



What I Did Over My Summer Vacation...

by Jamilah Ryan '95

Jamilah Ryan, a Steppingstone Scholar from the Class of 1995 and now a teacher in New York, describes her experience teaching during Steppingstone's six-week summer session.

Week One: The Beginning

Steppingstone has undergone many changes since I completed the 14-month program in 1995. There were 40 sixth-graders in my class, seeking placement in seventh grade. Now, over 150 Scholars are admitted each year, applying to schools at three different grades.

Nonetheless, many things have remained the same. Community building remains a vital part of each Scholar's education. I see Scholars now develop the same relationships that I was able to establish with my teachers at Steppingstone. Now I am one of those teachers.

This is my second summer teaching English for The Steppingstone Academy. From the moment I step into their classrooms on the first day of class, the Scholars have their binders open on their desks, smiles on their faces, and are ready to begin.

Week Two: The Writer Within

Three o'clock, and an unrelenting heat fills each corner of the study hall classroom. The Scholars busy themselves with the homework for the day, settling down to the rustle of novel and dictionary pages. Study hall is when you get your questions answered, I remind them. They have access to most of their academic teachers, their advisor, and most important, each other. As the Scholars work (*continued*)

News of Note

(cont'd) on their homework, I correct their written assignments. For as long as I can remember, I loved to write. In a classroom of diverse learners and thinkers, teaching writing skills can be a daunting task.

The assignment I am correcting is a journal entry written from the perspective of one of the main characters in the novel that we have been reading, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. I read one entry written by a Scholar who has always been outstanding academically.

"You have a gift for writing," I tell her. "I hope that you embrace your talent and pursue it at your new school." I say this with the greatest confidence because I know that her placement school, The Winsor School, will provide her with the nurturing and intellectual environment that she will need in order to develop as a writer.

Week Three: Debate, Debate

As I approach the end of the third week, I stop to consider how quickly the days go by as the Scholars attempt to absorb all the information that they possibly can before finals. This week, we have covered drawing historical conclusions and writing a thesis supported by evidence. I am most proud of their performance in this week's debate on the topic, "Did life for African-Americans change drastically after the Civil War?" They have just completed fifth grade, yet they are handling a controversial topic with the eloquence and intellect of high-schoolers.

We end the week with the Bill of Rights, closely examining its application in our class novel. How are certain rights exercised in the novel and when and where are these rights abused? The Scholars are excited as they peruse the chapters and compare notes and examples. They are eager for their next debate, and I know that they are more than prepared.

Weeks Four & Five: Change the World

On Sunday, I reviewed the lesson plan for the week: discussing two civil rights articles while reviewing effective active reading of non-fiction text, and researching and making presentations on prominent civil rights activists. I caught sight of a video called *A Time for Justice* that I had watched as a student at Milton Academy. The documentary chronicles highlights of the civil rights movement with live footage and interviews from participants. I knew that these powerful visuals would help the Scholars truly understand this important struggle.

I showed the film to the Scholars, followed by discussion. When some of the Scholars began to cry, I knew that the film had touched them in the same way it had me. I urged them to use the emotions that they felt inside to make positive decisions and changes in their own lives and the lives of others. I left their classroom with complete confidence that these young children, who responded so powerfully to the film and demonstrated a profound sense of empathy and compassion, would no doubt go on to make many meaningful decisions.

Week Six: New Beginnings

On Saturday, the Scholars are recognized for 14 months of hard work at the commencement ceremony. The girls dazzle in their white dresses while the boys are attired in suits and ties. As I sit amongst my fellow faculty members, I watch the Scholars awaiting their diplomas. Perhaps they are not fully aware of how much they've accomplished in their 14-month journey, as their focus shifts to new schools in the fall. Nonetheless, I can identify how much each one of them has grown from the time I stepped into their sections last summer to this moment. My experience with them has been one of change, growth, transition, and the realization that I, too, must continue to pursue excellence and fulfill my own dreams. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to know that I was a part of it all.



"I see Scholars develop the same relationships that I was able to establish with my teachers at Steppingstone. Now I am one of those teachers." – Jamilah Ryan

McLane Fund Established to Honor Long-Time Donor

This summer, the Managing Directors of TA Associates established The McLane Fund, in honor of their colleague Andy McLane who is retiring after a 30-year career. The McLane Fund has given Steppingstone \$1 million, and has also given \$750,000 each to St. Paul's School and Phillips Exeter Academy.

"Steppingstone is so fortunate to receive such a unique gift," said Steppingstone Founder Michael Danziger. "The resources from The McLane Fund will be used, through Steppingstone, to prepare under-represented students to gain admission to schools that lead to college and to support them through high school graduation. In addition, St. Paul's and Exeter will be able to use McLane Fund resources to offer additional financial aid to students from backgrounds similar to Steppingstone Scholars."

Together, these gifts totaling \$2.5 million will help expand Steppingstone's efforts to add boarding schools to the pool of public exam and independent schools currently attended by Steppingstone Scholars.

NPEA Conference

On Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1, 2009, the National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) will hold its first annual conference, called "Collaborating for Success: Promoting Educational Access" at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge.

The conference will feature workshops, seminars, and guest speakers focusing on management, student services, and research, policy and evaluation. In attendance will be NPEA members, school and non-school based programs, independent schools, higher education institutions, and other education nonprofits.

NPEA is an initiative of The Steppingstone Foundation and is supported by The Goldman Sachs Foundation, the J. C. Kellogg Foundation, and The Esther A. & Joseph Klingenstein Foundation. The purpose of NPEA is to collaborate, build connections, and share emerging practices that will assist member programs in achieving the goal of educational access for under-represented students.

For more information, please contact npeaconference@tsf.org or visit our web site at www.educational-access.org.

Founded in 1990, The Steppingstone Foundation is a non-profit organization that develops and implements programs which prepare urban schoolchildren for educational opportunities that lead to college. Based on the premise that, regardless of circumstance, children can achieve at high levels academically if given the proper preparation and support, Steppingstone programs emphasize rigorous standards and achieve meaningful results.

Steppingstone programs include: The Steppingstone Academy, Boston, Steppingstone Scholars, Inc., Philadelphia, The Steppingstone Academy, Hartford, and National Partnership for Educational Access. For more information about Steppingstone, please contact us at 155 Federal St, Suite 800, Boston MA 02110 (617) 423-6300 www.tsf.org.



Steppingstone Commencement

123 Scholars in the Class of 2008 celebrated their commencement from the 14-month component in August.



Belmont Hill student **Nnaemeka Ekwelum '02** was awarded a Certificate of Accomplishment from the Princeton Prize in Race Relations. The prize is given to recognize, support, and encourage young people who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing the cause of relations among the races.

Boston Latin Academy's **Anthony Mathieu '02** and **Jasmine Watts '02** were awarded POSSE Scholarships to Centre College and Hamilton College, respectively.



The following Scholars worked as Steppingstone teaching assistants during the summer: (left to right) Nafis Ahmed '02, Roxbury Latin School; Laura Mejia-Suarez '04, The Winsor School; Jessica Thermitus '06, Newton Country Day School; Helena Suarez '04, Dana Hall School; and Anthony Mathieu '02, Boston Latin Academy.

Myriam Kuusipalo '02, **Felix Liang '06**, and **Adrianna Ureña '05** of Noble & Greenough received the following awards: Myriam won the Scudder Medal in the Arts which recognizes a senior whose work displays artistic excellence and who has exhibited unwavering commitment to artistic study at Nobles. Felix won the Purchase Award which recognizes a middle school student who displays excellent

artistic talent, and Adrianna was awarded the Middle School Character Award.

Stephany Munoz '02 was awarded the Boston Latin School's Modern Prize for outstanding academic achievement.

Newton Country Day School's **Keiani Gomes '03** was awarded a Silver Distinction Certificate for excellent academic performance in all disciplines.

Erica Cuevas '03 from Boston Latin Academy, **Lois Gordon '04** from Fenway High School, and **Fernando Lora '03** from the John D. O'Bryant School were selected, based on their outstanding grade point averages, to participate in Harvard's Crimson Summer Academy. They spent the summer taking classes at Harvard and working alongside Harvard professors and students. Erica was also inducted into BLA's National Honor Society.

Boston Latin Academy's **Jean-Luc Teixeira '04** traveled to Indiana to the National Latin Convention and placed 15th in the nation in Latin grammar.

Merry Chin '05 from Winsor received a Silver Medal and magna cum laude accolades on the National Latin Exam.

Olivia Lau '06 of Thayer Academy received high honors for earning straight As on her second trimester report card.



CJ Masdea '07 of Boston University Academy was awarded the American Association of Physics Teachers Outstanding Physics Student certificate and the Faculty Prize for Excellence in Physics for his work, both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities.

Stepping Out

Golf Classic

On Monday, June 9, the sixth annual Steppingstone Golf Classic took place at the beautiful Concord Country Club. Thank you to everyone who braved the heat and joined our co-chairs James Wolfsberg and Michael Pehl to help raise over \$150,000 for Steppingstone. A big thank you to all the players, sponsors, and donors who made this another successful year.



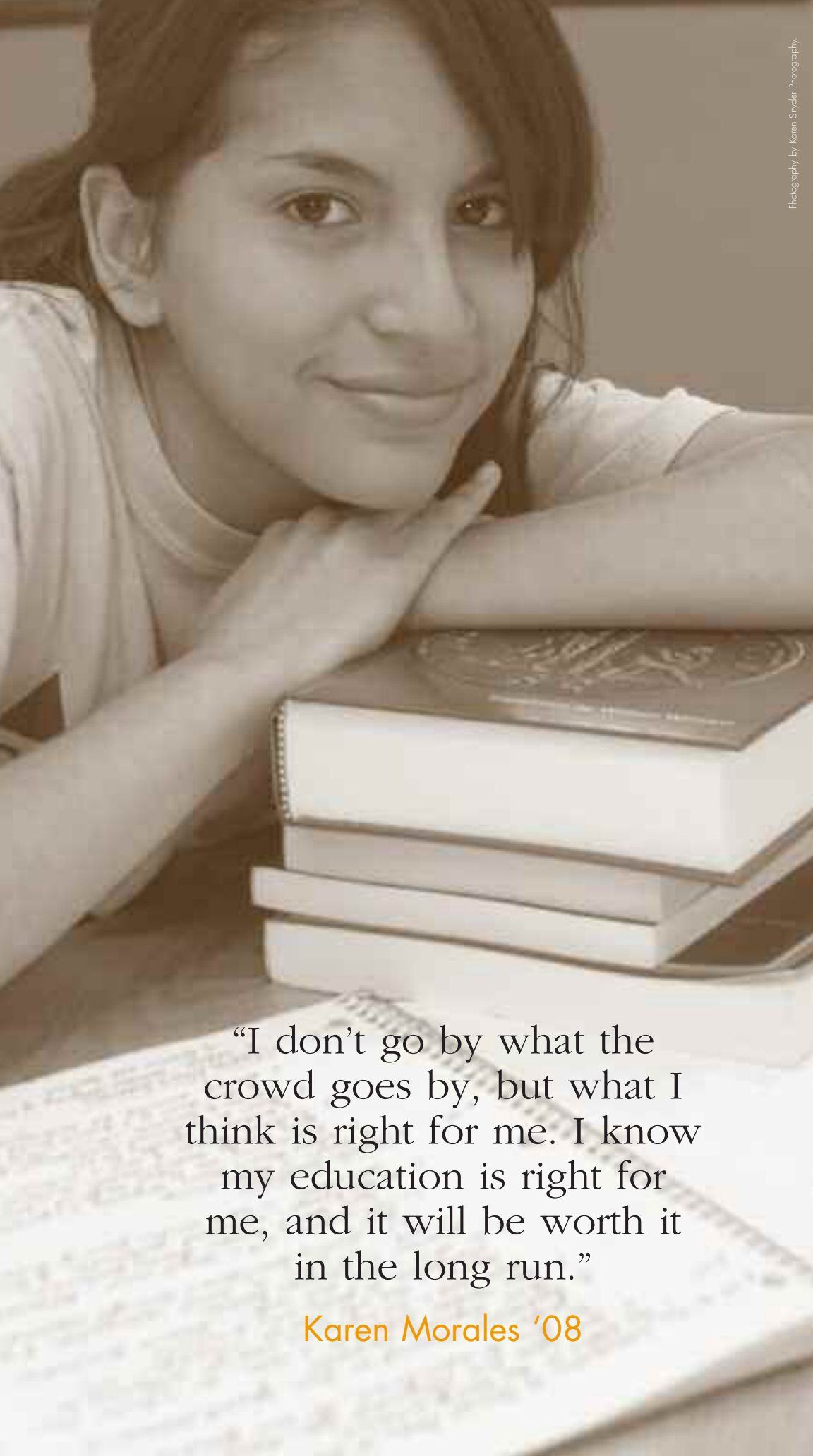
Left to right: Becky Hamlin, Renée Curtin, Nancy Drake and Betsy Danziger

Scholars who completed the 14-month academic component in 2002 were admitted to the following colleges and universities in the spring::

Barnard College
 Berklee School of Music
 Boston College (2)
 Bowdoin College
 Bridgewater State College
 Bryant University
 Centre College
 Claremont McKenna College
 Clark University
 College of the Holy Cross (2)
 College of Wooster
 Columbia University
 Dartmouth College
 George Washington University (2)
 Hamilton College
 Harvard College (3)
 Lasell College
 Long Island University
 Manhattan College
 Massachusetts College of Art
 Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (2)
 New School of Social Research
 New York University
 Nichols College
 Northeastern University (3)
 Pace University
 Regis College
 Rollins College
 Salem State College (2)
 St. John's University
 Syracuse University (2)
 Temple University
 University of Massachusetts Amherst (3)
 Boston
 Dartmouth
 Lowell (2)
 University of New Hampshire
 University of Pittsburgh
 Wellesley College

An Arthropod Has What Type of Skeleton?

If you said "exoskeleton," you are ready to play "Are you Smarter than a Steppingstone Scholar?" at the **Game Show Gala** which will take place on **Wednesday, November 5** at the Charles Hotel. Please mark your calendars and contact Jessica Hyde at jhyde@tsf.org or 617-423-6300, ext. 237 for more information.



“I don’t go by what the crowd goes by, but what I think is right for me. I know my education is right for me, and it will be worth it in the long run.”

Karen Morales '08

A Different Beat

A rush of angry cold wind blew violently at my face but I pushed on walking, trying to get my destination. Up the countless steps and through the heavy doors I went, to the halls of Boston Latin Academy once more. My backpack was heavy with books, but I paid no heed. I was pretty tired from the long commute of two trains and a bus, but I continued on to the classroom where study hall was about to start. Why does this girl go to this place if it is so much trouble you may ask? I answer: because I care about my education and future. Because I want to be successful in my life and because hard work pays off. A lot of my peers don't have these same thoughts, but this is the drummer I hear.

I live in a place and time where some people don't take their education seriously. I understand that not all people may have the chance to get an education, but when you have a chance you should take it. And that's what I did. I joined Steppingstone, even though it's a lot of extra work, and I spend a lot of nights going to sleep at midnight because I'm staying up late doing my homework. With so much homework from my school, work from Steppingstone, and limited time during the day, it can get very stressful. So many people have asked me, "Why do you go to Steppingstone?" Sometimes I reply, sometimes I don't. I know the answer myself, and that satisfies me.

I do not let myself get caught up with all the negativity. Gangs, fights, and drama; I leave it all behind. People around me hear a different beat, but I listen to mine. I don't go by what the crowd goes by, but what I think is right for me. I know my education is right for me, and it will be worth it in the long run. For example, I applied to private schools, and I got into two of the best private schools in Massachusetts, possibly in the country. Seeing those acceptance letters made me realize that my hard work has paid off, and finally seeing it in real color like that has made me extremely happy and satisfied. I wouldn't regret working as hard as I have because my goal has been reached.

Every one of us hears a different beat, a different drummer that makes us do what we do. It calls to us, leading us to different paths, good and bad. Mine is different from a lot of my peers and friends. None of my other friends want to go to boarding school, and some people I know would never imagine going to a private school. My drummer leads me to school, leads me to Steppingstone, leads me to higher education and hopefully will continue leading me to bigger and better things.

--- Karen Morales '08

Karen Morales '08 wrote this essay for her Reading Seminar class at Steppingstone. She is currently a ninth-grader at Phillips Academy.

STEPPINGSTONE PLACEMENT SCHOOLS

Beaver Country Day School
Belmont Day School
Belmont Hill School
Boston College High School
Boston Latin Academy
Boston Latin School
Boston Trinity Academy
Boston University Academy
Brimmer and May School
Buckingham, Browne & Nichols
Cambridge School of Weston
Commonwealth School
Concord Academy
Dana Hall School
Dedham Country Day School
Deerfield Academy
Derby Academy
The Dexter School
Holderness School
The Fessenden School
The Meadowbrook School of Weston
Milton Academy
Newton Country Day School
Noble and Greenough School
John D. O'Bryant School
The Park School
Phillips Academy
Phillips Exeter Academy
The Rivers School
The Roxbury Latin School
St. Mark's School
St. Paul's School
St. Sebastian's School
The Southfield School
Thayer Academy
The Winsor School
Xaverian Brothers High School

Karen Morales '08
marches to her own beat.

- Also Inside:*
- Start studying for The Game Show Gala!
 - Scholars sweep awards at graduation.

Steppingstone

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