

SURVIVING

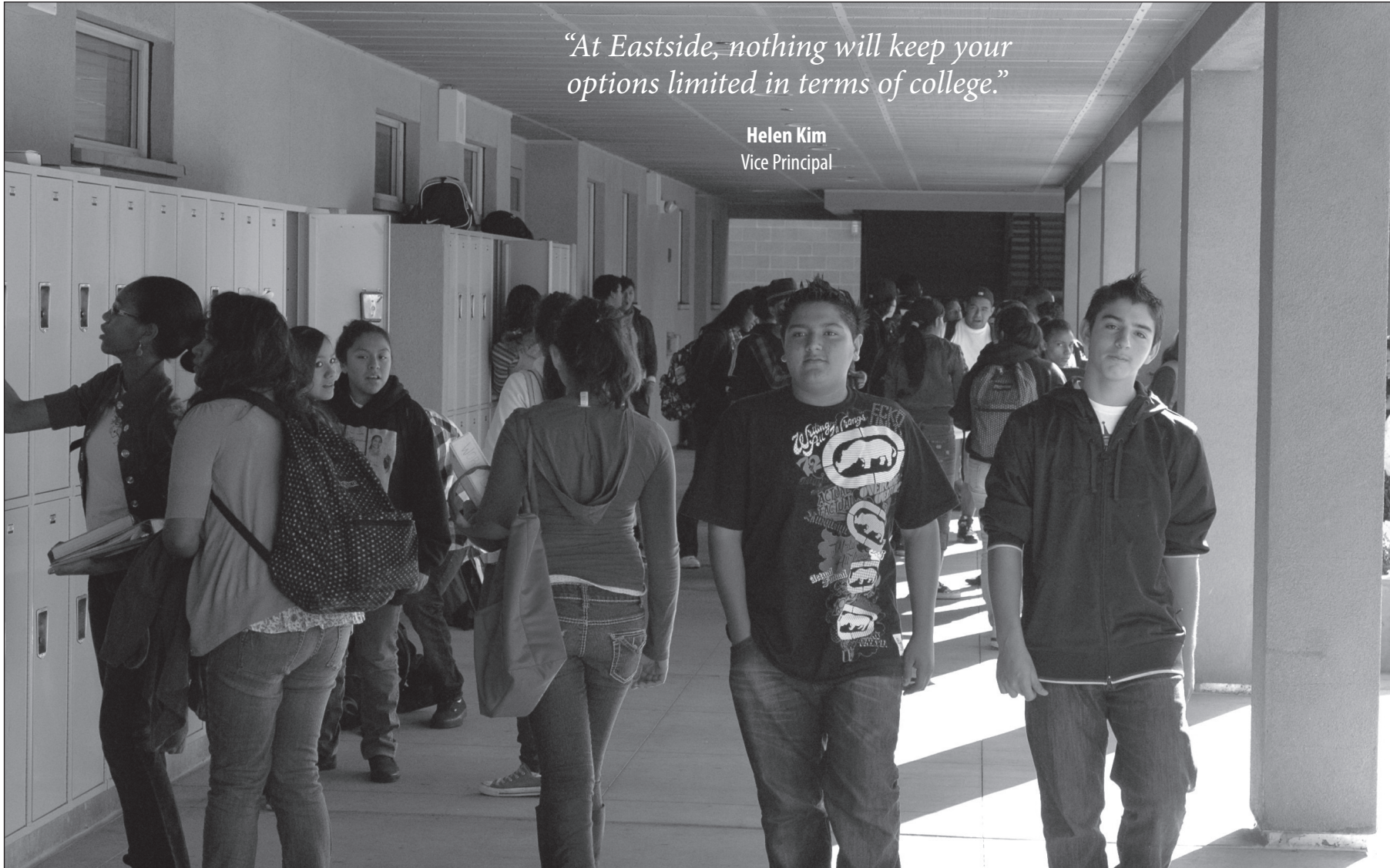
"At Eastside, nothing will keep your options limited in terms of college."

Helen Kim
Vice Principal

Right: Freshmen Esteban Contreras and Brian Zepeda walk through the halls of Eastside, ready for the next four years ahead of them.

Bottom: Candid photos of life at Eastside.

PHOTO BY
MANUEL MACIAS



Classes and curriculum set Eastside

By Ca'Shea Airy

From the eyes of students who attend public schools in the area, Eastside is seen as an extremely challenging college prep school that assigns lots of homework and leaves its students with little time for fun. Many Eastsiders agree with this description but disagree with the assumptions that often follow like, "Eastside is boring," or "Everyone who goes to Eastside is a nerd!"

"Whenever I hear people say things like this, I know that I am getting a good education and that I'm going to college," said senior Darrell Ford, who has been attending Eastside since the sixth grade. "I'm really book-smart, but I'm not only interested in school."

Many Eastsiders experience an exchange like this with at least one person outside of school during their career at Eastside. Though they become accustomed to it, many still ask themselves and their fellow Eastsiders, "Why am I at Eastside anyway?"

For some, like Darrell, the question is fairly easy to answer, but for others, it is a constant battle. From brand new freshmen, to stressed out sophomores and overworked juniors, it can help to explore themselves to find this answer. And as for seniors, it might help to remind themselves of how it all got started. Generally, a look at the aims, challenges and opportunities at Eastside can provide insight, if not answers.

From the Beginning

Eastside's principal and vice principal, Chris Bischof and Helen Kim, created Eastside in 1996 with the goal of providing

a college-oriented high school dedicated to the East Palo Alto community. Since then, Eastside has accomplished its goal of sending all its graduates off to four-year colleges.

In developing the curriculum for Eastside, Helen said that it was all for a purpose. Academic classes are set in stone in the Four Year Academic Plan, so students generally choose only their elective classes.

"We don't want any students to have any doors closed based on their selection of courses," said Helen. "At Eastside, nothing will keep your options limited in terms of college."

As Helen, Chris and others developed the curriculum, they had to consider the school's size, resources and logistics, as well as the best ways to prepare students for college.

"The Eastside curriculum is positive because everything works out," said junior Luis Tamayo, who will be taking AP Microeconomics during the spring semester. "It challenges us and prepares us for college level courses that we will have in the future."

A Different Kind of School

In addition to the basic required subjects for all high school students (history, English, math and science), the Eastside curriculum requires students to take extra classes focused around preparation for standardized tests and the college admissions process.

During sophomore year, students are introduced to test and college preparation in MVR, the Math and Verbal Reasoning class. MVR is a class that focuses on PSAT preparation and building skills for the outside world, with an emphasis in logic and debate.

After MVR, students take College Readiness starting in their junior year. College Readiness starts with a year of college research. Students visit colleges and begin to figure out what will be required to succeed in college. Standardized tests makes up the next part of the curriculum. Students will take the SAT at the end of their junior year.

"College Readiness helped me to write a research paper and gave me information on what colleges look for during the college admissions process," said senior Titus Van Hook.

Once senior year comes around, students are immersed in the college admissions process. College Preparation creates time for students to focus on applications and scholarship competitions. College Preparation, also known as SRI, gives students a chance to write essays and presentations.

In order to graduate from Eastside, students must produce a senior thesis—a 25 page research paper of their choice, generated from their SRI class presentation to a panel of faculty and staff.

A Positive Response

Helen said that Eastside alumni will continue to affirm the value of the skills that Eastside provides.

"Feedback from alumni adds to the value of a structured curriculum and the extra classes," said Helen. "We live on the premise that we are preparing students for four-year colleges."



SOS

Students on the Street

As a senior, what advice would you give to the underclassmen?



Kassandra Torres

"Time management is the key to having successful years at Eastside. Especially as a senior, you need to manage your time and prioritize."

eastside



Eastside alums reflect on college life, give advice

The Panther staff recently spoke with Eastside alumni life at college and how Eastside has helped them survive



Umeeka Khelawan
Freshman
UC Merced
Merced, CA



Francisco Tamayo
Freshman
Yale University
New Haven, CT

Q How is the college experience different from high school at Eastside?

A Umeeka Khelawan: The experience from high school to college is different because you do not have teachers telling you what every homework assignment is. You basically have to find out on your own. You have to take on more responsibility for your work.

Francisco Tamayo: For me, college is very different from high school, in terms of the independence that you are given. When you go off to college, sometimes you are unable to handle all of the freedom that comes with living away from a structured schedule revolving around your set school schedule and your familial responsibilities. I am free to take the classes that I want, stay out as late as I want, and do whatever it is that I want with my free time. Coming

from a school like Eastside, which gives its students an organized set of classes in order to make them as academically prepared for college as possible, I found it a bit disconcerting to choose my own classes and schedule and to have the final say in what I want to do. Although I was apprehensive at first with this newfound knowledge, it actually has been very fun.

Q What tools did you learn from Eastside that have helped you to succeed?

A Umeeka Khelawan: One of the tools that helped me was to be a proactive learner. Note-taking at Eastside really helped me in lectures.

Francisco Tamayo: Because Eastside is a college preparatory school, it really gives you the academic traits needed to succeed in any environment. The curriculum at Eastside pushes its students to their highest potential, and encourages them to adopt scholarly traits to incorporate into their own study habits.

Q What has been the most difficult experience for you thus far in your college experience?

A Francisco Tamayo: I've only been in college for about five weeks so far, but what has been the biggest challenge has been

managing my time. You really have no one to physically check up on you (i.e. parents), so it is really easy to stay up into the early hours of the morning, or to hop from party to party, and push academic responsibilities a bit lower on your list of priorities. All it takes is a calendar and a daily planner to organize my daily schedule. It is exactly the same process of organization that it took to prioritize my high school responsibilities with an Eastside planner. It is often difficult, but it really is important to find the right balance between social activities and academics.

"It takes some getting used to, but new college students, like myself really have to take the reins of their own schedules, and in a broader sense, their lives."

Francisco Tamayo
Eastside Alumnus

7:30am- wake up

I use this time to get ready for the day ahead of me. I make sure that I have the appropriate supplies and coursework in my bag (why carry extra weight, right?) and I check my e-mail to see if there are any announcements from professors for the day. On my way to class, I usually stop at an outside cafe near the library to get orange juice or a muffin to hold me until lunch.

9:00am- class one

I usually get to my first class at least 15 minutes early so that I can settle into my seat and have my materials ready for class. This is especially important for small classrooms with many students; you want to make sure you at least have a seat where you can hear the professor clearly, and where you can be comfortable. Fidgeting during class is not the business!

a day in the life

Eastside alum and senior at Stanford University, Dallas Teo gives a glimpse into a day of his life as a college student

10:00am- class two break time

During this time, I organize all of the handouts/notes/paperwork I received in my classes, making sure to put them in their appropriate place in my binders. I also use this time to grab a bite to eat with some friends. If there is time left after eating and socializing, I use the remaining time to resume my reading.

1:05pm- section

A section is the discussion portion of lecture courses; if you take a lecture course at Stanford, you will most likely have a section (scheduled for a different time in the week) to discuss the topics introduced in lecture.

3:00pm- work at YMCA

9:00pm- homework

Already tired, I know I need to do work before I go to bed. My goal is not to just do work for the next day, but to be several classes ahead in my coursework. This tends to take longer on a given day, but it helps to free up my weekends! I sometimes work with a group or by myself—if it's busy work, I don't mind working with others around. But if it is critical thinking work, I like to work alone. I also use a small fraction of this time to call home to keep up with how my family is doing.

12:30am- prepare for bed

This is always my goal, but it is rarely the case that I sleep before 2 a.m. I make sure to have my materials and bag ready for the next day, and I head to bed.

apart

ge Readiness during their s with the nuts-and-bolts colleges and universities and quired, both generally and College. Preparing for stan- rt of the class, as students nior year.

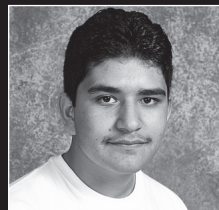
learn how to form a re- on about the qualities that admissions process," said

students are already fully s process. Senior College s to work on college appli- . Senior Research Institute, iste of college-level presen-

de, all students must pro- ch paper on a topic of their ss. They also make an oral d an audience of students

ho are now in college con- de teaches.

Eastside's commitment to college preparation classes," e that we are all prepping



Jose Churape

"Do all of your homework because it counts. Study even if you think you know everything because your teachers are sneaky like that."



Darrell Ford

"Get involved and do as many electives as you can. It'll pay off in your junior and senior years when you won't have much time."

