

Putting the "Upward" in Upward Bound

By: Elizabeth "Lizzy" Parayno, Hilo High School 2004 graduate

Upward Bound can be described in one word: **UPWARD!** The Upward Bound Math/Science program has given me the opportunity to explore, experience, and learn the itty-bitty things about college life that I never thought about before. It has been an amazing and rewarding learning experience that has made me strive for the one dream I thought I wouldn't live. This dream, which I believe is rare among teens, is the dream to go to college.

I applied for the Upward Bound program, not just to get a head start, but to *learn*. Many students out in the world today take advantage of having the ability to learn, which either is riding waves or making new friends. I can say that of the millions of students out there, I am one. One who wanted to be able to live the *true* college life and experience what it holds for me. Aside from living out of the house for six weeks, I actually got to take a college course, with a real professor. It was the *realdeal*.

I joined the program because I wanted to learn and experience new things. I wanted to grasp and encompass the concepts and ideas that only the Upward Bound program offered, to prepare myself for the upcoming year, setting foot as a college freshman. The program has given me the best opportunities and experiences, that some can only dream of. Its structure has given me the academic and personal support that I have needed to step closer to my dream. Upward Bound has also given me the chance to meet other students with the same goals, even though we come from a variety of cultural and ethnic communities.

One of the best experiences I've ever had with Upward Bound was during the Upward Bound summer residential program. It wasn't an easy challenge, but I took it. How do I make my roommate feel "at home," here in Hilo? All the way from Kosrae, she was not only in a different environment but around a different culture and community as well. After a week of silence and hiding behind an imaginary brick wall, I opened up. I had to break down this wall that stood between us. As our wall slowly broke down, bit by bit, our six weeks as roommates drew to an end. From the first "Iwen wo" (good day) to the last "fong wo" (goodnight) and the in-between "elos fukah" (how are you?), I couldn't ask for a better roommate. My summer ended with no barriers; instead, I had gained a new friendship, new memories, and a great new outlook on the culture and language of my roommate's homeland.

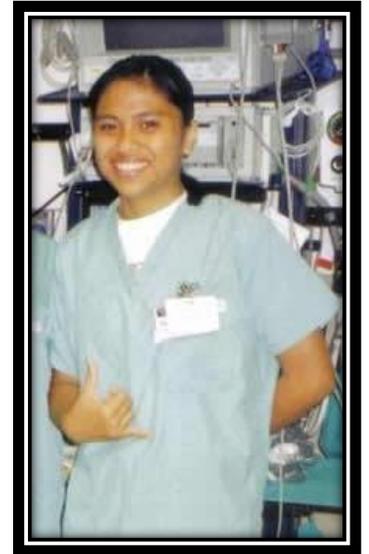
Upward Bound also introduced me to the personal support one may not be able to find elsewhere. This amazing 'ohana (family) built my self-confidence out of nothing. The strong encouragement from the staff and the ability to be myself has helped me to believe in myself, which has made me a stronger person.

It's my turn to give back to the program and I will do so by not only being a role model, but also by being a leader and a friend. I not only want to share my experiences with the underclassmen, but I also want to prove to them that this program can help them become successful. I am taking closer steps toward my college dream and goal. "If I'm moving **UPWARD**, towards my dreams and goals, the underclassmen can move **UPWARD** towards their dreams and goals, too!"

Who am I you ask? My name is Elizabeth Parayno and I am a 2004 graduate of Hilo High School. I currently attend the University of Hawaii at Hilo, double majoring in Mathematics and Pre-nursing. I plan to apply for the nursing program in January 2008 (cross my fingers... I hope I get in). If it wasn't for Upward Bound, I wouldn't be where I am today, successfully attending college day in and day out, striving to succeed in all areas of my life, including the drive to become a registered nurse. I am currently in my senior year (4th year). Many may be wondering, "Should I be done yet?" the answer to your question is... if you love learning, why stop?! Actually, in my junior year, I added Pre-nursing as a second major: I wanted to try something different from my usual math.

Although I've struggled a lot with my courses, the support I continue to get from friends as well as the Upward Bound staff has enabled me to continue my strive to persevere... the result? Grades that mean a whole lot to me (especially the ones that came from those LONG late-night studying session... it sure paid off). In addition to living the college life as a full-time student, I am also an Upward Bound staff member, currently the interim fiscal specialist, a mentor, and a student assistant.

Upward Bound is like my second family. What else can I say? a



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