



## Where do local students see themselves in the future?

### Mountain Pride - Future Visions

By Carmen George - Special to the Sierra Star

(Updated Friday, March 24, 2006, 5:05 PM)

"I hope that whatever I end up doing, I enjoy it and it's an adventure," stated Yosemite High School Senior Steven Daniels, regarding hopes for his future after graduation.

"I just know that I don't want to be stuck behind a desk somewhere punching numbers. I hope that I won't just be seeing events that are taking place in our world, but that I'll actually be taking part in them."

"Students have a lot of different options after high school," stated Yosemite High School Principal Steve Raupp.

A follow-up survey of the class of 2004 showed that 69 percent of the YHS graduates enrolled in a post-secondary institution. Of the graduates, 34 percent went to community college, 21 percent to the CSU system, eight percent to private colleges, five percent to the UC system and one percent to vocational schools.



Steven Daniels

Of the remaining students, three percent served in the military, and 28 percent went directly into the work force.

"We try to help students focus on where they want to go and to help them get there, and I think the high school does a pretty good job of that," Raupp added.

### Ivy League focus

For YHS Sophomore Raj Srinivasan, the focus is Harvard. "If I can get a full-ride scholarship to Harvard I might end up going there. Right now it's definitely my number one school because my sister got in and turned it down, and I'd like to see someone from my family go there," Srinivasan said.

The respect for the school is the biggest factor in Srinivasan's choice in placing Harvard on the top of his list.

"I really don't think the education that you can get at Fresno State is that different than Harvard, but I feel like Harvard has a better name, and if I want to reach my full potential, I want to go to a school with that kind of respect," Srinivasan concluded.

Freshman Hallie Withrow also holds a school's prestige as one of the most important factors in eventually deciding upon a college, adding that, "As long as I get into a good college, I'll be happy."

For Sarah Tovar, YHS senior, the happiness is in doing something, and going somewhere after

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high school where she can find herself.

Tovar hopes to go to Questa Junior College for a semester and then to take a break to join the choir and performing group Up With The People in 2007, in which she she will travel for 22 weeks throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

The goal of the group is to develop, inspire and transform young people into future leaders and global citizens, while helping to give them intercultural understanding and a commitment to serving communities. She hopes that taking the break from school to be involved in this experience will be more beneficial in helping her later on.

"I think it's a good way to find out the person I am and what I am capable of. I'm going to receive a chance to develop more confidence, better teamwork skills, better adaptability and it will make me more innovative in the way I live my life. I think it will give me a better grasp on how it's like to be an achiever and contributor," Tovar added.

But one of the best parts for Tovar is simply the singing.

"Singing is my passion, it's what I do, and being able to meet new people, and see different cultures and then taking all of that and mixing in singing in all of these magnificent places is going to be overwhelmingly gratifying," Tovar said.

"I can't see myself ever stopping singing; if I go a week without being in choir, by the end of the week I'll be like, 'Someone, let me sing!' In college I want to join the school's choir and make the most of what I can do while I can do it."

YHS Junior Bradly Wilkinson similarly hopes in college to continue his passion for athletics, which has been an important and fulfilling part of his life.

"I play three sports a year, and I think it would be a hard transition for me to go to a school and not play a sport," he said.

### **Considering athletics**

Wilkinson has been considering playing basketball for a smaller, prestigious university like Westmont if the opportunity arises, but stated that he is keeping his options open to playing basketball, baseball or football for a junior college, where he could later transfer to a four-year university.

"I have always loved Cal Poly and San Luis Obispo, so going to Questa and transferring in is also an option," Wilkinson said. He hopes to pursue sports in college through an athletic scholarship, but stated that he is keeping his options open and isn't necessarily relying upon it.

With a 4.0 GPA last semester, he has been working hard both academically and athletically to pursue his future goals.

"I'm looking for all-around colleges where I can still decide," Wilkinson said. He expects to major in something that involves math, but is still investigating the possibilities for what he wants to do with his future. Srinivasan is also exploring his options and states that, "I'll figure it out when it comes to me, and that's how I've always lived. I feel like society is sort of shoving the ideals of doctor and lawyer down your throat and I want to explore a little first before I decide," Srinivasan said.

Withrow also feels similarly, stating, "I don't really have any thoughts after college, and I'll decide when I get there."

Daniels also discussed his thoughts regarding an occupation, adding that "I want to keep my options open, and once I get a taste of life after high school, then I'll make my decision."

Daniels hopes to pursue a future with the military through the Marine Corps, where he hopes to get into the Naval Academy and possibly major in aerospace engineering. His second choice to

the Naval Academy is to attend San Diego State, where he already has been accepted, and to obtain an ROTC Marine Corps scholarship.

Daniels will have the financial cost for college covered through the Marine Corps but is required to go five years in active duty and then three years in the reserves.

### **Military goals**

The best part of being involved in the military for Daniels is, "The opportunity for me to be doing something that helps others."

For many of the students, a desire to help others has influenced their decisions regarding what they want to do with their lives after high school.

"I've always just loved helping people out, and I've always thought about being a teacher or a coach," Wilkinson said. Tovar hopes to major in sociology in college and to help others by possibly working with young people in a counselor role.

Tovar stated that participating in Challenge Day initially inspired her to get into classes and clubs like Peer Communications, and Peer Mediation, and her experiences in both helped her to decide to major in sociology.

### **Positive influence**

The positive influence of teachers also has helped many students in discovering what they want to do with their lives. Withrow stated that many teachers have helped to push her in a positive direction toward her goals, and their encouragement of her involvement in various science fairs has helped her feel more confident in wanting to pursue science after high school.

Srinivsan also felt that his teachers have helped him to develop his passion for science, stating that "I've had many good teachers at YHS and if it wasn't for these teachers I wouldn't be able to follow my dreams, and because of them I've become a better student in every aspect."

"All of the teachers I've had have always just helped me out and I've always felt close to all of them," Wilkinson said. He also credits his teachers and counselors for helping him in planning for his future. He stated that Mr. Yohn (counselor, now retired) has been a really positive influence in helping him get everything together for college.

"The counselors really do a great job with the five-year plan in preparing students for whatever post-secondary goal aspirations they may have," Raupp said.

Along with teachers and counselors, many of the students said that their parents and growing up in the mountain community have also helped them to better understand themselves and what they want to do with the rest of their lives.

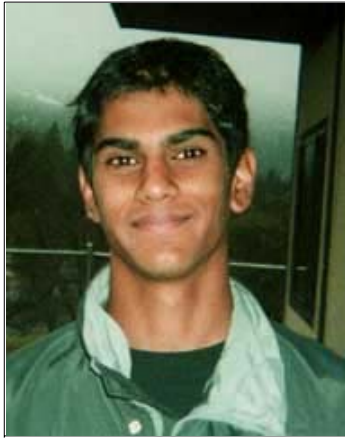
"Living in a small community gives me an appreciation for working together and everyone doing their part," said Daniels. "You have more possibilities to do more of the things you want, growing up here, and you aren't limited to one thing even though we're small," stated Withrow. Tovar added that "Living in a small area helps me to stay focused on what I really want."

"I'll always have a special place in my heart for Oakhurst, but I'd really like to get out into a big city, and I think that's where I really want to be," commented Srinivasan.

"I'm extremely excited to leave but it's going to be bittersweet, and I'm going to miss the love I get every day from so many special people," Tovar stated.

All of the students stated that they have enjoyed growing up in the mountain community since they were very young, but that they are excited and ready for the next step in their futures.

Daniels finished by stating that, "I'll be making a little bit of a change in the world; it'll be a pretty tiny one, I think, but I'll be making a difference."



Raj Srinivasan



Sarah Tovar



Bradly Wilkinson



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