

Don Lugo students learn there is more to life than high school

Looking like she was addressing her police officers in a shift briefing, Chino Police Chief Karen Comstock told Don Lugo students that success is theirs if they just have the right mindset.

Chief Comstock was among more than a dozen Don Lugo High graduates who spoke to seniors, juniors and sophomores on January 7 about going to college during the annual "Life After Lugo."

Don Lugo counselors founded the event seven years ago "because they felt that giving students as much information about college would ensure greater success," said teacher Sophie Yu.

She took over coordination of the event three years ago when original coordinator Kathie Spaun transferred to Chino Hills High. This year, Ms. Yu increased the number of sessions a senior could take from two to three. "All presenters are Lugo grads and my goal is to have more career pathways," Ms. Yu said.

"Commit yourself to a process of learning," Chief Comstock said as she walked back and forth among students in the Don Lugo multipurpose room. "Even if you don't want to go into college after high school, get into a learning environment."

"Success is all in your futures, if you want it," she said "...You are from Chino; you're from Don Lugo. We believe in you."

The chief said police officers receive training all the time, and one of the most powerful things they are trained for is their mindset.

"If you start off with defeat in your head, you're done," she said.

She told the students that they should never use the lack of money as an excuse not to go to college. Chief Comstock said she just finished paying off her graduate degree loan. "There's money out there to go to college," she said. "It's going to be hard, but you can do it."

Following introductions and the chief's keynote speech, other Don Lugo High alumni spoke to small groups of students on a variety of college related topics in different classrooms.

Among the subjects discussed were campus life, military experience, engineering, networking, picking the right school, commuting versus dorms, studying abroad, personal finance, the AVID college preparation program, the Dream Act, and time management.

Brianna Smith Gunn, a 2008 Don Lugo graduate, said she managed a hotel for a while before going to college and eventually entering the Army 4 ½ years ago. Although she is only 5-foot-3, she worked in corrections for the military at Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp in Cuba, where war criminals and other high profile prisoners are detained.

She said at least three of the approximately 30 students in the class she was addressing would go into the military, based on statistics kept on military service. She told the students that many soldiers have lost their lives to ensure the freedoms of Americans.

Don Lugo graduate Albert Perez, who said he was the first in his family to attend college, talked about how three-dimensional printing is used in the bio-medical engineering field he is studying. He passed

around two of the items he has made with a 3-D printer: a Batman symbol, and the words #1 Mom with a heart symbol behind it. He also talked about the fun he had exploring a new city while attending college.

Graduate Lauren Rios discussed using social media to network with colleges and potential employers. She also advised students not to post questionable or “silly things” on their social media because college officials and employers could see that.

Rios also discussed finding college/work mentors, creating good resumes, the value of internships, and how to interview well.

“Never be discouraged by the size of a company” when seeking employment, she advised.

While waiting for a video to begin on the culture shock experienced by first generation college students, Don Lugo psychology and government teacher Mary Carpentier told students that “it wasn’t if you go to college, but when” in her family. She also related her own college experience.

Graduate Elizabeth Cho said her parents are immigrants who didn’t go to college, so they had a hard time helping her when issues came up about her college experience. She told the Don Lugo students there are resources and people on college campuses that can help new students adjust.

She also talked about overcoming the “imposter syndrome” in which students don’t feel like they belong at their college or that they are not “good enough” to be at the school.

She said it was a culture shock for her to be attending prestigious Wellesley College in Massachusetts because of the more affluent students who attend that school, the long distance from her home in California, and the colder weather there.

“You grow a lot,” she said of attending a college away from home.

She concluded her comments by showing a video of students who have experienced culture shock in college. Among those shown were students who were the first in their families to attend college.

Other Don Lugo graduates speaking included Megan Johnston, Janette Armenta, Joseph Green, Nick Flores, Jacqueline Dana Valera, Samantha Ochoa, Kendell Langrell, Randall Brakob, Frankie Torres. Graduates Clare Herlihy, Austin Frenes, and Socorro Pantaleon helped man the multi-purpose room for sophomores and juniors participating in the event.

Don Lugo teachers Heather Lord and Jamie Brown monitored the multi-purpose room during the day, and AVID tutor Rudy Perez also assisted.

A luncheon was held following the event, with muffins, cookies, and water provided by Ms. Yu’s brother-in-law.

Pictured:



Don Lugo High graduates, including Chino Police Chief Karen Comstock (front left), are introduced by teacher Sophie Yu (front center) at the Life After Lugo event, held Jan. 7 at the Chino school.



Brianna Smith Gunn (right), a 2008 Don Lugo High graduate, talks to Don Lugo seniors about her experience in the Army.



Don Lugo alumnus Albert Perez explains how three-dimensional printers are utilized in bio-medical engineering.



A Don Lugo student checks out a heart symbol made with a three-dimensional printer during a presentation by graduate Albert Perez, who is majoring in bio-medical engineering at San Diego State University.



Don Lugo High alumna Lauren Rios discusses using social media to get into college and find a job.



Graduate Elizabeth Cho talks about the culture shock some students feel when they attend college.