

AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL



2012

GRADUATING CLASS
ESSAYS



"For such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)

"The house of the righteous shall stand" (Proverbs 12:7)

Foreword

BY RUEL HAYMOND

*M*y feelings are tender as I anticipate this graduating class of American Heritage School and the end of my time with you. In saying goodbye to you “until we meet again,” I want to echo the simple and few words of Jacob 6:12, “*O be wise; what can I say more?*” To be wise is to become obedient to every command that comes from the mouth of the Lord, and this requires the ability to receive and obey personal revelation.

As we have emphasized in class, knowing how to receive direct guidance and help from the heavens, and avoiding the deception inherent in our five senses, will become increasingly more important. We live in a Photoshopped, virtual world where counterfeit is king and reality is relegated to illusion and regulated by various media and technologies. Learning to receive pure and untainted answers through the spirit of the Lord will become increasingly necessary.

May this poem, written for you, remind you of words of Jacob in the Book of Mormon when he stated: “*Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.*” (Jacob 2:17-19)

*Knowledge, of learning sought, of learning gained
Sounds of brass and cymbals, His permission not obtained.
For each person has a mission, a covenant long ago,
To waste and wear out life, obedience to show.
For what will facts and figures, truth and tale, in souls make?
If the Father's business, lips revere, yet hearts forsake?
We're born to feed His hungry, clothe His naked, to free
His children, His poor, starting with you and with me.
We are not to "grind" them, nor avoid or be seen of men
But to seek them out, lift them up, as equal, then
Shall we not see more clearly, beaming, meek in heart?
Shall our hope not be in Him, which hope to them impart?
Inequality is real and His poor live to remind,
That we are all beggars, and He, infinitely kind.
What manner of men ought we to be?
Humble, true, and pure, yea, even as He.
For He gives us the poor so Christ we understand
With Him, equal with them, we shall walk hand in hand.*

May the Lord bless you in your personal life missions.

—Ruel Haymond



Joseph Andersen



*A*lthough I was only able to attend American Heritage School for my senior year of high school, it has truly changed my life. I never would have thought that coming here would have such a great impact on me. I have made deep, lasting friendships; learned true, eternal principles; and received insightful, transforming revelation. My experiences here have dramatically changed my view of myself, my family, God, and the world, as well as my understanding of my respective role in each.

On my first day of school here, I was welcomed and befriended by many students here. These friendships have both deepened and increased throughout the year. I now count many of the students in my senior class among my best friends. I believe we share a common yet unique bond because of the principles we have learned and the experiences we have enjoyed and worked through together. There is so much unity and love created when people learn together, and feel the Spirit together, even among people of different backgrounds, cultures, languages, and experiences. I saw this same phenomenon in Mexico on our service-learning trip as I grew to love the people and culture there as we felt the Spirit, worked, played, learned, and served together. This experience gave me a better understanding of the world, of God's kingdom, and of my personal mission in life.

I feel that my teachers have often been inspired to teach what I have needed to know in order to overcome challenges, understand answers to deep questions, and endure difficulties in my life. They have taught me how to create and maintain a loving, joyful marriage and family even during the rapid disintegration of these eternal institutions in our society today. My teachers have taught me the principles



necessary to maintain liberty: agency, love, self-government, law, justice, and others. Most importantly, my teachers have motivated me through the Spirit to be a disciple of Christ, to seek revelation, and to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring others to the knowledge of the truth and the joy that comes through living the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

I love our core class theme scripture: “to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted” (Jacob 2:17-19). Through the things we have learned, this scripture has become a major part of my personal life mission. For me, Doctrine and Covenants 88:80 illustrates what the theme of this year has been for me – “That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you and the mission with which I have commissioned you” – a theme of preparation to do God’s will throughout my life. Part of my mission is to proclaim truth, maintain liberty, and promote faith, hope, and charity first in myself, then in my family, and, ultimately, in the world.

I will be attending Brigham Young University where I plan to study economics and music. After one year of college, I will serve a full-time mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, something I have been anticipating since childhood. After serving my mission, I plan to graduate from BYU, marry, and have a family. I have learned that our families must be the most important thing in our lives besides God. The family is a central part of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our eternal progression.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to come to this school. It has changed my life forever. When I first saw the school, I loved the virtues above each entrance to the building and still enjoy seeing them each day when I enter the school. The teachers I have had here have not just been teachers; they have been mentors, friends, and examples. I hope that I will never forget, but always use, the things that I have learned during this last year, always keeping Christ the center of my life.



Amy Bailey



It is often said that when you lose yourself in the work of the Lord, you conclude finding your true self. I sincerely believe that through my experience at American Heritage, I have truly found myself. American Heritage is not an average school, where the things that are taught are generally mere academics. In order to get the most out of a school like this, one truly has to engage him or herself and labor to gain their own education – in other words “lose” themselves in the teachings.

The things that I have learned at American Heritage go way beyond the subjects of History, English, Math, and P.E. Through my wonderful teacher Mrs. Brinton (my PE coach) I have gained a greater love, appreciation, and understanding of the Word of Wisdom and its importance. She taught me that in order to fulfill the will of the Lord and serve others, we must have a healthy body, spirit, and mind.

Mr. Hancock, my Yearbook/Journalism teacher, taught me many technical photography procedures; he also taught me principles that such as patience, friendliness, and having a great attitude when things go wrong. He has been a great example to me to many and others.

In Business Fundamentals, Mr. Knecht taught our class to be honest and to have integrity in all of our dealings, in business and in life. I felt that he sincerely cares for us has faith that we have the ability to succeed in whatever we do.

One of my very favorite classes I have ever taken in through my entire academic endeavors has been Family Science. Mr. Bohn is awesome! He taught me so much about family, and relationships in general. I have always felt that family and other relationships are important, but Mr. Bohn helped me realize that family relationships are the basis of a moral society, and that to have healthy family relationships both



mother and father have to be united in living exemplary lives for their children to follow.

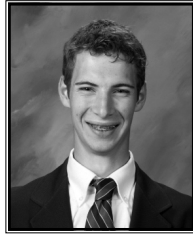
Although seminary is separate from the typical classes we take, I would regret not thanking Brother Hemming for everything he has done for all of the high school students at AHS, and for me personally. His willingness to serve the Lord and bring about his work has been such an anchor of faith in my testimony. I admire the fact that he is so passionate about bringing the gospel to everyone. I hope to use that example in my life to bring my brothers and sisters on this earth to knowledge that they have a Heavenly Father, who loves them dearly, and a Savior, Jesus Christ, who understands their lives and situations and who is compassionate to anyone who desires His peace.

Another teacher who I feel deeply indebted to is Mr. Haymond, my core teacher. My appreciation for Mr. Haymond is beyond words. He has taught me so many eternal principles that I hope to live by for the rest of my life. He has demonstrated to us the importance of becoming great husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers. He has taught us the importance of being aware of our surroundings and of "sniffing tyranny." He has instilled within me a desire to become a better person, to stand up for truth and righteousness, and to let my conscience be my constant aid. However, the most important thing that I have learned from Mr. Haymond is that we must turn our lives to the Lord and to become true Disciples of Christ.

To my senior class, I would encourage all of you to take the principles that we have obtained here and strive to fulfill our missions in this life as given to us from the Lord. I feel that because we have been so abundantly blessed with the knowledge we have obtained here, from our teachers and from each other, that it is our responsibility to help others taste of that same knowledge and joy. It would be selfish for us to keep it locked up in our hearts and to not share it with others. We must diligently strive to become lights in a world of increasing darkness. People will look up to us if we are constantly trying to live our lives in a Christ like way. Always remember to stand up for virtue, truth and righteousness. I love my senior class so much and I admire their examples and their efforts to follow Christ. I feel that we have a really strong bond and unity in our class. I consider my classmates as my brothers and sisters. I will never forget them.



Drew Bowen



I have been attending American Heritage School since fourth grade. Before that I was home-schooled. The reason why I choose to come at first was simple I wanted to go to school and make friends and learn just like any other fourth grader. Well, I got what I wanted. I made friends, and I learned more than I ever thought I would.

The learning was more difficult than I ever imagined, which makes sense, because fourth graders don't really go to school thinking of the difficulty that they will face in the following years of school. But the struggle for knowledge is what helped me obtain it. If it were not for this struggle than I would have never learned what I have.

I have learned of history, government, the Founding Fathers, English and so much more. In history I have learned that it is His story. That God guides history with his Providential Hand. I have learned that history will repeat itself if we make the same choices that have been made in the past. Of government, I have learned that it is "instituted of God for the benefit of man" but that we have a responsibility to be active in our government so that it benefits us. I have learned more of the wonderful blessing that I have been given to be able to live in a time and a country where I can participate in my government. I have learned of how blessed I am to live in a country that has been blessed with freedom. I have learned more of the proper role of government and how our Constitution is an inspired document, and it establishes the basic laws of Zion. I have learned of the principles that the Founding Fathers understood and strived to live. In English I have learned of the importance of communicating and have read amazing books. I have learned to love good books like A Tale of Two Cities that teach principles of love, faith, and hope.



Through all my learning I have had amazing teachers who have become my friends. They have taught me not only by sharing their knowledge but by living what they have taught. Their examples have shown bright. I have looked up to them through all these years and have seen qualities in each of them that I have strived to develop because those qualities are Christ-like. In striving to become a better person, the students here – who are my best friends – have helped me also through their examples and goodness.

American Heritage School has made me a different person. I believe that everything you experience in life will change you either for the better or for the worse. American Heritage has been an amazing experience. It has changed me for the better, and I feel that I am now ready to go through life with the knowledge I have gained and relationships with people who I will never forget.



Rachael Breaux



I first came to American Heritage School in fifth grade. Since attending, I have gained knowledge that will bless me throughout my life. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to attend American Heritage where I have had teachers and friends whom I look up to as examples of faith, love and courage. They have inspired me to become my best self, intellectually as well as spiritually. I am profoundly blessed to have received an education in a place where the Spirit resides. These have been some of the best years of my life and I will never forget them.

I love all the teachers I have had at American Heritage! I have learned many important lessons from them. In Mrs. Updike's seventh



grade class, I felt the joy that comes with hard work. She made learning fun, interesting, and motivating.

Mr. Gentile was my tenth grade teacher. He taught me the value of using original sources and how exciting it can be. It was in his class that my love of history blossomed! He taught me what it means to be courageous and steadfast. He inspired me to always stand for truth, even when you stand alone.

Mr. Haymond has also greatly blessed my life. He was my teacher first in eighth grade, and then in eleventh and twelfth grade. When I first met him on meet the teacher day, he talked about all the wonderful things we would be learning and reading. Mr. Haymond's passion for knowledge motivated and inspired me, helping to instill in me a true love for reading. Mr. Haymond has taught me the value of education and the importance of being a life-long learner.

There is no way I could list all the important things I have learned, but I will mention some of the most profound. I have a deep love and gratitude for the men and women who founded this nation. They were truly led by God and through their sacrifices I am able to enjoy my freedom today. I have come to understand that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are inspired documents. It is important that we study these documents and stand up and fight for them. We need to be able to "sniff tyranny" on any tainted breeze. I have learned that history repeats itself and that it is a continuous cycle. Unless we study and understand history from original sources we will repeat the mistakes of the past. Finally, I have learned to be a scholar. I have learned how to research, reason, relate and record. I have learned what it means to be self-governed. I have been taught to work hard.





Adam Bushman



Time... such a menace. Can there be a more lucrative villain than this? This enemy none can conquer, despite all the power and strength one may possess. All must succumb to its cold hand, its ever tightening grip. As we move throughout life, we look back at the time that has been stripped from our grasp, yet we look ahead to the time that seems forever poised in the future. Time is truly a priceless gift.

This gift becomes more real and valuable the further we progress through and experience life. It seems as though only one bat of an eye has separated my first and fourth years attending American Heritage School. At one moment I was an eighth grade student with all of high school before me and BAM, I awake to discover myself with one month left of this grand high school experience. Stepping back, I am tempted to believe I have been robbed of time, but then I realize I have been blessed by this time, and the future possesses more blessings yet to come!

While reflecting on the past, the time I had was well spent. Both my curricular endeavors as well as my after school activities were built upon hard work, learning, and fun. I have worked diligently these last few years to achieve the high grades, college acceptance letters, and excellence in sports. I have learned much in my writing, reasoning, problem solving, and spiritual development. All these areas have been developed through the teachers, students, and curriculum that are present at this wonderful school and will continue to increase as I study at Brigham Young University. I have enjoyed many special moments, performing in various plays, concerts, sporting events, and fundraisers for AHS.



I feel so privileged to have attended such a beautiful school. I have had to rely on others, as well as my own hard work, to participate in the wonderful gift of enrollment. Each year has been a blessing to me and a sacrifice for someone else. I have come to truly value my education as a result of so much generosity from others. It is yet another reason why I love and cherish the time I have been given at AHS. I have been given much and have had to sacrifice myself as a result to make this great gift worth it. Although this donation may seem like just a physical contribution, it has so much more value in a temporal, spiritual, and emotional sense. I have gained so much knowledge and experience from the sacrifices of others and myself.

Our time is so short. Though each second, minute, hour, and day are the same length as the previous, they escape through our fingers and fly farther from our memory. We must savor each moment; live each moment correctly because it will melt into the next, lost forever. But somehow I don't feel cheated by time. I feel grateful to everyone's most elusive enemy. Though these moments are in the past, my heart and mind are thankful for what I have been given and what is in the future. I will cherish these experiences and keep them close to my memory.

Time. Is he such a menace after all? The way in which we view this idea of time and its effect on us will shape our perspective of it, including its identity and relationship to us. We can look at it as a bandit, one who comes in the night to pilfer our dear time and with it, the experiences we had. Or, we can view it as a friend, who gives us the gift of a day and the memory of it, then grants unto us another day just like the first. It is our choice; however, I prefer the latter choice.

Time. What a blessing to be given 1 day, 24 hours, 1440 minutes, 86,400 seconds to enjoy, to experience, and to remember, then awake to this gift yet again! Even when time's brother, death, takes its toll, we awake to find another gift, a celestial gift, greater than time... eternity! We have so much to look forward to. Be grateful for the past, as I am for the time I have had at AHS, and be excited for the future, as I am, for what it holds. But wait, time's running out! Don't waste it! But don't fret, tomorrow will bring a new gift. Tomorrow will bring time.



Kelsey Carlson



I was ten years old when I first saw American Heritage School. I remember slowly walking through the beautiful hallway lined with pictures of my Savior. When I turned and looked out the window, I saw something that stole my breath; I saw the House of Lord shining against the charcoal night. As the warmth of the spirit filled me, an unquenchable hope to attend this amazing school was created. The summer before my tenth grade year, my dream was fulfilled when I was given the opportunity to attend this school. I distinctly recall my heart fluttering like a hummingbird, as I entered the front doors, on my first day. I worried that my teachers might not like me, that my classes might be difficult, and even that I might not make friends. Yet as I walked down the hall, still covered in depictions of Christ, and saw the holy temple through the same window that I had looked through that dark night many years ago, the spirit again filled my heart and I knew that I was meant to be here.

Since then the years have seemed to fly by so quickly. I am so excited (and somewhat nervous) to be graduating, attending Brigham Young University, and growing up in general. But I will never forget and always cherish the lessons and memories gained at this incomparable school. There are few places in the world where you can submerge yourself in learning and have such an uplifting environment. What an incredible opportunity I have had of learning of math, science, and history through the Holy Spirit. I have gained indispensable knowledge from the 4-ring method, history of our God given country, the many word studies, and the seven principles that I will have for-



ever etched in my mind. I have learned that contrary to my old belief that it is the school's responsibility to educate the student, I now realize, that it is my responsibility to own my education so that it follows the mission that God has for me. I am infinitely grateful to my teachers, administrators and mentors who have prepared me not only for the many intellectual battles ahead but have helped me grow into the young woman I am today.

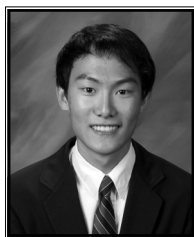
Although my American Heritage experience has been filled with hard work, I have always found time to have fun. Be it a luncheon, weekend activity, class game outside (rain or shine), dance, or just finding any excuse to bring food there never seems to be a dull moment. I can never express enough gratitude to my sweet classmates that I have had the honor of befriending. I will never forget the examples, kindness, service, and love that I have been shown to me throughout my years at this school. I have made life-long friends that will always be close to my heart.

As I look back on my journey so far it isn't hard to see that my experiences at this school have changed my life. Because of this experience I have grown in so many areas. Most importantly I have gained a greater testimony of the Lord and his infinite love for me. I want to thank the amazing administration, teachers, custodians, volunteers, donors, students, and my family who have sacrificed both time and effort for others. I cannot thank enough all the people that have made my experience possible. As I turn a new chapter in my life, I know that fears and trials will present themselves, but I will use the foundation I have built and remember the words of the Lord, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid ... for the Lord thy God ... will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," (Deuteronomy 31:6) and all will be well. I am happy that my dream of coming to this wonderful school was fulfilled.





JongSu Choi



T

wo years ago when Meridian School, the school I was attending, was bankrupted, I was encouraged to come to American Heritage School. The first impression of American Heritage School that I had while I was visiting for the entrance test was its huge and beautiful building and all the statues and paintings from America's founding period. The atmosphere it brought was really different. It was nothing like any of secular schools I have attended. The first day of school at American Heritage was rather scary for me. I knew that everything that was being taught at school was based on the LDS principles, and I have attended church and seminary ever since I got here 4 years ago (so I would say I was pretty familiar with the church). Everything had the gospel involved one way or another. Every subject, even science and math, involved the gospel.

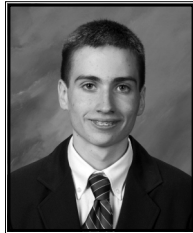
Comparing the history classes I have taken, which mainly consist of only memorizing dates and names of persons, history classes at American Heritage School were more focused on learning the principles behind the incidents, and relating these principles to our lives and to current events. As time went on and I got to know the teachers, I realized how caring they are and how important the principles are that they teach. The teachers are concerned not only about the lessons and grades, but also about my personal struggles in life. They really want us to succeed and be a good influence in the world. Once Mr. Haymond said, "You are probably smart enough to make a living later on in your life, but I am here to teach you how to live — what life is really about." This really touched me. I never realized how important it is to relate the gospel in my life. It was like finding the missing puzzles in my life that I was looking for ever since I was young.



I knew sins like homosexuality and adultery were wrong, but I did not know why. All the principles that I learned completed all my missing “puzzles.” The truth is the gospel really affects everything and everyone. American Heritage School has helped me to accept the gospel and taught a lot of life lessons that I am never going to forget. This school has been truly a blessing in my life. I have made a lot of great friends who have helped me and will help me as I go to college. I have had many special experiences that I wouldn’t have had like playing soccer and being in choir. The blessings the school has brought me are enormous, and I am really thankful for it.



Aaron Cowley



*M*y experience at American Heritage School was interesting not only in the fact that it was my first year here, but also my last, as I am graduating this year. In the little time I had here however, I learned a lot that I can use in my daily life. I haven’t been able to spend as much time here as most everyone else has, but this year has made a huge difference in my life.

I did not want to attend American Heritage at first. I was happy at American Fork High School, and I did not want to change schools. But I was surprised to be given a new perspective on life and secular matters that I have never been given before. I have met people from many different countries, different walks of life and those with different interests and hobbies. Because I have formed enjoyable friendships, I even had the courage to take a wonderful date to the

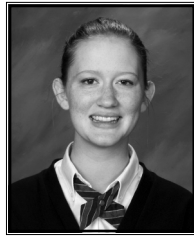


formal dance, something I never expected I could do.

The highlight of the year was being in Mr. Haymond's class. I learned how I can best make a difference in this world and "sniff tyranny," as he often worded it. We read *Anna Karenina*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *King Lear*, and found many analogies in these works relating to subjects ranging from personal morality to how to save a nation. I learned how I can do my part to help clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and liberate the captive. I am thankful that I was able to spend my final year of school here. The progress I have made and the wisdom I have gained in this one year will bless me the rest of my life.



Kelsey Crawford



I was twelve years old and about to start the eighth grade when my parents announced that my Dad had gotten a new job and that we would be moving across the country, from Missouri to Utah. I was crushed. At the time I was attending a small Christian private school and preparing to go to high school with all of my friends. But we moved, despite my pleas, and within a year my parents had enrolled me in the ninth grade at American Heritage School.

Being somewhat shy and antisocial, I was more than a little nervous at the thought of attending a school that seemingly dwarfed the only other school I had ever attended: a non-denominational Protestant school housed in an old grocery store. But when I walked through the front doors for the first time, when I saw the smiling faces and felt the Spirit, I thought that maybe (just maybe) I would be okay.



Contrary to my initial beliefs, I did not perish from sorrow or loneliness. Believe it or not, I actually came to enjoy my time in Utah and at American Heritage School. I met some of my very best friends that first year, and got over much of my shyness. For the first time I really became interested in American government and politics. Over the next few years I grew more confident in my writing abilities, and came out of my shell in programs like drama and debate. I have met people and had experiences that I know I could only have had here.

I will be eternally grateful for my time at American Heritage. My life has been blessed in countless ways because of my decision to attend. I have had teachers that have believed in and inspired me. I have made friends that I have learned from and had fun with. I have studied topics and read books that have made me think. I have studied, I have learned, I have lived, I have grown. Most importantly, I have felt the Spirit and seen the hand of the Lord more prominently in my life.

To my class, both those who are graduating with me and to those who have come and gone over the past few years, thank you. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you for making me smile. Thank you for the wonderful times we've had, and for being a support during the not-so-wonderful times. You are amazing and I will miss all of you immensely.





Whitney DeSpain



I have been at American Heritage School since sixth grade. I have grown so much in the time I have been here.

I remember my first year with Mrs. Geslison. I did not know anybody in the other class, or the whole school, only the people in my class. Since then, I got to know more people. I have gained many good friends, and even though some have left, I still keep in touch with them.

And while friends are important, I have also grown academically. I really cannot think of a subject that I do not enjoy, or did not, enjoy. With help from loving and caring teachers, I have learned so much in many subjects. They have helped my love of learning grow. The teachers are really so great.

But what I consider most important is what I have learned about myself. I have learned about who I am, and who I want to become. I have come to a deeper understanding of myself, and that is awesome.

I love all that this school has done for me, and I hope others can gain what I have gained from here. The school and I have grown side-by-side, and both of us will continue to grow. What I have discovered and learned here will always be with me, in the fleshy table of my heart.



Lauren Hall



L first started attending American Heritage in tenth grade. I was a little worried at first to attend a Mormon school; I was expecting a school full of “Molly Mormons” that get appalled at the smallest things and math teachers that bear their testimonies after every lesson. But I was happy to see that everyone in my class was normal; I use that term very loosely because most of them are just as high-energy as I am, including my core teachers Mr. Gentile and Mr. Haymond.

I have had so many wonderful experiences at this school like last year in Mrs. Tolman’s math class. I never loved math as much as I did that year. Mrs. Tolman is an amazing teacher, but to understand the concepts better and make the math problems more interesting my math buddy, Nichole Bushman, and I would turn the word problems into murder investigations, much to the horror of Mrs. Tolman. I also loved having chemistry with Mrs. Logan and how we spent time together planning and decorating dances.

This year has also been full of amazing memories like having senior lunches every month of food from different countries (thank you, Mumzie, and all the other parents who participated).

Going to American Heritage for three years has been a great blessing! I have made so many amazing friends here who have changed my life for the better and have created memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life.



Karina Hansen



*I*f there truly is a perfect way to teach the rising generation, American Heritage has found it, or has come very close to it. My experience at American Heritage has made this one of the best years, if not THE BEST year, of my youth. My experience at this school has helped me broaden my vision of not only what I am capable of, but it has deepened my understanding of my mission here on this earth. This school has also given me the tools necessary for me to fulfill that purpose and mission. Even though I was only able to enjoy one year at AHS, I will always be grateful for the one year I had. I have often pondered why I and twenty-three other seniors were chosen from the billions of the Lord's children to be at American Heritage at this time, and of course I still do not completely understand the reason, but I know how greatly I needed the individuals and the lessons I have learned through my experience here. Surely, the infinite wisdom of the Lord is incredible not only in guiding my life but in the workings of His divine plan.

I remember one of my first experiences I had with American Heritage. My family and I flew from Kansas in November of 2010 to see my sister perform with the Lyceum orchestra in "The Price of Freedom" concert honoring American veterans. I cannot recall ever having witnessed or experienced something so powerful and moving; I came away in great awe and pondered about attending American Heritage myself one day. I did not realize then how greatly I needed the teachers, the students, the history and English lessons taught with the Spirit, and understanding the Seven Principles of Good Christian Government. I decided to fast and pray to know if I should come to American Heritage, and the spirit whispered to me as I sat on a pew in a Kansas chapel building that perhaps wearing uniforms might not



be so awful. Looking back, I now recognize the incredible hand of the Lord in leading me to this school and His infinite wisdom and love for me as His daughter. I could not have imagined then how life-changing and spectacular only a few short months in a new school and a completely different state could be.

Within my first week of attending American Heritage School, I knew it was very different from anything I had ever before experienced. My love for the school deepened as I came to know and appreciate all of the individuals that give so much to American Heritage. I immediately noticed how the unique design and interior of the building fostered a noble atmosphere and added something special to the learning, the meaningful words inscribed on its outer walls, and the pictures of Abraham Lincoln, the Founding Fathers and prophets decorating the walls. I loved seeing the temple every day through the windows as I walked through the hallways. This eternal symbol further testified to me of the divine mission and work being done at this school. It was a frequent reminder to me of the eternal goals I have made and my purpose in obtaining education.

I cannot say enough about the students I have befriended this year. I have learned so much from each of them. They continually impress me with their capacity to love and reach out to others. I have gained great insights and wisdom from the thoughts and testimonies they have shared during class and outside of school. There is so much love and goodness amongst them. We learn together, we pray together, we sing together, we cry together, we play together, and we laugh together. I love them like they are my family, and I am certain more than a few tears will be shed at the close of our journey together this year.

In addition to my amazing friends, my heart is filled with gratitude when I think of the remarkable qualities and nobleness of the teachers and administrators at American Heritage. They have been prepared in many ways for this purpose. They are teaching and refining the Lord's children into virtuous men and women that will one day leave their classrooms and go forward with hope and faith into the world. Having been instructed by them myself, I feel I am so much better prepared to fulfill my mission God has sent me here to do. I am humbled when I ponder the sacrifices they are making in order to teach and work at American Heritage School. Most of them could have



more prestigious jobs, a larger salary, and spend more time at home with their children. But they choose to be here because they love us and see our potential. How remarkable and wonderful these individuals are to me!

The success of this incredible school comes from more than having great teachers and administrators. It is hard not to recognize and be grateful for all of the people, including the founders, who have donated their time and resources to American Heritage School. These gifts of love have not been wasted. I believe they will one day experience a joy comparable to the joy Alma described that a person will feel from converting a soul to the gospel. For they have made it possible for individuals, precious sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father, to become educated and strengthened by the spirit and power of God. They have helped to nurture and prepare the students of AHS with the skills, knowledge, and strength we must have in order to endure to the end in this time of great confusion and increasing powers of darkness. Their gift has not merely educated a few individuals, but rather strengthened a nation, and innumerable families and individuals because of the conviction distilled within the hearts of the graduates who will continue to move forward the cause of Christ in His Story long after our enrollment here has concluded.

On top of everything else, I came to understand how freedom, the laws inherent in God's kingdom, and the work of the Lord all interconnect. History finally seemed to come alive to me and I felt awed at comprehending its purpose of helping us come closer to Christ. I have come to more deeply understand how essential it is for us to follow the commandments God has given us and how breaking these results in varying degrees of misery and destruction. I have felt a greater urgency in acquiring all the knowledge I can in order to help protect the freedoms of this nation from being swept in the aggregate interests of passionate minorities and others who wish to usurp all of the sacred freedoms we enjoy. I have come to appreciate how divinely inspired the Constitution of the United States is and how we must befriend it in order to truly protect it. It is surely difficult to put a price on freedom, but there is no price that can ever be put on true education. I honestly feel like the luckiest girl to be able to come to American Heritage! I am filled with gratitude to my God who has blessed me so richly, and for everyone who has been a part of my experience.



Chelsea Heaton



I began at American Heritage School in eighth grade; this was the beginning of an amazing journey and a beginning of amazing learning experiences that will help me throughout my life.

When I first came here from a public school setting, I was amazed at the differences and filled with so much happiness to be able to come here. This school has blessed me so much. It has given me experiences that I know are preparing me for the future and giving me the tools I need to live a good life. The experiences here have strengthened my faith and hope in God and Jesus Christ and taught me more about their characters. The teachers here have been wonderful and patient, and I will always be grateful for their help when I have really needed it. As I continue on in my future, I will never forget the friends I have made here, the love I have felt here, and all that I have learned here. It has truly been a foundation I needed, to build my spiritual and academic strengths. My testimony has grown greatly by coming here, and I feel attending AHS has prepared me for leadership and service in church and the community.

After graduation I plan on going to Utah State University and studying child development and early childhood or elementary education. I know God will be my strength and will guide my path as I progress into my wonderful future.





Hayley Hei Ting Lee



When I look back into what I have learned, I discover that I have learned a lot in this fantastic school. It is amazing to realize that I have been changed a lot in a good way. It is my pleasure to go to this school, and I love to go to school every day. Time goes by fast, it is incredible to ponder about what we have learned after each class. It sticks in your head for the rest of the day.

I appreciate what the teachers teach us. They are following the Spirit to teach for our benefit. It is a great blessing going to this school. I love how the atmosphere in the every class feels just how it is in seminary. I feel the spirit so strong and testify that the spirit is the one to inspire Mr. Haymond to help us look at events in different perspectives. He is guiding us to become better people and helps us to exercise our ability to realize there is something going wrong in our society and how we can prepare to deal with choices that government or people made.

The most significant about this school is that every student in this school loves everyone around them, and they are open to make new friends. This circumstance gives me a chance to magnify my charity for others by serving others. I know in my heart that serving is important in this school. Serving may not be a big thing, but a lot of little things: stewardship minute, making food for a Physics party, praying for a classmate who needs special blessings, etc. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said the following about service:

"I hope that we welcome and love all of God's children, including those who might dress, look, speak, or just do things differently. It is not good to make others feel as though they are deficient. Let us lift those around us. Let us extend a welcoming hand. Let us bestow upon our brothers and sisters



in the Church a special measure of humanity, compassion, and charity so that they feel, at long last, they have finally found home."

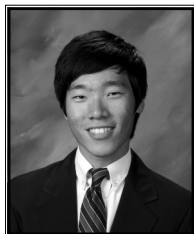
American Heritage School is a place for me to share my light of charity and my testimony in class and in school and to be an example for the others. By exercising faith in God, and by pondering the atonement of our Savior, I know that I have been taught a lot this year that I cannot learn in any of the schools in my home country. It draws me closer to God, and I feel my Savior's love more. My testimony has been strengthened in this school. I think every senior would agree on that and is really grateful for going to this school this year. My love is becoming gentler as I get closer and closer to Christ. I pray that everyone who is going to this school will feel the same thing that I felt.

"But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (D&C 9:8) I know in my heart that every day when I go to class, I would get to learn something new from my class. It could be a discussion during class, or another method to do math, or how to relate science to our life. There is just some feeling in my heart to let me know that I am gaining my knowledge, and hopefully one day I will magnify my wisdom based on what I have learned today. Also it is so wonderful that I can learn by the teachers' experiences. Their light is guiding me to choose to do what is right, allowing me to absorb the things I learned and let my light shine brighter. Everything from them is a great treasure; they are open-minded teachers. I appreciate everything they sacrifice for the classes. Preparing lessons is not easy, but they pray for the Spirit to be with them and help the students learn what they should learn.

I have little time left for me to study in American Heritage School, but I will always remember the laughter and memories of our Senior class. I remember I was smiling when I first got to this school and felt something special. I want to smile when I go out to face society because I understand what is so special and touched me so deeply about American Heritage School.



Ho Seok Lee



Since tenth grade, I attended American Heritage School. AHS is my first school in America. I cannot say anything about the other schools, but I know that American Heritage School is a wonderful school. I am sad to leave this wonderful school. When I came to this school to attend AHS, they did not have the ability to issue I-20 documents for international students. I thought I would not be able to attend this school. However, my aunt asked them again. I am still thankful to Mr. Anderson who gave me a chance to attend AHS. Sometimes, I think about what would have happened if Mr. Anderson had rejected me and not allowed me to attend this school. I might have gone another school, and I might be having a hard time.

I was a Christian because my mom is a Christian. My mom forced me to go to church. I never heard Mormonism before I came to Utah. Even after I came to Utah, I did not know what it is exactly. In Korea, I did not care about God. I was just busy living my life, but now I believe God exists, and He will be with me. I am so grateful for small blessings of God. I was so lucky that I came to Utah and attended American Heritage School. I think He gave me chances to learn more about God. Moreover, I took Seminary class for three years. It was so hard to understand in English. It is still hard for me, but it is getting better. Through this school, I learned about God, and was baptized. That day was my best day. I am so thankful to everyone who came to watch the baptism, and who prayed for me also.

I will miss my awesome friends who always encouraged, and made me laugh. I will miss AHS patriots. I will remember Doctrine and Covenants 4:6 forever. Even though, I could not join soccer team

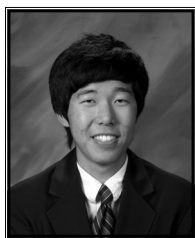


this year because of work, I am a one of the Patriots, and I will always be.

Also, I will miss teachers who treat us as their friends. Especially, Mr. Gentile and Mr. Haymond – my favorite teachers. Mr. Gentile helped me a lot at first. It was so helpful that he could speak Korean, and he is amazing soccer coach. Mr. Haymond helped me to study. He always make us to laugh. They are adorable teachers. I met so many good people through this school. I cannot imagine how my life would be if I did not meet them. My life would be very different.



Woo Seok Lee



I have attended American Heritage School since I was in tenth grade. I still remember when I came to this school for the first time. In fact, I was kind of scared of attending this school at that time because I was not good at English, and I was not sure whether I could make American friends or not. But my worry cleared as I began attending the school. Everyone in this school was very kind and friendly to my brother and me. Especially, I was so thankful to Drew Bowen and David Pack who were my first American friends. When we did not have any friends, they just came to Hoseok and me to be friends. It was also very nice that they really loved playing soccer, so we used to play soccer a lot.

I was so glad that my first core teacher of this school was Mr. Gentile who served his mission in Korea and could speak Korean. I was not good at English at that time, so I had a hard time understanding every class. And American Heritage School was based on the Book

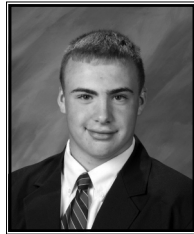


of Mormon. I had never heard of the Book of Mormon or Mormonism before I came here, so it was also difficult to understand the Seminary class. Mr. Gentile recognized my English problem, and he tried to teach me in Korean whenever I did not understand the lesson well. He also taught me about the Book of Mormon to help me understand it after school. I could not have been here if Mr. Gentile did not give me his wonderful help. I am going to remember forever what he did for me.

As I mentioned, I never heard of the Book of Mormon when I was in Korea. It was kind of awkward for me, at first, having prayer before the class started because I never did that in a Korean school. It was also difficult for me taking Seminary class because I knew nothing about the Book of Mormon. Everyone in the school was very kind and friendly to me, and I learned many valuable lessons from the Book of Mormon. I realized that the Book of Mormon is true, so I decided to get baptized this year, as I was taking seminary class. I was really glad that Mr. Gentile, whom I admire, baptized me. I felt like I was reborn after I got baptized.



Dallen Lofgreen



*A*s I considered what I could write for this essay, I found my mind wandering to why I attended American Heritage School. I came to American Heritage in seventh grade, part way through the first term. The main reason for my transfer was that my parents believed that a change of scenery would help me with my attitude toward school. I was not doing well, so they transferred me as a matter of last resort. Because I saw it as my parent's choice, I did not



take advantage of the wonderful opportunities found here. I barely made it through seventh grade, and I “flunked” out of eighth grade, forcing my transfer back to public school for ninth grade. It was sometime during that year that something clicked. I realized how badly I wanted to go back to American Heritage. I found myself missing my friends, the reverent atmosphere, and the small size. I was tired of being “959338” to the school. I did not enjoy the “cookie-cutter” education I received. I decided to come back – not an easy thing. Eventually, I made the cut and was allowed back. This time around I noticed what I had missed. I came to appreciate the blessings this school offers. I still struggled with the poor study habits created in previous years, but, with help, I overcame most of my trials and have done well since.

One of the greatest blessings I have come to appreciate at this school is the Spirit here. It is hard for me to articulate what exactly I feel, but I know there is a certain clarity the Spirit brings. I have noticed that I remember and understand the principles behind the lessons more than the dates, which has allowed me to apply the lessons to my life easier. I am neither articulate nor eloquent so this is a difficult point to get across.

Another blessing I have recognized is the small size of the classes and the caring of the teachers. I have noticed that I learn better when I am not one of forty in a class. When I am one of maybe twenty, I pay more attention and I tend to enjoy the class more. I also get more out of a class when I know the teacher loves the subject (and teaching in general). A teacher like Mr. Gentile makes his subjects more enjoyable. I know he cares about me and about the subject he teaches, which, when you’ve been a number for a year, means a lot.

In closing, I just want to express my appreciation to my family, my teachers, and my friends for supporting me as I have made my way through this phase in my life. I don’t know what lies ahead, but I know that this school has helped give me the foundation to make it through the rest of my life.



Lacey Monson



I have been at American Heritage a long time and have loved my experience. I have seen teachers, students, principals and even buildings come and go. I remember the groundbreaking ceremony of the American Fork campus. I remember the stained glass window I would walk under every morning at the old building. I remember when Mr. Hunsaker taught music. I remember when we put on the eighth grade play for the first time, Merchant of Venice (I was in first grade). I remember making new friends every year, and seeing other friends go different ways. I remember first learning how to do a word study in Mrs. Updike's seventh grade class. I remember crying in ninth grade when a student's brother passed away. I remember laughing, singing, crying, studying, and growing at American Heritage. I will remember American Heritage School for the rest of my life because it has helped me become the person I am today.

It would be easy to say that AHS is the best school in the world and that I would have failed anywhere else, but that is not true. There are other schools who strive to give students a strong foundation, where students learn and are prepared for the next step in their lives. There are other places where truth exists and people succeed. I believe that with Christ as my foundation and my supportive family I would have succeeded if I had been in a different environment. However, American Heritage has been the perfect school for me to develop myself in ways I wouldn't have elsewhere. There is a spirit of unity and love amongst the teachers and students that is difficult to build in different school environments.

I went to a public Jr. High School in ninth grade for a brief period of time and while there, I discovered I yearned for the indi-



vidualized education at American Heritage. Most teachers meant to help students with their education and gave the personal attention to students when they could, but there were so many students and such pressure on the teachers that it was impossible for every student to be important. I returned to American Heritage School and returned to the unified and one-on-one environment American Heritage has to offer.

No one is perfect, including myself, and that is something to keep in mind. There have been things at American Heritage that I have not agreed with, but the experiences American Heritage School has to offer outweigh any dislikes I may have. The school carried a mission and spirit that have benefitted in me in ways not possible elsewhere. I have been truly blessed to attend this beautiful school! American Heritage has helped me shape my life and behaviors in a way that will help me live my life and fulfill my purpose in a way that is pleasing to God.

Keegan McGhie



*W*alking through the doors of American Heritage School for the very first time nearly three years ago, I did not know exactly what to expect. Thoughts were swirling around in my head about how my experience at American Heritage was going to be, and if I had made the right choice by our decision to purchase another home and move 500 miles just for me to go to school here.

Before coming to American Heritage School in my Tenth Grade year, I had lived in Reno, Nevada all my life. I had been homeschooled until eighth grade when I really wanted to take the next step in my



education and go to a private school, where I could be challenged even more and create friendships with others my age. Going to school was not at all what I expected and wanted it to be. I soon learned about all the bullying, sensuality, swearing, and gossiping that school really had to offer. Even though I was at one of the best schools in Reno, I found that even private schools could not offer me a “drama” free education. I was the only member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a school of over five-hundred students, and help others understand why I did not have a steady girlfriend, why I would not swear or use foul language, and who I was as an individual – a child of God, rather than a test score, GPA, or student ID number.

My family soon began entertaining the idea of moving to another state, in order for me to receive the education I craved. Eventually, through continued research, we found American Heritage School. It seemed almost like a dream come true. Walking the grounds, through the doors and classrooms was a spiritual experience for my family and me. I did not know or even meet anyone from my future class, nor did I know who the teacher would be, and yet that did not bother me. I was at peace with my decision to come to American Heritage School, and I knew I was going to put my life in the hands of the Lord.

All that American Heritage has meant to me over the last three years of my enrollment can scarcely be put into words. The years I have spent at this school have been the best of my life, and I do not regret one minute. Through the happy and sad times, through good and bad, all the experiences throughout my years at AHS have helped me grow into the person I am today. All of my instructors in classes from Art to Calculus have helped me grow in ways that I could not have otherwise at any other institution. I attribute much of my learning and growth to the amazing instructors who are present at this school. These people really do, out of the kindness of their hearts, help us learn and grow without receiving many of the perks of normal teaching positions in schools other than American Heritage. The instructors really care about individual students and their educational progress, which can be found at many other schools across the United States; however, the “American Heritage” difference is that they care about your personal and spiritual progression in addition.



I would like to publically thank Mr. Haymond for all that he has done for me over the last two years that I have had him as my instructor. I have learned so much of truth and error throughout his classes, and have become more aware of my current surroundings. Not only has he given me the tools to make sure that I am more informed, he has given me the ability to change my surroundings and make the world a better place through education and service. Thank you, Mr. Haymond, for your countless hours of putting up with my sometimes ridiculous comments, and for helping me realize my calling in life.

The administrators at American Heritage School have been, first and foremost, my greatest mentors during my years at this school, but also have been some of my greatest friends. While some may see the “admin,” as we so lovingly refer to them, as scary or unapproachable, the Administration has been nothing but kind, loving, and Christ-like to me in all situations. Ms. Jacob, Mr. Beckwith, Mr. Anderson, and the entire administrative team truly do love each and every student who walks through the doors of the school, and succeed at remembering every student, their aspirations and goals, and their personalities. Each has their own way of showing their love towards the students, and all succeed at making sure that love is felt by all who are receptive. If I have anything to share with the future graduating students of American Heritage, it would be that the Administration is completely approachable. I have had several meetings with various Administrators every week and had it not been for my office in student government, I would not have fully realized the love and understanding they truly do have for us, as students. Do not make the same mistake I did, and let my situation define the relationship that I had with the Administration. Take advantage of expressing your opinion with them and your student body representatives. They are there for you to achieve your goals, and to make the changes you would like to see happen.

I hope all have learned at least one thing from this essay, and that is to not let others define how you are going to live your life and express yourself. We all have and will experience different tasks and trials throughout our lives, but one solution remains universal. The Lord, in His infinite mercy, has given us many mediums of communication with Him and ways to change, repent, and become more like Him. I challenge us all to make sure we are doing what the Lord would



have us do with our lives. If there are others around you not living up to the standards you know to be true, stand up and be a pillar of righteousness in a sea of darkness. Do not lose hope. Although it may seem as if you are the only one doing what is right (keeping the commandments, attending the temple, giving service, and loving everyone around you), you are not ever alone. I often felt, while in Reno, that I was the only one in my age group who was trying to keep the commandments. It was extremely hard to live day by day while being taunted for doing what is right, even by those who you think never would taunt you. However, it was not until I went to the Lord broken, hopeless, with nowhere else to turn, and turned my life to him, that I began to be my own person again, and not feel like I was a byproduct of my surroundings. I began to feel strong in a den of lions. I began feeling safe to be myself and whom the Lord wanted me to be, and not what others and the world expected of me. I became the happiest that I have ever been in my life, and you can too if you humble yourself before the Lord and cast your burdens upon Him. Let's face it – we live in a world of social turmoil, where it is becoming increasingly less popular to be a practicing member of the Church. It is often hard to remain strong, and remember your divine purpose. But I know if you keep your parents and the Lord as strong figures in your life, you will find strength to go forward with faith, and change the world.

You don't have to run the show to be able to feel important, or make a difference in life. Life is a gift given to us by our loving Heavenly Father, and we should take advantage of that gift to do all that we can in this life. Making a difference does not have to be done by student body presidents, officers, administrators, or even national dignitaries. Usually the biggest difference can be made by our little day-by-day choices and actions. We don't have to create world peace, design the Eiffel Tower, or paint the Mona Lisa to be considered a contributor or even successful in life. Success can only be defined by you. Dedicate your life to serving those around you, and you will find the greatest joy possible in life, and you will truly find yourself. I challenge everyone to not be products of their surroundings. Stand up for what you believe in, make a difference, and enjoy life. I love you all, and wish you the best of luck finding your callings in life, and experiencing the many things that the Lord has in store for you.



Ryan Neuhaus



Coming to American Heritage School has been a “pre-college” experience for me. I moved out here alone at the beginning of the second semester to attend American Heritage and graduate. I am grateful to the Knechts who offered their home as a home for me during this time. They have been a great example in my life and I have learned much from them, and I have grown to love each of their children as though they were my own brother and sister.

This has been the fourth high-school I have attended so far. All of which have taught me many important things about my life and the reason the gospel is the way it is. In Brentwood, Tennessee being Mormon is not easy. Persecution is great and living the standards can be hard as a youth. I have had many friends fall to temptations there and I am blessed and grateful to say that because of my parents’ teachings and the gospel, which I know is true, I was able to stay strong and be worthy to attend BYU-Provo this fall.

Moving here was a unique experience. It was frightening, exciting, and a blessing in itself. Leaving a home where love is a strong feeling often felt was difficult. Being the oldest of soon to be ten children, I felt as though leaving them would cause my younger siblings to forget who I was. This was not the case, however, as I feel even closer to them now than I did when I left. Being apart from my family has caused me to appreciate the little things in life they did each and every day. I miss going everyday to the YMCA with my brother Brad to practice basketball so that he can one day play for BYU, and then going home to see my sister Emily growing up to be a mature daughter of God by helping my mom in the kitchen or helping one of the younger siblings. I miss helping my brother Andrew build Lego sets of anything from



Star Wars to Cars and watching my sisters Natalie and Laura dancing and playing with each other, constantly laughing and smiling. I miss laughing with and at Preston and Nathan as they turn on the iPod to dance to "Dynamite," I was teaching them to play baseball or basketball. I miss watching as my brother Mark tries to constantly keep up us as we run around the house resulting in my mom saying something along the lines of "He is growing up too fast." I cannot wait to find out what the next little sibling will be. Whether a boy or girl, I know that they will be welcome into our home and feel the love that we all share.

Dad, I want you to know that you are my hero. As I am writing this now I have tears falling from my face as I reflect upon all of the memories that I have of us as a family. I want to become a father like you, and someday I hope to become a husband like you. The love you show to Mom and your children is Christ-like and undeniably felt by those all around you. You are a leader, a worthy priesthood holder, and a disciple of Christ. Through your example of being a worthy priesthood holder and a great father, I have grown in the church and learned to love the gospel as you have. While being out here in Utah, my thoughts towards working with you as a partner in your practice have grown and I hope to one day be able to work side by side with you as a Podiatrist. I believe Medicine is the direction I want to head in my life. I hope I have made you proud in all I have done throughout the past seventeen years I have lived with you, and I hope to become a father like you one day and raise a family as well as you have. You have been a friend, a mentor, someone to talk with, someone to cry with, and someone to go to each and every day, and I will always be thankful. I love you for that.

Mom, you are the strongest woman I have ever met in my life. The trials you have overcome would be unbearable to me. I look at you in marvel and respect you for how well you have raised me. I know I have not always been an easy child as I can let my emotions get the best of me at times. I am glad you decided to stick with it and always be there for me as I now have realized how often you were there when I needed you most. I hope I one day marry a woman as strong in the gospel as you. You "are the gospel," you stand for it in each and every way, and you do not fall. Your life revolves around the teachings of Christ and you have emulated that to your children in a way I do



not think any mother could have done. Your love for your children is individual; you always know how to make each and every one of us feel better when we need it. Heavenly Father has given you the blessing and honor of bringing ten children into this world. I believe that you have served him in a way that He can only be proud of. You truly were meant to be a mother, and your purpose in life has been served in a way I believe no other woman could have ever done. I love you mom and I will always be here for you to help you fight your battles of life each and every day.

By attending AHS for a semester I have learned much about our country from Mr. Haymond. Our country is struggling. We are headed down a path that leads to much sorrow and pain. Satan is working hard and quick with the attempts to take down families, and brings to pass his vile work upon this earth. However, because of the gospel that we have we know the outcome of this battle that we are facing. We will overcome him in the end. The Second Coming is soon; Christ will return in his full glory and rule over us in righteousness. We must prepare for the Second Coming together, lift up the Constitution, raise our voices as missionaries, and listen to the prophets' teachings. If we are to be ready for Christ's return we must prepare ourselves to be worthy of His presence.

American Heritage is a school like none other. The spirit is felt in each and every hallway and classroom. All of the students that attend here are filled with the love of Christ and express it every day through their actions. As the days go by at school, I no longer feel as though I am learning useless schoolwork. I feel as though I am learning what Heavenly Father needs me to learn at this point in my life because I believe each teacher here to be inspired by Heavenly Father to teach what they teach. God's love is reminded to us by the devotionals we have every morning. Prayers are said before class and blessings are asked for those who are in need. I firmly believe that because of the spirit felt in this school, angels are able to walk the hallways with us, helping us with the trials that we may face every day.

As many of the students and teachers know at this school I have had the opportunity to play varsity baseball for Lone Peak High School. By doing so my school time has been cut short, experiences with you may not have occurred, and some relationships are probably



not as strong as they could have been. However, by participating with the baseball team at Lone Peak I have been able to be an example of this school and what we stand for. I have been blessed with experiences to teach kids on the team that it is not always “cool” to be “cool.” Standing up for what you believe in is a character trait much admired by those around you and if you can do it, then you will have more respect from others in life than you would if you followed those actions. I want you to know that members of the Lone Peak baseball organization now look at this school and its members with high standards and I challenge all of you to meet up to that standard by living the gospel fully and standing up to what you believe in no matter who or what you are facing. For in the end, nothing is more important than Christ and your salvation.

In conclusion, American Heritage has been the experience of a lifetime. The principles it teaches not only help us with this life but the next as well. The teachers and students share a love that make you feel as though you are a part of a family. By coming to this school I have grown much as a man, and a servant of Christ. For this I thank you all that have played a part in my life for the past five months, and I know that we will all see each other again, whether it be with our Heavenly Father or here on earth during an activity in life. I cannot wait. Good luck to you all, and may you stand strong in the teachings of Christ.





David Pack



The first prophet of this dispensation, Joseph Smith, describing the educational institutions of his day said, “Children are so instructed as to acquire a smattering of everything and as a matter of consequence they know nothing properly.” The opposite is true at American Heritage School. This is one of the things that I have enjoyed most during my educational experience. Being able to learn something and learn it well is a great gift, and it is a gift that our amazing school will provide if scholars are willing to work for it.

Throughout my experience here, I may have learned many facts, dates, and occurrences, but more importantly, I learned principles and how to think rather than what to think. This is not only vital to an education – it is vital to a nation. Edmund Burke said, as he was explaining to some Englishmen why America could not be controlled by England, “Here [in America] they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle, they augur misgovernment at a distance; and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.”

This is how we are educated in American Heritage School. We are educated to defend morality, principle, and the Constitution of the United States of America. And how we defend these vital things is by being able to “snuff [or sniff] the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.” We are not only educated to be the best employee, worker, or CEO, if we choose, but we are educated to change and potentially save the world.

Another amazing and singular thing about an American Heritage School Education is that, as stated, we are taught principles by the teachers, but what is unusual is that these teachers are led by the Spirit and what they teach is confirmed by the Spirit. The opportunity to



have this kind of education is rare, and nearly unheard of, and I have enjoyed every second of it.

Another big part of my experience here has been sports, more specifically cross-country and soccer. As I ran cross-country I worked hard and enjoyed it. Although I am not the fastest runner, cross-country gave me ambition. While running with the team I decided to train for and run a marathon, and because of the diligence I gained with the team, I was able to do so.

Soccer has been a big part of my life in and away from school, but the thing that has influenced me the most is what Mr. Gentile said on the first day of our tryouts. He said something to the effect of, "Our school was built where it is for a reason; it was built between the temple and the mountain, and we need to strive to be as righteous as the temple and as strong as the mountain." This quote is simple but profound. As LDS youth, living up to these examples is imperative. We need to constantly be looking for ways to serve and become better people, and we need to stay firm and immovable.

In conclusion, my experience at American Heritage School has changed me for the better, and because of what I have learned I will strive to do all I can to live up to all the principles I have learned and the examples of all the good people I have met.





Hoo Eun Park



*T*rust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6) As I sit and ponder all the experiences I had as a high school student being far away from my family, I have wondered what it would've been like if I had not attended American Heritage School. I do not want to call it a "coincidence" how I found about the school and even making a decision to come to Utah. Born in Seoul, South Korea and being raised in a strong Catholic family, coming to Utah and deciding to attend the school was not only a big change, but also a tough challenge. It was difficult for me to adapt to a new lifestyle and to be surrounded by people that had different standards and values. However, I have learned and felt in my deepest heart that I was meant to be here with these great people and God, my Father in Heaven, had a specific reason and plan set for me. My experiences at American Heritage School were very special in so many ways – academically, but also personally – and I cannot imagine myself graduating from any other school. The school's systematic, well-planned education program has benefited me and also has shaped me to become the person I have now grown to. It has helped to open up my perspectives, expand my interest in different areas, and teach me the importance of owning my own education. I learned how to read and write; I learned how to ask questions. I was eager to learn more about history and relate it to current events. I started to become interested in life. No school could've done any better job of preparing a student to become a true scholar and I am very grateful for all the knowledge that I have obtained academically. This school, however, not only has prepared me academically, but also has prepared me in the most personal ways. On February 28, 2012, I lost my mother to



a brain tumor. It was a tragic loss, and it was the most difficult time in my life. I was full of contention, anger towards Heavenly Father and did not understand why this had happened to me. The following day, I received twenty-five emails from the students and teachers from American Heritage School. They were full of words of kindness and love. Some of the letters had the most powerful testimonies, and I do not know how I could have stood up again without the help of the people from American Heritage School. They were there for me, to support me in gaining my testimony and faith again towards Heavenly Father.

American Heritage School is my home. It is a place I can feel peaceful and know that I am a step closer to the Lord, our Savior. I am very grateful that I had an opportunity to attend this wonderful institution, and I am honored to be of “the Class of 2012.” “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah 41:10) For those of you who are now going to step into another starting point of your life, always remember that Heavenly Father is watching over us and is always there for us. Congratulation, Class of 2012!



Heather Petersen



*W*hen my first year of high school came around, I already had my senior year planned out. I had the classes I wanted to take, the activities I was going to do, and all the homework I wasn't going to do. It was going to be my relaxing year with almost nothing to do but play, but that all changed during my junior year. Complications



arose at my high school and soon, my parents and I were talking about changing schools. I was determined to go to school with my cousin down in Mapleton, but one day, my mother came to me and talked to me about a private school called American Heritage School. At first I was stubborn about going to a private school, since all my friends (including myself) always thought private school students were extremely snobby and stuck up. Upon arriving to the school for our tour, I was struck by seeing all of the prophets on the wall, all the smiling faces, and even the art projects from students that were pictures of Joseph Smith, President Washington and the Savior. Immediately, I knew I wanted to come to this school.

It has been a blessing in my life to be able to come to American Heritage my last year of high school. Although it hasn't been all the fun and games I wanted my senior year to be, it has been full of hard work, a lot of learning, and a ton of headaches, due to the fact that my brain actually had to work to do ninety percent of my homework. The friends I have made and the relationships that have been formed will always stay with me throughout my life. They have made such an impact in my life and are such a blessing. I am extremely grateful for my wonderful teachers who took the time to get to know me and work with me when I was struggling, and for the friends who have influenced my life so deeply – they will never understand the significance they have played in my life.

As I look back on the days, it seems like only a week ago it was the twenty-ninth of August, the first day of school. While graduation rapidly approaches me and comes, fear strikes my heart of having to leave such a wonderful school and head out into the “real” world. I am also afraid of not having my life planned out. For almost eighteen years my life has been planned out for me, with school and most of my daily activities. Of course I had my freedom to choose what I did but when it came to my day-to-day life, it was mainly planned out for me. Wake up, get ready for school, leave and go to school for eight hours, come home, do my chores and homework, eat dinner and go to bed was a normal day for me. Now that I am soon going to have to make my own future, I am scared but also very excited. Many opportunities are ahead and I cannot wait to find out what great significance they will have in my life.

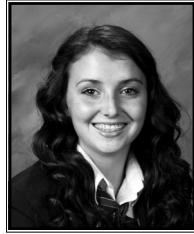


I will miss my amazing senior class! Chelsea, Drew, Amy, Aaron, Keegan, Lauren, Rachael, Keegan, Marianne, Lacey, Ryan, David, Brittany (even though she was only with us for awhile), Joseph, Hoseok, Wooseok, Haylee, Jerry, Annabelle, Jieun, JongSu, Kelsey I, and Kelsey II! I will also miss my wonderful and inspiring teachers, Ms. Doutri, Brother Hemming, Mr. Gentile, Mrs. Mullen, Mrs. Mcomber, Mr. Swenson, Mrs. Budge (even though I was never actually in physics) and last but certainly not least, Mr. Haymond! Thank you!

I wish you all a farewell and hope you all remember D&C 130:2. Till we meet again.



Mariane Sorensen



H

ome is where the heart is. My heart has been with American Heritage School for 18 years (plus four years that my siblings attended before I was born). I consider it my second home in every way. When I make comparisons about what exists in a home environment, I find very many similarities between American Heritage and my home. I have spent the majority of my life walking down the halls that hold pictures of comfort and reminders of my heritage, and sitting in classrooms where I am not just given information, but I am strongly encouraged to obtain it on my own. Just as in a home, we are given certain responsibilities to keep our rooms clean, helping our parents and siblings, and using agency to realize the positive or negative consequences for our actions.

Throughout my experiences here at American Heritage I have felt these same responsibilities from the teachers and administrators. I have developed such strong friendships with the teachers that I feel like I can call them my family. I have been taught by the best teachers



in the world who truly have been guided by the spirit when they are in front of the classroom. Teachers like Mr. Haymond, Mrs. Updike, Mr. Gentile, Mr. Bohn, Mr. Miller, Mr. Swenson, Mr. Hunsaker, Mr. Cornell, Mrs. Brinkerhoff, Mrs. Strong, Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Camp, Mrs. Moss, Mrs. White, Ms. Jones, Mrs. Geslison, Mrs. Jespersen, Mrs. Mulvey, Mrs. Tolman, Mrs. Perry, Mrs. Brinkerhoff, Mrs. Hancock, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Latimer, Mr. Knecht, Mrs. Patten, Mr. Hancock, Mrs. Logan, Mrs. Griffiths, Mr. Beckwith, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Jacob, and many more have been such a blessing to me in special ways. I don't think I could ever thank them all enough for everything they have done for me. They have been constantly understanding and kind to me and have always believed in me by encouraging me to do hard things.

During my high school years, I thought many times about leaving the school to attend another school, but after prayer and fasting I realized I needed to stay. I never knew exactly why or what I was staying for, but every year on the first day of school I have recited the pledge of allegiance while looking at the flag and having the temple behind it, then Mr. Cornell would fire his cannon, and my favorite part of the first day of school has been singing "Children of Liberty" because that song is what has confirmed my decision to stay at American Heritage School. I know I am in the right place, and I know that God knew I needed American Heritage School in my life. At times, I struggled with certain changes that would occur here, but I understand that I have had such a unique experience here that no one else in the world has had the blessing of having. I have so many fond memories here that I will cherish forever, like Flat Stanley, *Heidi*, *Pinocchio*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, field trips to the Crandall Printing Museum, Utah reports, the Civil War Celebration, Egyptian masks, *The Bronze Bow*, *Exiled*, the Pilgrims, Five Kernels of Corn, Jane Austin, classics, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Ben Hur*, *The Trail of Dreams*, being Golde in *Fiddler on the Roof*, A Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, Shakespeare week, The Patriotic Program, the Teddy Bear hug, Christmas Sing, many concerts, talent shows, and so much more. I could honestly go on and on about so many things that have been impacting me while attending school here. Some of the most tender and memorable times were when a testimony meeting would just happen in class. I have had many humbling experiences that really made me so thankful for the



blessings of teachers and classmates.

This school has been the foundation for the rest of my life. I have been using the 4Ring method for so long that it is engraved on the fleshy tablets of my heart, and I will be able to do so much because of it. I have become so much more prepared for my future as a mother, wife, college student, musician, and an example of Christ. I would never trade any of my opportunities here for ones I could've had at another school. Who can say that they have spent their whole life in such a different but truly wonderful environment? These last couple of months have been hard as I have realized I will not be able to be a part of the traditions and go to school here at American Heritage anymore. My eyes have secretly been tearing up when walking by Mrs. Updike's classroom, singing "Battle Hymn of the Republic" or "Children of Liberty" during the patriotic program, hearing Mr. Haymond give an inspirational speech, and while thinking of what my life will be like not walking through these halls. It will be different, but I will still have the memories and knowledge to take with me wherever I go.

Usually at the end of the year I have sung "For Good" from the musical *Wicked* with a friend or a few friends. Every year it has touched my heart because I have said my farewells to many friends through this song. This year it is especially meaningful to me as I think about the words and what message it has for me this year. It says, "*People come into our lives for a reason bringing something we must learn, and we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them, and we help them in return.*" Everyone at this school has helped me to grow so much and has shared so much knowledge with me that I hope to share with so many others, hopefully my future children. The second verse says, "*it well may be that we may never meet again in this life time, but let me say before we part, so much of me is made of what I learned from you, you'll be with me like a hand print on my heart.*" Some of you I may never see again or come in contact with very much but I have been blessed to have known you and learned so much from this school and the people within its walls. I cannot imagine my educational experience any other way than the special and spiritual way it has been at American Heritage. These principles and truths have surely made an imprint on my heart. I know that because of all of you and having been a part of American Heritage School, I have truly been changed for good.



JiEun Yang



I was chosen to be at American Heritage School. The Lord has sent me to this school for specific reasons – to earn a great education, to meet wonderful people, and to come unto God. I believe that the Lord directed me to attend this school to provide these marvelous opportunities for me. Unquestionably, He made the perfect decision for me. As the Lord wanted, I surely love the experiences that I had at this school.

The education that I have received from American Heritage School is one of the reasons that the Lord wanted me to be at this school. Concepts such as the Seven Christian Principles, the Four R-ing Process, and the Eight Virtues helped me to understand true education. And knowledgeable teachers also guided me to be motivated to gain the true education. I cannot wait until I use my knowledge earned at the school in the future as a tool in the Lord's hand.

Another reason why I was sent to this school by the Lord is to meet the people I have met at American Heritage School. I cannot express my gratitude towards my friends enough. Although I was a transferred, international student about two and a half years ago, I still could adopt the unique environment at the school without any difficulties. They welcomed me, accepted me how I was, and loved me. And I will also never forget the teachers at this school. They all are passionate about what they teach, caring and understanding for every student in different situation, and inspirational, which are the most important characteristics of teachers. Additionally, I have much appreciation towards the administrators at this school for their correctly directed hearts for the best of the school. I am very blessed to



have those amazing people around me to build precious relationships.

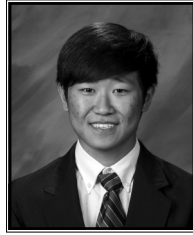
Lastly, the most valuable gift I have received from the Lord through attending American Heritage School is coming unto God. I joined the Church before coming to AHS, but I was ignorant and naïve about the religion, and I did not even know basic information about Jesus Christ. I have to admit that I once was arrogant and stubborn when people discussed the gospel with me. However, teachers and friends at the school patiently taught and helped me to believe in God and know more about the church. Through attending seminary class and people's high standards and examples, my heart and mind have opened towards the gospel. I am becoming more humble, to know more about God, and to come unto God.

I am heavily indebted to the Lord to have all the blessings that I have received from Him. Short, yet priceless, memories that I have built at American Heritage School truly added bright color to my life. As I graduate from this school and start a new stage of my life, I will face many challenges and obtain more gifts that the Lord has planned for me to learn. With the help of God and the knowledge I gained from attending this school, I am ready to overcome the challenges and enjoy the gifts I will receive in the future. "With men, this is impossible; but with God, all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)





Jerry Zhongyuan Zhou



*T*ime flies. I cannot believe it is almost the time to graduate for us, the greatest senior class ever. Two years ago, I came to American Heritage School from China. I still remember my first day at AHS, maybe I will never forget the experience. People were just so nice to me, and of course I made so many friends on that day. And my life here just started from then on.

As an international student whose native language is not English, I was a little afraid. I did not know the culture and people here well. But I did not want to mess everything up, so I tried to talk to others. The first person I talked to in my class was Lauren Hall. I still remember that her smile encouraged me to talk to others and speak in class, because I got a message from her that they are nice and kind to me. I did not feel anything uncomfortable in my classes on the first day. And everyone knows, the first day is very important. I began to fit into this big “family” pretty well from that day on.

I decided to come here myself, and everything I experienced proved that was a good decision. AHS has a high standard which can guide us to be good and make our lives more significant. I enjoyed being here.

Knowledge is not the only thing that we need in life; sports, music and art are as well. I was on our basketball team for two years. Everything was going better and better. I was so proud this year. We had a good team and a great coach, Coach Norton. He taught me not only the skills, but also the real meaning of basketball. All my teammates are like my brothers. We are united and powerful. That’s how we face others and the games. Being together makes us stronger. The other thing that I think which is really important to me is to never



give up on anything. Coach Norton did a lot to teach us this point. He showed us videos, gave us speeches and taught us during the games. I understood that and applied it to my life. I am not giving up on anything until it ends. The basketball season is over, and that makes me sad. But I can see that I improved a lot in basketball and being a good person. I will miss this season, this team, this coach, and this wonderful school with a beautiful gym.

Another basic thing of this school is that we can learn the gospel in classes. I came from the mainland China, where little is known about God and the gospel. After I came here, I felt the Spirit and the gospel. I think that God guided me to come here; he wanted me to come and change my life. Now I am really thankful for everything that He gave me and how He helped me, and I am also thankful to this school and everyone here.

My tears are flowing as I am thinking of everything that has happened to me at this brilliant place. I'll keep all those things in my mind. Blessings to all the people that I met here. Thank you.





The 4R Method



by Ruel Haymond, 12th Grade Core Instructor

The 4R Method of Research, Reason, Relate, and Record (in the scriptures, search, ponder, pray, and act) is not only the method of personal scholarship, but it is the key to personal revelation. There may not be a better way to “record” than to “act.”

In the Book of Mormon, in Moroni 10:3-5, the prophet Moroni outlines the personal 4R method perfectly as follows:

RESEARCH (SEARCH)

“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them...”

At AHS you have learned to research by studying original source materials, considering varying perspectives or accounts of events or facts, and carefully comparing these sources with reason and revelation (revelation includes the words of ancient and modern prophets and direct and personal revelation through the Holy Ghost). Always remember that empirical data that contradicts these three tools for determining truth should be considered with caution.



REASON (PONDER)

“... Remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.”

As you reason and ponder, in your search for truth, it is essential that you take time to remember all that God has done for His children throughout history, including yourself. As you recollect and ponder the miracles in your life and the lives of others, your heart will be softened, better prepared to receive that which He desires to give you.

I am reminded of the great Tongan patriarch Lohani Wolfgramm praying over the dead body of his six year old daughter Tisina, pleading with the Lord to restore her to life. Before he requests God’s intervention, he shows his gratitude by specifically remembering how merciful He has been from Adam until now:

“I reminded the Lord of how he saved the Israelites by parting the waters of the Red Sea, how Christ raised people from the dead, and of the simple faith of a missionary who just had his daughter run over by a car and had been killed, you can understand of my love for her. I reviewed how Lazarus was raised after being in the tomb for four days, through faith and the power of the priesthood. I prayed and thanked the Lord for those great prophets of old and their faith and special callings in the church from Adam down to the prophet Joseph Smith” (Lohani Wolfgramm: Man of Faith and Vision, 1911-1997, compiled by Tisina Wolfgramm Gerber).

Following this prayer and a sacred priesthood blessing, little Tisina was recalled back to life.



RELATE (PRAY)

“... And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Following your research and reasoning, with a heart softened and prepared for personal direction and application, you now begin to apply the truths you are learning to your own situation, to your own understanding. One of the great tragedies of human history is that we tend to learn the facts and events in history, but we rarely relate them specifically to ourselves. We want to blame those foolish Nephites for their neglect of God’s laws or those Germans for not recognizing Hitler for who he really was.

We must do what is necessary to become like great men and women in history and to avoid doing what wicked men and women have done to bring misery upon themselves and a nation. We must relate what we learn to ourselves and then with Heavenly Father’s guidance, do His will, allowing the consequences to follow.

RECORD (ACT)

“... And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”

John Witherspoon, James Madison’s mentor, said that right reason is akin to revelation. Once truths have been recorded on our hearts through the power of righteous researching, reasoning and relating, we are in a position to act in accordance with God’s will. We will go and do as the Lord has commanded and we will waste and wear out our lives in His service. How blessed we are to have so many records from the Constitution to the Federalist Papers to Anna Karenina, where right reason written with pen corresponds with revelation from heaven.



Tribute to the Class of 2012



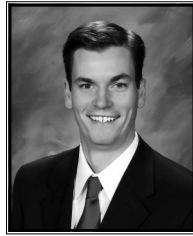
by Leland Anderson, Principal

To you my friends – admirable youth of the noble birthright – your faith, hope, and charity inspires me. Your nobleness is clear to all who read your inspiring essays. You have been nurtured, supported, and guided by dedicated parents, caring school teachers, helpful leaders, and other great men and women – seen and unseen – to become leaders yourselves in your homes, the Church, the Kingdom of God, your communities, and your nations – including in this beloved nation that you dearly cherish. You have accomplished much in your secondary school years of which to be righteously proud. You have a Godly vision of who you are, and you are fixed on your goal to gain eternal life – “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7). You seek and act on the direction of the Lord both through his Spirit and his Word. Because of your righteous habits and desires, yours is a bright future, filled with “revelation upon revelation” (D&C 42:16) and success upon success and as you live for it through steadfastly following Christ. You love Him. You know Him. And one day, you will be like Him. You are in my love and my prayers for your lives to be “swallowed up in the joy of Christ” (Alma 31:38). Faithfully yours.

– Mr. Anderson



Tribute to the Class of 2012



by Grant Beckwith, Head of School

Occasionally we catch a glimpse of the divine majesty of the rising generation. We see our children not as children, but as kings and queens - and we are moved for a precious moment to kneel. These are my feelings as I pour over the thoughtful and sacred words written by each of you, the Class of 2012, in your essays. You write to each other, but you also write to those who sacrificed before you, and to those who must sacrifice after you. May the Author of All Blessings guide you in your righteous endeavors, and may you always believe His Story. Truth has a name, and it is Christ. You have each brought me nearer to Him through your powerful examples of love and discipleship. I honor you. I love you. Faithfully yours.

-Mr. Beckwith