

COOL STUDENT PROFILES

CHELSEA MILLER

COOPER HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2009



I am currently a third grade teacher at Lee Elementary in Abilene ISD. COOL really helped me see what schools were out there and what they offered. The summer before my senior year I was able to take a trip with about six other students to tour colleges in the Hill Country. Overall we looked at six schools, and then later in the year I was able to visit more. It helped make the process much smoother because my parents would not have been able to take off work to let me tour other schools. I chose to attend McMurry and was confident in my choice because I was able to make an informed decision after touring multiple schools. The COOL program helps to make the college admissions process less stressful for students and parents by assisting them with daunting tasks such as completing the FAFSA application and the college selection process.

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LEVI GRAND

ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2013



My name is Levi Grand, and I graduated from Abilene High School in 2013.

Today, I am a graduate of the University of North Texas, where I majored in English Literature and European History. I graduated with honors in May 2017 and began working with Teach for America in Idaho. As I pause to reflect over how I have gone from being a senior at Abilene High to being a graduate of UNT, I am reminded of the amazing group of teachers and counselors who made my collegiate

experience possible. Chief among these, were Abilene High's COOL Counselors (first, Ms. Carr, later Ms. Wiskow). The COOL program provided me with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the obscenely complex process that is college admission. From FAFSAs, to admission essays, to scholarship applications, the COOL Counselors had answers for every question and solutions for every problem. I am beyond grateful to the COOL Program and would recommend it to any and all students who have an interest in going to college.

COOL STUDENT PROFILES

CHELSEY MEDINA

COOPER HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2015



I am currently a junior at Texas State University majoring in Special Education. The COOL program has helped me in my college endeavors by providing many different resources and programs to help me reach my

goal of going to college. They also had such incredible mentors that walked me through every step and made the college process easy and fun. Though there are many strengths, I think one specific strength of the COOL Program is that they never give up on you and they will do anything in order to see you succeed. I remember my junior year of high school I wanted to give up the dream of attending college because I thought I would not be able to afford it. The COOL Program reached out to me and told me otherwise. Instead of agreeing with my "can't" mindset, they helped me to see that I can and that I will go to college. I remember receiving a stack of scholarships to fill out and constant encouragement. I can say that I would not be in college if it were not for this amazing program.

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VICTORIA GARZA

ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2014



I am currently a junior at McMurry University majoring in Life Sciences and Studio Art. I appreciate the information I received on how to understand the college process. The COOL Counselors not only helped me get into college, but have been there to assist me while I am still going through the journey. The COOL Counselors have an uncanny ability to help students from high and low

places and their knowledge of high school and college programs is top notch. I am a firm believer in the COOL Program and would encourage anyone in AISD to take advantage of this wonderful resource. In fact, I already have my niece excited to meet her advisor once she enters Abilene High in the fall!

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JOSH RADER

COOPER HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2009



I am currently a health and fitness trainer and business owner of a training facility called Strength Fitness. I can truly say that I was lost without the COOL program. Neither of my parents had any guidance for me when I told them I wanted to go to college and I don't think I would have been able to get through the process without the help of my COOL Counselor. The connection that the counselors have with the students is the strength of the program. I can't tell you the name of

my algebra teacher, but I remember the name of my COOL Counselor, Will Medina, and what he did to help me get into college. I now serve on the Advisory Board of the Abilene Education Foundation and am thrilled to see the continued success of the COOL Program.

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LEANDRA MIDDLETON

ABILENE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2013



Coming from my background with my mom having me at age thirteen and me being the oldest I've had a big weight to carry. I wanted to break generations of nobody in my family walking across the stage to graduate, to providing something for my three younger siblings to look up to. Freshman year, seems like I was just a baby! But the COOL program allowed me still to visit Texas Tech my freshman year through a partnership with the AVID program. Not many freshmen get to go on the college trips, but I did. This enabled me to see the reality of how close-yet how far- the opportunity for college was in my life. It got me truly thinking of what I needed to do and what I needed to keep priority the next three years of high school to stay on track to reach that goal of going to college. As Junior and Senior year came around, the COOL Program office became my "go to," providing me with several other visits to colleges, help for my ACT and essays I needed to write for scholarships, as well as keeping me up to date with more scholarships (which I needed being the first in my family to attend college). These are all resources I would've never gotten simply on my own.

After graduating I went to an out-of-town college for a year and hated it. Yet, I still had the COOL Program as a resource and still do to this day. When deciding that I didn't like my freshman college experience, I easily messaged Mrs. Wiskow to help me get into another college, valuing her opinion of options and appreciating the time she took to reread over essays now that I had to reapply to new campuses EVEN THOUGH I was no longer an Abilene High School student. Eventually ending up exactly where I need to be for the time being, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, School of Nursing and I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing in May 2017.

The strength of the COOL Program is its grasp on students who might have nothing and come from nothing and are still sought out if they are willing to put in the effort. The COOL Program exceeds with prosperous resources and the opportunity of meeting great people, like Mrs. Wiskow, along the way. They provide resources many otherwise would never have. The COOL Program offers their services to everyone but touches the ones with the most determined hearts, such as mine, the most. I understood a little 100 word essay could possibly get me \$5,000 to help with school. I sought college options and advice over test taking skills and essays I took the time to take advantage of those resources and the outcomes were such a blessing. I would absolutely recommend the COOL Program! My sister is even currently in it. Since her freshman year, the COOL Program has sought her out and helped keep her on track by offering resources. It's a beautiful thing to see this program reach generations!

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ASHLEY HICKMAN

COOPER HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2011



I am a 2015 graduate of McMurry University and currently work at the university as a College Admissions Counselor. If I am honest here, without the COOL Program and the COOL Advisor at the time, I most likely would not have attended college. I came from a poor family and I am a first-generation college student, so college was never something I considered. My COOL Advisor helped me to realize my potential and provided me with resources to find the right college.

What made the COOL Program, “cool,” was the college tours and personable advisors. The visits were great because I know my family would never have wanted/been able to go on these trips with me. Also, I am very thankful for my advisor because he was very personable. He helped us to set REALISTIC goals, which is hard for high school students to do. The advisors do a great job of building relationships with college counselors, making the application process easier on the students. With my current profession, I constantly refer AISD students to the COOL advisor at their corresponding high school. It is a wonderful program.