



John Wilkerson



Past Vaca High Grad



Vaca

by: Nicole Hoffman

Try, pride and the focus; the new slogan for Vacaville High School. This catch phrase won't be heard chanting at the fall football games, but during this time of year, it can be heard throughout the hallways and classrooms of the Vaca High campus.

For the past few weeks one can see many things while walking through the Vaca High campus, posters hung with inspiring words and famous quotes, administrators energetically lecturing the student body on testing strategies, and even a U.S. History teacher disguised as a superhero. Just another day at Vaca High.

Every year in early to mid April comes the time that students dread and administrators become increasingly anxious about, Standardized Testing and Reporting, also known as STAR testing. For a couple days each week, students take their seats and begin the STAR test, a test filled with hundreds of multiple choice questions, focusing on topics varying from comprehensive reading to the civil war. What makes the distinction between the STAR and other tests is that the state of California ranks each school, one to ten, one being the worst and ten being the best. A few years back, Vaca High was ranked a disappointing and surprising two. But with a lot of practice multiple choice problems and a little inspiration, in just a few years that two has transformed to an impressive score of eight.

So how has Vaca High witnessed such a remarkable improvement?

"There are three things, one is that we have gotten much better at preparing the students," explains Mr. John Alongi, Dean of Learning Support. By focusing on materials covered on the test, the school has seen dramatic improvement. The other two including putting a huge amount of energy in test-taking strategies and the idea that it is important to try, to have pride...effort has its own reward.

Some of the inspiring tactics have included Captain Star and the STAR Countdown Word of the Day, a

teacher dressed as a superhero whose goal is to inspire the student body to try their best on the upcoming test. New this year is rewarding students who either individually improve their scores or score advanced on the test. Rewards include free admission to Vaca High sporting events, tickets to dances, and the highly coveted reserved parking spot. These as well as the effort and energy put forth by students, teachers and administrators has certainly paid off; what used to be a score of 630 was raised to 730, a huge accomplishment for the school. And it doesn't stop there, the ultimate goal for years to come is a score of 800.

"We've addressed the question of effort, the truth is, five or six years ago, we didn't put much effort in to it," said Mr. Alongi. "Since then, what a change Vaca High has seen."

Mister GQ

by: Maranna Berry

Lights...Camera...Action. The ten finalists of Mister GQ stepped upon the stage in the little theatre at Vacaville High School on March 6, 2009 and all preformed a dance to announce they were ready for action and ready to win Mr. GQ.

At the beginning of the show on that March night, everyone was anxiously awaiting to see their friends or family strut their stuff in front of the crowd for two hours, wowing them all.

Mr. Williams, an eleventh grade U.S. History teacher at Vacaville High School, kept the crowd amused with jokes and stories that had everyone laughing as the boys got ready.

They have the talent, they have the runway skills and they have the brains to answer a serious and funny question to impress the judges and be awarded "King of Hollywood".

Blakelyn Birks, a junior who competed for GQ this year, explained that, "We had to practice for two weeks



High Bulldogs

as a whole and I had to practice for three days for my talent (basketball)."

These boys have nothing but talent to show and it was portrayed all night long. From walking the runway to hula hooping, these young men have a wide range of performing skills that did not disappoint.

All of the boys had no problems keeping the crowd's attention and charming all of the girls as they pranced around without shirts for the runway portion of the night. After the runway was the talent portion that made everyone either laugh from a funny skit or be amazed by mastering singing and guitar playing.

The winner of GQ this year was Lewis Robertson, who amazed the crowd and the judges with his remarkable guitar playing once again. Lewis is the only senior to be awarded Mr. GQ and Mr. Bulldog in the same year and he deserved it one-hundred percent. ■



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