

# Michael trinh

Education



Michael Trinh November 23, 2010 CRD 001 Felicity Lyons C. K. McClatchy High Sacramento's C. K. McClatchy High School (CKM) is distinctly known as one of the better public high schools in the region. Founded in 1937 and located in the high-quality Land Park neighborhood, CKM is particularly known for being one of the better academic as well as athletic high schools for parents to send their prosperous children. One of the great aspects of CKM is the connection that is built between everyone that is a part of the everyday activities of the school. Thus why this community is a solidarity community, as Jnanabrata Bhattacharyya defines in "Theorizing Community Development" it is a community where there is a shared identity via a shared type of culture/place and there is a code of conduct for people to address problems within the specific community. Everyone that is a part of CKM feels this sense of solidarity with one another as each student and faculty member is proud to be a member of this community because of the better reputation that it has compared to all the other schools within the district and the overall easy-going, feel good vibe that everyone that interacts within the high school has. I, as a student, could not ask for a better high school experience, as these four years were the best four years of my life. The rigorous education that was provided through CKM's prestigious Humanities and International Studies Program (HISP) program helped prepare me more for college than any other high school in the region could have possibly done. Moreover, being that I did not grow up in the residential district and had never been to school with the other students that attended CKM, it was a learning experience getting to meet new people that I had never known before; something that most other students that attended CKM did not have to deal with. Now that I am an alumnus, it is hard to interact the

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same way that I used to, though I still go to the football and occasional basketball games because of the connection that I still have to the high school and the memories that it gives me. I will always remember the advice that was given to me from my past teachers, my English teacher, Mr. Cosgrove, was like a second father as he gave me advice about life and kept me humble. CKM helped me prepare to step out into the real world, more so than I thought before attending and that's why its reputation holds true. CKM prides itself as being one of the most diverse high schools not just in the city of Sacramento, but of the entire nation as well. Being as Sacramento itself is one of the more diverse cities in the nation, this is not surprising. As of the 2009-2010 academic year and approximately 2, 000 students, the demographics broke down as follows: 28% Hispanic, 27% Asian, 27% White, 9% African American, and 9% other. All coming from a variety of different social classes, but mainly from upper middle class families as the surrounding Land Park neighborhood is an upper-middle class neighborhood. The concept of social capital as described by Robert Putnam is raised by this demographic as the students do not all share the same background and come from many different neighborhoods, so most students have little in common with each other. There is a strong bridging social capital between the students of CKM as the students, though they come from all these different backgrounds, are able to coexist with one another and act as if there is no difference between them, as if they are just like them in every way. Within the school, as brought upon before, there is an academic program known as the HISP program that the highly motivated academic students enroll into every year. Approximately one fourth of each graduating class is comprised of this prestigious program. As a four-year program,

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students take their history and English courses together with fellow program-mates, building the camaraderie with everyone within the program. By the time of graduation, nearly everyone in HISP knew each other, and everyone's friends were members of HISP. There was a sense of being better than everyone at the school because the academics were so much more rigorous and the expectations of the teachers were that much more heightened. Wellman would argue that this community would be a social network that is densely knit and tightly bounded because the members of HISP mainly interact with other HISP members and keep interactions within the program. The students may not share the same cultural class or ethnicity as that of fellow HISP students, but the one thing they all share in common is that they are members of HISP, which in itself separates them from all the other students at the school. Not surprisingly, the majority of students that were admitted to the better college institutions and universities graduated from the HISP program, providing another reason why parents would want to enroll their students into CKM. The HISP program does more than help students prepare for college and the rigors of college classes, it also provides a network of prosperous students to which fellow students can interact with. CKM has the cultural identity for the longest time as being the best public high school in the entire school district. This includes the before mentioned HISP program as well as the entire amounts of community service that all the students complete throughout the course of the four years at high school. CKM has always been looked at as the school that does well and is well respected by the public. That is, until the 2006-2007 school year in which CKM had three isolated gun incidents that tarnished its reputation as one of the better and safer schools in the district. One incident had an intruder

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shooting off a gun prior to class one day that led to a two- hour lockdown that was reported throughout the local media the entire day. The perception of CKM seemed to change overnight as parents enrolled their children into other high schools as they felt that CKM was no longer safe. Students from other schools in the district looked at CKM as a “ ghetto” school and looked down on it because of the one incident that they had heard about. It is still trying to recover from this debacle of events that occurred and though the reputation of CKM has been pretty much restored, there are still the pre-existing thoughts in parents’ minds that CKM is not safe which may take a lot more time for parents to get over, though nothing substantial has happened ever since. With the above mentioned, there are greater problems that test the reputation of CKM, and that is that of the budget cuts that affect the public schools of California. In an interview conducted with Judy Miles, a tenured math teacher who has been teaching at CKM for 26 years says that the budget cuts have significantly affected the academics that go on. The arts program that used to be prevalent at the school is all but gone, as the school can no longer support having an art program with the budget cuts. Thusly, there are very few and far between arts classes that are offered every year for all the students. Even with this reduction in arts classes, most classes require the students to pay a fee to assure that the materials that are needed for the class are provided. Moreover, this year came the threat that the current vice principals and counselors would all get pink slips because of the lack of any monetary funds available. However, the teachers union all made up for the counselors’ wages by taking \$95 out of their checks each month so that the counselors could remain doing the job that they are doing for the school. On top of this, Judy Miles has noted that class

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sizes have increased and are just about maxed out if not overloaded with students, which would assume that many teachers have been cut over the years as well. Tim Griffin, a prominent psychology/economics teacher faced the threat of being fired this past summer because of the budget cuts. Drama classes for students to perform in school plays used to take place during school time no longer follow that same pattern as drama is privately funded and is taught after school. The academic programs that used to be so prominent within the school have had to do many fund-raisers to assure that they could get the necessary equipment that they needed. Who knows where the budget crisis will take the public schools for the years to come, but for now it has been bad business for the school and student activities and has significantly changed the outlook of the school as a whole that could possibly ruin what is the best high school in the area. All in all, though the landscape of CKM is continually changing as time passes by and will continue to change, I will forever associate with this community. CKM has shaped me to become a better person and it has prepared me to become a college student. The connections that I have made I will forever cherish and remember because there is no better experience than that of CKM. The changing aspects of CKM will hopefully strengthen its reputation and make it better for future students so that they can have the same experience that me and many others have had. Works Cited Bhattacharyya, Jnanabrata. "Theorizing Community Development." *Journal of the Community Development Society* 34. 2 (2004): 5-29. Print. HISP. N. p., n. d. Web. 23 Nov. 2010. . Miles, Judy. Personal interview. 12 Nov. 2010. Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. Print. Wellman, Barry.

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