

## **On the Air...**

**By Steven Zhou**

When Starstyle® Productions launched the all teen radio program, Express Yourself!™ to a global audience last fall, many of our on-air reporters were busy filling out college applications and writing essays, pondering the next step in their lives. The purpose of the broadcast is to give local youth the opportunity to voice their opinions, thoughts, and ideas while sharing their passions and experiences with teenagers around the globe. As the administrator and co-host of the show, part of my job is to design each show's theme reflecting the topics currently circulating among friends, classmates, and peers. Seniors in Lafayette, Orinda, and Moraga definitely have college on their minds right now so we produced three shows geared towards leaving the nest.

In "Out into the World" Jacqueline Tao, a 2011 Campolindo High School graduate reported on the wild and humorous traditions at Stanford University while Rachel Glass chatted about the thrills of rushing to join a sorority at the University of Oregon. Both provided an inside look at campus life, dorm living, independence from parents, and the rigors of academia. We also discussed the opportunities for studying abroad where foreign languages and cultures await our discovery. In this same episode, my Los Angeles based co-host, Chan Dara Paschal and I interviewed Moraga resident, Michael Chickering who chose to spend his senior year at a boarding school in Michigan. At the woodsy location of Interlochen Arts Academy, Chickering is studying filmmaking without the distractions of Lamorinda extracurricular activities. He has already directed a movie, and expressed excitement with his experiences in this innovative environment.

As teens, most of us don't know what we want to do with our lives or what course of study we want to follow. In an episode, "Finding Your Gifts", we brought in two experts from across the country, Brooks Olbrys, who wrote the book, *Blue Ocean Bob Discovers His Purpose*, and Donna Zilka, a director of college services who gave us concrete examples on how coaches and counselors help students find the right path to educational success. We learned what questions to ask ourselves in our quest to find out what makes us tick.

Of course, paying for college is always a concern for parents as well as for teens that have to support themselves after high school. A show on financial literacy featured business coach and Missouri author of *Where Did the Money Go*, Ellen Rohr, along with Ron Melvin, Manager of US Bank in Lafayette who shared simple strategies for saving, managing money, and being accountable. After explaining the actual life costs of student loans, Miramonte senior, Eric Pawlakos, steered us towards finding scholarships, grants, and other sources to pay for our university adventures.

Other on-air reporters, Courtney Cheng, Courtney Tran, and Vivien Lee add sugar and spice to our weekly broadcasts with their segments of Book It!, Radio Junkie, and Say What! Express Yourself!™ is an international outreach program of the 501c3 charity Be the Star You Are!® designed to give youth a voice in a global arena.

From the responses we're receiving from the broadcasts, Express Yourself!™ is touching a cord with teens around the country and in other parts of the world. Whether we hail from Lamorinda, Loreda, or London, we are teenagers with dreams, goals, and desires. We want to talk, debate, and find out how others have done what we want to do. Each week our reporters will be sharing stories, highlighting successes, and emphasizing experiences conceived in Lamorinda and birthed wherever. Behind the jargon and the jibe, we are expressing ourselves on the radio. If you want to suggest subjects or guests, we welcome your comments at [BTSYATeenRadio@Gmail.com](mailto:BTSYATeenRadio@Gmail.com). After all, we are Express Yourself!™, an on-air global community where teens talk and the world listens.

Tune in every Tuesday at NOON PT on Voice America Kids Network. Visit [www.ExpressYourselfTeenRadio.com](http://www.ExpressYourselfTeenRadio.com).

*Steven Zhou, co-host and administrator for Express Yourself!™ Teen Radio, is a senior at Miramonte High School and volunteer with Be the Star You Are!® charity.*