

133 Steppingstone Scholars

celebrated the completion of The Steppingstone Academy's 14-month academic component on August 15 with a commencement ceremony held at MIT. Luis Ubiñas, president of the Ford Foundation, gave a heartwarming and insightful address that brought the audience to their feet.

Mr. Ubiñas met Steppingstone founder, Michael Danziger, in the ninth grade at Collegiate School, an independent school in New York City. Prior to joining the Ford Foundation, Ubiñas was a director at McKinsey & Company, during which time he served on Steppingstone's Board of Directors.

Danziger and Ubiñas reminisced about how far Steppingstone has come since he joined the board in 1993.



Back row (left to right): Luis Ubiñas, President of the Ford Foundation and Michael Danziger, Steppingstone Founder, celebrate commencement with Scholars from the Class of 2009.

Danziger: You know, even after all these years, I can still picture us sitting together in class at Collegiate as if it were yesterday.

Ubiñas: We were two kids trying to figure out how to make it through ninth grade. It's amazing to think about how much we didn't know then and to know now that we'll look back in 30 years equally amazed by how much more we've learned. *(cont'd)*

You said at graduation that I was a Steppingstone Scholar before there was a Steppingstone. Like we hope will be the case with every Scholar, educational opportunity transformed my life. As a fifth grader I was able to shift, on full scholarship, to a school which offered me unlimited opportunities, no different from the Scholars who graduated this summer.

Danziger: This is exactly why your background makes such an impact on the Scholars: you have been in their shoes and you represent the success that they can achieve.

Ubiñas: I still remember the first time I spoke at a Steppingstone commencement several years ago. One of the Scholars came up to me and asked me to fix his tie. I couldn't help but imagine the path that boy could travel from having his tie tied to becoming a leader in society.

Danziger: So tell me, Luis, why does Steppingstone resonate with you so strongly?

Ubiñas: The magic of programs like Steppingstone is that they bring people who might never meet together. I was a scholarship kid from the South Bronx attending classes with wealthy kids from the Upper East Side. Yet, in school, we were just kids trying to get by. I think we are both different people today because we were able to go to school with a vastly diverse group of people. That shared learning is one of the reasons why it's imperative that independent schools and great colleges and universities remain committed to diversity of socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

Danziger: You spent much of your professional career at McKinsey; how has the transition to the Ford Foundation been?

Ubiñas: McKinsey & Company was a special place to have spent 20 years. It is a great organization, deeply devoted to service and to the continuous development of its people. If I learned anything there, it's that every day is an opportunity to learn and that much of that learning comes from listening. And I took that learning with me to the Ford Foundation.

Serving as president of the Ford Foundation in the midst of one of the worst financial downturns in our nation's history has allowed me to contribute more than I ever imagined I would be able to. Ford has been and will continue to be a leader in helping societies become more fair and just.

Danziger: Well, they're extremely lucky to have you on board, as are we to have you here.

Ubiñas: Today was great. I have to say that being in that auditorium at MIT, with all of those Steppingstone Scholars, brought home to me how much you've accomplished over the last two decades, and how much Steppingstone means and has meant to thousands of families in Boston, Philadelphia, and Hartford. Given the capability of those children and the path of unlimited opportunity Steppingstone has put them on, there is no knowing how much impact Steppingstone will have. You have a lot to be proud of.

Danziger: Thank you, Luis. We both have a lot to be proud of.



News of Note

NPEA: Promoting Educational Access

The National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) held its inaugural conference: Collaborating for Success: Promoting Educational Access on April 30-May 1, 2009 at The Charles Hotel in Cambridge, MA. Close to 200 members and nonmembers from across the country, representing 22 states, attended the conference.

Keynote speakers included: Stephanie Bell-Rose, President of The Goldman Sachs Foundation and Managing Director, Goldman, Sachs & Co.; Nicholas C. Donohue, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation; Ron Fairchild, Executive Director of The National Center for Summer Learning; Thomas H. Parker, Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Amherst College; and Rick Weissbourd, Lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Kennedy School of Government.

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Summer Conference Career Panel a Success

The Steppingstone Academy held its inaugural Summer Conference on August 12 for rising sixth, seventh, and ninth graders to discuss topics ranging from "How to Succeed at an Independent School" to "Social Media Safety." The conference also offered a career panel for Scholars, put together with help from members of The Steppingstone Task Force. Established more than a year ago, this group of young Bostonians focuses on ways to attract, retain, and engage younger donors who will become the next set of advocates for Steppingstone. The Task Force reached out to their networks to find participants for a career panel at the conference, and panelists included a pediatrician, an investment banker, a Google engineer, a lawyer, and a news anchor. More than 60 Scholars attended the panel, which was moderated by Steppingstone Alumnus Donovan Brown '95, who discussed his own career path into banking and his next move, studying international business at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. The volunteer panelists were very impressed with the questions they were asked and were busy handing out their business cards to ambitious Scholars after the career panel!



Top: (left to right) John Katzman, Executive Chairman, The Princeton Review; Michael Danziger, Founder, The Steppingstone Foundation; and Isabelle Loring, Board Member, The Steppingstone Foundation.

Bottom: Carlos Alvarado, Research & Evaluation Specialist, Breakthrough Collaborative; Andy Shin, Executive Director, Breakthrough San Francisco; and Alison Glastein, Executive Director, Breakthrough Cambridge. **Left:** Ron Fairchild, Executive Director of The National Center for Summer Learning.

It's mid-July and a particularly hot and steamy day at The Steppingstone Academy's summer session, held at Milton Academy. As Scholars scurry by to get to class, Teaching Assistant (TA) Phi Tran and Edosa Onaiwu, Class of 2009, grab a seat in Milton's café to talk about school, Steppingstone, and sports.

As a TA, Phi helped Steppingstone teachers facilitate classes and worked on special projects. Phi, who completed Steppingstone's academic preparation component in 2004, will be a junior at St. Sebastian's School in Needham and Edosa will be joining him as a seventh-grader in September. Edosa jumped at the chance to sit down with Phi to get an insider's view of what's to come his way. Phi was eager to reminisce about his days as a Scholar.

Edosa Onaiwu: What are your two favorite summer memories as a Scholar?

Phi Tran: Well, there are many, but if I had to choose, I think commencement and lunchtime. Commencement was the culmination of a lot of hard work and sacrifice. I was really proud of myself that day; it wasn't an easy road, but I persevered. Lunch was a great time to kick back and get to know your classmates. They understand exactly what you're going through, along with your advisors, teachers, and family; they become a part of your support network.

Edosa: Yeah, I'm really looking forward to commencement. After 14 long months, the end is nearly here! I have made some good friends, but I'm not sure if we'll still see each other once we all start at our placement schools.

Phi: Actually, it's pretty easy with Facebook and the help of your Advisors. I've been able to stay in touch with many of them and even re-connected with one of my favorite Steppingstone teachers.

Edosa: Got it: stay in touch with Steppingstone! Any advice on how to balance schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and the rest once I start at St. Sebastian's this fall?

Phi: Don't procrastinate! Get your homework done before you start anything else. Once you get into a groove, it becomes easier to manage your time and enjoy extracurricular activities as well. I played football and baseball during my first two years, but the academics really kicked into high gear during ninth grade, so now I'm just on the wrestling team and in a few clubs.

Edosa: I like lacrosse, baseball, and football, and I'm really looking forward to getting involved in clubs, too.

Phi: Great, and don't limit yourself. Try new things, but academics come first. By the way, make sure you complete the summer reading list for St. Sebastian's. I had a quiz on the first day of class. Luckily, it was on Roll of Thunder, a book I had read as a Scholar, so I did fine.

Edosa: Thanks for the tip! Now, with the summer session almost over, what are your plans?

Phi: Well, I want to do really well on my SATs and fortunately, Steppingstone is offering Kaplan review courses, so I'm definitely doing that! I want to go into medicine; hopefully, I'll get into a good college and eventually go to medical school.

Edosa: That's great. I'm not sure yet what I want to do, but I want to do well in school, and I'm really looking forward to starting at St. Sebastian's. Thanks so much for meeting with me. You've given me a lot to think about and some great insight.

Phi: No problem. I'll see you on campus this fall!



AN INTERVIEW WITH Edosa & Phi

Scholarly Achievements

Noble & Greenough School's **Melissa Centeno '02**, **Vinesha Baker '03**, and **Felix Liang '06** all earned honor roll for the third term. Vinesha is in her first year at Columbia University.

Anastasia Walker '05 of Noonan Business Academy is a co-creator of a video campaign that aims to reduce sexually transmitted infections (STI) among Boston teens. The campaign was launched by the Boston Public Health Commission to combat STIs among youths, and she was featured on the front page of the August 4, 2009 edition of The Boston Globe.

Xaverian Brothers High School's **Jhaquan Henderson '06**, was chosen as a Next Generation Venture Fund Scholar through the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth.

Aylin Feliz '07 of Milton Academy is the Tri-Head of the Latino Association that builds awareness in the Milton community about Latino/Hispanic culture through various social and cultural activities.

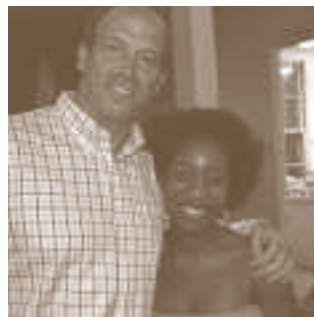
Noble & Greenough School's **Justin Jimenez '08** was awarded the Bond Prize for most improved seventh-grade student.

Daniel Creese, **Bruna Lee**, and **Kali Robinson**, all Class of '09, were valedictorians of their classes. This fall, they will attend ninth grade at the John D. O'Bryant School, The Rivers School, and Milton Academy, respectively.

John D. O'Bryant School's **Amy Lyu '06**, **Amina Egal '07**, **Joshua Frias '08**, and **Genesis Guerrero '08** received honor roll fourth term.

The following Boston Latin Academy Scholars received honor roll fourth term: **Stephane Alexandre '07**, **Abigayle Beaumont '07**, **Kara Blackwell '06**, **Andres Cardona '06**, **Kevin Chan '08**, **Damian Cruz '08**, **Faetitia Desamours '06**, **Erwin Fuentes '07**, **Natalia Greenidge '06**, **Angelina Hua '08**, **Trevon Jackson-Pratt '07**, **Rashinda Key '06**, **John Le '08**, **Simon Ngo '06**, **Victoria Okafor '08**, **Gared Paul '08**, **Chris Perez '08**, **Melissa Rodriguez '06**, **Blondin St. Jusme '08**, **Carlina Teixeira '06**, **Stephanie Thermora '06**, **Kelly Tice '06**, **Julie Tran '08**, and **Mandy Yun '07**.

Steppingstone Alumna **Alicia Genisca '93** graduated from Weill Medical College of Cornell University and Michael Danziger was on hand to celebrate the occasion. Alicia will be doing her residency at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.



Stepping Out

Teeing Up for Steppingstone

After a month of rain, we were lucky to have some sunshine for the seventh annual Golf Classic, which was held on June 29 at the Concord Country Club.

Congratulations to Mike Pehl's foursome for the win! And a special thanks to everyone who served on the committee and helped raise more than \$135,000 for Steppingstone.



Top: Golf Classic sponsor Mike Pehl of North Bridge Growth Equity with his foursome. **Right:** Steppingstone Founder Michael Danziger; Steppingstone Scholars Christina Giacoppo '09, Dakorite Ojuka '09, and Kevin Alved '09; and Red Sox General Manager Theo Epstein.



Steppingstone Salons

General Manager Theo Epstein hosted Steppingstone Salon donors and three lucky Scholars at a Red Sox game in the spring.

At another Salon luncheon, held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Peter and Bobby Farrelly recounted how they came up with some of the more hilarious (and outrageous!) scenes in their movie, "There's Something About Mary."

Gala 2009 Committee List

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A Celebration of Summer

To benefit THE STEPPINGSTONE FOUNDATION

Come Celebrate Summer in November!

All the harbingers of autumn are here: Labor Day is over, school has started, even the leaves are starting to turn. At Steppingstone, however, we are still in summer mode! Please join us for Steppingstone's Celebration of Summer Gala on Wednesday, November 4, at The Charles Hotel. This year's event will focus on summer not just as a time to relax and have fun, but also as a critical time for learning.

For many underserved children, the summer months undermine much of the academic progress they have made during the previous school year, causing them to fall behind their higher-income counterparts who often avail themselves of summer learning activities. Keynote speaker, Ron Fairchild, Executive Director of the National Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University, will explain why the children who can least afford to are the ones that fall the most behind over the summer and how programs like Steppingstone can reverse these effects.

For more information, please contact Kate Golden at kgolden@tsf.org or 617-423-6300, ext. 238.



133 Scholars in the Class of 2009 celebrated the completion of Steppingstone's 14-month academic component on Saturday, August 15. Three Scholars were selected to represent each division as commencement speakers: Academy Six Scholar Luisa Perez Lacera, Academy Seven Scholar Derek Samir DaSilva, and Academy Nine Scholar Opeoluwa Oluokorede.

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.isf.org.

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