

# Thoughts from a WCHS Alumni Parent

## Websites and Books I have found helpful

By Karen Jakpor

The following is information by Karen Jakpor the mother of Otana Jakpor, class of 2010, who is currently a student at USC. She was also accepted at Yale, Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Duke, and Dartmouth, Brown and numerous other universities and colleges. She put together this information for the parents of Woodcrest Christian High School students in hopes of helping them navigate through the college application process.

### On Choosing a College:

Don't just focus on name-brand-- look for a great match for your child. Read ***Colleges that Change Lives***, by Loren Pope. Also look for the Colleges that Change Lives regional college fair by checking <http://www.ctcl.org>.

Ask your student to apply to one "out of the box" college that is very different from all the other colleges on his/her list.

When you visit colleges, try to visit churches as well. Or call up a Christian student group such as InterVarsity and ask questions about the spiritual environment.

Apply to some "financial safeties." If you only apply to the Ivy League, you will not receive any merit-based aid at all, only need-based aid. And it is the college's definition of need, not yours.

Private schools with generous scholarships may be cheaper than public schools. Check **CollegeConfidential.com** for a particularly useful list of schools with good merit-aid. Go to Parents Forum, then Schools Known for Good Merit Aid. <http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/parents-forum/52133-schools-known-good-merit-aid.html>

One way of trying to find great scholarships is to look for schools that use big merit awards to lure students who have higher stats. So compare your child's stats to the schools stats. If your child's GPA and SAT's are higher than the upper bracket of the school's SAT, then your student has a chance of merit aid.

### Don't just be a Bright Well-Rounded Kid (BWRK):

Your child needs to stand out with an NTA (non-teenager activity). Passion!

### College Review Websites:

\*<http://collegeprowler.com/> I suggest you enter several colleges under "Compare Colleges". Then you can click on the links for detailed information about each college.

\*<http://www.studentsreview.com/>

### SAT Prep:

Prep for the PSAT, not just the SAT, because scholarships count!!!

Prep using tests written by the College Board—better than using materials written by other companies who don't write the actual tests.

I recommend using the Official SAT Online Course (found at [Collegeboard.com](http://Collegeboard.com) for \$69.95 for a 4-month subscription). This has 10 practice tests written by the College Board. Also an online essay grading service.

Also buy the book Official SAT Study Guide which has another 10 practice tests written by the College Board.

Busy students probably won't have time—but if your child still needs more, buy old tests from the College Board or buy a used copy of 10 Real SAT's on Amazon.com, plus a solutions manual. (But these tests are the old SAT, so they have a different format.)

### **College Essays:**

Don't let your child fall into the trap of writing on a typical topic that the admissions officer can code in a few words such as "football equals life."

### **Have your child read these books:**

\**On Writing the College Application Essay—Secrets of a former Ivy League Admissions Officer*, by Harry Bauld.

\**Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps*, by Alan Gelb

### **Summer Opportunities:**

[www.cogito.org](http://www.cogito.org)

**Get to know your college admissions officer** at Regional Information Sessions and College Fairs.

1. Register for the mailing list of colleges that interest you even 2 years in advance, so that they will email you if they are having a program in your area.
2. Search the websites of the schools you are interested in frequently, especially in August – November. Check for words like "Harvard in your Hometown."
3. Go to college fairs. Check the website for NACAC for their spring fairs  
<http://www.nacacnet.org/EVENTSTRAINING/COLLEGEFAIRS/NCF/SPRING/Pages/default.aspx>
4. Check [collegeconfidential.com](http://collegeconfidential.com) and search for posts by Tokenadult on Regional Information Sessions under "meet college admissions officers"

### **Helpful Books:** (buy books cheaply secondhand on Amazon.com)

\**How to Make Colleges Want You*, by Mike Moyer Talks about the importance of an "NTA"—non-teenager activity.

\**Colleges that Change Lives*, by Loren Pope

\**What it Really Takes to Get into the Ivy League and Other Highly Selective Colleges*, by Chuck Hughes (former Senior Admissions officer, Harvard College)

\**The College Hook*, by Pam Proctor

\**Admissions Confidential—An Insider's Account of the Elite College Selection Process*, by Rachel Toor (about the Admissions process at Duke)

\**The Gatekeepers—Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College*, by Jacques Steinberg (about Wesleyan)

\**Acceptance—A Legendary Guidance Counselor Helps Seven Kids Find the Right Colleges—and Find Themselves*, by David Marcus

\**What High Schools Don't Tell You—300+ Secrets to Make your Kid Irresistible to Colleges by Senior Year*, by Elizabeth Wissner-Gross. (Start in middle school.)

\**On Writing the College Application Essay—Secrets of a former Ivy League Admissions Officer*, by Harry Bauld.

\**Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps*, by Alan Gelb

\**The Price of Admission*, by Daniel Golden (On affirmative action for the rich. Admissions to Ivy League schools are even harder that it appears for students who are not "legacies" or "development cases".)

\**Accept My Kid Please!—A Dad's Descent into College Application Hell*, by Hank Herman (just a funny book)