

LETTER FROM THE BOARD



I am honored to share the 2009 Annual Report with you on behalf of the Summer Search Board of Directors. With the economic downturn, fiscal year 2009 certainly proved to be a tumultuous year for the world. Nevertheless, Summer Search's fundraising efforts and results remained solid and, most important, Summer Search remained true to its mission to *find resilient low-income high school students and inspire them to become responsible and altruistic leaders by providing year-round mentoring, life-changing summer experiences, college advising, and a lasting support network*. Summer Search was able to serve 1,048 students across our seven program sites—over 100 students more than in fiscal year 2008. Summer Search's alumni program also continued to take form as it grew to serve 2,200 alumni who built upon their Summer Search experiences, continuing to develop as leaders in the communities and to be civically engaged.

As we served more students we also looked for ways to improve our program. Summer Search board and staff continued to strengthen the program and increase its effectiveness in reaching the students who most needed the support. Some wonderful examples of the results of this strengthening: In fiscal year 2009, we were able to work with more financially at-risk students. 84% of them qualified for a federal free or reduced lunch, up a dramatic eleven percentage points from 73% in fiscal year 2008 and 69% in fiscal year 2007. The number of Summer Search seniors matriculating to college, at 96% remained significantly above the national average for low income youth. Most Summer Search students—this year 92%—were first generation college students.

We also had tremendous support from our summer program partners. During what became a fiscally challenging year for many of our partners, they remained committed to Summer Search and to our students. Summer program partners provided over \$1.4 million in in-kind scholarships for our students to attend summer programs, an increase from \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2008.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our many friends – our donors, volunteers, summer program partners, referral partners, staff, board, and of course our students and alumni. This fiscal year completes my tenure as chair of the Board of Directors. I am honored to have served as chair for seven years, and have been humbled by the stories many of you have shared and the wonderful friendships I have made. I am incredibly proud of our students and alumni, and of Summer Search's tremendous track record of success, growth and stability. On behalf of our staff, board, and all the alumni and students for whom Summer Search has made an enormous difference, I thank you.

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Emery".

Dana Emery, Board Chair (2003-2009)