

Alumnus Spotlight

BY RICH MEYER, DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AFFAIRS

Max Meltzer '08

For those who have ever wondered how their experiences at Hillside will ever help them in real life, Max Meltzer '08 has some answers. Max, currently a junior at Wayland High School, started his own business building and designing custom longboards. He recently returned to Hillside for the first time since he graduated and talked about the impact that Hillside had on his life and how he is applying some of the skills he developed here to his business.

Max came to Hillside as a 6th grader in the fall of 2004. Prior to coming to Hillside he was very shy and quiet, but at Hillside, Max "found his voice." Hillside transformed him from a shy boy who never talked into a very outgoing young man.

The social confidence that he now exudes has helped him with his business venture and was honed through several different elements at Hillside. His confidence was developed on the lacrosse field where he made friends and became a valued member of the team. It developed in the Alumni Farm House where Max lived as a 5-day boarder and where, by the time he was an upperclassman, he had become a leader with the role of supervising farm chores. The most important thing that shaped his confidence and that which Max says holds his fondest memories was "the development of brotherhood with peers."

Last summer, as is the case for many teenagers, Max and his friend, Mackland Steele, were trying to find a way to make some money when they thought they saw a market for something they already loved to do. They noticed that the vehicles of choice for many of the kids in Wayland were longboards. Max and Mackland decided to form their own business, which they named Hillbomb Longboards, and their goal was to design and build custom longboards for

the kids in Wayland.

As Max explained, a longboard is similar to a skateboard, but it ranges in length from 3 to 4 feet. While skateboards are designed for going short distances and doing tricks like you see in the X-games, longboards are designed for long distance rides. The wheels on a longboard are larger than those of a skateboard and the board of the longboard has more spring to it than that of a skateboard. This extra spring in the board allows the board to flex when turning and to have a suspension like a car which reduces the effect of bumps in the terrain. They can provide a comfortable ride for a distance of several miles with less pushing than is required on a skateboard. The longboard can also go relatively fast - Max has hit 35 miles per hour on his longboard! Longboards have been popular in California for years and are growing in popularity on the East Coast.



Max Meltzer with one of his custom longboards during a recent visit to Hillside.

Max started his business with the help of many consultations from his parents who are both successful in business and he was able to use tools and machines in his dad's basement to begin building and designing his custom longboards. The boards he makes are 100% custom designed. Customers pick out the frame details, such as the type of wood and tires, and then pick an artistic design, which Max paints on the board himself. This last skill was one that he developed at Hillside. Max refined his art skills at Hillside under the guidance of his art teacher and advisor, Mr. Osae. Equally important to his business today, was a spray paint stenciling club of which he was a part of at Hillside with Mr. McGuire.

After starting the business that summer, sales were very

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Optimism

can take you anywhere

BY GEOFF HARLAN,
DIRECTOR OF THE ANNUAL FUND

This simple phrase from “Life is good” characters Jake and Rocket, nicely and succinctly sums up the everyday approach that is taken by Hillside School’s administration, faculty, and staff in their work with our boys. Every Hillside student has an opportunity to realize success along his educational journey, whether it manifests itself in the classroom, in athletics, in the arts, in the residential life program or in the farm immersion program, there are multiple areas available to learn and grow. Each accomplishment helps to build the confidence of our boys with the ultimate goal of helping them realize that they are building a solid foundation for future success – success that can take them anywhere they wish to go.

In order for Hillside to continue to provide the educational challenges and opportunities that build the minds and character of our boys, the school relies on financial support from the Annual Fund. Each year, the Annual Fund accounts for nearly 15% of the annual operating budget. The items which come from that portion of the budget are some of the key elements that make a Hillside educational experience all that it can be

– technology improvements; support for experiential learning (i.e. – field trips, guest speakers, athletic equipment, farm equipment, etc.); the hiring of new faculty and the continuing education for and retention of current faculty; residential life improvements (house lounges, weekend trips, new games and activities). To ensure that our boys receive the best possible educational experience, it is essential that our Annual Fund goal of \$525,000 is realized by the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).

Each year, the Annual Fund accounts for nearly 15% of the annual operating budget.

Every gift makes a difference and donations of any and all sizes are welcome. Please help us continue to make a difference in the educational lives of our boys. To make a donation on-line, please visit: www.hillsideschool.net/giving.htm/ and complete the on-line donation form. To make a donation by check or cash, please use the provided remittance envelope. Thank you for giving us added reason to be optimistic!

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good through the fall but business has slowed now that it is winter which allows Max to work on developing a customer list for the spring. He is also in the early stages of developing a variation of a longboard that could be marketable in the winter, which will feature a single ski attached to the board instead of wheels.

Away from the business, Max lives the life of a typical high school student. He has joined the crew team at Wayland High where, as a freshman, he was part of their state championship team. He also plays lacrosse and in his spare time has taken up golf. After high school, Max would like to study criminal justice and eventually become a policeman with the hope of ultimately joining a federal agency such as the DEA.

Max has proven that he can be successful in whatever he decides to pursue. He remembers how hard everything seemed when he started at Hillside, but looking back he sees the advantages it gave him. His advice to students at Hillside is: “stay close to your friends, and you will get through.”