

Leaving the Nest

It's no fluke, or purely a matter of demographics, that students graduating from Lopez Island High School continue their educations where they want. Lopez develops people with passions and unique skills that catch the eye of colleges and employers. Students graduating from Lopez School know what they want and need, and are willing to reach out and grasp it.

I have recently completed the "Oh my goodness what do I want do with the rest if my life?" phase. In the process, I have been able to better understand what our school, community, and island have taught me. Growing up on Lopez I have developed a profound respect for the environment, a love for seeing smiles on other people's faces, and an appreciation for education; these characteristics guided me to the type of college to which I wanted to apply and the majors that would best suit me.

With my college choices intact, the daunting application process was ahead. Once again, in this process, Lopez lent a hand: I had the opportunity to play numerous sports, do interesting volunteer work, and have foreign travel experiences. In every part of the application process I felt I had an experience that allowed me to answer well. The most amazing part was the teacher references. I knew I could use almost any one of my teachers as a reference: they had all taken the time to learn who I was not only as a student, but as a person too.

I experienced the unique skills that Lopez provides us with when I went to do my first college interview. I arrived more than a little nervous (luckily the interviewer couldn't see my feet tapping anxiously under the table) but within the first minute or two, as I realized that an interview was no different from the many conversations with adults in my community, I was confident. Adults in the community care about youth and we frequently talk to them for extended periods of time, learning to communicate clearly. They often ask the same stimulating questions about the person I want to be and how I want to achieve my goals as were addressed in the interview process. While I was speaking I thought of different people asking, "Could you give me an example of how you would do that?" and "How does that fit with who you want to be as a person?" My interview went smoothly because I had a community who cared enough to take the time to make me think and communicate clearly.

It's no fluke that kids from Lopez Island School go where they want; we are loved and supported and we grow up happy to learn. Upon hearing my college decision, a woman, whom I'd talked with only once or twice before, embraced me ecstatically. She told me she was glad I would have such an amazing experience in my future. She was someone I barely knew, wishing me happiness and success in my future. Lopez is about embracing people and their hugging you right back, and there is something about that open minded love for everyone that people just can't resist.