

Steppingstone Scholars on the Path to Success



Steppingstone Scholars
Meggee J. (left) and
Antonio S. (below).



Since 2003, Derby has welcomed outstanding students from under-performing Boston school districts, who prepare for the rigor of independent school with the help of The Steppingstone Foundation. These students have enriched the Derby community through their character, motivation and life experiences.

The founders of The Steppingstone Foundation, Michael P. Danzinger and John Simon, were dedicated to helping urban schoolchildren with high potential but limited means, pursue high-quality education that would lead to college success. Today, the three divisions of Steppingstone in Boston, Hartford and Philadelphia assist more than two hundred scholars a year enter top independent, Catholic and public exam schools.

Each Steppingstone Scholar and family has an Advisor who supports them during Steppingstone's preparation component and guides them through the independent school application process. Steppingstone continues to support students after they enroll at their new schools, and 1,500 middle-school, high-school and college-aged Scholars are currently benefitting from Steppingstone's comprehensive support services.

Steppingstone's success rate is impressive. Of more than 1,800 Scholars who have completed the

program since 1991, 99% have graduated from high school, 92% have enrolled in a four-year college and 80% graduated with a bachelor's degree within six years.

In the last ten years, a total of 19 Steppingstone Scholars have attended Derby Academy. The Scholars who enter Derby are academically motivated and have already completed hundreds of hours of extra schoolwork during the 14 months prior to their first day on campus.

Steppingstone Scholar Meggee J. '15 arrived in the United States from Haiti in 2010, and learned English in only a few months. A relative recognized Meggee's motivation to succeed and suggested she apply to Steppingstone. Meggee recalls the day she was accepted to Steppingstone as "the best day," and the day she was accepted to Derby, "an even better day!"

In addition to the small class sizes, her favorite things about Derby are the choices she is able to make — which sport to take, which art class to choose, and even which meal to have at lunch! She is especially excited about her roles as a Munchkin, an "optimistic voice," and a beautician to Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz* performance. While she enjoys math the most, she is surprised by how much she has come to like history this year. "Mr. Condrick changed the study of history for me. He makes each class an

adventure."

Steppingstone Scholars work extremely hard to get into the program and even harder to stay in it. They take pride in the school to which they are admitted. When Antonio S. '14 learned that his family was moving to northern Massachusetts last year, he knew that daily transportation to Derby would be virtually impossible. Antonio was devastated at the thought of leaving Derby after only two years. His determination to stay led to a unique situation: living with his Derby friend Carter in Hingham during the week.

Trustee Mark Jones notes that, "Antonio's passion for Derby and his solid character have had a positive impact on our household." Antonio is as supportive of his new family members as they are of him. He has also shared some of his Jamaican culture with the Jones family, with the introduction of jerk chicken and spiced buns into their dinner menu!

Derby is proud to partner with Steppingstone. Past Scholars at Derby have gone on to attend secondary schools such as Milton, Thayer and Belmont Hill School, and the current Scholars are as motivated as ever. "I love the specific feedback I receive on my report cards," says Meggee. "It helps me set specific goals for myself so I can improve my work."