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Fully Accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and School

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Description

Community High is a co-educational independent high school devoted to the pursuit of both the Arts and Academics and located in downtown Roanoke, Virginia. We are small by design, with classes that work in an intimate, seminar-based format. Our faculty includes working artists accomplished in their fields and scholars with advanced degrees. Our curriculum is diverse, including classes in both conventional core subjects and in subjects not frequently taught at the high school level, ranging from Film Production to African Studies. Our students are diverse as well, in ethnicity, faith, economic background, and, perhaps most importantly, vocation.

Our generous student teacher ratio and small enrollment allow us to address each student's individual needs and to nourish his or her individual talents. Faculty members are involved with students in a variety of contexts, and over the span of their entire matriculation, so that strong mentorship bonds develop for every student. In addition to college preparatory classroom instruction, our students are encouraged to seek out internships and community service projects. Toward that end, Community High has forged partnerships with many museums and other cultural and civic organizations. We have similar relationships with a number of area colleges, and many of our students graduate having already taken college courses.

Our goals for every student include the ability to:

- Write clear, persuasive prose
- Speak or perform confidently before an audience
- Demonstrate creativity in a variety of media
- Set goals and accept responsibility for their fulfillment
- Accept both leadership and group responsibilities
- Appreciate and understand the values of diverse cultures
- Contextualize effectively
- Reflect, evaluate and criticize constructively
- Develop an awareness of local and global problems and assist in their solutions through community service
- Demonstrate a sense of humor



School Statistical Profile 2008 – 2009

- Faculty with post-graduate degrees: 78%
- Parental and board funding participation: 100%
- Demographic draw: 60-mile radius
- Full time students: 47
- Part time students taking classes: 1
- Full time student-teacher ratio: 5:1
- Male/female student ratio 5:4
- Students on scholarship: 51%
- Students representing traditionally under-served ethnicities: 16%

Curriculum Format

We offer our students a college preparatory curriculum in a nontraditional format. Our courses are offered semester by semester, and made available in small multi-age seminars. The dominant model is that of colleges. Instead of English 9, 10, 11, and 12, for example, a student may take Elizabethan Drama, African American Literature, Russian Novels, Latin American Literature, Poetry Writing and Comprehension, Theater as Literature, The Short Story and Contemporary Southern Literature. Science and Social Studies, as well as Math, are offered in a more conventional format, but all courses seek to involve students in direct ways, and to cross curricular boundaries.

Unlike many secondary schools, courses in the Arts are considered “Core” classes, and are required and weighted in the same way. We consider the Arts vital to an engaged citizenry, and essential to the development of full mastery of other subjects.

We provide as much curricular flexibility as possible so that students can avail themselves through Community High of college courses at Hollins, Roanoke College and Virginia Western as part of their high school experience and as an excellent preparation for future college experiences. Internships, social service projects and work experiences are also encouraged and integrated into the individual’s curriculum.

Courses and course concepts:

Foreign Languages: Spanish I-V, French I-V, Latin I-IV, German I-V. We concentrate on verbal proficiency except of course with Latin.

Literature and Writing: the premise of all courses is a strong insistence that every graduate be a competent writer. Aside from specific writing and composition instruction, Literature courses are required every semester and may be as varied as: Dante’s *Inferno*, Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* to Beat Literature, Contemporary Southern Literature, Survey of Philosophy, a Shakespeare intensive, Romantic Poetry, or 21st Century Drama.

Math and Science: full college preparatory offerings with an emphasis on practical applications and environmental awareness. Basic Math – Calculus as well as Business Math; Earth Science – Physics, with labs.

Social Science and Critical Thinking: we encourage critical thinking, engaged debate and tolerance for differing points of view in all our course work. In the Social Sciences these aspects of learning are particularly featured. We offer a full college preparatory curriculum: World History – American Government as well as other courses which vary from year to year and include Ethics, Archaeology and Anthropology, Western Civilization, Geo-politics, Biblical Studies, Philosophy, The History of Rock and Roll, African Studies.

Visual and Performing Arts: The Arts Programs at CHS are our most outstanding feature. This is not only because we believe the Arts and an appreciation of the Arts are fundamental to developing an educated citizenry, but also because the Arts are so underserved in our regional educational environment. Our Faculty includes a number of individuals who are artists in their own right. These teachers bring expertise, professionalism and passion to the classroom, the theater and the studio. The range of possibility for artistic expression at CHS is truly remarkable. Repeatedly we have found that encouraging a student's interest in the Arts, and allowing the student to develop his/her talent has the beneficial side effect of making the student happier and much more successful in other academic endeavors. The work ethic and pride of accomplishment discovered in the Arts often transfer to the rest of the student's life. Thus we see a more responsible, motivated and engaged individual.

Brian Counihan, a VCCA fellow, winner of Ireland's first National Portrait Award, and frequent participant in International Art Exchanges offers instruction in **Oil, Watercolor, and Drawing**. He has started a curatorial program, the **Young Curators**, for our students with The Taubman Art Museum. Our students have access to other area artists for internships and our program has been showcased on a national level via The Marginal Arts Festival.

Josh Chapman is a short story writer whose work has been anthologized in *New Stories from the South* and published in various national magazines has worked to bring writers to campus for his **Creative Writing** classes, including American Book Award winner, Josif Novakovich and poet and novelist Lucinda Roy.

Simon Nolen won the Philadelphia Screenwriters Award for his feature length screenplay "Mountain Love" and is currently producing a film for the Bedford Historical Society leads our students in **Film, Photography, Digital Graphics, and Film Studies**. Because of his efforts our students are able to produce the posters for our productions and festivals as well as win awards in local photography and film competitions.

John McBroom, Production manager of Floyd Fest, veteran of several touring ensembles such as Red Weather and Blue Mule with appearances on 15 commercially released CDs, has changed the face of high school music. We do not have a marching band but we do regularly have students in **Performance Band** who are sufficiently talented and well trained so that they have been asked to perform in concert with national performers like Toni Blackman. Additionally they are trained in **Music Theory**, and they have the opportunity to work in at **Floyd Fest**.

Les Epstein appeared in Off Off Broadway with The Washington Square players and has directed World and Regional Premieres of Operas by Ksasa, Edward Barnes and Raymond Wire leads our students in a regular season of three full scale productions. His infectious love of **Theater, Opera, and Shakespeare** allows our students to experience the best from a pro.

College Counseling

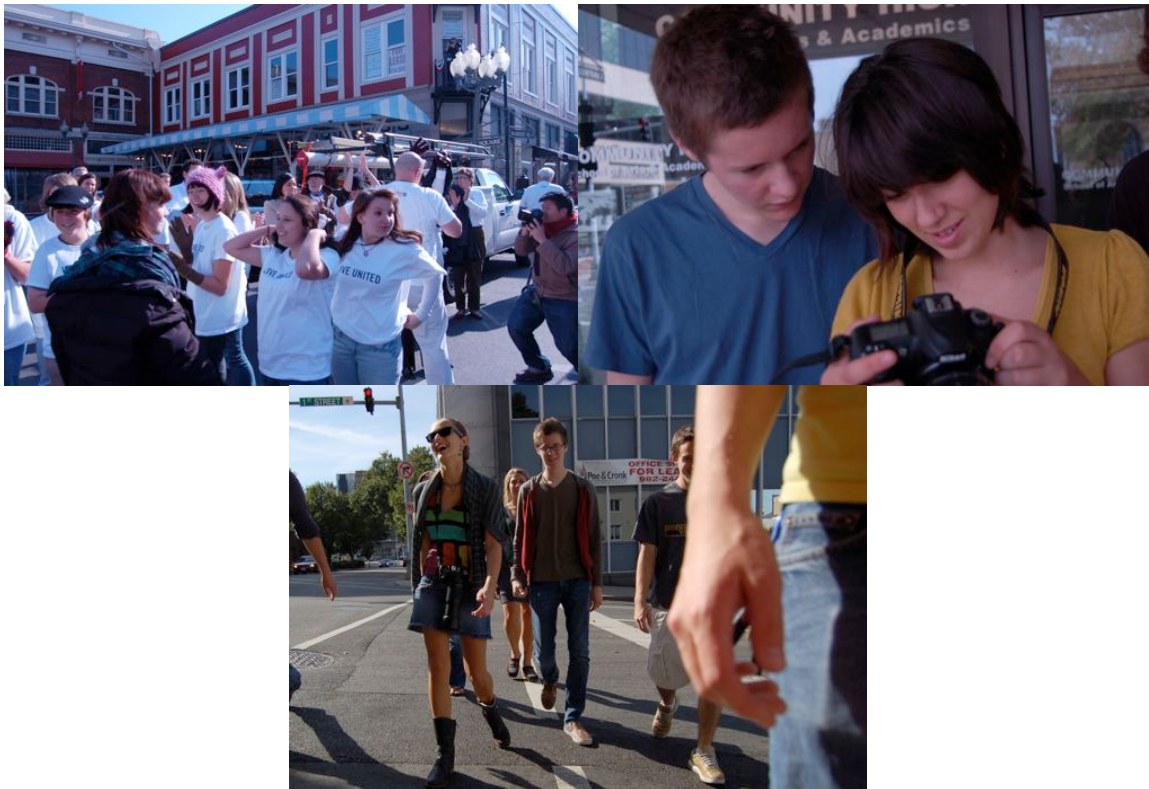
At Community High, we work with each student and family to ensure that the college chosen is appropriate and suited to a student's individual talents and goals. We use an outside college counselor to supplement our efforts to find diverse and suitable matches for our students. We have been extremely fortunate over the last seven years to facilitate the process so that every student who has applied to four year colleges has been granted admission in at least one such institution. The list below shows the range of colleges that have accepted our students.

College Acceptances: 2001-2009

Berklee College of Music	Marlboro College	University of Colorado at
Centre College	Moravian College	Colorado Springs
Christopher Newport	North Carolina School of	University of Louisville
University	the Arts	University of Mary
College of Santa Fe	Northern Arizona	Washington
College of the Atlantic	University	University of North Carolina
College of William and	Oberlin College	at Asheville
Mary	Pennsylvania Academy of	University of Oregon
Cornell College	Art	University of Pennsylvania
Culinary Institute of	Purdue University	University of Richmond
America	Pikesville College	University of Virginia at
Dickinson College	Radford University	Wise
Drew University	Randolph College	University of Virginia
East Tennessee State	Randolph Macon College	Virginia Commonwealth
University	Roanoke College	University
Emory and Henry	Savannah College of Art	Virginia State University
University	and Design	Virginia Polytechnic
Ferrum College	Seattle University	Institute and State
George Mason University	St. Louis University,	University
Goucher College	Madrid Campus	Virginia Western
Guilford College	St. Paul's College	Community College
Hampden Sydney College	State University of New	Wake Forest University
Hofstra University	York at Purchase	Warren Wilson College
Hollins University	University of Colorado at	Washington College
Humbolt University	Boulder	West Virginia University
James Madison University		
Knox College		

History and Facilities

Community High was founded in 2002 by a group of parents, many of them college professors, looking for a more innovative and responsive high school environment for their own children, a school that would more thoroughly prepare them for a complete liberal arts education, and for a fulfilling adulthood. We began as an extension of Community School, an institution with over thirty years of experience in student-centered alternative education, and have quickly grown into an independent and vital organization. We now occupy a campus with classrooms throughout downtown Roanoke, including the Dumas Center—a cultural organization in the heart of Roanoke’s historical African American community—and the Roanoke Higher Education Center as well as our main facility at 302 Second Street. This location makes it possible for our students to learn and work with a number of partner organizations, ranging from the Jefferson Center, a facility for the performing arts, to the West African advocacy group Kimoyo, Ltd., to the Taubman Museum of Art.



The Marginal Arts Festival and Arts at Community High

Although it is a private school, Community High takes its responsibilities as a citizen organization seriously; we do not wish for our students or our faculty to work or live separately from the community at large. Towards that end, we sponsor the annual Marginal Arts Festival.

This festival reflects one of the core principles of our school: exploration of our community and the world through active and intellectually engaged participation in the Arts. We believe strongly in the value of diversity of ideas and cultures, and we work to bring artists, local and international, to the festival who share our commitment to push limits and explore boundaries.

In sponsoring this festival and other related events, we hope to make Roanoke a better place, and to teach our students that culture is a dialogue to be maintained, not a product to be passively consumed. The Arts, at Community High, are a vital and necessary mode of intellectual inquiry and personal expression.



Our Future Plans

In its relatively short existence, Community High has grown from a student body of twelve to a stable enrollment of around fifty. We have assembled a faculty with enviable credentials and talent, both inside and outside of the classroom; a deep commitment to the Roanoke Valley; and sharing a common educational philosophy. We are fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and have a rising profile in the Roanoke region and among our fellow schools. We believe the creation phase is nearly complete and we are ready to consolidate our strengths on a permanent basis.

As we move forward, our primary goal is to build for Community High a sense of security, while retaining the institution's flexibility and responsiveness.

- 1) As we now understand our staffing goals and the needs of our students, our most immediate objective is to stabilize our finances. We need to continue to increase our student enrollment to the optimum level of sixty full time students. This will make the yearly operating needs more in line with tuition income.
- 2) Although our current location is ideal, our facilities are not. What is needed therefore is classroom space equal to our enrollment and curriculum, in a building downtown with a public profile. Such a facility would improve the day-to-day lives of faculty and students, and, more importantly, make it easier to recruit new students and raise additional funds. We currently are looking at a property which may well be the perfect home for the school.
- 3) Schools such as ours, large or small, can never be exclusively tuition-driven. In order to recruit the best students, to fully serve the Roanoke area community, and to weather occasional downturns in the economy, we must begin and grow an endowment.

Our Hope

Is that you will join us in our efforts to provide the most innovative and progressive educational opportunities in the Roanoke Region. Your commitment to Community High School of Arts and Academics will make a difference in the lives of many deserving young people – our future.

