

STHS seniors singled out for distinction



South Tahoe High School
Young Women of Distinction:
Morgan Kaufer, Liana Novak,
Tammi Tu, and Christine
Larrance.

Publisher's note: Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe on Feb. 13 recognized four Young Women of Distinction from South Tahoe High School. The following are comments Assistant Principal Marilyn Pawling said at the noon lunch at Harveys.

By Marilyn Pawling

Liana Novak

This young woman has had two unique experiences: She went on a Panama mission trip to help orphans, and a Japan youth exchange and stayed with a host family for six weeks. This experience earned her an award for being an ambassador for the United States. Liana Novak is an AP honor scholar, and a member of the National Honor Society, receiving an award for the National Honor Society for high school scholars.

She has participated in cross country running, Nordic skiing,

and swimming. She has served on the South Tahoe Youth Commission and been president for the past two years. She is a member of Generation Green, S-Club, and is currently vice president of National Honor Society.

Influential people in her life are her family, from her grandparents who immigrated to the United States, to her parents who have pushed and encouraged her throughout her life.

In her spare time she enjoys baking, cooking, and dancing. She is a well-rounded young woman for sure.

Liana applied to schools in and out of California, but would love to go to UC Berkeley. Though no career plans are set, she is committed to excel in her major and future career.

She says, "All I hope is that I feel accomplished and happy."

She carries a 4.33 gpa and enjoys history because she likes to learn about people's decisions, and how their way of thinking has influenced the world.

Deb Johnston described Liana this way, "Despite her exemplary academic accomplishments, I feel that Liana Kovak's most stellar attribute is her virtuousness. That is not a description to be taken lightly, nor is it a term that is used often. What makes Liana truly stand out from her peers is her sense of righteousness – she is very true to herself and her values without waiver. I do not know how someone Liana's age can have such a sense of purpose and compassion and selflessness, but her trip to Panama to serve is an example of such. Furthermore, I observed these qualities in my classroom everyday in her interactions with other students and with me. Liana is truly remarkable in that manner, and I am absolutely certain these qualities will assure a life of noteworthiness."

Morgan Kaufer

Being a state volleyball champ last fall will no doubt be a highlight of her high school experience. Another highlight is being a member of S Club, serving as president last year. This has provided Morgan Kaufer with lots of opportunities for community service and she is proud that S Club has reached out globally, providing bikes to girls in third world countries who need a way to get to school, getting solar cookers to women to help keep them safe, donating to the Heifer project, and bringing the Invisible Children crew to South Tahoe High School to speak to our students. She has been in the National Honor Society and Key Club and joined ASB this year.

Morgan has a weighted 4.42 gpa, is an AP scholar, received the Violet Richardson Award, and selected for Girls State. She would love to do something to help humanity, the animal world, or the environment. She has applied to multiple colleges across the country hoping to play volleyball for them.

Besides loving volleyball, she boasts she “loves all things musical: like dancing, singing, and playing the piano.” She also enjoys being outside in beautiful Lake Tahoe: skiing in the winter; and boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, and playing beach volleyball in the summer. When asked where she sees herself in 10 years, she answered, “All I can hope for is to be happy, healthy, having fun, and surrounded by loving people and people I love. If I accomplish that, I will be successful.”

After Morgan saw a documentary on Invisible Children, an organization devoted to raise awareness about the LRA violence in central Africa, she applied and attended Fourth Estate, a four-day convention on the University of San Diego campus to learn more. She said every day was filled with so much emotion; leaving was bittersweet because she came out of the camp a whole new person.

Morgan has been influenced by her family and says, “My dad is so amazing because he has a demanding job as a firefighter,

and I admire his professionalism. But at home, he has proven that you never really have to grow up: he is like a little kid and I love that about him. He is also so athletic, which is where I get my competitive drive. My mother is always instilling bits and pieces of wisdom in me, in her calm and loving way. She never fails to support me in whatever I do, keeps me healthy, and is the teacher in my life that has taught me the most valuable lessons. And lastly, my sister; I look up to her so much and we have a really close bond. She influences me because I aspire to be like her: funny, outgoing, extremely smart, driven, and always doing what is right. She is beyond amazing, and I would absolutely be nothing like the way I am without her vivacious and magnificent soul in my life.”

Janey Roeser, her S Club adviser, said of her, “Morgan is an intelligent young woman who is passionate about helping others. To this extent she has volunteered with the Invisible Children organization and brought this program to the high school so students could learn about the plight of these young children. She is determined and acts upon her beliefs to help others. Her global consciousness is to be respected and admired. Morgan is a young woman who will make a difference in our world. I look forward to seeing Morgan’s positive impact on our society and I am both thankful and grateful for all her efforts.”

Tammi Tu

Tammi Tu says her favorite subject is music because she enjoys the feeling that music brings and how it relieves a stressful day. Symphonic Band, Blue Ribbon Choir and Glee Club, which she is currently president of, keep music in her life. She is in the National Honor Society, the S Club, and Generation Green. She plays volleyball and has been in Track and Field on Varsity since 10th grade. She has participated in the Festival of Trees and Lights with the Blue Ribbon Choir, and National Honor Society for the Senior Center. She has been part of

Bingo Nights, Optimist Pancake Breakfasts, Polar Express, and Community Clean-up days. Tammi was a Girls State delegate, nominated for the Rotary Youth Leadership Camp, and a Golden Star Student for El Dorado County.

This multi-talented girl plays flute, some guitar, speaks Chinese fluently, sings, and loves music, art, and photography. She also likes writing, hiking, yoga, and paddleboarding.

She has a 4.09 gpa. She hopes to attend UC San Diego, and her plans for the future are to pursue a career in acupuncture/medicine or psychology/social sciences.

The person who has influenced Tammi the most is her sister because she is the reason she continues to strive for success. She also says SHE has influenced herself because she is the reason why she doesn't give up and always challenges herself to work hard. She says, "I am my own competition and I always want to do my personal best in order to achieve happiness within myself."

Tammi says, "The first time I sang in front of an audience in 3rd grade, I knew that I would never want to stop singing. It helped me discover aspects about myself that I would have never thought I would obtain. Singing always makes me feel relief, happiness, serenity, excitement, and so many more feelings. It brought me out of my shell and made me the person I am today."

Carla Zezula, her science teacher says, "Tammi Tu is a very bright, hard working student. She has very high expectations for herself; this trait runs in her family. She likes to challenge herself academically, yet manages to be involved with choir, and sports also. Tammi has a great sense of humor and she will be valued wherever she studies."

Christine Larrance

This young woman wants to become a civil engineer. She hopes to attend San Jose State, Chico State, or Sac State to study. Christine Larrance has visions of someday working in an engineering firm to help design bridges and plan the layout of cities.

She was influenced to choose this field when her father sparked her interest while designing their house's second floor, including introducing her to house plans. Her mother has influenced her by being so supportive throughout her academic career and inspiring her to achieve. She says that her sister is the best friend she could ever have.

Christine enjoys painting on canvas, skiing and fishing. While taking a class at South Tahoe High School with Ms. Lincoln, she has discovered a love for digital art. Christine's niche at the high school is in the orchestra where she plays viola. She says she has had a position in the front row of the orchestra since fifth grade.

Christine says, "My favorite subject is computer aided drawing because it is a fun class that makes plotting floor plans easier."

Her teacher Phil Williams describes her in this way, "Christine Larrance is an outstanding student and person. She has been a top student in both architectural design and computer aided drawing. Christine has an incredible eye for the details and a very clear vision of how to accomplish goals in drawing. She is truly a gifted young lady that has been blessed with a passion that is very obvious to all around her."

