

# Reach High Scholars

P.O. Box 745  
Raymond, N.H. 03077

May 24, 2011

Dear Friends of the Reach High Scholars Program:

We would like to bring you up-to-date on some recent developments in the Reach High Scholars Program at Raymond High School. The Program encourages RHS students to “reach high” in their pursuit of an education after high school, with emphasis on attending highly competitive colleges.

## Major Initiatives

The principle areas of emphasis of the Program are:

- (i) furnishing information on colleges and the financial aid which they offer;
- (ii) organizing and subsidizing some of the cost of trips for RHS students to over 20 schools that are within a one-day drive from Raymond;
- (iii) encouraging RHS students to attend summer enrichment programs at top educational institutions;
- (iv) encouraging students to take courses on-line that are not available at RHS, including honors and advanced placement courses;
- (v) providing a course to prepare for the PSAT and SAT tests; and
- (vi) paying a portion of the fees for RHS students applying to summer programs, preparing for and taking standard college admission tests and applying to four-year colleges.

## This Year's Seniors

Several of this year's seniors have been involved in the Reach High Scholars Program since its inception over three years ago. They have had record-breaking results in their college acceptances. To place their accomplishments in context, in the history of Raymond there have been 19 people who have graduated from, or are currently attending, one of 80 highly-competitive colleges which we have identified for this purpose. In each of the past four years there has been an average of two acceptances and one attendee (who in most cases had received all the acceptances).

This year, spread among seven seniors active in the Program, there have been 21 acceptances at the following top colleges: Brown, Colgate, Dartmouth, Grinnell, Hobart & William Smith (4), Holy Cross, RPI, Skidmore (4), Smith, Tufts, Washington & Lee, Wesleyan, Wheaton (2) and Williams. Jake Leavitt will be going to Brown, Samantha Harmon to Dartmouth, Ami Neepser to Holy Cross and Kristina Francoeur, Jesse Hardman and Jonathan Lemay to Skidmore. Josh Burgess will attend UNH.

## Reach High Scholars Club

An important component of the Program has been the Reach High Scholars Club which was started by a group of students who set as their goal attending a highly competitive college and helping each other and younger Raymond students to do so as well.

**Control Your Destiny**

The Club is an RHS extra-curricular activity open to all students. Its weekly meetings include discussions about experiences in summer programs, planning of forthcoming college visits, reports on schools recently visited or researched, comparisons of the curricula at various colleges and financial aid policies.

The Club has a program in which the seniors each mentor one junior in their pursuit of top colleges. In addition, the older students play an important role in spreading ideas to the sophomores and freshmen, not only in the Club's meetings, but also in the hallways, lunch room and wherever they encounter each other. This commitment to help others is expected to continue after graduation.

Deirdre Doyle, an RHS English teacher, has played an inspirational role as the Club's Faculty Advisor.

### **Summer Enrichment Programs**

Summer enrichment programs continue to be an important element in our overall efforts. In particular, we have been fortunate to have the support of three top New Hampshire-based academic institutions

RHS is one of five under-resourced urban and rural high schools in the country in the **Summer Enrichment at Dartmouth (SEAD) Program**. Six students from each of the schools were selected to attend the program starting in July 2010. The students are selected for showing high promise rather than high achievement and qualifying under low-income guidelines established by SEAD. The RHS students, all in the Class of 2013, are: Nicholas Clark, Tayler Dileo, Briana Draper, Kathryn Gray, Steven Mackenzie and Hope Palattella.

The six students were at Dartmouth for two weeks in the summer of 2010. They will return for three weeks this summer and the emphasis this year will be on their influence on the environment and the effect the environment has on them.

During the next school year, Dartmouth undergraduate Interns will be at RHS during three successive periods each of about nine weeks. This is an increase over the current year when there has been no Intern during the spring. The Interns spend much of their time with the SEAD students in a focused, hands-on way helping with their academic progress. They also assist in promoting early college awareness and other projects involving all EHS students.

We are delighted to have been encouraged by SEAD to apply for another three-year cohort to begin in the summer of 2012, with the possibility to repeat again in 2014.

RHS will have five students at the **Phillips Exeter Academy Summer School** this year. As in the past two years, the RHS delegation will be one of the largest of any secondary school in the world. Rachel Faust, Virginia Harmon, Amanda Lundergan, Alec Shubenko and Shaun Spinney will be attending. Charles DeBenedetto and Collin Spinney will be attending the **Advanced Studies Program at St. Paul's School** this summer. Each of these programs is for five weeks.

**Raymond Roundtables**, which was started in 2010, will take place again this summer at the Raymond Middle School for students entering the eighth and ninth grades. An English course and a math course will be conducted by faculty members from **Phillips Exeter Academy** employing their world-renowned "Harkness Method" of teaching. The Harkness Method is a student-centered seminar style of learning in which the teacher guides and fosters discussion amongst the students who are sitting around a table. Students learn to take responsibility for their education, to listen to each other and to explore the potential of their academic and

intellectual abilities. The courses will meet three times per week for four weeks. There will be about 10 to 12 Raymond Middle School students in each class and some will take both courses.

In 2010, six Raymond Middle School teachers were tutored in Exeter and Raymond on the Harkness method. This summer the tutorial program will be continued and extended to Raymond High School teachers.

### **Website**

We are delighted to announce the recent launching of the website of the Reach High Scholars Program ([www.reachhighscholars.org](http://www.reachhighscholars.org)). An enormous amount of thanks is owed to Bob Lemoine, the Library Media Specialist at RHS, who very patiently supervised and guided us through this effort.

Although the website's design aspects would benefit from upgrading in the future, there is useful substance in its contents. The website has considerable information on colleges and summer enrichment programs. In addition, there are materials on preparing for, visiting, applying to and paying for colleges. We will be expanding the content in the future and significantly reducing our production of paper documents.

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Hopefully, this will give you some sense of the overall effort in which so many of you have participated and generously supported. We look forward to keeping you posted and maintaining your enthusiasm for helping Raymond students.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. McDaniels". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

John F. McDaniels