

# Einstein Center graduate achieves the primary goal of all students

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Einstein student Charlie DuRand is congratulated by Doctor Edgar Lampkin-Director of ELL and student Services. (Kirsta Purdam/Courtesy)

On July 10, Martha Teeter received a phone call immediately after her son Charlie Durand completed his final requirements and became the first graduate of Einstein Education Center. As a student of EEC I was proud to see one of my classmates achieve our common goal. For a lot of the students at Einstein, high school seemed a questionable part of our futures. However over the course of our first school year we found some of those answers. High school is a definite part of our lives, and only the beginning.

Einstein Education Center requires more than just attendance from its students. In order to graduate we are first required to show that we have seen a little of what life beyond high school is all about. One of these requirements is to successfully complete three units in a college level environment. Most of us have done so by attending classes at Woodland Community College or UC Davis. Over the school year our school has taken trips to Sac State, UTI, and The Culinary Art Institute, in order to explore career options. The experiences were unforgettable, even to those of us already planning on higher education.

The shining pride of EEC students preparing for graduation, are our Plus Phase portfolios. This was by far the most challenging task for me. We are initially left to sort through all of our past projects and assignments and find the ones that taught us the most in each of our subjects. It was shocking to find that sometimes a student found the most knowledge within the smallest pieces of work. What were really interesting were the reasons behind that. After finding our "educational artifacts" we had to write reflections. I found this challenging because for once I was asked to write about myself, and they came out seeming like a brochure for Einstein. Needless to say, I made use of the practice in this personal mission.

After completing the body of our portfolios and assembling them in a professional matter, we then added community service, letters of reference, and proof of career readiness. Part of this was earning the Work Ready Certificate, an award that automatically requires any employer in California to interview its holder. To earn this I have held my job at a local

pizza restaurant for a year, and attended two semesters of Work Experience classes. In order to get the "stamp of approval" on both our portfolios and Work Readiness Certificate, Einstein's seniors were then (mercilessly) sent into our interviews in which we had to sell our work and ourselves to VIP members of the EEC board.

Through it all, students such as Charlie Durand and I have learned so much more than the basics here at Einstein. We've learned to see that we never needed anyone more than ourselves to make it in this world. I for one think we have been among the luckiest to have a school like ours to give us a head start in the right direction. I know that some people considered this school one for "drop-outs" but I'm sitting at school as I write this. I don't see a single person I don't believe will make something great of his/herself, and I hope in the future people will be able to make more educated comments about our school. If anything Einstein is a school for those, like Charlie, with a shot at success.

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