

Vance Senior thankful for 13 years of CIS Support



Vy Ho is a 2015 graduate of Vance High School and will attend UNC-Charlotte in the fall.

Vy (pronounced “Vee”) Ho was born in the United States, but her parents are from Viet Nam, moving here just before Vy was born to seek a better future for their family.

“Eventually, I loved school,” said Vy, “but it was definitely hard at first. My parents didn’t speak English – my mother only a little bit, so the language barrier was an issue.”

Vy was enrolled in Kindergarten at Nathaniel Alexander Elementary in 2002. Soon after, she was enrolled on the Communities In Schools (CIS) caseload of CIS Site Coordinator Gwen Thompson. She has remained involved in CIS throughout her school years – six years at Nathaniel Alexander, middle school at James Martin, and then Zebulon Vance High School.

While Vy doesn’t remember the first time she met Mrs. Thompson, she does remember Mrs. Thompson coming over to her house to see her mother. “She would come by to check on us and got to know my Mom well over the years,” said Vy.

She also remembers that Mrs. Thompson made sure she got help with English, and also arranged for a math tutor. “The language issue was really hurting me academically at first, but it got better pretty quickly.”

Apparently so! Mrs. Thompson recalls that Vy eventually was one of her “top” students, winning several academic achievement certificates from CIS, and Mrs. Thompson selected her as CIS “Student of the Year” when Vy was in 5th grade. At Vance High School, Vy was on the A-B Honor Roll all four years, (while taking multiple AP classes), was selected a Junior Marshall, and finished her senior year with a 4.4 GPA. Oh yes, she played 1st Chair Viola in the school orchestra and served as president of the Environmental Justice Club, just to mention a few activities!

“CIS has really played a major role in my life,” said Vy. “At James Martin Middle, Ms. Russell [CIS Site Coordinator] pushed me to participate in everything - CIS programs, field trips, leadership opportunities,” added Vy. “She was also someone I could talk to and felt like I had a second ‘home’ with her at school.”

And at Vance High School, where she has clearly excelled, Vy says she relied on her CIS Site Coordinators to guide her academic and future college and career plans.



This is a photo from 2005, when Vy was in the 2nd grade. Vy had just received a certificate from CIS Site Coordinator Gwen Thompson as part of a CIS student awards program at Nathaniel Alexander Elementary.

“Ms. Draughn and Mr. Carr [Site Coordinators]) connected me to summer internships, community service, and college scholarships that I otherwise wouldn’t have known about. I am so thankful for all the wonderful people who have supported me and touched my heart over the years.”

Vy received several scholarships through CIS, including a Patricia Fields Scholarship, which is sponsored by Myers Park Presbyterian Church. She will attend UNC-Charlotte in the fall and plans to major in business for now, and is interested in dental school down the road. With a strong foundation and her own intelligence and drive, we expect she will be “Dr. Ho” in the not-too-distant future!

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By May Johnston, Communities In Schools