

Top 10 ways to  
annoy admissions  
pg 15

But I'm just a  
junior!  
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*See page 12 for details!*

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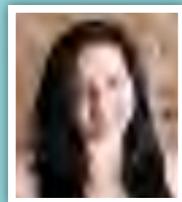
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# Editor's letter

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WinFreeTuition

Dear Next Steppers:



The end is near! The school year is coming to a close and summer fun is just around the corner. Here at NextStepU, we want to encourage you to do everything you can to prepare for your next steps.

This issue is all about making the most of your senior year, so juniors, get ready for some exciting things ahead! We have advice for how to spend (and enjoy!) your summer while actively preparing for the col-

lege search and application process. You'll need to brush up on those studying skills (for the SAT and/or ACT) and keep your grades up for your final year of high school. We'll also walk you through the financial aid process and let you know exactly what you should be doing to plan for college over the next few months.

Want to get a head start on college and those looming tuition payments? Check out NextStepU's Win Free Tuition contest for a chance to win up to \$10,000 in college tuition! Visit [NextStepU.com/](http://NextStepU.com/) WinFreeTuition and enter by July

2, 2013. We also have a huge listing of college scholarships available to you in our Scholarships Galore section — check it out at [NextStepU.com/Scholarships](http://NextStepU.com/Scholarships). Your parents and your pockets will thank you!

As you wrap up this school year and head into the next, be sure to enjoy every moment. Senior year can be a lot of fun — from leading the school to becoming leaders out in the world, this is your time. Make the most of it!

**Katie Barry**  
Editor  
[Editor@NextStepU.com](mailto:Editor@NextStepU.com)

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## Meet our cover model!

**Name:** Paige W.  
**Age:** 17  
**Grade:** Senior



**What was your favorite thing about high school?**

Experiencing new opportunities with my friends and creating friendships that I'll never forget.

**What activities were you involved in?** Dance, modeling, Link Crew

**What are your hobbies?**  
Dancing and reading

**What's your advice to students planning for college?**  
Don't freak out about not knowing your future plans. Allow yourself to enjoy the process of finding what career suits you best. Know there will always be help if you ask for it.

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Taste what's next!

# A summer share

SHOP, BUY AND EAT LOCAL!

By Alyvia Burkey, MS, CHES



Summer is a perfect time to get a taste of locavore life, whether it is for personal enjoyment or career



exploration. **Deborah Denome**, director of Seeking Common Ground, Inc. in New



York, and **Flannery Cerbin**, fellow with the FoodCorps in Montana, share their thoughts on

growing, promoting and providing local, whole foods.

**Q: How did your passion turn into a career?**

**DENOME:** My four friends and I met for a year to figure out how to transfer our business education and skills to growing and promoting whole food. The end result was our educational nonprofit, SCG.

**CERBIN:** I thought critically, asked questions and made sure to always eat a hearty breakfast!

**Q: As an expert foodie, where do you think people should go to find the tastiest whole foods that summer has to offer?**

**DENOME:** Farmers markets are lively, fun places to find delectable, juicy, healthy, whole foods.

**CERBIN:** The most local place to find fresh, whole foods in summer would be your own backyard or windowsill. It's extremely rewarding to taste the fruits of your labor.

**Q: What types of internships and volunteer opportunities are available in the summer months for those who want to do more than just EAT local food?**

**DENOME:** SCG welcomes internship or volunteer requests and we work to determine projects that are mutually interesting and beneficial. Many farms, CSAs and organizations like NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) also offer opportunities.

**CERBIN:** If you like to get your hands dirty, many K-12 schools and colleges have student-led gardens. If you like to teach, consider local public health offices, hospitals or schools to teach about where food comes from.

**Q: Any parting advice to those who share your passion?**

**DENOME:** Interest in local foods, supporting our local economy and natural health and wellness are all growing exponentially. Start small and let things grow "organically!"

**CERBIN:** Nourish yourself with fresh foods to be the ultimate role model. Don't be limited by conventional thinking; we need critical thinkers to solve today's problems. 🌱



**Alyvia Burkey** is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) who holds a MS in Health Promotion Management from American University ([american.edu](http://american.edu))

Be healthy

## 10 easy ways to get into the local food movement

- ➔ Vote with your fork! On average, your food has traveled 1,500 miles to reach your plate. Eat food grown or produced closer to home.
- ➔ Shop farmers markets and u-pick farms with friends. (Blueberries anyone?)
- ➔ Join the Real Food Challenge ([www.realfoodchallenge.org](http://www.realfoodchallenge.org)) to help bring local food to your college campus.
- ➔ Join a CSA, community garden or start a garden with your family and friends.
- ➔ Support grocery stores, restaurants and businesses that sell and serve local food. (In other words, buy from them!)
- ➔ Get involved with your local 4-H chapter or travel with the WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms).
- ➔ Check out Ten Teens Rocking the Food Revolution Scene.
- ➔ Visit the Organic Consumers Association ([www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)) to petition for health food.
- ➔ Talk up your family's local food experiences on your blog, Facebook or Twitter.
- ➔ Plan and cook a meal featuring local foods.

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## Fashion forward

By Laura Sestito

We talked to Carly Heitlinger, the author of fashion blog “The College Prepster,” ([www.thecollegeprepster.com](http://www.thecollegeprepster.com)) and asked for her advice on how to develop a sense of style in college while staying true to yourself.

**Q: What is your blog all about and why did you decide to start it?**

**A:** I grew up in Tampa, Florida and moved to Washington, D.C. to attend Georgetown University ([www.georgetown.edu](http://www.georgetown.edu)) in 2008. I started the blog as a creative outlet after my first semester. It’s evolved over the years, but it’s a mix between my personal life, fashion/style I’m inspired by and ways to live a better life. I created this character (the “College Prepster”) as the person that I wanted to be. My first semester was so awful and dif-

ficult and I wasn’t happy at all. The College Prepster was everything I thought I wasn’t. But, I learned that I was her all along...I just had to peel back the layers.

**Q: What kind of style advice would you give to students who are about to go to college?**

**A:** I think personal style is just that — personal. You’re going to look the most confident when you’re being 100 percent true to yourself. Bring the clothes that you already love [to college]; you’re not going to reinvent yourself and be happy at the same time. You’re YOU already! If you want to update your style, try incorporating pieces slowly. Definitely [add pieces] one at a time as opposed to going on a big shopping spree.

**Q: Do you have any advice on keeping a sense of style on a student budget?**

**A:** Invest in classic pieces. It’s actually worth it in the long run to buy something really nice that you’ll wear for years than having to replace it frequently. But, if you’re experimenting with trends, definitely go with a cheaper version (because who cares if it makes it past a year!).

**Q: Where do you get your inspiration? How can others find inspiration and their own unique style?**

**A:** I find my inspiration from confident women. Why is she confident, how does she carry herself, how does she define success? Consider this difference: How she dresses, rather than what she wears. ♪

Shout Out winner

# Spreading the love

By Cassie Weaver

For an average high school student, it's easy to let life revolve around what goes on within campus boundaries. As a sophomore, I know what it's like to be caught up in grades, sports and the ever-changing rumor mill. But after a successful community service project caused me to take a step back and look at how fortunate I am, I know I'll never complain about these matters again.

I was chatting with my mom one evening after school, asking her for advice on how to juggle my stressful schedule. I felt as though I was completely overloaded with various school assignments and I was bogged down. Using her seemingly never-ending wisdom, my mother suggested I take the afternoon off from studying and join in on her plans. I reluctantly agreed, oblivious to how spending my evening at the local homeless shelter would make me feel any better.

When we arrived at the shelter, my heart instantly went out to the families living there. I never knew how many homeless children there were in my town. After playing board games and serving snacks to the kids, I found out how truly sweet and precious they were. I knew there had to be some way I could make them feel better about their situation and let them know everything would be okay.

After thinking about it for a couple days, I came up with an idea that I knew I would have to put in motion.

After sorting out all the details, I put my plan in to action.

I wanted to give the homeless children something to comfort them in their time of need: blankets. But not just any blankets, homemade ones! I wasn't a wizard with the sewing machine, but I was determined to learn. After receiving donations from people in my community, I bought fabric and went straight to work. I made so many blankets and received so much positive feedback that I gave my project a name — Blanket Children with Love.

The day I passed out the blankets is a day I'll never forget. Seeing the joy in the children's eyes really touched my heart. I wanted to let them know that they weren't alone and that they had a community that supported them. I still pass out blankets to children in the shelter every month since, sadly, there are always new families.

This experience showed me that even if my problems seem significant, other people may have it worse. And there is always a way to help. 🙌

👉 **Cassie won \$100 for her story! Share your stories at [NextStepU.com/ShoutOut](http://NextStepU.com/ShoutOut) for your chance to win.**

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A photograph of a man, Senior Airman Ryan Holley, in a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue shorts, kicking a blue soccer ball. He is in a dynamic pose, with one leg raised and arms outstretched. The background shows a brick building and a cloudy sky.

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# Top 10 ways to annoy admissions counselors

DON'T PESTER YOUR DREAM SCHOOL, GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT!

By Rebecca VanderMeulen

It can seem impossible to decode how colleges decide who gets in.

Ultimately, though, college admissions counselors are people. There are certain things that irritate them.

Here are the top 10 ways to annoy the admissions office. Consider this list a guide of what NOT to do when you apply to college.

**1. Send unexpected extras with your application.** The admissions office at Carnegie Mellon University ([www.cmu.edu](http://www.cmu.edu)) has received science projects from applicants who want to study physics. Prospective music majors have sent compositions they've written. That doesn't help admission counselors like **Justin Mohney**, assistant director of admissions at Carnegie Mellon who was a business administration major in college. If you want to add extra materials to your application, he advises to first ask if it's OK. Also, send a concise explanation in language accessible to someone who's not an expert.

**2. Ask about majors that don't exist.** "You can play soccer in college, but you can't major in it," says **Jenny Peacock**, director of admissions



they've written. That doesn't help admission counselors like **Justin Mohney**, assistant director



at William Peace University ([www.peace.edu](http://www.peace.edu)). You can't major in "CSI" either.

**3. Put the name of another college in your essay.** Mohney says, "There's nothing that feels worse as a reviewer than reading an essay and getting excited about an applicant, [then] getting to the last line of the essay and reading, 'That's why I've always wanted to go to one of your main competitors.'"

**4. Be unaware of your GPA.** Your grades and test scores are important when you're applying to college. Peacock says that when you talk to an admissions counselor, you should at least have a good idea of what they are.

**5. Let your parents complete your application.** Believe it or not, some parents fill out their kids' applications. Admissions officers often figure it out when the social security number on an application belongs to the applicant's mom.

**6. Stop at a college fair information table without talking to the admissions officer.** At a fair, you walk into a high school gym and see dozens of tables with information about different colleges. Behind each one will be an admissions representative who spent hours on a plane or in a rental car just to chat with students like you. But a lot of

students walk up to a table, grab a brochure and walk away. Admissions officers call them "drive-bys." (Don't be one of them.)

**7. Call or email everyone in the office.** Admissions counselors like



students who really want to go to their schools. But some are too eager. **Jay Murray**, director of admissions at Post University ([www.post.edu](http://www.post.edu)), says some students (or their parents) will pose a question to one counselor, and if they don't like the answer, ask the same question to each other person in the office. If one counselor says your GPA is too low for you to get in, all the other counselors will say the same thing.

**8. Call the admissions office every week.** You've probably heard that colleges accept applicants who demonstrate interest in attending. But calling just for the sake of calling won't help. Follow the college on Twitter instead. "It's a quality thing, not a quantity thing," says Mohney.

**9. Let your parents ask all the questions.** Admissions counselors want to talk to students, not their parents. You're going to college. Not your mom and dad.

**10. Talk to an admissions counselor before researching the college.** Can you find the answer to

## Typical College Day



We wanted to know what a typical college day looked like, so we asked **Maria Barragan**, a government studies major at Harvard University ([www.harvard.edu](http://www.harvard.edu)).

**5:40 A.M.** Wake up, check email and Facebook. **6:** Go to the gym. **6:30** Shower and get ready for the day. **7:15** Answer emails, read news updates. **8:** Breakfast. **9-11:** Homework, extracurriculars (I'm coordinating two conferences this semester). **11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.:** Ethical reasoning class. **12-1:** Economics class. **1-3:** Government seminar (bring a bagged lunch). **3-4:** Work as an ESL consultant with the Harvard Bureau of Study Council. **4-5:** Homework. **5-6:** Dinner in Winthrop Hall. **6-6:30:** Take a break and hang out with roommates. Sometimes we go out for ice cream to JP Licks or for fro yo at Berryline :) **6:30-8:** Homework, answer emails. (They're never ending!) **8-10:** Ballet Folklorico dance practice. **10-1:00 A.M.:** Homework, stop by Brain-break for a snack (they leave snacks like brownies and cereal out in the dining hall for everyone). **1:** Sleep!

your question by poking around the college's website for 10 minutes? Then don't email an admissions counselor. Murray says some students don't even peruse his school's majors before a campus tour. "They'll drive two hours for a visit and they'll ask if we have [a program that we don't offer]," he says.

So, here's what you should do:

It's not hard to be a likeable applicant. Send in your application by the deadline. Make it easy to read. Put your full name on each part of it — and add your ZIP code in case you're one of two Joshua Smiths to apply to Dream University.

Ask how you should send any extras. Maybe the office would prefer a CD to an email attachment. If you have a question, try to find the answer on your own. People at the admissions office have poured hours into building an informative website with almost everything you'd like to know. Look there before emailing an admissions counselor. "If you've read something and you don't understand it, we can talk you through it," Peacock says. ¶



**Rebecca VanderMeulen** has a degree in journalism from American University ([american.edu](http://american.edu)).

## Profile of a liberal arts major

### MEET JENNIFER ROBICHAUX



When I used to tell people I was an English major, more often than not, their foreheads crinkled as they said, "What are you going to do with that?" And I would respond, "Whatever I want."

I chose to pursue a liberal arts degree in English Writing & Rhetoric for two reasons: First, I wanted to be Jane Austen, and the program I chose put equal emphasis on creative and professional writing. Second, I felt confident that I would leave college with the skills to enter the workforce as a professional writer.

While in college, my professors advised me to carve out my own writing niche, gain experience in a specific field and pursue coursework and extracurricular activities that would help me get a job. I took this advice to heart

and decided that grant writing and non-profit work would be my niche. I started taking classes and applied for internships that would give me grant writing and non-profit experience. However, I also had the option to pursue technical writing, copy writing, marketing, copy editing or academia.

My advisors made it clear that if I took an active role in my education and was thoughtful in my extracurricular activities, the job market would be wide open when I graduated. In May 2012, I graduated from St. Edward's University ([www.stedwards.edu](http://www.stedwards.edu)). Since then, I have been working as a PR/writing intern at a nonprofit with the occasional contract writing job on the side.

While I'm not sure what my next step will be, I truly believe a liberal arts education has allowed me to pursue writing in whatever form I choose. ¶

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1903-2013

# SuperTeens CONTEST

At NextStepU, we love to recognize teens who do “super” things! That’s why we feature a select few in every issue who stand out from the crowd and go the extra mile. Meet our Super Teens!



At age twelve, **Kyle Ashby** partnered with her sister to create Friends Through Books, an organization

which provides books and education materials to the students of Carriacao, a Caribbean island that suffers from widespread illiteracy.

Overcoming major financial hurdles, Kyle has seen this organization grow to donate over 25,000 books and \$30,000. Four years later, Friends Through Books has also built a septic tank at a school, paid for two children’s life-altering eye surgeries, assisted six women in receiving college degrees and started a pen pal program for students between Carriacao and Boise, Idaho, where Kyle lives.

Recently, Kyle has been working on a new project to promote self-esteem in young women. Kyle says her goal is to “make an impact on the lives of those born into these horrific situations.” She plans to eventually work with an international peace organiza-

tion to “not only promote peace in these areas, but more specifically to help women and children rise out of the grasp of abuse, illness, trauma and poverty and to achieve an education.”

Do you have what it takes to be a “Super Teen” or know someone who deserves to be recognized? Visit [NextStepU.com/SuperTeens](http://NextStepU.com/SuperTeens) and email your application or nomination to [Editor@NextStepU.com](mailto:Editor@NextStepU.com) today! 🙋

ARE YOU SUPER?  
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SUPERTEENS](http://NEXTSTEPU.COM/SUPERTEENS)

## Last-minute extracurriculars

Looking to get involved in some extra activities before applying to college? Here are some ways to bulk up your resumé and have fun at the same time!

### ➡ Summer leagues

Never really got into sports during high school? No problem! There are plenty of recreational leagues and intramural opportunities available, especially during the summer months.

### ➡ Tutoring

Have a knack for a certain subject? Consider becoming a tutor and help a student who may be struggling. Try going through your local library to find similar tutoring opportunities.

### ➡ Pick up an instrument

If there’s something you’ve always wanted to learn, now is the time to do it! You don’t have to spend countless hours practicing an instrument, but picking up something new shows that you are willing to try new things.

### ➡ Volunteer

There are so many ways to get involved in your community and every one of them will look good on your college application. Look for places like your local food pantry, church, summer camp or other organizations where you can volunteer your time. 🙋

## Quotes to live by

“It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”

—Walt Disney

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

—Benjamin Franklin

“I don’t love studying. I hate studying. I like learning. Learning is beautiful.”

—Natalie Portman

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

—Thomas A. Edison

Have fun!

## Game night!

Game nights are a great way to have fun and meet new people, especially in the dorm community. These games are a sure-fire way to have some laughs and make some friends.

### Catch-Phrase®

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### 20 Questions®

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### Settlers of Catan®

Players use and trade resources collecting “victory points.” With intensity added to the fun, this board game is a fantastic addition to the dorm.

Try out these fun games and make your dorm a little more interesting when you arrive!



# A career in nursing

HARD WORK WITH GREAT REWARDS

By Kelli O'Connor



No matter where you go or what you do, you need healthcare. Why not be a part of the fastest-growing field in the U.S. — nursing! According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is projected that there will be a half-million more nursing jobs by 2018.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing ([www.aacn.nche.edu](http://www.aacn.nche.edu)) believes that earning a bachelor of science degree is the critical first step for a career in nursing. Leading nursing organizations recognize a bachelor's degree as the minimum education required for a practicing nurse. However, you can practice nursing as a registered nurse with an associate degree or hospital diploma. This route will lead you through hospital-based training where academics are mixed with

hands-on learning.

“There are no typical days for nurses,” says Amy Graham, enrollment management supervisor at Crouse Hospital College of Nursing ([www.crouse.org/nursing](http://www.crouse.org/nursing)). A nurse in a hospital may see a day that includes assessing patients, checking vitals, giving medications and communicating with patients and their families. “There are nurses in schools, prisons, home services, research labs, teaching in colleges and in industrial settings,” remarks Graham, “That is why it is so exciting!”



**Kelli O'Connor** is a freelance writer based in Rochester, New York.

➔ **National average salary:** \$66,340

➔ **Education:** Bachelor's degree in nursing. Nursing programs range from hospital diplomas to advanced doctoral degrees and everywhere in between.

➔ **Typical day:** Nurses must have great communication skills to deal with patients, colleagues and other hospital staff. DiscoverNursing.com provides a great overview of nursing: depending on the specialty you choose, you'll work

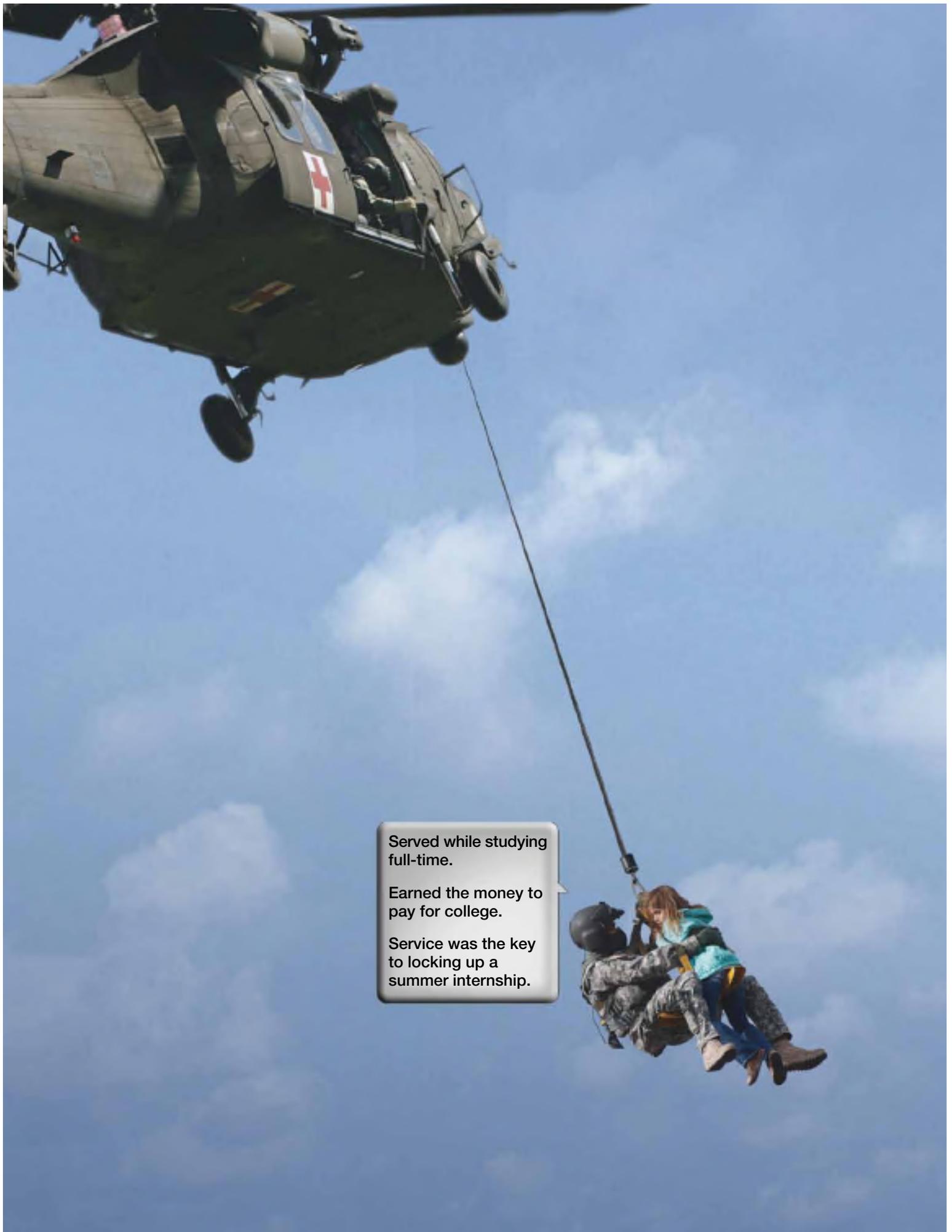
during different times of the day in 4, 8, 10 or 12-hour shifts. You can work weekdays, weekends or a combination. Flexible schedules are especially helpful for parents who need to adjust their hours for family and childcare needs. You can work in urban hospitals, suburban doctors' offices, on Indian reservations or Alaskan outposts.

➔ **Pursue if:** “You should pursue nursing if you want to work hard, but want to reap huge rewards from that hard work,” according to Graham.



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# Roadmap to college for juniors

## YOUR COLLEGE PREP CHECKLIST FROM THIS SUMMER TO NEXT

By Katie Barry



Hey, juniors — it's finally here...you're (almost) a senior!

We've put together a helpful checklist for you to follow as you begin your college search and application process. We'll take you through what

you should do during the summer months preceding your senior year, through your last year of high school, right up to the day you arrive at your dorm. Because, believe it or not, the time to start preparing for college is NOW!

### THIS SUMMER

*May – August 2013*

- Take the SAT or ACT as soon as possible. This will give you enough time to retake the exams in the fall if need be.
- Make a list of the college campuses you would most like to visit.
- Schedule 4 to 5 college visits over the summer. Be sure to discuss travel arrangements and scheduling with your parents to coordinate each trip.
- Organize all application deadlines and requirements. It is best to keep a calendar with all of these important dates to be sure that you don't miss a single deadline.
- If you don't have one already, get a part-time job. Try to save some money so that you won't have to work as hard (if at all) once you go away to school.

Consider taking a summer course at a local college or university. You'll likely be able to gain some college credit and build up your resumé at the same time!

Research college scholarships. The schools you apply to will likely offer some scholarship opportunities, but there are thousands of other options if you are willing to do a little research to find them.

**Tip:** Check out the NextStepU Scholarships Galore section for more information ([NextStepU.com/Scholarships](http://NextStepU.com/Scholarships)). You can also enter to win up to \$10,000 for college through our Win Free Tuition contest! Register online at [NextStepU.com/WinFreeTuition](http://NextStepU.com/WinFreeTuition) by July 2, 2013.

### IN THE FALL

*September – December 2013*

- Don't take your classes lightly. Senior year can be a lot of fun, but you will need to maintain your grades if you want to get into college.
- Narrow down which schools you plan to apply to and start putting all requirements together.
- Discuss financial aid with your parents and prepare to fill out the FAFSA (which you will need to complete in January).
- Begin to apply for scholarships. (This is where that previous research and calendar organization will start to come in handy!)
- Take/retake the SAT or ACT.
- Request recommendation letters from teachers, employers, mentors or any other adults who might be willing to sing your praises (and help your chances of getting in to the college of your choice!).
- Pay special attention to admission deadlines. You might consider an early decision (binding) or early action (non-binding) program to lock in your college admission before the spring.

## WINTER MONTHS

January – March 2014

☐ FAFSA! Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

☐ Once your FAFSA is processed, you'll receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). Correct any inaccuracies to ensure you qualify for as much financial aid as possible.

☐ Finalize all applications. Now's the time to make sure every single piece is in place, like essays, recommendation letters, transcripts, etc.

☐ Continue to search and apply for scholarships. Many are year-round.

While there is much to be done over the next year as you prepare for college, remember one thing: enjoy every minute! Don't get too caught up in the stress of it all. Sure, it's important to be organized, stay on top of deadlines and meet all of the requirements being thrown at you — but that's why we put together this checklist for you! Take advantage of it and have some piece of mind that it will all get done, everything will work out and you'll be living the college life in the blink of an eye. 📌



**Katie Barry** is the editor of *NextStepU Magazine*.

## SENIOR SPRING

April – June 2014

☐ Choose your college! If the answer isn't glaringly obvious, compare financial aid packages. If you still can't decide where to go, consider a final visit before you send in your deposit.

☐ Seal the deal. Send in any required paperwork and submit your deposit.

☐ Enjoy the last few months of your senior year!

☐ Look for a summer job or internship to help cover some college expenses like books, dorm room essentials, etc.

☐ Take lots of pictures on graduation day. It's a day you will never forget. (And one to be proud of!)

## THE LAST SUMMER

June – August 2014

☐ Keep a lookout for mail/emails from your new school. You will receive a lot of information over the next few weeks, so be sure to stay on top of it.

☐ If you plan to take out any student loans, now's the time to apply. But only borrow what is absolutely necessary. Loans will have to be paid back in full, with interest, so they should be your last resort when it comes to paying for school.

☐ Request your final high school transcript and send it to the admissions office.

☐ Spend lots of time with your high school friends. You are about to embark on a new journey that won't include spending as much time with them, if any at all.

☐ Reach out to your new roommate(s) and coordinate what you plan to bring. This is a great way to make a connection before ever meeting face to face. After all, you'll be spending a lot of time together; you might as well start now!

☐ Go shopping for all of the college and dorm room essentials (clothing, bedding, books, supplies, snacks and more!). This is a fun way to both prepare for your transition into independent living and spend some quality time with your parents before you leave.

☐ Discuss how often you plan to visit home while at school. Setting up a plan now will help manage your time (and combat homesickness) once you are away.

Enjoy your summer!

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Super Teens winners

# SuperTeens CONTEST

At NextStepU, we love to recognize teens who do “super” things! That’s why we feature a select few in every issue who stand out from the crowd and go the extra mile. Meet our Super Teens!



As a three-year Senior Ambassador and 2012–2013 State President of the Idaho 4-H Teen

Association, one of **Brett Wilder’s** greatest achievements has been the founding of the hugely successful District II 4-H Leadership Retreat. The retreat aims to teach teens to “create plans of action for service in their communities.”

“If the retreat failed, I would have been seen as a kid who couldn’t follow through on his projects,” he stresses, “Instead, I am viewed as a

teen who can overcome the fight against time and society’s view of adolescence and create an opportunity for my peers to excel.”

Brett hopes to go into a career in public policy and plans to major in both agricultural economics and animal science or agricultural education.



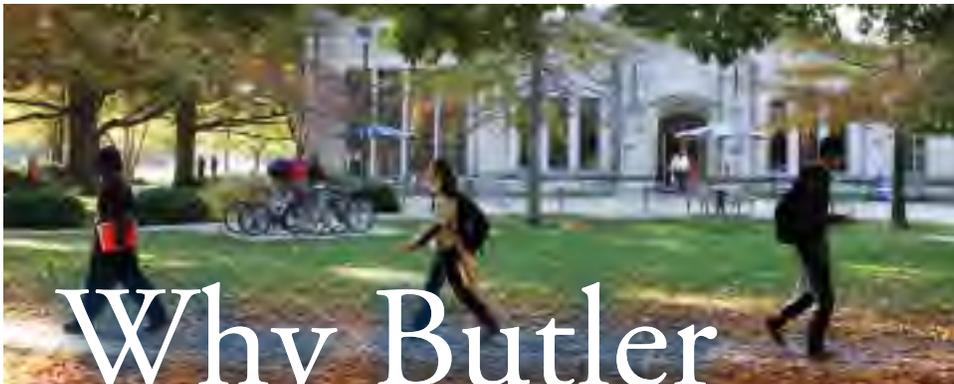
When **Isha Jog** moved to America and started elementary school, she did

not speak English, could not communicate with teachers or peers, and was not confident in her ability to read. Now a senior in high school, Isha holds a 4.0 GPA, is taking three advanced placement classes and is learning two new languages in addition to the three she speaks fluently.

A firm believer in the importance of volunteering, Isha started the non-profit organization “Holiday Heroes,” which has collected cans of food for a local food pantry, created Valentine’s Day cards for senior citizens and made a Christmas meal at a youth center for at-risk and troubled children.

With her title as “Distinguished Young Woman of Illinois,” Isha began fundraising for Children’s Miracle Network to benefit children’s hospitals and help pay for life-changing surgeries for sick and injured children.

Do you have what it takes to be a “Super Teen” or know someone who deserves to be recognized? Visit [NextStepU.com/SuperTeens](http://NextStepU.com/SuperTeens) and email your application or nomination to [Editor@NextStepU.com](mailto:Editor@NextStepU.com) today! 🙋



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*-Josie Villanueva, Class of 2010*

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# Typical military day

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SPEND A DAY IN THE MILITARY

By Laura Sestito



It may be hard to picture what your life is going to look like after high school. If you take the college route, you'll probably be going to class during the day, maybe work on the weekends and hang out with friends at night. If you go right into a career, you'll likely be working normal work hours all day in the field of your choice.

But what do your days look like if you decide to join the military? While there's no real "typical" day, we asked Anton Guzman of the National Guard ([www.nationalguard.com](http://www.nationalguard.com)) what students might expect to do after they enlist in the military.

## A typical day during training

A day in the military is anything but typical. According to Guzman, what you do often depends on what job you have, what rank you are and where you are. "We did physical therapy usually early in the morning," says Guzman, "[or] from time to time we would do field training or weapons training."

As someone who was preparing to be deployed, Guzman's days often revolved around getting up in the early morning, eating breakfast and spending the day out in the field or training. "We did a lot of job-specific training, like police tactics and paper work," he says, "but on the other hand, we did a lot of combat train-

ing, doing simulations for scenarios from moving in a convoy to clearing buildings. We also spent a lot of time in classrooms going over rules of engagement and laws of war."

## While deployed

Guzman says that when he went to Iraq, his days also varied depending where he was needed most. "We were on call as a quick reaction team some days and on other days, we were up early and rolling out on a mission."

Early mornings are to be expected while deployed as soldiers are briefed on the day by their superiors and then go execute whatever tasks are assigned. Some tasks include doing maintenance on the base, doing maintenance on vehicles and weapons, or gearing up and rolling out on missions and doing whatever planning was needed as well. "We had our downtime here and there where we could work out or relax, but we also spent a lot of time keeping up on our gear and vehicles and weapons," Guzman said. "We spent countless hours doing inventory and maintenance checks on everything we were issued."

## What the military can do for you

While a "typical day" may not always be the same, Guzman believes that the National Guard can be beneficial for students who want to serve and

still go to school. "[The Army] pays for most of your schooling and if you get into an ROTC program, you come out of college as an officer," he says. "The military also gives you a skill set and trains you in a job faster than any school will. There are an endless amount of jobs you can do and most of them transfer into the civilian world."

However, he advises that students shouldn't try to over-reach by trying to do too many things at once. Don't take more classes than you can handle while also pursuing a military career.

"Think of it like going to school and still trying to work 40 hours a week." Guzman offers a final word of advice for students who wish to stand out as good soldiers: "Show commitment, integrity and an ability to adapt and overcome."

Visit [NextStepU.com/Military](http://NextStepU.com/Military) to learn more about your options. ↴



Laura Sestito is a senior at Nazareth College ([www.naz.edu](http://www.naz.edu)) and is a graphic designer and writer for *NextStepU Magazine*.

Would the military be a good choice for you? Snap a picture → [NextStepU.com/ArmedForces](http://NextStepU.com/ArmedForces)



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Shaka Smart  
head men’s basketball coach

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V I R G I N I A C O M M O N W E A L T H U N I V E R S I T Y

# 5 packing essentials

It's never too early to start planning what you need to bring to college. We've put together a list of the top five items all students should have in their dormroom closet.

## 1. Plain white shirt

There's a reason these are so popular — they look good and go with practically anything! Have a V-neck for casual days and a button-up to layer under cardigans or sweaters for more professional occasions.

## 2. Several pairs of jeans

Jeans are the ultimate college staple. Wear your old, beat-up pair for that morning class you're always running late for and save your dark jeans for when you need to look a little more put-together.

## 3. Flip-flops

Not the most practical footwear, but in college you'll be able to use them for almost anything. Put them on for warm weather strolls, to wear in the shower or throw them on for last-minute plans.

## 4. Structured jacket

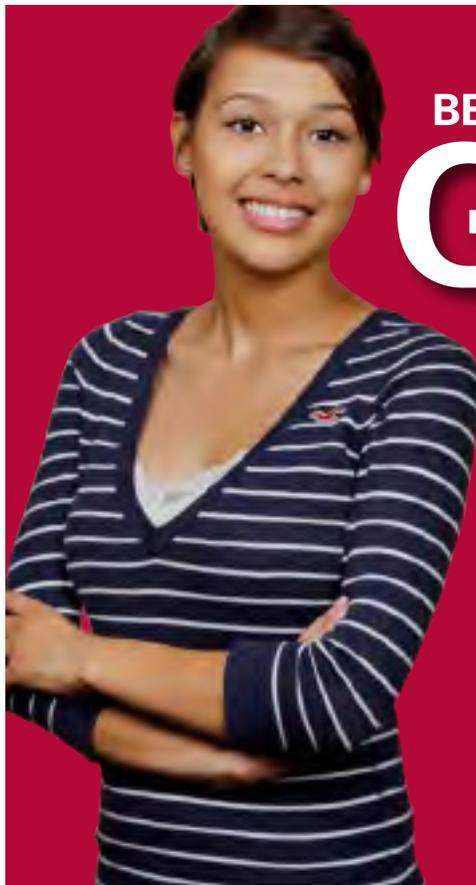
Of course it's easy to throw on a sweatshirt when you're walking out the door, but if you want to make a little bit more of an impact, bring a classic, well-tailored jacket to school with you. For optimum results, find something you can wear out, to class, or even to an interview.

## 5. Signature piece

This can be anything in your closet that, when you wear it, is distinctly



“you.” Whether it's an old necklace, a pair of worn-out jeans or a graphic T-shirt, make sure you bring something that will remind you of who you are...because some things never change! 📌



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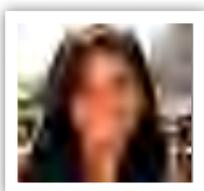


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## Profile of a communications major



We wanted to know what it really means to be a communications major, so we asked **Krista Pilla**, a junior at St. John Fisher College ([www.sjfc.edu](http://www.sjfc.edu)). Here's what she had to say!

**Q:** What is your official major/title of degree program?

**A:** Communication/Journalism

**Q:** Why did you decide to major in communications?

**A:** I started out as a communications minor, but I decided I wanted to switch it to my major by the second semester of my freshman year.

**Q:** What do you hope to do once you graduate?

**A:** I can see myself doing a lot of different things when I graduate, as long as I am doing some type of writing!

**Q:** Do you think social media is changing the world of journalism and communication?

**A:** I think that social media is changing the way that

journalists compile and report information. They may get tips from social media sites...like Twitter or Facebook. I find that it's becoming rare for students to get their news from a newspaper or by watching the news. I tend to follow news on Twitter or Facebook and if there is something I want to know more about, I then seek out more credible sources, like reputable newspapers or news web-sites.

**Q:** Why do you think strong communication skills are so important?

**A:** I think that strong communication skills are necessary no matter what your major is. Everyone needs to communicate and interact with others [no matter what you do], and those who can do it effectively will get the best jobs. These days, so many people use texting lingo, so I think it's even more crucial now to know how to be able to communicate professionally. 🗣️



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# But I'm just a junior!

## PLANNING FOR YOUR SENIOR YEAR AND BEYOND

By Elizabeth Archuleta, Ph.D.

So, you're a junior in high school. Now what? Have you started thinking about senior year or college? Isn't it too early to start thinking about college when you haven't even graduated? Actually, if you're considering college, your junior year is the best time to start planning.

If thoughts about college make you anxious, take baby steps. Concentrate on where you are now.

### Consider your classes

As a junior, this is the best time to reflect on the classes you've taken and the grades you've received. What subjects interest you or put you to sleep? To learn more about yourself and your interests, take a critical look at your classes and grades because they provide the best clues about what majors to consider in college.

If you struggle in math, then chances are you won't be happy pursuing an engineering degree. If you love reading, then majoring in English, history or communications would probably be a better fit.

### Here are some questions to ask yourself now:

- What is your grade point average? Does it need improvement?
- Can you retake classes to improve grades?
- Are you on track to earn all of the credits required for graduation?

### MY TO-DO LIST

- Make an appointment with my guidance counselor
- Go over graduation requirements
- Consider required classes for senior year
- Make sure I am on track for graduation
- Consider A.P., honors, or college prep classes
- Get involved in my school (sports, government, organizations, clubs)
- Get involved in my community by volunteering
- Start exploring and visiting colleges
- Start writing a resumé and making notes for my personal essay(s)

- Are there any courses you can take to help you decide if a particular career is right for you?
- Should you take honors or advanced placement classes?
- Can you start taking college prep courses or do you have to wait until you're officially a senior?

These questions are important for you to start thinking about now.

### Talk to others

Don't try doing everything alone. In addition to getting advice from your parents, talk to your guidance counselor and let him or her know that you are interested in college.

### A guidance counselor can help you do the following:

1. Choose the best classes to prepare for your senior year and your first year in college.
2. Explore career paths and how to prepare yourself to be a more attractive candidate for college selection committees.
3. Offer advice on choosing a college, preparing for college entrance exams or exploring funding options.
4. Find summer internships or businesses that will let you shadow someone in that profession. If you want to go into journalism, ask if your local newspaper will let you shadow a reporter. If you're thinking about a communications major, check appropriate businesses to see if you can intern or shadow someone in order to learn more about the job.

### Learn about yourself

In addition to talking to other people, you should also talk to yourself. College selection committees don't just look at your transcripts, they also look at what you've done with your life. Will you be a good fit at their





# Building your resumé

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME  
AND MAKE IT COUNT!

By Anne Chaconas

You've heard it before and you'll hear it again — colleges like to see their applicants do more than just excel in school. They like to see involvement in extracurriculars, participation in the community, an active volunteering streak, or maybe even a combination of all three! It can get exhausting to try to get all of the bases covered, but it can also be fun.

Try these five steps to make pumping up your resumé a productive endeavor...and one you will enjoy!

**Choose activities that will look good and be fun for you.** This may sound like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised to hear how many students put themselves through extracurricular horrors in the name of a beefy resumé. Don't do it! If you hate writing, don't participate in the student newspaper. If you can't tolerate sports, don't volunteer to be a team booster. Remember, if you loathe your extracurriculars, you won't enjoy them and — even worse for resumé-building purposes — your participation in them will be miserable and any leadership positions will pass you by.

**Don't be afraid to try new or unconventional things.** Just because you haven't tried something doesn't mean you won't like it. If you're having a hard time thinking of groups you'd like to join, go with something you've never done before.

Or, try something that might not immediately seem like the perfect fit for your personality or skills. Go to a few meetings, participate in a few events and see if it clicks. If it does, you've found a new hobby! If it doesn't, you've learned what you don't want to do and can try your luck with another group. Don't worry; you'll eventually find something and it'll be truly enjoyable because you took the time to really find out what motivates and interests you.

**Don't overdo it.** While some students struggle to find a few extracurriculars that interest them, you might find yourself on the other side of the coin: having way too many extracurriculars on your plate. Suddenly, you'll find yourself involved in the student newspaper, yearbook, choir, drama, chess club, math club, team booster...and that's just on Tuesdays! While keeping yourself busy is a good thing, it's never a good idea to be so busy that you can't devote enough time to each of your activities or to your schoolwork. Colleges would rather see extended, consistent commitment to a few groups than superficial participation in many.

**Be consistent.** Once you've found the groups you want to get involved in, be consistent in your participation. Attend meetings, volunteer for events, ask for greater responsibilities and

lead committees. Not only will this keep you abreast of what is happening in the group, it will also help you build rapport with the rest of its members, which will, in turn, make it easier for you to secure leadership positions down the line.

**Aim to lead.** This should be the eventual goal of your participation in any student group, at least as far as resumé-building goes. While colleges like to see consistent participation in your groups, they like to see evidence of leadership even more. Once you've been in a group for a year or more, start thinking about which positions you'd like to campaign for and obtain during your junior and senior years. Don't just be a part of a group — help keep it going in the right direction!



**Anne Chaconas**

is the director of admissions counseling for PowerScore Test

Preparation ([www.powerscore.com](http://www.powerscore.com)).

Every year, she answers countless questions about college admissions and helps many students get into their top choice schools.

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Ask our editor

# Dear NextStepU

Our editor, Katie Barry, gives answers (and hopefully good advice!) to you, our readers!

**Q: I know that senior year is still really important, so how can I avoid catching senioritis?**

—Cindy Flores

**A:** You are right — senior year is extremely important. While your grades leading up to this point will be taken into account by college admissions counselors, they will also want to see that you are con-

tinuing your hard work and commitment to your studies through the end of your high school career.

Senioritis is in fact a very dangerous thing, but it also is 100 percent avoidable! The best advice I can offer is to keep your eye on the prize; that is, doing well in school today means a brighter tomorrow. Set yourself up for a positive and fulfilling college experience by enhancing your study habits now, when the workload is less stressful and your schedule is more struc-

tured. College is no walk in the park — it's demanding, it requires impeccable time management skills and there won't be anyone there to "hold your hand."

It sounds like you are already on the right track. Stay the course and remember that you will be a college freshman before you know it. Don't wish away this last year of high school too quickly. Someday, you may wish you could have it all back. 🙌



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# 5 Myths about military recruiting

FIND OUT WHAT YOU SHOULD (AND SHOULDN'T) EXPECT!

By Carrie Schmeck

Well-groomed, uniformed soldiers hawking brochures promising action-packed jobs and promising career opportunities are a familiar sight at high school career fairs.

While students wonder what the military might be like and parents worry about the commitment, many discount military opportunities based on myth and misinformation.

We've unpacked five common myths about military recruiting. The answers may surprise you and open new avenues for service, education and financial solutions:

## **MYTH #1 Recruiters only want to enlist full-time soldiers.**

Recruiters aren't limited to signing full-time enlistment contracts. In truth, each service branch offers numerous programs and resources to help students meet education and career goals.

Students can consider versions of full-time soldier/part-time student programs as well as full-time student/part-time soldier options (commonly known as Reserves) as well as variations of the GI Bill that, after a typical four-year tour, will pay for huge portions of tuition, housing and books.

Visiting a recruiter is not just for students hoping to postpone or skip college. Recruiters can point students who want to finish college before

serving as commissioned officers to programs that will both accommodate education and offer tuition assistance that rivals traditional college scholarships.

## **MYTH #2 The military will take anyone.**

Both the economy and technical advances have altered the admission landscape. With limited private sector work options, fewer active duty soldiers are leaving the service while more students are considering the service's job security and benefits. As a result, branches have become more selective with admission standards.

You should prepare for your visit to a recruiter as you would a job interview. Presenting your very best impression is important because acceptance is not guaranteed. "We operate on the whole person concept," says Darrell Lafrenz, a Naval Recruiting Public Affairs Officer. Beyond the basic physical and medical requirements, recruiters look for consistent academic performance and overall character during initial visits.

Straight A's aren't required, says Lafrenz, but a track record of being a reasonably good student who has stayed out of trouble is key. Recruiters especially like to see evidence of "a productive life," that a student has held a job or participated in sports and extracurricular activities. "We like to see that a student has been involved

in things that attempt to achieve a common goal — because that's what we do."

Enlisting in the military was once a last stop option for troubled and aimless students. Not so anymore. Instead of suggesting that the military will be good, in terms of discipline, service branches are asking, "Will this young adult be a good fit for our military?"

## **MYTH #3 Recruiters will tell you what you want to hear.**

Colleges tout academic prowess and national rankings as opposed to the incidence of crime on campus. Likewise, the military presents their best. "Let's face it," says Sergeant First Class Jeff Knuth, an Army recruiter in Madison, Wisconsin. "We're going to paint our military in a positive light... just like any college recruiter."

Of course, he acknowledges, for every option, there are drawbacks. Recruiters are directed to "recruit with integrity." He says, "That means ethical recruiting with full disclosure." Raise concerns in your meeting and ask for substantiated answers.

## **MYTH #4 The service will decide your job.**

Before committing to the military, you will take a career exploration test called the ASVAB to help discover your aptitudes. With the results, you and your recruiter can scour current job openings to determine a career

track that makes sense for you and matches what the service needs.

In the Army, students pick their job and Knuth says that, 99.8% of the time, recruits end up in their chosen field. “If we don’t find anything that matches their interests, I tell them to come back in a few weeks and check again.”

**MYTH #5 Recruiters will convince your parents for you.**

Students under 18 years old need parental approval before making a military commitment.

“Any good parent would be nervous about the prospect for a number of reasons,” says LaFrenz, so it helps to be open with them from the beginning. Include them in meetings and be ready to justify your reasons for wanting to serve. Recruiters will answer their questions, but should not be relied upon to convince them.

The most important thing, says Knuth, “is for students to get information from a subject matter expert, not someone who was in a few years ago.” There’s no way to get facts without asking questions of a knowledgeable source, such as a recruiter. ¶



**Carrie Schmeck** is a special features and business copywriter from northern California.

**Typical College Day**

We wanted to know what a typical college day looked like, so we asked **Michelle Maurer**, a student at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. ([www.cua.edu](http://www.cua.edu)).



**8:00 A.M.:** Wake up.  
**8-8:30:** Do homework. **8:30-9:** Get ready for the day. **9 A.M.-12:00 P.M.:** Class. **12-1:** Lunch. **1-2:** Class. **2-3:30:** Downtime in the room. **4-5:** Work out. **5:30-7:** Homework. **7-8:** Dinner. **8-9:** Some type of meeting for an organization I’m involved in. **10:30:** Homework or hanging out with friends.  
**11:** Bed.

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**June 24-28** - Lawrence Technological University, *Summer Camps*. [www.ltu.edu/summercamps](http://www.ltu.edu/summercamps)

**Jul. 8-12** - Lawrence Technological University, *Summer Camps*. [www.ltu.edu/summercamps](http://www.ltu.edu/summercamps)

**Jul. 13** - Milwaukee School of Engineering, *MSOE Open House*. [admissions.msoe.edu](http://admissions.msoe.edu)

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Luis Perez knew when he was in high school that he wanted to go to dental school at Nova Southeastern University, just like his mom did. And because he also knew that he'd have the chance to participate in clinical exploration programs with the dental college as an NSU undergraduate, it sealed the deal on his college choice. With classes taught by faculty who know your name, so many ways to get involved on campus (including the Pre-Dental Society for Luis), and exposure to prestigious graduate and professional programs, NSU is the premier private research university that can help you achieve your goals, too.

**Luis Perez,**  
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