

## SCM Alumni Stories

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## ARTS/MUSIC

**LUCIEN POSTLEWAITE:** Lucien attended Santa Cruz Montessori School until 1998, and then graduated from the Professional Children's School, N.Y. in 2001. Lucien also attended Cabrillo College as part of his high school career. He followed his passion for dance, completing his training at the School of American Ballet in 2002. He then moved to the Pacific Northwest Ballet (PNB) in Seattle. In January, 2003, he was selected second of 15 finalists, receiving an award for dance with the National Foundations for the Advancement of the Arts. In June of that year, he signed a professions contract with PNB. In a recent ballet review of his role in Torque, it was said, "He ate up space in every direction, a true stage animal. He looked like he was having the time of his life!" Lucien then became a core dancer with PNB. He has contracted with the Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre to dance in "The Nutcracker", and he was a guest dancer in "Midsummer Night's Dream" in Japan. Lucien then received a promotion to soloist for the Pacific Northwest Ballet. A principle dancer for PNB, Lucien received the Princess Grace Award in NYC for excellence as a dancer. He was also invited as a guest dancer to NYC for the 75th Anniversary of New York's School of American Ballet. He danced "Melancholic" of the Cour Temperments choreographed by G. Balanchine.

**GINA INTERSIMONE:** Gina attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1991 to 2000. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, she attended Santa Catalina School in Monterey, where she further delved into her love of theater. She went on to attend the College of Creative Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. At UCSB, she was a National Society of Collegiate Scholar. She enjoyed studying Japanese and founded an amateur production company (Shrunken Head Productions). After completing her Bachelors of Arts degree, she went on to complete a fifth year graduate certificate of dramatic studies at UCSC. She now works as the Assistant to the Artistic Director and Intern Coordinator at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. She currently freelances as a Director around the South Bay, including work with her production company Red Egg Theater. Gina is applying for grad school for her Masters of Fine Arts Degree in Directing.

**HEIDI RAMEE:** Heidi started in the Fireside Class at the age of 20 months and graduated from SCM's Wavecrest Junior High program in 2004. She then attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby where she was very active in performing arts (drama and musical theatre) both in school and in the community. She sang in the jazz and chamber choir, which won many awards, and she sang in Carnegie Hall with the Cabrillo Touring Chorus. Heidi went on to attend Chapman University as a Theater major with a minor in Film Studies. She loves to spend most of her weekends on set with the film students, working from very early in the morning to late in the day, using her skills as a make-up artist and doing set photography. Her mom writes, "It all started with the arts at Santa Cruz Montessori with the support and inspiration from Robin Polse, thanks to SCM's support of the arts."

**MOLLY INTERSIMONE:** Molly attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1991 to 2003. She was named a California Arts Scholar in 2002 and won a silver medal in the Scholastic Magazine National Art and Writing Awards in 2006. Ultimately, she attended ICU in Tokyo, Japan where she received her BA in Japanese Culture and Linguistics. Molly is so fluent now in Japanese that she took a Chinese language course that was taught only in Japanese. Molly then went on to the Chicago Institute of Arts to do graduate work in art design. She also volunteered as a courtroom artist for Greenpeace.

**EMILY INTERSIMONE:** Emily attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1991 to 2003. She attended the Thornton School of Music at USC to study jazz piano. During her time at USC, she earned over half of her tuition and expenses through a Presidential Scholarship from USC and a scholarship from the National Merit Scholarship Corp. Also while at USC, she won the award for best musician/composer in the USC Jazz Orchestra, she was consistently on the Dean's List and was invited to join the prestigious "Pi Kappa Lambda" National Music Honor Society in recognition of her college scholarship. In 2007 she took a class in conjunction with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute and was subsequently asked to give a speech at a benefit for the Institute honoring Wallis Annenberg, hosted by Jerry Seinfeld. Emily preceded a featured performance by Don Henley and presentation by Steven Spielberg. Lots of A Listers were in the audience including Michael Eisner, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Frank Marshall and Bono from U2! Emily performed regularly around Los Angeles in her USC jazz combo, as an accompanist for USC vocal majors and in a Rhythm and Blues band called "Sock Oom Pow". Emily has her own website "EmilyJazz.com". Emily then went on to New York University to work on her masters.

**AJA CLUM:** Aja attended Santa Cruz Montessori for 11 years, from 1994 to 2005. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby where she continued her interest in Art and Design and continued to dance with the Company at No Limits Dance and Performing Arts. Aja received the title of "Miss Odyssey 2008," a high honor in regional dance competition. In 2009, Aja began attending Chapman University where she is studying Art and Dance. In Summer 2011, she worked as a dance teacher at a studio in Monterey. She plans on graduating Chapman with the class of '13 and hopes to travel out of the country and attend a graduate school for art and design. In 2008, Aja wrote, "My time at Montessori taught me how to become organized so I could stay on top of my work easily. Montessori also helped me find what area of study I am interested in."

**BROOKE PALMIERI:** Brooke attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1996 to 2006. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, he attended Stevenson School in Pebble Beach. During his time at Stevenson, he enjoyed making films, and often worked with fellow Montessori alumni Zac Weathers and Wil Gieseler. Brooke and Zac's film "First Date" was shown in the San Francisco International Children's Film Festival, and they worked on a documentary with Montessori parent Bryan Love in Santa Cruz. Brooke made a film with fellow Montessori alumnus/Stevenson student Wil Gieseler about the varsity basketball team, and he also filmed a presentation by a Hiroshima survivor for the Stevenson

history department. Brooke played on the Stevenson Lacrosse team and tennis team, he wrote for the school newspaper, Tusitala, he was selected as a Community Forum Leader, and as a senior, he mentored Freshman students in a weekly class. He was also a member of the student leadership program, Green Key. Brooke graduated with honors from Stevenson School in Pebble Beach with the class of 2010. In the summer of 2010, he attended the Academy of Art in San Francisco to study Video Journalism and Filmmaking. He currently attends UCLA and is continuing his interest in film. He is active in the UCLA Film and Photography Society and worked on two films in 2011.

CATHERINE PALMIERI: Catherine attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1996 to 2006. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, she attended Stevenson School in Pebble Beach. She served as a member of the Student Council and also the student leadership program, Green Key. Catherine wrote for Tusitala, the Stevenson School newspaper, played Volleyball and Lacrosse and she managed the boys' basketball team. Catherine graduated with honors from Stevenson School in Pebble Beach with the class of 2010. In the summer of 2010, she attended the Academy of Art in San Francisco to study Fashion Journalism and Acting. Catherine currently attends the University of Southern California. While at USC, she had the opportunity to go with her freshman seminar class to Sacramento to lobby for a bill she initiated that would require all public high schools to have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). She also worked as an intern on the feature film "Nobody Walks" which filmed on location.

LIBERTE' REILLY: Liberte' attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1994 to 2006. After graduating from SCM's Wavecrest Junior High program, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby. Liberte' was on the girls volleyball team each year - winning the Spirit award, she has been active in theater, and was the assistant director for the play, "Twelve Angry Jurors". Liberte' received an honorable mention in the Santa Cruz Art League's high school art exhibit in the Mixed Media/Collage division and one of her poems was selected in the annual High School poetry anthology. She was on the dean's list while participating in the Language and World Cultures Intensive Path at Kirby. Liberte' is now attending the University of British Columbia in Vancouver where she is studying Art History and Anthropology. She plans to go into Museum Studies.

## **BUSINESS/LAW**

LAUREN LABINGER: Lauren attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1990 to 1998, starting in the Sequoia class, then the Junior Class, and finally Wavecrest. She attended Harbor High School from 1998 to 2002 and graduated as Valedictorian, then went to USC from 2002 to 2006. She graduated with a BA in Music/Vocal Arts from the Thornton School of Music. From 2002-2005, she was a General Manager of a student run business, was member of an award winning a capella group (USC Sirens). Lauren is living in Santa Clara, CA, working as the Director of Client Relations with an outsourcing firm called The Party Staff, Inc. She's playing regularly in a band here in the Bay Area and keeping in touch with past classmates! When asked how Santa Cruz Montessori enriched her life, Lauren wrote, "1) Independence – The Montessori method has taught me how to be self-reliant and capable of supporting myself. I have found this to be immensely valuable. 2) Considerations and Generosity – Growing up in a Montessori environment was very family-like and supportive; this taught me many social skills in regards to considerations of others. 3) Academic Maturity – The academic training I received at Montessori was so intensive, personalized and accelerated that not only was I challenged in an environment where I could handle it, I found upon entering the public school system that I had many more abilities than my peers from an academic standpoint."

ANDREW MENGES: Andrew began at Santa Cruz Montessori at age 2 and after a short trial in public school came back to SCM for grades 4 through 8. He graduated from Santa Cruz Montessori's Wavecrest Junior High program in 1999. After SCM, he spent one year at Palma, and three more at Monte Vista Christian, then on to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo where he majored in Economics, minored in Statistics, and concentrated in Quantitative Economics. Andrew graduating in 2008 and currently holds a full time position with Capgemini consulting, an IT consulting group. These days he's located in San Francisco on the weekdays, and Santa Cruz on the weekends. In 2003, Andrew noted, "The Santa Cruz Montessori School way of teaching is similar to college except there are more due dates in college. If I had advice to give, it would be to complete everything on time and to do as much of it as possible."

ANDREW TALMADGE: Andrew attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1990 to 2001. Since high school graduation, Andrew had the opportunity to spend a month in Brazil, a month traveling all around Ireland, time in El Salvador, Mexico, NYC, London, Barcelona, France and Italy. His travels inspired his major - he graduated from Santa Barbara City College in 2011 with an AA in Anthropology and was on the President's Honor Roll his last semester. During this time, he discovered an interest in construction and added green building, framing, blueprint reading and construction management to his class load. He returned home to work in the family business as a carpenter and management trainee. While a toddler in Fireside, he once said his name was "Andrew Talmadge Construction". Maybe more true than anybody knew. Andrew writes that he "made lifelong friends" at Montessori

SAM MEEHAN: Sam attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1992 to 2003. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, he attended Pacific Collegiate (PCS) where he took a total of 8 AP classes, participated in Mock Trial, was involved in the student tutor program, was on honor roll every semester, was the captain of the soccer team, participated in two drama productions and had the lead in a student produced and directed play. Thanks to his drama training at SCM, the best actor award was given to Sam for playing the lead in Present Laughter during his junior year. After graduating with honors from PCS, Sam was accepted at 5 of the 6 campuses he applied to including USC and UC Berkeley. Sam received Regents Scholarships at UCSC and UCSB, the equivalent to full tuition for merit based scholarship. Sam decided to attend UC Berkeley and graduated with a degree in Political Science. He then went to work at Ocean Champion law firm as an intern, took his LSATS and scored in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile, and applied to law school. His top schools are Stanford, Berkeley and Yale. Sam says of Santa Cruz Montessori, "Montessori education was a fantastic preparation for the demanding years at Pacific Collegiate and Cal." He and his brother Reilly are especially grateful to their Wacecrest science teacher, Bonnie Benham, for giving them such a strong foundation in science for high school and beyond.

NICK HOWERTON: Nick attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1996 to 2007. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, he attended Aptos High. Nick played tennis and basketball at Aptos High. After graduating, Nick went to UC Santa Barbara where he is pursuing Pre-Economics and Accounting in the College of Letters and Science. Nick parents noted that, "his Montessori years served him well as he is excelling in all his classes. Nick says he misses Wacecrest and he really appreciates it now that he has moved on. Santa Cruz Montessori taught Nick to be an independent thinker, to take initiative, to be very organized and to do well for the pleasure it gives oneself, not to impress or please others."

## TEACHING/HELPING PROFESSIONS

ABBY CHRISTOPHER: Abby attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1989 to 1999. After SCM, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby and then UC Davis, where she graduated in 2003 with a major in Spanish. She is now Athletic Director at Kirby and plays on “Fury,” the top women’s ultimate Frisbee team in the world.

ANDREW MASSENA: Andrew graduated from Santa Cruz Montessori’s Wavecrest Junior High program in 2000. He attended Westmont College in Santa Barbara and studied abroad in the United Kingdom in the Fall of 2006. In May 2008, Andrew graduated with two bachelor degrees, in English and Religious Studies. In August 2008, Andrew began a three year Graduate program at Union Theological Seminary (at Columbia University) in New York City. He currently lives in Manhattan with his wife Lindsay and is continuing his studies at Columbia with the goal of teaching religious studies.

JORDAN SANDEL: Jordan attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1994 to 2004. After graduating from SCM’s Wavecrest Junior High program, she attended York School in Monterey. She was the Junior Class President, a member of the Haiti Club, the Key Club, the Culinary Club, and played on the varsity volleyball team. After high school, Jordan attended UCSC where she double majored in History and Literature. She plans to continue studying Literature in graduate school with the intention of going into teaching. Jordan notes, “I have been incredibly fortunate to have such wonderful educational experiences at SCM and beyond. I have witnessed time and time again the effect that amazing teaching can have on students. Great teachers, education, and reading can play an enormous role by helping students develop into empathetic, compassionate people who know themselves and go on to make our world a better place.”

CHRISTINA DEOGRACIAS: Tina attended SCM from 4<sup>th</sup> grade through the Wavecrest Junior High program, graduating in 2006. Thereafter, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby. There, she strengthened her love of science and math as a Science and Technology Intensive path student. One summer, she was selected to attend the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine where she explored possible careers in medical sciences. She took AP classes, sang with the award-winning Chamber Choir, kept a job after school tutoring middle school kids, played varsity volleyball and developed a strong interest in environmental issues. After Kirby, Tina went to Tulane University in New Orleans majoring in Child Psychology and Development with a focus on education, and a minor in Spanish. In New Orleans, she tutored and worked in the public school systems as a teacher’s aide and a reading buddy. Seeing the results of Katrina and other economic impacts on the public schools system in the South, she noted that she feels, “so fortunate to have gone to a community-based school that supports individual learning, communal activity and peer education.”

## SCIENCE

FAREN CLUM: Faren graduated from Santa Cruz Montessori's Wavecrest Junior High program in 2002 and went on to study at Stanford University where she studied human biology. During that time she danced with Stanford's "Urban Style" and taught and choreographed for a dance studio in Los Gatos. During her time at Stanford she wrote the following to Wavecrest teacher Tom Lepoutre- Postlewaite inviting him to a special event: "This afternoon I was honored to hear that I was selected to receive the School of Humanities and Sciences' J.E. Wallace Sterling Award for Scholastic Achievement. The award is named after a previous President of the University, and is based on academic performance. I have heard that it is given to about 25 graduating seniors in the School of Humanities and Sciences. Dean Richard Saller will present the awards at a luncheon on May 2nd at the Stanford Faculty Club. I'm writing because I would be delighted if you would join me for this event. My professor/mentor/ biggest cheerleader at Stanford will also be accompanying me." Faren graduated from Stanford in 2011 and after exploring Manhattan and taking advantage of dance and theater opportunities, she headed back to NorCal in the Fall of 2011 to begin medical school at UC San Francisco. She is considering a career in clinical genetics or endocrinology.

DEVON SANDEL: Devon attended Santa Cruz Montessori from primary in the Redwood Class through 8th grade at Wavecrest, graduating in 2005. She went to both York School and Robert Louis Stevenson for high school, and then on to UC Santa Barbara where she is a Biopsychology major. While at UCSB she studied abroad at King's College London. Once finished with her major, Devon plans to attend medical school.

LINDSEY MEYER: Lindsey graduated from Santa Cruz Montessori in 2006. She then attended Soquel High School, where she participated in the "Humanities Academy". She studied AP Spanish, played on the Girl's Golf team and did Varsity Swimming. Lindsey graduated as a valedictorian then went on to attend Pomona College to study the mind through a combination of neuroscience, linguistics, computer science and psychology. She is also fulfilling pre-med requirements, in case she decides to go in that direction. Lindsey wrote, "Soquel High is an excellent school and I am glad I was able to attend. Wavecrest helped me to prepare for Soquel High. It's rigorous academics are a challenge, but I was well prepared in all subjects. Thanks." Lindsey also wrote, "Sometimes Pomona College feels a little like Montessori. It's small, personal and has a great sense of community." She shared more thoughts about Santa Cruz Montessori: "Terri and Catalina – you taught me so much and I have such fond memories. Tom, you were such a good sport about coloring your hair green. And Maryse, thanks for helping me grow up. Montessori was great."

MAYA SPRINSOCK: Maya attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1997 to 2007. After graduating from SCM's Wavecrest Junior High program, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby where she held teaching assistant positions in Physics and for the computer lab. After Kirby, Maya entered UC Davis with an interest in studying science. Maya has had a long and successful swimming career, locally with the Threshers Swim Team, and now with the Division 1 UC Davis swim team. In 2010, she was named



swimmer of the year for Santa Cruz County. Maya continues to enjoy volunteering for Ride a Wave Foundation, a non-profit serving kids with disabilities and introducing them to surfing, boogie boarding, and kayaking.

## **OTHER AREAS**

**REILLY MEEHAN:** Reilly attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1994 to 2004. After graduating from SCM's Wacecrest Junior High program, he attended Pacific Collegiate (PCS), where he did very well academically making the honor roll and enjoying his demanding classes. Reilly was a formidable soccer player both defensively and offensively, and he participated in a number of clubs at school. He played the lead role in the Drama Class Production, and continued to develop his love of cooking. In 2009, Reilly participated in the Professional Culinary Institute cooking contest for US high school seniors. Out of about 40 finalists Reilly was given what amounts to 2nd place. In 2011, Reilly graduated from Oregon Coast Culinary School. He is a Team Member of the USA Culinary Team and he will be traveling to the 2012 Culinary Olympics in Germany. He writes, "I would just like to thank anyone and everyone involved with my SCM education."

**ELISABETH DEOGRACIAS:** Liz attended Santa Cruz Montessori from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade through the Wavecrest Junior High program, graduating in 2004. Thereafter, she attended Georgiana Bruce Kirby. She spent four years as Kirby's newspaper's Editor in Chief and was a national Quill & Scroll best essay winner with her "Two Moms are Better than One" column. She also debuted her first video journalism piece with an AP Environmental Science documentary project on Bio-Diesel. She was captain of the volleyball team and participated in various school sustainability projects. After being accepted by nine schools throughout the country, Liz decided to attend New York University. At NYU she is majoring in Environmental and Metropolitan Studies. Recently, she studied abroad in Paris and also in Buenos Aires. She lived on Maui for a summer to work and get involved with environmental activism on the island. When asked how her education at Santa Cruz Montessori enriched her life, she noted that, "Santa Cruz Montessori provided a well-rounded foundation for my future with academics, sports and trips. It gave me the social skills to help adjust to high school and provided me with good junior high memories." She also noted that her experience with SCM, "especially the emphasis on engaging with the environment and growing food in the garden has certainly helped shape my academic career and plans for the future."

**ERIC YOUNG:** Eric attended Santa Cruz Montessori from 1997 to 2005. After graduating from SCM's Wavecrest Junior High program, he attended Harbor High School, where he had an interest in math and science. He noted that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade biology class taken at Wavecrest in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade allowed him to skip that class at Harbor and start off with Chemistry, putting him a head ahead in the cycle and able to take two of the science AP classes in high school. Eric then attended University of California at Santa Barbara where he concentrated on Environmental Studies, with an interest in Hydrology. Erik's favorite memories from Montessori are math classes with Terri and all the various trips and outdoor adventures with his classmates.

