the only one that counts to the college admissions committee.

This is your chance to shine. Good luck!

*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/>*

College Access

# Lost.

(How most kids feel about preparing for college.)

[KnowHow2GO.org](http://KnowHow2GO.org)

## open houses

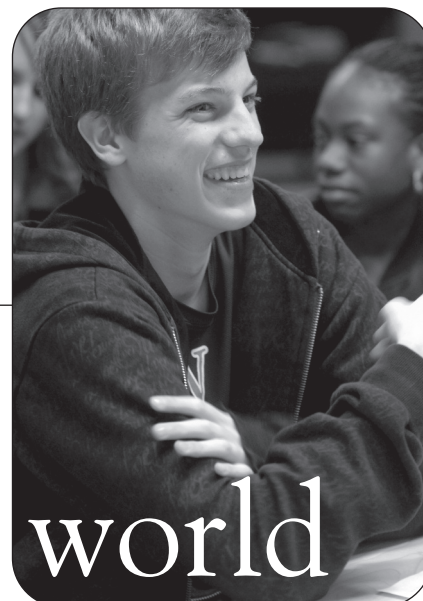
- Wednesday, November 18  
6:30-8pm
- Thursday, December 3  
6:30-8pm
- Saturday, December 12  
10am-12pm

Reservations requested.  
Check in begins 15 minutes  
prior to program.

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