



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Dear Friends,

It is with sadness that I inform all of you that I am taking my next step professionally. I have loved being the Executive Director of SF Achievers, just as I have loved all the young men we've been privileged to serve. As I made this decision, I reflected on the progress we have made.

We have restructured our high school Support Program and developed an effective curriculum that includes group discussions and additional advocacy assistance. We also created a new program, the Leadership Academy, for high school seniors designed to prepare them for success in college. We have also developed relationships with many organizations to increase the wrap around support resources for our Scholars.

It is important to thank the Board of Directors for trusting me to lead this organization. I am also grateful for the generosity of the foundations, corporate, and community partners that have come forward over the last three years to support our vital work. Finally, I want to thank the Achiever Scholars who had the courage to take risks and to trust not only me but themselves as they reached higher to think new thoughts. You can count on the fact that I will continue to watch and celebrate the success of each one of them.

Gregory Collins



Greg and Scholars join Outward Bound for camping trip to Point Reyes

Meet Our New Board President



As an African American male who grew up in South Central Los Angeles, I am keenly aware of the specific challenges African American students face in San Francisco and other urban school districts. I would not have "beaten the odds" without the guidance of mentors who wanted nothing more than my success. Nine years ago, that support motivated me to get involved with SF Achievers; I felt a strong obligation to pay forward the assistance I had received on my personal educational journey.

I have enjoyed a front row seat as SF Achievers has grown to serve over 100 young men with college scholarships and comprehensive wrap-around services plus a growing high school program. As Board President, I am pleased with our direction and plan to boost our students' successes in school and after.

Your generous contributions of time, talent and monetary gifts have been a blessing to SF Achievers as we work collectively to close the achievement gap. Thank you for your continued support in our mission. Please feel free to contact me with your questions and observations. Full steam ahead!

Tarrell Gamble - vershorn@gmail.com

Volunteer Mentors

Students in the Achievers' program, in addition to receiving a scholarship, are matched with a volunteer mentor who works collaboratively with staff to help the Scholar problem solve and learn new strategies for success. As mentor relationships have been a critical aspect of the success of San Francisco Achievers we would like to highlight two special ones

Stacey Chun learned about SF Achievers through the Blue Shield Black Employee Network. When she first met her mentee, Mike'l Gregory, he was already on the college track: good grades, ambitious, and driven. She wasn't sure what value she might add to his life. Yet when they met she discovered that he yearned to have a listening ear. Initial feelings of trepidation are often mirrored by scholars, but new mentors and mentees often discover it can only take one conversation to erase that initial doubt. As their first conversation began, it became apparent that Stacy and Mike'l, seemingly so different, were alike in so many ways!

Stephanie Gee, a SF Achievers Board member, had an immediate connection with her mentee, Binyam Teklegiorgis. In their first conversation she learned that Binyam had lived in a homeless shelter with his family for a few months after immigrating from Ethiopia, and she shared that her mother passed away from breast cancer several years ago. They chatted for over 2 hours at their first meeting!

Mentoring relationships develop in many forms, whether it is a friend, academic or career advisor, or simply a listening ear, the foundation is the same: a trusting relationship between two people. We are proud of Stacey and Mike'l and Stephanie and Binyam who have created that trusting relationship through regular communication and mutual respect!!



"I didn't know what to really expect in the beginning but as conversation began, it became apparent we were alike in so many ways! Stacey is a joyful light to be around and super helpful!"



"My relationship with Steph has been great, I have no words to describe what this relationship means to me. Whenever I feel down or feel lost, she is the person that I go to and she gives me the courage and motivation to help me bounce back."



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