

SCHOOLS

QUICKTIPS

HOMEWORK HELP

With Queen Elizabeth II of England visiting the colonies last week, now might be a good time to brush up on the British monarchy. Elizabeth is the granddaughter

of King George V, who reigned during World War I. George's grandmother is Queen Victoria, who gave her name to an era. And Victoria is the granddaughter of King George III, who sat on the throne on July 4, 1776. If you're still not up to speed, check out the monarchy's home page: www.royal.gov.uk

Non-profit helps fulfill college dreams

BY LEE A. LITAS

It was the dead of winter, December 2005, when Lincolnshire resident Cliff Bregstone stopped to help the Adames, a Latino family stranded by a stalled car.

Bregstone, 68, a former printer, began a conversation with the family, learning that their eldest daughter Ailyn, 17, was an A-student who wanted to go to college but considered it an impossibility given her family's modest financial means.

Further inhibiting Ailyn's prospects was her lack of knowledge regarding the college application process. She was, after all, the first in her family to be in a position to attend college.

"Generally children who come from underprivileged backgrounds are basically not prepared for school," said Bregstone. "Their life experiences are certainly different than, say, what we're used to on the North Shore."

Turn of fate

The simple turn of fate helped launch College Bound Opportunities, a non-profit organization that provides qualified but economically-disadvantaged high school students with enrichment coaching and financial support.

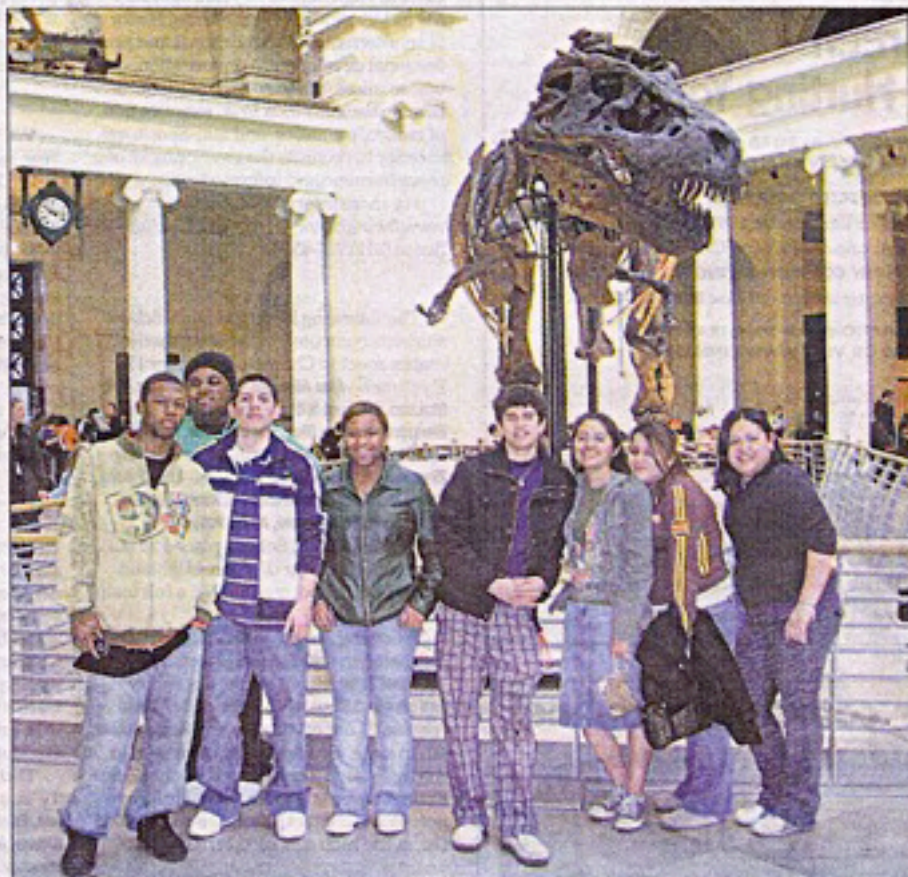
Within its first year, CBO has sent 10 students to major universities throughout the U.S., an endeavor that represents hundreds of thousands of dollars in combined counseling and financial assistance.

The organization's goal for its clients is college graduation, a successful career, all while engendering a strong sense of community.

"What we're trying to do is provide the foundation so the students will be successful not only in getting into college but also be successful in college and graduate," said Bregstone.

The groundwork for the new organization came about shortly after Bregstone's run in with the Adames. He took it upon himself to contact the only person he knew who might help; Marybeth Kravets, a college counselor for 28 years at DHS.

He chose the right person to call. In addition to her day job, Kravets had served as the president of both the Illinois Associ-



College Bound Opportunities students enjoy a field trip to the Field Museum. The non-profit organization provides enrichment coaching and financial support to economically disadvantaged students who demonstrate academic potential to succeed in college.

ation for College Admission Counseling, as well as the national association, whose mission is allowing students to realize their full educational potential through support of the work of counseling and enrollment professionals.

"In this capacity, I was essentially presiding over most of the deans and directors of colleges and universities, and most high school counselors throughout the country," said Kravets. Despite having initial ideas of college-based colleagues to contact, however, Kravets was constricted in what she could do.

The two also knew they were racing against time while universities were closing their admissions lists and the government was making its final decisions on aid.

But through coaching, contacts and personal financial assistance Kravets and Bregstone helped Ailyn successfully enroll at the University of Iowa

where she has just completed her first year.

"You get more when you give than when you receive," said Bregstone modestly. "I truly believe that. I am a very blessed guy. My kids went to college, I went to college. I never had to worry about where my next meal was coming from. It's time to give back."

As the backbone of the program, CBO assigns full-time coaches to each student who are responsible for getting together with the students at least once a month for cultural outings, inclusive of museums and symphonies, in addition to one-on-one mentorship.

"It's an inequity issue. We are exposing kids to things that they have not been exposed to before which leads to a well-rounded, successful college experience," said Kravets.

Prototype

Though currently representing only District 113 which cov-

ers Deerfield and Highland Park High Schools, the goal of CBO is to develop a prototype that could be taken by any school district, said Kravets.

"I'm always looking for ways to give back to the profession and to the kids," she said. "This is a wonderful way to do pro-bono work because these kids are going to go to college and come home to give back to the community themselves. What more could we ask?" she said.

For parents like Reina Quijada, 50, originally from El Salvador whose son Brian is currently being mentored by CBO, this has been a dream come true.

"I am so glad that these people are trying to help us, the Spanish people especially. I don't find the words to say thank you to everybody because it is so wonderful," said Quijada.

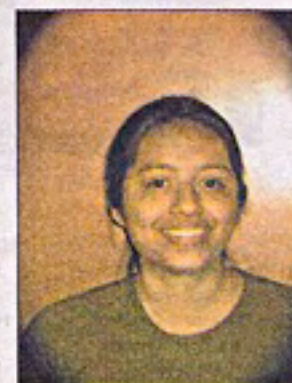
To become a CBO mentor or to find out about college opportunities go to: www.yourcbo.org.



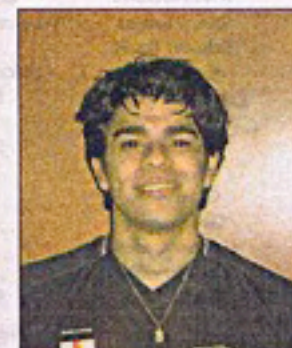
Anna Aguilar



Alisandra Castrejon



Maricela Najera



Brian Quijada