

LETTER FROM THE BOARD



On behalf of the Summer Search Board of Directors, I am proud to share our 2008 Annual Report with you. Fiscal year 2008 was the first year in an ambitious five-year expansion plan for Summer Search, and as this report shows, we achieved and even exceeded our growth goals across the organization. With nearly 1,000 students served in 7 different sites, as well as nearly 2,000 civically engaged alumni, and a budget that puts us in the top 1% of youth development nonprofits in the United States, Summer Search is quickly becoming a national force for change.

Most importantly, however, we have made sure that our accelerated growth does not diminish our focus on program quality. In fact, we actually continued to refine our program and increase our impact in 2008. For example, our student recruitment focused on the highest need areas and resulted in a 4 percentage point increase in the number of Summer Search students whose income is low enough to qualify for a federal free or reduced school lunch (69% in Fiscal Year 2007 to 73% in Fiscal Year 2008). Meanwhile, Summer Search's unique blend of mentoring, summer program experiences, and college counseling continued to help students achieve their potential and give back to others: last year, we saw a 1.5 percentage point increase in the number of Summer Search seniors matriculating to college (97% in Fiscal Year 2007 to 98.5% in Fiscal Year 2008), and an astonishing 11.4 percentage point increase in the number of alumni who chose to support Summer Search financially.

To see our young alumni joining us as stakeholders is to see the true scope of Summer Search's impact: our investment in each individual student results in profound personal transformation, but also creates a ripple effect as alumni begin to inspire change all around them. From organizing a volunteer day at a Los Angeles food bank to participating in a CNN panel on how best to close the achievement gap in America, Summer Search alumni are role models, philanthropists, volunteers, activists, and responsible leaders. These were the true highlights of 2008, and a hint of the kind of return we can expect on this year's incredible growth in student numbers and organizational strength.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the hard work and generous support of many, many people: donors, volunteers, program partners, staff and board leadership. We hope you share our pride in this year's achievements, and our determination to continue building Summer Search in 2009 and beyond.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Emery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "E".

Dana Emery, *Board Chair*