

Hello, my name is Laura Cervantes, Class of 2011, and a member of the Class of 2015 at Archbishop Mitty High School. I attended Resurrection for ten years, and looking back I can honestly say that that was one of the most formative experiences of my life. I don't think I would be where I am now, doing the things I love, were it not for my time here. At Resurrection, I found community. I found family and caring and compassion. The people you meet here will follow you for the rest of your life. Through every up and down in my time here, I always had the support of everyone I knew. And once you move on to a larger school, you really appreciate the people you found in the past. From here, I also took away a strong sense of educational preparedness. My honors courses freshman year were bearable because of the rigor of the math and science classes here. My accelerated English course freshman year was more than manageable. I felt ready to take on a harder more involved curriculum. Junior year has been a struggle, obviously, but the techniques I learned here have honestly helped me maintain myself as a good student. But apart from just being prepared, I find myself liking my classes, wanting to learn more. My desire to learn was fostered by the teachers and classes here. And I was able to take that spirit beyond the classroom. I love to write, and am a slam poet with an internship at YouthSpeaks, a local writing organization based in San Francisco. I also am involved with a new Journalism program called the "teen press pass" where we review local art events and performances for publication. Not only did I gain a love of learning, I learned the skills I would need to pursue the things I love.

Resurrection also gave me a love of service and a sense of empathy. Whether it was our visits to InnVision, or the annual Thanksgiving bag lunch making day, I was inspired by the people I saw here giving back. I took that spirit with me, and am the Vice President of the Mitty Advocacy Project, an on-campus group which serves to stand for the rights of the marginalized in our community. Recently, I went to DC with the group to lead a workshop on using media for advocacy and to lobby on bills pertaining to the rights and protection of the homeless. Something about working with the women at InnVision stuck with me, as that is what I think of when I'm up there lobbying to Diane Feinstein and Anna Eshoo. My interest in human rights spawns from the religion classes we took here, and the sense of reflection I felt every time we learned about those entrenched or suffering. It made me realize that this is our job to fix, and I strive to do so. Whether it be through Mitty's advocacy project, Raise Hope For Congo, or just by volunteering, this sense of service is one that I will continue to carry on with me.

But, I don't think I could have done any of these things were it not for the leadership skills I acquired here. In the classroom, there are always opportunities to engage, times to stand up and go past the norm. On the field and beyond, you can serve as a leader for people. I was a member of the student council at Resurrection, but it was my dynamic experience here as a whole that allows me to be a leader today. You really get to know people, when your class is a group of kids you spend so much time with. You learn how to interact, and thus, how to lead. I'm a varsity member of the speech and debate team at my school. We do a lot more leading and teaching than anything else. Learning how to represent others is a long process, but when you start that process in

elementary and middle school, it suddenly doesn't seem that long. I'm also a member of the Youth Advisory Council of San Jose, which in essence is just another leadership position, but on a larger scale. We work with people of all ages, and at Resurrection, I found myself doing the same.

I don't think I can stress enough just how prepared Res left me. I don't think there are enough words. There are too many people to thank, to many experiences I am grateful for. But I can guarantee you, that even in my junior year of high school, looking back isn't that hard. In fact, writing this was one of the best parts of my week. Remembering all that I have been through, remembering the people I have met here. I hope that you too feel as though Resurrection is the place to be. The place to make these memories and connections that will last you a lifetime.

**Laura Cervantes, Class of 2011**