



together *Juntos*

A **special edition** of the quarterly newsletter
of KIPP Massachusetts

KIPP:MA
MASSACHUSETTS

SUMMER 2012

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CALEB DOLAN

Dear Friends,

As members of our extended KIPP Team and Family, you know about our laser focus on increasing college graduation rates for our KIPPsters, and our commitment to providing them with the skills and tools they need to live a healthy, successful life of choice.

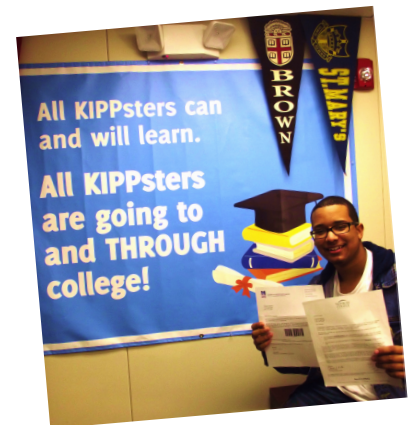
Nearly eight years ago my good friend and colleague Josh Zoia and his team founded KIPP Academy Lynn along with 77 kids and families who believed in KIPP, and our promise of 100% better life outcomes for our kids. The founding Class of 2012 at KIPP Academy Lynn paved the path for the 463 KIPPsters currently attending KIPP Academy Lynn and KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate high school, and the nearly 200 alumni before them. We want to give this incredible group of kids, families and staff a “shout out” by dedicating this special edition of *Juntos* to them.

The stories of Ashlee, Jeremias, Alex, Rey, Rachael, and Moises represent the GRIT, ZEST, COURAGE, and hard work of the entire founding class of 2012. This fall, 89% of 2012’s eligible seniors will matriculate to college, compared to 41% of their low income peers nationwide.

We hope you will enjoy this special edition and we look forward to sharing our KIPPsters’ college graduation stories with you in the future. It is only with the support of the entire KIPP Team and Family that we have these stories to share, for which we are so very grateful.

Many thanks, much love

Caleb



Check out our new
**KIPP Through College
VIDEO**

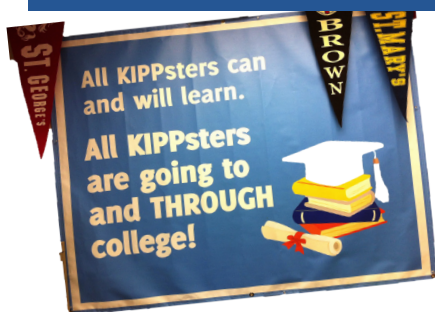
www.kippma.org

P.S. We hope you will come join us for a tour of our school this spring to see our kids, teachers, programs, and strategies in action (and bring friends!). To schedule a tour, call 781-592-1937 or email wgrace@kippma.org. If you can’t make it this spring to Lynn, don’t forget our Boston school will open in Jamaica Plain this fall.

25 Bessom Street · Lynn, MA · 01902 · www.kippma.org · 781.592.1937
To make a donation, visit www.kippma.org/donate

**We asked KIPPsters to finish this sentence:
“A COLLEGE DEGREE WILL ALLOW ME TO...”**

From the Class of 2012, headed off to college this fall:



...Be one step closer to where I want to be.

Rachel Espaillat, Class of 2012

*Senior at Cristo Rey Boston
Attending Loyola New Orleans
University in Fall 2012*

...Become a hedge fund manager.

Danny Morel, Class of 2012

*Senior at Lynn English High School
Attending Keene State College
in Fall 2012*

...Accomplish all of the goals I set for myself.

Rey Rodriguez, Class of 2012

*Senior at Lynn English High School
Attending Keene State College
in Fall 2012*

**...Be the first person in my family
to graduate from college.**

Gloris Lopez, Class of 2012

*Senior at Lynn Classical High School
Attending Everest Institute in Fall 2012*

...Prosper in life.

John Cordova, Class of 2012

*Senior at Salem Academy Charter School
Attending Keene State College
in Fall 2012*

From our younger KIPPsters:

...Make my own life.

Walner Duran, Class of 2015

*9th Grade
KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate*

...Become an anesthesiologist.

Betty Louis, Class of 2016

*8th Grade
KIPP Academy Lynn Middle School*

...Get into other colleges to get my Master's.

Miguel Valdez, Class of 2019

*5th Grade
KIPP Academy Lynn Middle School*

...Pay medical bills for my parents.

Kevin Morfa, Class of 2015

*9th Grade
KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate*

...Become the next Bill Gates

Marc Vasquez, Class of 2015

*9th Grade
KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate*

COLLEGE



ASHLEE SPENCER

Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & HIGH SCHOOL
12th grade
St. Mary's High School

COLLEGE SHE WILL ATTEND:
Simmons College

CAREER ASPIRATIONS:
Radiologist



Excerpts from the college essays of our KIPPsters

On the experience of being a lifeguard: *No one can be prepared for every event. He struggled. He flailed his arms. Seeing him in trouble, I jumped in with the tube that lifeguards wear at all times and swam over to him. He was still struggling and crying. I wrapped his arms around the tube and told him, "Everything is alright, you are safe." ... I've had a lot of training, [but] after helping that boy to safety, I realized that it takes more than training to respond to an emergency. I jumped in without thinking. I had the strength and confidence to apply my training in a crisis. It was a good feeling to know that I had made a difference in someone's life...There was a time I was not confident in what I see now as my strengths, [but] I [now] realize how strong I have become...This experience has made me understand how ready I am to face the next challenge: going to college.*

How has KIPP prepared you for college? I've always had a vision of going to college, and of being a doctor. KIPP helped me realize that college is not just about having freedom. You're going to have to be disciplined. At KIPP they started with it early. They tell us all the time that in college and in the rest of your life, no one's going to be on your back - you have to rely on yourself to get your work done, and when you're given a deadline you're expected to live up to it. KIPP helped me develop discipline.

How have you changed since you first came to KIPP? When I first got to KIPP, I was really shy and introverted, and now I'm more social and confident. We did a lot of community things where they put us in groups, gave us different challenges and we had to talk with other people and figure it out as a team. It pushed me to interact with others more. I have also always struggled with writing, but in 8th grade I was published in a poetry book, which I don't think I would have done if I weren't at KIPP. I wouldn't have had the confidence or the skills.

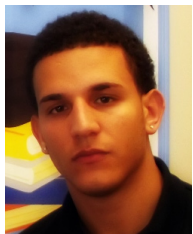
You were in the founding class of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn and now you're headed off to college. How does it feel? I never thought about the fact that I would actually make it here. It seems like yesterday I was in 5th grade coming to KIPP.

JEREMIAS CAMPOS

CLASS
Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & HIGH SCHOOL
12th Grade
Salem Academy Charter School

COLLEGE HE WILL ATTEND:
Manhattanville College



Excerpts from the college essays of our KIPPsters

On the experience of volunteering in New Orleans to help victims of Hurricane Katrina: *...One woman in particular, a victim of the storm, took me aside and offered a token of her appreciation which I have with me at all times. It was a coin, a simple Mardi Gras coin, a symbol of her resilience which reminds me that good things can come out of bad situations...The coin reminds me to look past the difficulties that I have faced and essentially to conquer the hardship that is to come...This experience has encouraged me to challenge myself in ways I never expected. College will offer me that challenge, allow me to grow as person and help people by using my past experiences and new experiences that are to come.*

How has KIPP prepared you for college? KIPP gave me the power to expand my strengths. In 5th grade, making the Principal's List was really hard to do. There were three girls who always used to make it, and I was the first guy from KIPP Lynn to make it. KIPP also taught me not to be afraid of separating myself from the pack. Now, some of my friends take the same classes just so they can be together. That's fine for them, but I'm going to do my own thing. KIPP taught me to make my own path.

You were in the founding class of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn and now you're headed off to college. How does it feel? Being in the founding class, everyone just "clicked." We had a common connection that no other class had. Before KIPP, college was never *there* in my mind - I never had the mindset. But when I started visiting colleges and I saw that there are people who come from the same kinds of places I come from, who haven't had everything come easily - that made it more real for me.

What are you looking forward to about college? I'm realizing now that I did a lot of work at KIPP and in high school and that's what helped me get to college. I think I'll feel the same when I look back on college - I'm looking forward to seeing my hard work pay off.

ALEX NEWELL

CLASS

Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & HIGH SCHOOL

12th grade, Bishop Fenwick

COLLEGE HE WILL ATTEND:

Berklee College of Music

CAREER ASPIRATIONS:

Singer/Dancer/Actor



Excerpts from the college essays of our KIPPsters

On the experience of being on the TV show, *The Glee Project*, making it to the top four, and earning a 2-episode part on Fox's hit show, *Glee*:
...To think I was just a teenager from Lynn, going to school and living my life, just a teenager trying to fit in, trying to please everyone, trying to hide the fact that I am gay, and trying not to be socially awkward. Basically, I was spending my life trying to do or be something that I'm not. Because of The Glee Project, I am now a better singer, actor, dancer, but what is more important, today I am a more authentic person. I am more confident in who I am and what I believe to be true. Because of [this experience] I now have the confidence to do anything I put my mind to.

How have you changed since you first came to KIPP? My personality hasn't changed much but I've definitely matured more as a person. KIPP helped give me a different, more positive outlook on life. It taught me that any trials and tribulations I go through will be to make myself better. In the end, everybody has a plan, KIPP was part of my plan.

What are you most looking forward to about college? I have always wanted to go to college – it was just about finding what college worked for me. [At Berklee], I'm looking forward to really perfecting my voice and talent, and understanding it more.

Tell us about your recent experience volunteering at KAL Collegiate. I wanted to volunteer at KIPP because I love Ms. DeAngelo and Ms. Startek like kids love cake. I wanted to be someplace that meant something to me. I may not have shown it as much when I was here, but KIPP *means* something to me.

You were in the founding class of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn and now you're headed off to college. How does it feel? I remember back in 5th grade, my aunt just told me to show up and sign [the Commitment to Excellence] for this new school called KIPP. I signed, and history was made. We were the "test kids" we were the ones who made it possible for the other grades to follow us. I take pride in what we did.

REY RODRIGUEZ

CLASS

Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & HIGH SCHOOL

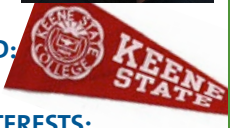
12th Grade
Lynn English High School

COLLEGE HE WILL ATTEND:

Keene State College

ACADEMIC & CAREER INTERESTS:

Business, Computer Science, Biology



Excerpts from the college essays of our KIPPsters

On what KIPP taught him: *When I was in 8th grade my father died. He always checked to see that I was working hard in school and making the right choices outside of school...Despite having a great mom and a big loving family, I still missed my father's advice. But thanks to my "family" at KIPP, my father's words always mattered....At first I felt stressed because every single aspect of KIPP was based on the motto "Work hard. Be nice." And they meant it. The only way to succeed was through commitment to school and each other...KIPP disciplined me to work hard, not only in academics but in everything I did. When I think about who I've become as a person, I realize that my father's advice and my experience at KIPP taught me everything I needed to know. If you work hard & be nice you will overcome almost everything in life.*

How do you describe KIPP to people who don't know anything about it? KIPP is a different environment, and a better environment to grow in. If you're not doing a lot of work, you don't get used to it that way. The work at KIPP was one of the most challenging things about it, but you learn that what you think is a lot of work is really not.

You and another KIPPster [Danny Morel] have had a unique experience of working with a mentor from the community (KIPP:MA friend and supporter Eric Svenson). What has that been like? Eric is a great mentor. He has a lot of advice for us and helps us think differently about a lot of things. He told us once that when you see someone with a lot of confidence, don't be intimidated because everyone's afraid. He gave us a poem that says, don't be afraid of what you can accomplish.

You were in the founding class of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn and now you're headed off to college. How does it feel? As the first class, and we never had a class above us. We had to get stuff down right for the kids who came behind us. It feels like it's been an experience. I've learned to build better relationships and branch myself out to people. When I opened my first college acceptance letter, I felt proud - I actually got accepted. If it wasn't for KIPP, that wouldn't have happened.

RACHAEL ESPAILLAT

CLASS

Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & HIGH SCHOOL

12th grade
Cristo Rey Boston

CAREER ASPIRATIONS:

Food Journalist

COLLEGE SHE WILL ATTEND:

Loyola New Orleans



Excerpts from the college essays of our KIPPsters

On her desire to become a food journalist: *Much of my inner-strength and determination for success has come from my mother & what she has taught us by example. Throughout my life, the most defining moments for my family have always taken place around the dinner table. The dinner table symbolizes my mom as the unwavering center of our family unit. It is where she has nourished us with food & love. While my mom exemplifies determination and nurturing, my English teacher, Mrs. Wagner, displays the balance & self-discipline that have inspired me to become a writer. [Because of] my two role models, I have developed strong connections to family, food & writing... Food serves as a universal necessity that connects all human beings. I am hopeful that college will bring me closer to...becoming a food journalist, so I can incorporate my passions and continue to bring people together.*

How has KIPP prepared you for college? I didn't think about college and big stuff until I came to KIPP. KIPP helped me change my mindset, and helped me keep college always in my mind, like, "that's what is ahead of me, that's what I'm striving for." When you're younger, college isn't something you can see, it's not tangible, so it's hard to work towards it. KIPP made it more tangible, and helped me build my determination to succeed.

What are you most looking forward to about college? It will be a whole new experience, a new world. I'm going all the way down to New Orleans - I'm looking forward to experiencing a whole new culture. I've visited a lot of colleges and I never really felt an attachment to any of them, but when I visited [Loyola], as soon as I got there I had a good feeling about it.

You were in the founding class of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn and now you're headed off to college. How does it feel? It's an honor. We're the founding class - there is no other "us." I feel rewarded in a sense.

MOISES MARTINEZ

CLASS

Class of 2012
KIPP Academy Lynn
The founding group of 5th graders at KIPP Academy Lynn

GRADE & SCHOOL

Earned his G.E.D.
Now earning Associates Degree at
North Shore Community College
Plans to then earn his B.A



Alternative Paths to and through college

At KIPP, we make the commitment to stick with all of our KIPPsters, even those who choose non-traditional paths to and through college. Moises Martinez is one of these students, and we are proud to call him a KIPPster.

What is one of your favorite memories of KIPP? I came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic a year before I came to KIPP. I barely knew English, so I didn't say a word at KIPP for almost 2 years. The first time I raised my hand & participated in class was at the end of 6th grade in Mr. Zoia's science class. He made everyone give me a round of applause. It is something I still think about today. Whenever I am speaking to a group, in my head I still hear the applause.

What was it like being part of the founding class at KAL? We were a group of kids who were going to make a difference in Lynn with this new school. We wanted to lead and show people that it's cool to be a nerd. I'm proud I was in that group.

You decided to drop out of high school and earn your G.E.D instead. Why was that the right choice for you? At KIPP, I connected with so many teachers, but when I got to high school, I couldn't find those relationships. I tried to connect with other students but I didn't belong. So I decided to sign up for the G.E.D. program at MY TURN instead. It was a risk, but I thought, "Life is only going to give me these chances if I risk what I have to get something better." For me, it was the right choice - everyone in my G.E.D. class was there with the same purpose and they *wanted* to be there. It wasn't just about school - it was about life.

How did the KIPP teachers react to your decision? At first I didn't keep in touch with KIPP - I thought they'd be disappointed. I thought all they understood was college, and I didn't think they'd get that some people take different paths. But when I earned my G.E.D., I came back to show my "KIPP parents." They respected it so much that I was still pursuing the college dream, and they welcomed me. It made me realize it doesn't matter what path I take; KIPP will be there for me no matter what.

Do you think you'll stay around here for your B.A? Lynn is where I grew up - it has made me strong and smart and who I am. But sometimes, to see that you're succeeding, you need to go somewhere else. I'll go anywhere for college. Some people stay here for college because they're afraid to leave. You know the saying, "The devil you know is better than the devil you don't know"? Most people choose the one they know, but I choose the one I don't know. He will challenge me. He will surprise me.

www.kippma.org



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