



VISTA NEWS

COLLEGEVISTA'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2009

One Goal, One Focus: College Admissions & Retention

Volume 1, Issue 1

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ Vista students take on colleges of the Midwest
- ◆ Community Service defines Vista's summer programming
- ◆ Vista moves to its new home
- ◆ Applications for the 2010 program year are now available. Details inside!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Texas Tech Visit **11/20**

St. Mary's Leadership Event **11/30**

Wii Fit Party **December**

Garrett Center Open House **December**

For more details on upcoming events visit our website or email

Ms. Fernandez at mjf@collegevista.org

News from the Executive Director

I am very excited to launch VISTA News, CollegeVista's official newsletter. As we begin our fourth year, CollegeVista has lots of exciting news to share this October. The CollegeVista Class of 2009 earned scholarships and aid to push the total number of college scholarships and aid earned by CollegeVista Seniors to over \$1 million dollars. Our retention rate for College bound Seniors remains impressive at 85%. We are extremely proud of all our graduates from the class of 2009!

This year's college trip was a memorable tour of higher education institutions in the Chicago-Wisconsin area. The CollegeVista student-travelers embraced the ups and downs of being on the road for thirteen days with such a positive attitude that many did not want the trip to end. Ultimately, the

Chicago trip inspired Vista students to explore new horizons and seek out opportunities beyond San Antonio. The trip was truly, as one student-traveler explained it, "a life changing experience." CollegeVista



Maria J. Fernandez (above) founded CollegeVISTA in 2007

would like to thank all of our generous donors for making the Chicago trip possible. It could not be done without your support.

I am also excited to announce that CollegeVista

will be relocating to the City of San Antonio's Frank Garrett Community Center and saying goodbye to Guadalupe Street Coffee House [GSCH] after three years. The move will provide CollegeVista with more space to conduct its college advising programming and a permanent office location. CollegeVista is also expanding its collaborations and will be working with the *Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church* in bringing college advising services to its community.

Growth has been the theme of 2009 and it has been a great year. I am extremely excited for 2010 and for Vista's new journey. Stay tuned for further success!

Maria J. Fernandez

CollegeVISTA Moving to Frank Garrett Center

The CollegeVista program will be relocating from the Guadalupe Street Coffee House to the City of San Antonio's Frank Garrett Multi-Service Center in October 2009.

We are extremely excited about our new home and look forward to furthering CollegeVista's mission as we take this next step.

Please bear with us as we make this transition and please share the news with our friends and supporters.

CollegeVista will host an open house at the Frank Garrett Center in late 2009 (details to be announced soon). But for now, you can catch CollegeVista at the Frank Garrett Center Wednesdays and Thursdays

6:00 p.m.— 9:00 p.m.

The Frank Garrett Multi-Service Center is a City of San Antonio facility and is located at:

**1226 N.W. 18th Street
San Antonio, Texas
78207**

Phone: (210) 737-0051

Stop by and see us some time!

Summer Community Activities Spotlight

DIABETES HEALTH FAIR: JUNE 2009

Although summer is usually reserved for a much-needed break, for CollegeVista it was also a time to roll-up our sleeves and do some community service. CollegeVista along with the League of United Latin American Citizens [LULAC], Guadalupe Street Coffee House [GSCH], and Dr. Sherwin Schwartz collaborated to host the first **Juvenile Diabetes Education Fair** at the GSCH. The goal was to educate students about diabetes and its effect on one's health. Dr. Sherwin Schwartz volunteered his family, time, and staff to take blood measurements and speak with students about risk factors for the disease. Dr. Schwartz also pledged a *Nintendo Wii Fitness* system for Vista student use. Special thanks to Mr. Henry Rodriguez of LULAC who was instrumental in coordinating door prizes and food for the event.

URBAN CONNECTION—ALAMO QUEST/SCAVENGER HUNT: JUNE 2009

CollegeVista students were invited to participate in this year's Urban Connection's **Alamo Quest/Scavenger Hunt** event held in downtown San Antonio. Students were split into teams to find clues associated with San Antonio's history. We all learned a lot that day and were treated to a fantastic lunch afterwards. Thank you to the Urban Connections program, especially Leslie and Chuck, for inviting us to such a fun event. VISTA looks forward to collaborating with Urban Connections in the up coming year.



Vista Students on the Amtrak headed for Union Station.

2009 VISTA Graduation

The annual Vista Graduation Ceremony took place May 20, 2009 at the historical Casa Rio Restaurant on San Antonio's famous Riverwalk. This was CollegeVista's third year at Casa Rio and the experience was, once again, wonderful. Six seniors graduated from the program and all gained admission to one or more universities, including St. Mary's University, Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi, San Antonio College, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This year's Seniors earned over \$100,000 in scholarships and aid, pushing the grand total for Vista participants to over \$1,000,000. We are extremely proud of all our students for their hard work in completing the Vista program. We congratulate you for being dedicated to your college goals. Congratulations! Carpe Diem!

"[T]he view of the river, beautifully decorated tables, the music, and the food ... made me feel so special."

-Vista Student speaking of the 2009 Casa Rio Graduation Ceremony

2009 College Trip: Chicago-Wisconsin

For thirteen days, nine VISTA students and two chaperones embarked on an awesome traveling experience. VISTA students were hosted by two outstanding schools, the University of Wisconsin at Madison [UWM] and University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana [UIUC] and left excited and inspired.

UIUC dining and our student assistant Rico really made it difficult for students to want to



Vista Students outside Wrigley Field.

leave UIUC. The lush beauty of the Madison campus and its caring staff as well as the awesome research facilities housed at UIUC especially impressed the students. Vista students were so inspired by the schools that many have decided to apply for admission when the times comes.

While away we traveled by Amtrak train, Greyhound Bus, and navigated the Chicago Public Transit system. We arrived at the historic Union Station in Chicago and then rode the subway—a first for many students—from the train station to our hostel in the heart of downtown Chicago. One of our most memorable experiences was walking the downtown streets with our suitcases and looking up to see the towering skyscrapers and city lights. We really came to realize the importance of only packing what you can carry. In addition to touring college campuses, we watched the Chicago Cubs play our own Houston Astros at Wrigley Field — which was hard because we wanted to support our Texas team despite being sur-

2009 College Trip: Chicago-Wisconsin (continued)

rounded by Blue. While also toured schools, Develt Univer-

Our time in visits to lennium Park, and

Pavilions, which we learned was the inspiration for the Bold Plans and Big Dreams that have shaped downtown Chicago for the past century. We have to thank our Chicago tour guides for their generous donation to the students which allowed them to visit the Shed Aquarium (known for its Beluga whales). Our tour guides also introduced us to the "best" Chicago-style pizza in town.

We ended our tour of the area with a ride up to the 103rd floor of the Sears Tower Sky Deck, one of the most popu-

The 2009 College Trip included overnight stays at two schools: University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign

a sea of Red and in Chicago we two other local Paul and Roose-sities.

Chicago included Navy Pier, Mil-Park-Bean, Grant The Burnham

lar tourist attractions in Chicago. The tower provides an awesome view of the City and Lake Michigan. It was a spectacular experience that will not be forgotten. We were also fortunate to be some of the first visitors to experience the newly opened "skywalk," a glass walkway that makes the you think you're walking on air. For many of us the time went by too fast. This is only a small snapshot of the impact this trip had on these students.



Vista Students after a hands-on session with the Circuit Fabrication Laboratory at the UI-Urbana-Champaign.

Visiting new places and experiencing cultures outside of San Antonio has always been a priority for the Vista program. Throughout our trip, Vista students participated in group discussions where we honed in on the travel experience overall and culture shock in general. As one of our UIUC guides, Mr. Sam Martinez, explained to students, "we must challenge each other to the next level ... because we will be here waiting for you." The students returned to San Antonio inspired and energized for the year ahead and all of the opportunities that await.

Keep up the great work Vista students and don't lose momentum!

Thank you to all who made our college trip possible. We can't thank our supporters enough for helping us to secure such wonderful accommodations. Thank you to the Universities for all the time and energy you dedicated to making our trip so amazing.



Vista Students in Wisconsin.

CollegeVISTA Now Accepting Applications for 2009-10 School Year

PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE TO EXPLORE WHAT VISTA DOES AND TO FILL OUT AN ONLINE APPLICATION.

YOU CAN ALSO CALL US AT 210-793-5193 FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

It's definitely a **family affair** when it comes to college admissions and VISTA works very hard to be inclusive and open to families. Parents know that they can drop by any time during program hours to sit-in, discuss issues with staff about their student, and just share some down time with VISTA.

Vista provides **one-on-one college advising**, financial aid application assistance, workshops on skills that every college bound student needs, SAT/ACT and academic skills prep.

Vista is a **comprehensive** advising service and is free. **Dedication** and **hard work** are required!

CollegeVista

A Unique College Prep Program

Frank Garrett Multi-
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1226 N.W. 18th Street
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78207

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MARIA J. FERNANDEZ

Executive Director

CollegeVista is a project of Maria J. Fernandez. CollegeVista is not a non-profit corporation or 501(c)(3) organization.

MISSION STATEMENT

Vista is a comprehensive college consultation service providing students with guidance and strategic advice regarding all aspects of the college admissions process: applications for admission, financial aid, and scholarships. In addition to the traditional college advising services, Vista provides its students with peer counseling and mentorship in regard the general transition to college. Vista aims to provide a consultation service tailored to its students' needs that will both maximize student success and confidence.

"Once social change begins it can not be reversed. You can not un-educate the person who has learned to read. You can not humiliate the person who feels pride. You can not oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." —César Chávez



**COLLEGE
VISTA**

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www.collegevista.org