The Partners Program received two national recognitions this past year. I am very proud of both, because each highlights a piece of Partners that is critical to reaching our goals.

**Data.** First, we were one of 10 programs of 374 surveyed nationwide to be included in the Educational Policy Institute’s 2012 report *A Blueprint for Success: Case Studies of Successful Pre-College Programs*. At the outset of the section about Partners, the authors wrote: “The Partners Program offers a model of data-driven program enhancement and expansion for small organizations.” While our small size may restrict us from controlled experiments and data regressions, we think it is nonetheless critical to continuously count and compare our results, and we do just that. Collecting and analyzing data is how we know that we are improving, reaching our goals, and benchmarking appropriately with our peer organizations.

**Collaboration.** Second, we received the 2012 Excellence in Collaboration Award from the National Partnership for Educational Access. This
The Partners “AYMSP” program delivers upon its name: the “Academic Year Middle School Partnerships.” Launched in 2011-12, AYMSP brings high school students (a mix of College Prep students and Partners Summer Academy alumni) to two Oakland public middle schools: Westlake and KIPP Bridge. These highly motivated high school students tutor and mentor their younger peers much like they do during the Summer Academy, except in AYMSP they are at the middle schools, rather than at College Prep.

In our second AYMSP year we are working toward deeper, more significant impact. We moved the tutoring sessions out of the schools’ often crowded homework centers and into nearby quiet classrooms, and then paired the high schoolers with some of the middle schoolers who struggle most – kids for whom school is hard and often defeating.

Instantly, we witnessed peer relationships making learning less arduous, more social, and more fun, and academic work is getting done! Staying with the same middle school students for four 6-week “cycles,” we will keep a close eye on their grades and stay in close contact with their teachers to make sure that this positive peer dynamic is having an equally

When Partners families told us in the summer of 2010 that they were really worried about the lack of college counseling for their kids, we responded by launching the Partners College Transition Program that following summer. This pilot effort included 5 Partners alumni in an intensive week-long, full-day summer college “bootcamp,” then worked with them and an additional 10 alumni peers, offering Saturday workshops, college tours, and essay-writing support throughout the college application season.

After that, we got serious! For our second year, currently in session, we teamed up with UC-Berkeley Extension’s college counseling certificate program, two peer non-profit organizations (Aim High and Heads Up), and two Oakland public high schools (Envision Academy and Coliseum College Preparatory Academy) to provide deeper support. We renamed ourselves the College Counseling Collaborative, or “CCC” for short.

In this second year, we are serving twice as many students overall (30), all of whom enrolled in the bootcamp – up from 5 bootcamp students in the pilot year. We also moved the bootcamp to the UC-Berkeley campus and toured UC-Berkeley as well as 3 other campuses during our bootcamp week together.
positive impact on their academic performance, too.

Also in the mix are Summer Academy students who elect for academic-year tutoring and mentoring, thus creating a year-round system of support for their academic and social learning.

We are deeply indebted to the Chamberlin Family Foundation and our school partners for making this program expansion possible. For more information, please contact our AYMSP program leader, Francesca Cervantes, at cervantes.francesca@gmail.com.

The students are now benefiting from 1-on-1 and small group support from adults who are working toward their college counseling certificates at UC-Berkeley Extension. Like last year, our support continues in the fall and winter with Saturday workshops, college tours, and essay-writing support.

Grants from USA Funds, Inc. and Bank of the West have made this program expansion possible, as well as our terrific partners in this venture. For more information about the CCC program, please contact John Fanning at johnfa@college-prep.org.

Bright Stars: The People Powering Our Progress

Partners welcomes two new staff members and a new intern in 2012-13

Francesca Cervantes

Among the many relationships at school that shape and influence learning, one of the most powerful (and often, most fun) is the one between peers. As the new Program Leader for Partners’ Academic Year Middle School Partnerships I have the pleasure of facilitating student collaboration in our after-school tutoring program at both Westlake Middle and KIPP Bridge Charter schools in Oakland.

I have spent the last fifteen years in elementary and secondary school classrooms teaching Spanish, French, and most recently, English to second language learners. Prior to a career in education, I worked in the field of community development with nonprofits in south central Los Angeles, as well as the Tenderloin and Mission districts of San Francisco. My work at Partners allows me to merge two of my great passions: education with social justice. Working with such a dynamic team of young leaders and witnessing young students grow in confidence and knowledge makes the job all the more satisfying.

Emmanuel Pavia

“newsletter-landia!” (Hello to everyone out there in newsletter-land!). My name is Emmanuel Pavia and I am proud to be the new Partners Program Coordinator. It has been a pleasure to work with the Partners middle and high school students because I was once in their shoes. I grew up in a low-income, single-parent household, located in a Los Angeles suburb known locally for its two rival gangs. During my middle and high school years, I had little awareness of how these socio-economic realities could negatively affect my future. Without the guidance I received from my family as well as the adult educators in my life, I certainly would not be the young man I am today. So now, two years after being the first college graduate in my family, my goal is to give back to young boys and girls from similar walks of life. I am grateful to have found an organization, such as Partners, that strives to empower youth with the skills, attitudes, and confidence needed for a bright future. I am reminded every day why this work is needed in Oakland... especially when it comes from Partners students and families themselves!

Andy Tovar

Hello! My name is Andy Tovar, a second year political economy student at UC-Berkeley. I’m originally from Anaheim, CA. I’m an intern for the Partners Program through the Bonner Leaders Program, a public service organization that develops leaders to give back to the community. I love to be part of an amazing team, dedicated to education. At Partners, I am working with the AYMSP program, helping with the High School Transition Program workshops, and will be presenting my own workshops for the College Counseling Collaborative students and other Partners alumni to help them find college scholarships. In the future, I hope to run my own program to bridge the achievement gap.
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July 1, 2011 - November 1, 2012

Thank you for your generous financial support; you've enabled us to serve more students and families in more ways than ever before!

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Many thanks to those whose in-kind and discounted products and services, volunteerism, connection-making, and program partnerships have helped us to extend our work and resources!

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Field Trip Hosts
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UC-Berkeley – Robert Gleeson, David Larue, Barbara Peterson, & Mike Mansfield

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Partners by the Numbers: Thanks to your support, we are serving more students and families in more ways than ever before. Here is how the numbers break down ...

Summer Academy
96 Oakland public middle school students
32 Oakland public and private high school tutors/mentors
6 College Interns

High School Transition Program
32 Oakland public middle school students
4 Oakland public & private high school tutors/mentors
1 College Intern

Academic Year Middle School Partnerships
150 Oakland public middle school students
50 Oakland public and private high school tutors/mentors
2 College Interns

College Counseling Collaborative
30 Bay Area public high school students
1 College Intern
4 Graduate Certificate Interns (studying to become college counselors)

TOTAL: 346 unduplicated students, tutors, mentors, and interns receiving and giving support in 2012 – 2013.
The Partners Program 25th Anniversary Celebration

In July 2012, Partners celebrated our 25th graduating class with a gathering that drew more than 115 alumni, family members, friends, supporters, and well-wishers, including Mayor Jean Quan and representatives from the offices of Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner and U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee. We also collected 25 stories for 25 years from Partners alumni and former Assistant Teachers and College Interns. Here are a few of the great photos and heart-warming stories from that special day.

“Looking back on those experiences, I would have to say that the best thing I learned from Partners was the simple reminder that our community is full of excellent people that are willing and able to help at all times. Between the teachers and the ATs there is always someone at Partners to assist you in any aspect of your life.”
Karl, Partners Class of 2005, Sienna High School Class of 2009, Current University of Alberta (Canada) Student

“One thing that I truly admire about The Partners Program is how the networks I’ve cultivated as a student, AT, and alum have lasted my entire life. Last summer I attended the Partners reunion and was greeted by former teachers, students, and classmates. It’s such a wonderful feeling when you meet up with people for the first time in 4 years or more, and your friendships haven’t changed one bit.”
Mercy, Partners Class of 2003, College Prep Class of 2007, UC-Davis Class of 2011

“My favorite memory from Partners has to be Lexy’s class when we were reading Othello. This was memorable because I never knew about this guy named Shakespeare. Lexy had explained to me who Shakespeare was, and he sounded really boring. But to the contrary, it was the greatest class ever. Lexy made it really interesting and compared real life to the book, and it made me and the whole class understand it better.”
David, Partners Class of 2008, inaugural Partners College Counseling Collaborative class, & UC-Merced freshman

“I think the advanced art classes at Partners were instrumental in helping me choose my career path. I never had the experience (or even the opportunity) of using the skills and techniques offered by the Partners art teachers in my inner-city schools. Learning these new methods of doing art, and of seeing the world in a totally new way, really helped me expand my creativity.”
Carolina, Partners Class of 1998 & recent Master of Fine Arts (MFA) graduate
is awarded to an organization that “has demonstrated successful and positive results in forming, cultivating and implementing a collaboration that serves to increase the educational opportunities for underrepresented students...and show(s) that through collaborative efforts, more has been accomplished than would have been by working alone.” Indeed, this says so much about our work. Again, as a small organization, we can’t do it all! But through partnerships with Oakland public middle schools, UC-Berkeley, Oakland Unified School District, and many peer organizations, we are serving more students and families in more ways with greater results than ever before.

Perhaps ironically, receiving awards instills in me both pride in what we have accomplished and humility in that we are not doing more. These days I am thinking mostly about wanting to partner with 1 – 2 more Oakland public middle schools, and hoping to add them to the fold in time for the 2013 Summer Academy.

I am also worrying about some of our alumni who are struggling in high school, or struggling in college, beyond the supports of our core programming, but still very much part of our family; how can we help them stay on track, even after they have transitioned from “student” to “alumni”? Hopefully this year we will begin to tackle this long-term challenge.

Receiving awards also reminds me how broad our community is, and the depth of so many people’s contributions. From College Prep and our other in-kind supporters, to our many generous financial supporters, to the amazing faculty, staff, college interns, high school assistant teachers, tutors, mentors, and volunteers who toil at our various points of service, these awards recognize us all. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to Partners and the students and families we serve. We could never, ever do what we do without you.

I welcome you to learn more about these awards and our work at www.college-prep.org/partners. And as we head into a New Year, please also feel very welcome to contact me at johnfa@college-prep.org and 510/652-0111, X260, with your ideas and inspirations! I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you so much for your support!

Heroes! In each year’s Summer Academy we incorporate an aspirational theme across our academic and enrichment activities. This past summer, students reflected upon the theme of “heroes” – people in their families, their communities, and inside themselves – and presented their collective interpretations in their Graduation and Family Celebration Day performances.
A Note from Our Chairman

Lights! Camera! Partners!

Over the last few months, John Fanning, the Partners staff, and I have been working with local video director Mark Altenberg to create a snapshot of The Partners Program. This process has been wonderful not only for the final result (you can view it at vimeo.com/markaltenberg/partnersprogram), which gives a wonderful sense of the excitement, engagement, and life changing nature of Partners, but also for the process of trying to capture the essence of Partners in just a few minutes. This turned out to be a very challenging task!

The difficulty was not that we didn't understand what makes Partners unique and compelling. It was not that we had any trouble filming excitement in the faces, actions, and words of the students, staff, and faculty. The difficulty was trying to fit the best of what makes Partners such a successful program into a 5-minute video. We have grown so much these past 6 years, thanks to the generous support of many of you reading this newsletter, and now have 4 distinct program areas serving more students and families in more ways than ever before.

In the end, although editing left out some beautiful scenes and eloquent words, the final product is a powerful statement of the ways in which The Partners Program is positively changing the lives of students, families, and everyone involved in helping them. It is a video with a very happy ending. I hope you enjoy seeing the great work that you have helped to inspire and make possible. We are grateful for your support.

Steve Berger, Chairman