



The Riverside University High School Foundation

Serving alumni, friends, and families of Riverside University High School

June, 2014

2014 Scholarship Recipients Jose Rizo

Thirty-eight applicants. Thirty-one scholarships. \$13,750 awarded. These are the results of the 2014 Scholarship selection process. Once again, the applicants were extremely impressive both in terms of their achievements and their interview skills. A full set of profiles will appear on the Foundation web site shortly. In the meantime, we would like to feature one very impressive young man.

four-year scholarship at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. If he maintains a 3.2 grade point average during his undergraduate years, he will then be eligible for a free Masters Degree program at the school.

Jose credits the multi-cultural, respectful, safe and academically challenging atmosphere at Riverside for helping him grow as a person and as a serious-minded student.

Jose was born in Leon, Mexico. His father left the family and disappeared from José's life early on. His mother took Jose and his sister at the age of 9 to Milwaukee to live with her own father, who had immigrated 20 years before and was by now a naturalized citizen. Jose's mother worked for a clothing manufacturer and was able to pay for the rent and basic expenses, but not much else. Jose admits that, in his first year of high school, he was under the bad influence of friends. He decided that he had to change friends if he was going to bring a better future to his family.

One of José's teachers at Riverside had the following to say about Jose: "The students I work with are mostly from low income families. Students who grow up under difficult circumstances more than most are offered the stark choice of either being passive, allowing their circumstances to define them, or being an active participant in their own lives by taking control of their destiny. That is exactly what Jose did during his freshman year at Riverside. He made the right decision and his whole life has changed for the better."



Jose Rizo has excelled at Riverside. He has been an Advanced Placement Program student for three years having taken AP World History, AP Spanish Language, AP US History AP English Literature and Composition, AP Calculus and AP Chemistry. He is an honor student and ranks in the top 10% of his class. Outside of the classroom, Jose serves as president of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and is a student athlete (track and

field). On April 25, 2014, Jose broke the school record in the 3200 meter run (two mile), completing it in 10 minutes, 41 seconds.

All of Jose's hard work at Riverside has gained him a

New Scholarship Fund

We are pleased to welcome a new scholarship fund into the Foundation's family of funds. The RUHS Latino Club will be sponsoring an annual \$500 scholarship to a student who:

1. Has been an active member of the Latino Club for at least two years;
2. Has earned an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better;
3. Demonstrates financial need.



Latino Club members do not need to be of Latino descent in order to join. Latino Club promotes cultural awareness through demonstrations, tutoring and by actively participating in the community. Some of these activities include: tutoring, lunch sessions with prominent Latinos, activities and performances for Hispanic Heritage Month, Latino Fun Night, and displays for holidays as well as volunteering at local grade schools.

The Latino Fund Scholarship will be funded by donations from Riverside alumni as well as the selling of two Riverside lapel pins for \$20 each.

Check it out!

The Foundation web site is slowly being integrated into the school's web site. In addition to reading the latest updates on alumni news, you can also see all of the good things that are happening at the school. There is a distinct and purposeful emphasis on celebrating what the school does well. The focus is on the academic, athletic, artistic and extracurricular achievements of students. The Riverside University High School Foundation can be found at: ww5.milwaukee.k12.wi.us.

Jump Rope For Heart Honor to Retired Riverside Teacher

The Riverside gymnasium was “jumping” on this past February 21. Literally “jumping” as a hundred elementary students, a number of adult attendees, American Heart Association staff, MPS Superintendant Thornton and Riverside Principal Michael Harris filled the gym with jump rope exercises. The event was sponsored by the American Heart Association in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Jump Rope For Heart fundraising activity Thirty years ago, Riverside physical education teacher, Jean Barkow, held her first “rope-a-thon” in conjunction with the Milwaukee chapter of the American Heart Association. Since 1978, Jump Rope For Heart has raised more than \$700 million to fight heart disease and stroke, and millions of school children have jumped rope and learned about heart health and how nutrition and physical activity can help prevent heart disease and stroke.



Following the ceremony honoring Miss Barkow, Superintendant Thornton led everyone out to the gymnasium entry lobby for a second surprise honor for Miss Barkow. A large, beautiful looking wooden sign was unveiled. It read, “Jean Barkow Gymnasium, Home of Jump Rope For Heart, 1978”. Miss Barkow was stunned by the honor and was (almost) speechless. Principal Harris stated that the naming of the school gymnasium after Miss Barkow was intended to honor not only her involvement in starting Jump Rope For Heart but also for her leadership and innovations in the physical education program during her 35 years at the school. A number of Miss Barkow’s former students attended both ceremonies and enjoyed reminiscing about the impact that Miss Barkow (seated in center) had in their lives.



May 15, 2014

An Open Letter to All Riverside University High School Staff:

As you know by now, Riverside is the direct descendant of the very first public high school established in the City of Milwaukee in 1868. Riverside has consistently been recognized, within the context of the economic and cultural conditions of the time, as a school of high academic standards. The maintenance of that reputation for almost 150 years is no accident. It is a direct result of the quality of the teaching, administrative and support staff at the school throughout that long period of time.

I have served on the Board of Directors of the Riverside University High School Foundation since its inception in 1997. The foundation has raised in excess of \$340,000 for scholarships for deserving graduating seniors. I have participated in almost all of the interviews of the applicants for these scholarships. They are required to submit an essay describing their experience at Riverside. In their essays and during their interviews, these students consistently state that the reason for their success at the school is the quality of the teaching staff, and by extension, the quality of the administrative and other staff that support the teachers. The following are just a few of the student comments that are repeated over and over again:

“My teachers believed in me even when I did not believe in myself”. “I was told that I was a bright student and that I needed to challenge myself academically and socially”. “I was encouraged to participate in (fill-in any extracurricular activity) and it made all the difference in the world in terms of developing my social and leadership skills”. “When I started at Riverside, I was very shy and introverted. My teachers patiently drew me out of my shell”. “Since Day One, the teachers have preached that ‘Everything is earned, nothing is given’ and I have come to understand and believe in that”. “The amazing teachers at this school have taught me that I can achieve anything that I put my mind and heart into”. “I have been surrounded by teachers with warm hearts and nurturing souls.” And it goes on and on. Some students talk about specific Riverside teachers who have made a difference in their lives but the vast majority talk about the atmosphere of high academic standards and the benefits of cultural diversity that permeate the school and this can only result from a deep-seated commitment by all staff to maintain this reputation.

My conclusion is that you, and all of the Riverside teachers who have preceded you, are the reason that Riverside continues to be recognized as a place of serious learning and high academic standards. You have a huge responsibility to carry on this tradition. Keep up your outstanding work!

Riverside students deserve good teachers and you deserve all of the credit in the world for working so hard to continue to meet their highest expectations.

Sincerely,

Jan Gibson, President
The Riverside University High School Foundation

Riverside alumni. Planning a reunion? We can help publicize your event. Contact us at gibsonj5@aol.com.

Riverside Alumnus Nicknamed "The Rapper MD"



Mary Washington is a 1977 graduate of Riverside. She went on to graduate from the Medical College of Wisconsin and then completed an internal medicine residency/nephrology fellowship at Tulane University in New Orleans. Her first job landed her in Harlingen, Texas where, near the Mexican border, she immersed herself in the culture of the Texas Valley.

Through her work and travels, Dr. Washington became sensitive to the disproportionate statistics of diabetes and high blood pressure in the African/American, Latin/American communities. That is when her alter ego, "Rapper MD" was born.

Mary's first passion has always been music. She began formal piano lessons at age 6. Since she was from a very musical family, it was no surprise that she also took up the guitar and the tenor saxophone.

Dr Washington decided to use music as a way of communicating her message regarding the need to deal with the crucial health problems of the community that she was serving. Her debut album, "The Cuttin' Edge" is described as a "hard hitting, bold sound, that not only makes you move but cuts deep with the razor sharp words and harsh realities that address issues of poor eating habits, obesity and lack of exercise in our country".

Dr Washington has also published a book entitled "Emotional Pleas" which is a compilation of poems and songs she has written that help paint a grim, yet genuine picture of what she sees every day in her medical practice.



Riverside's Highly Qualified Teaching Staff



Erin Walsh

Riverside has always had a comparatively large number of teachers on its staff that possess a Master's Degree (and sometimes more than one) and even has had a PhD or two. Now the school can boast of having four teachers who have earned their National Board Certification, a rare and difficult to obtain certification.



Whitney Gulbranson

We congratulate Erin Walsh - Science, Whitney Gulbranson - English (she is also a graduate of Riverside), Jenny Sagrillo - Math and Angeles Sitzes - World Languages for this achievement. Now more than ever, teachers are feeling the pressure to prove themselves in a constantly changing education landscape. The National Board has established the profession's definitive standards of accomplished practice since 1987. Created for teachers, by teachers, National Board Certification is described as a voluntary, performance based, peer-review process that recognizes the complex nature of teaching. Research has shown that the students of NBCTs outperform their peers in other classrooms.



Jenny Sagrillo

We honor these four teachers for their dedication to their profession, their willingness to continue to improve their professional skills and for their ability to educate, motivate and inspire their students. Their work is helping in a big way to continue the record of academic excellence at Riverside.



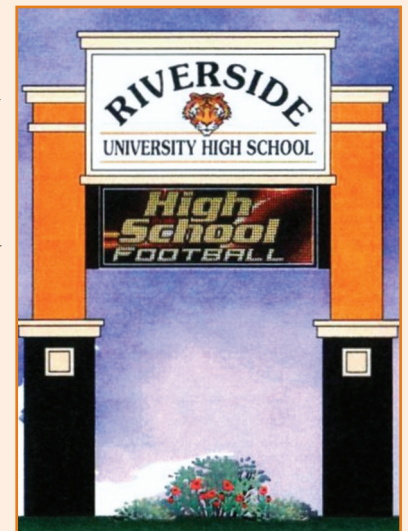
Angeles Sitzes

The New Digital Sign

This project has been enough to try anyone's patience. The Foundation started to raise funds for the construction of a new outdoor digital sign for Riverside sixteen (16) months ago. Since MPS is a governmental agency, we had to go through their design and bidding process. The first set of bids were much more expensive than we had originally been told this project would cost. We then worked with MPS and the School's new principal, Michael Harris, to prepare a second round of designing and bidding. MPS assures us as of this date, that the second round of bid seeking will take place within the next month.

The good news is that the school's alumni have been very generous in donating over \$14,000 toward this project. We will all have a reason to celebrate when this project is finished. MPS now estimates that the sign will be operational by the middle of this next October.

The new sign will be used to inform students, parents and the surrounding community of school events and student achievements. It will enhance the "College prep" focus of the school and hopefully serve as a key recruiting tool to attract even greater numbers of academically motivated students who want to take advantage of the school's outstanding Advanced Placement program.



President's Message

Jan Gibson

Riverside Principal, Michael Harris, has only been on the job a little less than a year, but wow what an impression he has made. Michael is one of the most positive and enthusiastic administrators I have ever been acquainted with. He exudes confidence in Riverside students, staff and parents. He is working tirelessly to build a "team" approach to improving the academic achievements of Riverside students. He communicates extremely well to both students and adults. I have personally heard more than one current or retired MPS teacher say, after hearing him speak or watching him work, "I could really enjoy working for this guy". Here is a little of what Mr. Harris has to say about the school:



"The Riverside University High School staff has a deep commitment to the academic and social success of all of our students. Our goal is to strive for school wide continuous improvement that will lead RUHS to stand out as one of the best urban high schools in the state.

The RUHS community offers a wide range of courses, athletic teams, clubs and activities. Students have the opportunity to feel connected and invested in their high school experience. Our elective offerings include Project Lead the Way, visual arts, computers, service learning, wellness services, band, orchestra, chorus and college preparatory courses. Because we focus on college preparation for all, we offer two world languages, 15 Advanced Placement courses, a bilingual program, English as a Second Language (ESL), and rigorous courses of study in all academic areas.

At RUHS we expect our students to inspire greatness by doing their best, trying their hardest, and giving their all. In the classroom and on formal assessments students will perform at their highest level. In the hallways students will walk with a purpose and know the importance of a high quality public education. Students will respect diversity and see it as a strength of their school community. RUHS staff will support these expectations by meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of students as they mature into responsible, respectful, caring and socially conscience adults.

Students will have numerous outlets to explore their unique talents, skills and passions as they achieve their full potential during their journey at RUHS. Professional and enthusiastic coaches lead 16 athletic sport teams. We have outstanding and dedicated advisors and coaches who assist with extensive extra-curricular activities. From sports to theatre, to student groups, we have it all! Learning at RUHS extends beyond the classroom and our school. Successful partnerships with surrounding business and community organizations provide staff and students with the resources needed to enhance teaching and learning.

Riverside University High School is destined to be again one of America's Top Public High Schools. We will return to that level of status with the strong commitment from our faculty, staff, students and parents. In the classroom and beyond, the students and adults who compose the Riverside University High School community make this school an exceptional place in which to learn and prepare for a college experience. To learn more about the tradition, spirit and pride of RUHS, I welcome you to visit us, or call us at 414-906-4900 or email me at harrism3@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. It's a great day to be a Tiger!
- Michael Harris, Principal"

Michael really does enjoy hearing from Riverside alumni. He will return your phone calls and he will answer your e-mails. Drop him a line. Let him know that you appreciate his efforts to maintain Riverside's reputation as a place of serious learning.

Opting Out of the Foundation Newsletters

In an effort to reduce newsletter printing and postage costs, the Foundation is asking any recipients who no longer wish to receive our twice a year newsletters to please let us know so that we can take you off of our mailing list. See the enclosed "Donation Form" for the way to do so.

This Newsletter is published by Jan Gibson, President, Jim Gibson, Editor.
We're on the web: www.riversidefoundation.com

As you requested, you are receiving this Newsletter via E-mail. If you wish to make a donation to the Foundation, you can do so by going to our web-site at www.riversidefoundation.com and click on the "Donations" section. Then you can either download the donation form and mail it to us or you can make your donation by clicking on the PayPal "Donation" button. We greatly appreciate your continued interest in Riverside. We desperately need your financial help.

Thanks.

Jim Gibson, Secretary/Treasurer
The Riverside University High School Foundation