

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT EXETER

This April, as part of the Academy's ongoing outreach efforts, the admissions office played host to a group of charter and magnet middle-school counselors from cities including Newark, Chicago and Milwaukee. The goal: to spread the word about Exeter in communities that may be unfamiliar with boarding schools, and to create new opportunities to find talented students from every quarter and from across the economic spectrum.

The school counselors toured the Exeter campus; learned about its academic programs, its admissions policies and its financial aid resources; and heard firsthand from Exeter students about boarding school life, its rewards and its challenges.

When a counselor asked Vanessa Williams, a prep from Springfield, IL, to describe some of the challenges, she listed being homesick, adjusting to a new place, finding friends, and learning how to manage a tough academic workload. But with those challenges, she added, came

real rewards. "Here, when you are challenged, you learn a new appreciation of success because of it," she explained. "When you get that A-, you're happy because you know how much you worked for it, even if it wasn't perfect. You gain a new respect for yourself and those around you just from having to go through all the hardships."

One counselor who visited Exeter was Roy Feliciano of KIPP Aspire Academy in San Antonio, TX, which is part of the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP), a national

network of college-preparatory public schools in under-resourced communities. Currently, 52 KIPP schools in 16 states and the District of Columbia serve more than 12,000 students. Feliciano was so struck by the students he met that in late May he returned to Exeter with 40 of his seventh graders, to give them the chance to see the school for themselves and consider the possibility of boarding school.

Feliciano says he appreciated how candid Exeter students were when describing their experiences to his seventh graders. "One of the students said, 'You have to humble yourself when you come here, because you are among smart students and you may not be as smart as they are. So you have to learn to ask for help.' It took courage and maturity for a high school student to suggest to prospectives that they should be prepared to humble themselves to get ahead," he says.

The San Antonio students were given student-led campus tours, and met with administrators and students from a variety of backgrounds. "Most of these kids don't experience diversity in their home communities, where more than 95 percent of the population is Hispanic," says Feliciano. "Here at Exeter, they got to see an Asian, an African American, and a Hispanic all sitting together in a dorm talking and having fun. This is the best way to learn academically and socially."

Treda Collier, Exeter's coordinator of recruitment of students of color and an associate director of admissions, says visiting Exeter reinforces what students hear at school. "They can say to themselves, 'Maybe I could have a shot at going to a good high school. If I work hard at my school work and really focus, I might have a chance.'"

And Collier says the students are not the only ones learning from each visit. "The counselors really appreciated hearing members of the student panel explain that hard work pays off when you become a senior and are prepared to attend a good college or university."

—*Famebridge Witherspoon*



JAEVIN LEE '09

Treda Collier (right), Exeter's coordinator of recruitment of students of color and an associate director of admissions, talks with a group of visiting 7th graders from KIPP Aspire Academy in San Antonio, TX.