



Hawai'i Preparatory
Academy



STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



Pohan Lee | Taiwan

My name is Pohan Lee. I am 18, and a senior at HPA. I came to HPA four years ago as a freshman after my mom had heard of this prominent school from a friend and proceeded to search online for more information. When we learned of HPA's comprehensive program, it was cemented that I came here for my high school education. Taiwan is a long way from Hawaii but I knew it was worth the distance as soon as I stepped foot on the campus because the staff and faculty were friendly and encouraging, while the student body is a melting pot of outstanding individuals. In a nutshell, HPA provides a healthy environment for a school or home away from home.

HPA has certainly provided me with the tools I will require for higher education and more. Academically, I have since gained much confidence in speaking, comprehending, and writing. Every teacher I have encountered was unbelievably helpful and supportive. Socially, I have amassed numerous unforgettable memories with my peers. Personally, being so far away from home, I have learned independence, self-reliance and self-organization. In other words, HPA has not only prepared me academically, but socially and personally as well. I am truly grateful and will treasure these valuable skills and apply them in the path I am about to embark on.

For students in Taiwan who are considering HPA as a choice for their high school education, I can confidently tell you that HPA is indeed a worthy choice. Nestled here in Hawaii, the environment is second to none. With its excellent faculty and student body, you will definitely feel like a part of the family here in HPA.



Rin Motoki | Japan

Aloha! My name is Rin Motoki and I am an 18-year-old senior at HPA, originally from Osaka, Japan. I decided to go to HPA when I was in middle school because I had a wish to study in a boarding school in the U.S. Before I came to HPA, I couldn't speak as well as I can right now, so I hit the books really hard. Both my parents were seriously surprised because they had never seen me studying so much.

I thought I would miss my home badly, but somehow I didn't struggle that much. I believe it's because people here always care about us and let us focus on the many activities of our HPA lives. Also, I was able to build great relationships with all the people here. Now I am a dorm prefect (student leader) and dorm representative. This shows the great results and trust from my many relationships with everyone at HPA.

Academically, my first year at HPA was a tough year for me, but as I continued to try hard, my grades continued to improve. I'm always trying to be an active student. It gives me a lot of opportunities to have fun with my friends and makes my life unique. Moreover, these opportunities make me a more mature person. I've become more organized myself, keeping my room nice and organized much better than how I used to. I also go to the weight room every weekday and hang out with friends a lot. This makes my life physically and mentally healthy.

At HPA, all the seniors have to work on a project called Capstone. Basically we can do whatever we want to do in Capstone, as long as we are passionate about our project. As I am working on this Capstone project, I feel that my problem-solving skills are growing and I'm sure these skills will help me someday in my life.

What I found most surprising about HPA was the relationships between teachers and students. It doesn't look like relationships between teachers and students that I am used to, it is more like relationships with friends whom I respect. We respect and help each other. Overall, HPA was much better than what I expected and helped me to be a great student. I want to thank both my parents who didn't say no to my request to study abroad, and cheered for me to continue my growth at HPA. Everyone should feel safe to come to HPA!



ChangHui Kim | Korea

My name is ChangHui Kim. I'm from Korea, and will be 18 years old soon. I am a senior at HPA. I chose HPA because I wanted a safe and pleasant learning environment like Hawaii. The distance between Korea and Hawaii Island is around 4,500 miles, which is approximately 7,300 km. It's pretty far, and also there is no direct flight, so you need to transfer to Japan or Honolulu to get here.

My first impression after I came to HPA was it's very diverse and the community is really warm, and I found it easy to adapt to. The dorm Prefects (student leaders) were doing a lot of work to help us new students, and I was really impressed by that and eventually became a Prefect myself.

I made a lot of good friends here, and also the great teachers at HPA taught us a lot of fun lessons. I like the classes here, which encouraged me in a lot of different ways to become an adult. I was an ELL student, which is an English Language Learner, and a lot of ELL teachers helped me to take the courses like other native English speakers. Then, I found my dream and passion with music, and continue to learn and improve my musicianship.

This school is a good place to study, because of the safe and beautiful environment. I learned a lot about how to live by myself, and also they reminded me about the importance of relationships between myself, my friends, and teachers, and the community that forms the school society. To be honest, at first I was worried about how to survive here, but soon I adapted to this welcoming community, and since have never had any worries.

I'm thankful for my friends, who encouraged and helped me to be in community, and also for teachers, who taught me a lot of different things from not only class, also from their life experiences and shared it with me. I think that students from Korea will adapt to this society really well, because even though there are some other Koreans here that I am friends with, we also just live here with a lot of friends from the U.S. and many other different countries. Don't worry about anything. Just come to Hawaii and HPA, learn, grow, and enjoy!



Dehyeon Yoo | Korea

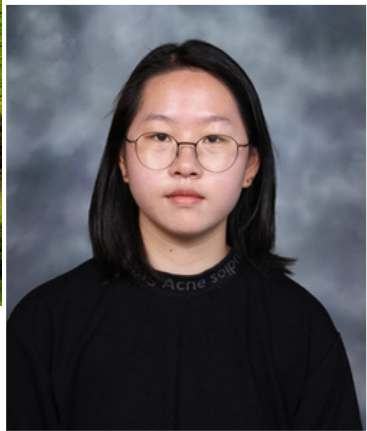
Aloha! My name is Selina and I am 19 years old from South Korea. HPA made me feel the true meaning of education for the first time, as I have experienced both competitive Korean education and neglected American education having changed schools over 10 times. The most special thing about HPA is diversity, opportunity, and community.

At first, I came to this school without discovering my talents, but now I speak Korean, English, and Japanese fluently and teach science and math to my friends. Also, I became the leader of the K-pop dance club and prefect (student leader) of the dorm, participated in the state golf competition, and wrote papers on the psychology of high school students.

At HPA, all students have fair opportunities, and can choose the classes and co-curriculars they want. We gain experience through various programs. Activities such as Capstone projects, leadership opportunities, and clubs develop our passion. Exchanges between students and teachers are active. HPA also has various events that respect all cultures and races, such as International Day, so it is far from words such as racism and alienation. Our college counselors have a lot of experience and also help us with college entrance.

It is so fun and happy to find my dream with my friends from many countries around the world and teachers who respect me while surrounded by perfect nature. HPA allows students' small talents to grow big.

In Korea, I found opportunities were reduced by one mistake, and it was hard to make friends because of high competition, and the key to success was very narrow. At HPA, I found my dream, met teachers who taught me how to make it realistic, made friends who cooperate, rather than compete, and my body and mind became healthy. HPA is ALOHA 24/7 and I'm not afraid anymore to face tomorrow. In fact, I'm looking forward to it.



Chloe Jung | Korea

Hello! My name is Chloe Jung, and I am currently 14 years old, and a freshman boarding student from Korea. I would like to share about how I am enjoying my life as an international student at HPA.

I was born an eager child who shined at the chance to try something new. For example, I am always looking for another new sport to try. I was fortunate to experience different types of sports every season of every year: skating, fencing, rock climbing, and snowboarding, to name a few. At the start of each sport I always begin with the biggest grin, anticipating the great joy from the accomplishments I will achieve.

This feeling does not always come with ease. With every different sport, effort must be put into learning something new, and sometimes it comes with failure. Repeating our failures isn't something anyone enjoys, but the thrill that comes with the first success always excites me, making me eager to try harder. This is what runs in my veins; it is why I am optimistic about the next new sport and this next big adventure in my life, that has been HPA.

HPA's diversity in student life, in sports, arts and even in academics is what lured me in. To experience such diversity in teams, bands and classrooms revs me up. I have no idea what bruises or falls it may bring, only that it will definitely bring me to new heights of success. So here I am, with that familiar expression on my face, grinning away. So here I am, with that familiar expression on my face, grinning away.



Leni Buerfent | Germany

My name is Leni Buerfent and I am a 10th grade boarding (international) student from Germany at HPA. I was 13 years old when I was starting to search for a school in another country for one semester. Then I got help from an organization (Karl Duesberg Gesellschaft). I was talking with them about my interests and they sent me a list of schools. I chose HPA! It's a long way from Germany, but I have the chance to experience a wonderful school located in beautiful Hawaii, and even if it's sometimes hard with the distance, I have no regrets.

I was shocked by the big campus and all the new things. In the first week I had a lot of organization to do but everyone helped me a lot. From the beginning I thought everybody was much nicer than in Germany. The first time living without your family is always hard but I got the best roommate and really close friends so it feels like I have another family to lean on for support when I need them.

There are a lot of activities where you can make new friends and get to know your teacher better. The community is really amazing here. Everyone is kind and when you need help they are always there for you. I have a lot of fun here and really like the activities of the school. On the weekends, it's always good to get off campus with a day student or with the many weekend activities the boarding program offers all around Hawaii island.

The classes are with 13 or so people so you can always ask questions. All of my teachers are really good. It's sometimes hard as an international student to understand everything, but after a time it really does get better and my English has improved a lot in a short time. I think the academic standard is really strong at HPA and you get a lot of chances for colleges.

I value that I always can talk with somebody if I need help and it doesn't matter about what. Also, I adore all of my friends, and that I can learn English and experience a different life. I value that I can learn with nice teachers and great classmates!



Matilde Portales | Chile

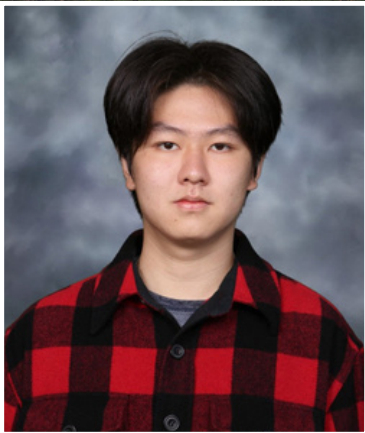
My name is Matilde Portales, I'm from Santiago, Chile and I'm in 10th grade. For my boarding school experience I looked at a lot of different options in California, Canadá, Australia, etc. but the one that caught my attention was HPA.

At first I was scared and nervous about the new experience and being by myself, but after two or three days I had new friends I trusted and I felt safe in the school environment. The faculty always offered their assistance for whatever I needed, so I felt completely comfortable if I wanted to ask about something or needed help.

The first day I came to campus I had the best impression. Every person, even if it was the security guard or the math teacher, they all welcomed me with open arms and an amazing energy, always wanting to help me with my necessities. The classes themselves are challenging, but not overly difficult, and the amount of homework is perfect.

The highlight of my experience here is the opportunity I had to get to know myself better, where nobody knew me and I could be my true self without caring about being judged. During my time here I've learned a lot about myself and the things I really like. I've also learned to enjoy the amazing landscapes of Hawaii and moments, not thinking about the past, the future or what could be better at the time. HPA has also taught me to be punctual, which I was not at all back home, and to serve my community, and actually enjoy it while doing it. I'm very thankful for that personal growth and I think it is very important for life in general. I will apply it everyday no matter what.

Back in Chile the community can be somewhat close-minded and there is not a lot of variety of cultures. With students from over 20 different countries at HPA, and students from Hawaii and the other U.S. states, this experience taught me how important it is to value the differences around the world and cultures and maybe find one in which you will feel more comfortable with.



Oscar Ni | China

My name is Oscar. I am 18 years old and I am from Shanghai, China. I came to HPA my freshman year, the first year of high school. I chose HPA mainly because I like Hawaii and schools with a relatively small population. The small population provided me with opportunities to know nearly every student and teacher at school, which helps me to build strong bonds with each other. Especially the people from the boarding program. I always go see the sunrise with them during the weekends; play basketball at the gym; and cook cuisines that have different origins.

Here at HPA, I met people from all over the world: Asia, Europe, North America, South America, and Africa. This experience really helps broaden my perspective. Therefore, my favorite school year activity is International Day when international students are given opportunities to demonstrate cultures, foods, and traditions from their own countries. As an international student, I love to perform music from China on international day's talent show. I am passionate about sharing my home country because HPA is a very safe and comfortable place to express myself.

I tried a lot of new things at HPA, such as the Marathon. I have never tried a marathon and I was a terrible runner. However, my coach Mr. Mumau kept pushing me and taught me a lot of running strategies in order to help me grow. I stepped out of my comfort zone under my friends' and coach's encouragement.

HPA is a big family, and everyone supports and helps each other. HPA is a place where I can be myself. I can pursue my dreams with help from teachers and students. HPA is definitely my second home.



Miyabi Wahl | Japan

Hello, my name is Miyabi Wahl and I am a 16-year-old sophomore at HPA. My brother used to go to HPA and I heard it was a nice place and as time passed he really changed in a great way. His confidence grew and it made him able to speak for himself. Watching his transformation, convinced me that HPA would be a great place for me.

Before I came here I was afraid that I wouldn't do well and miss my home. However, there are a lot of activities and fun friends that I don't have a moment to feel lonely. My first impression was that it is beautiful here, with a lot of nature, warm climate and of course rainbows. I'm very happy that I could study in this environment. Everyone here is nice and I never feel lonely. The teachers make me push my limits a little and challenge myself. I think this is a really important thing in regards to growth, so I am happy. All the teachers are generous with their time, so even though I'm not good at some subjects I am able to keep up my grades.

I value making friends within this diverse community and I like to speak to people from other countries. I think spending time at HPA will help me become independent and be able to express myself. When I was in Japan these were my weak points and one of the characteristics I value the most. In my short time at HPA I have already become more independent and organized, but mostly I think I became good at solving problems on my own. I used to rely on my family to help when I was at home, but now I am getting better at working through my emotions and problems.

The most surprising thing is that the campus is very big. I always think that nature here is beautiful and although I'm in the dorm, I feel really free. My impression now is that I'm having much more fun than I thought and growing as a person. I want to thank my parents for giving me this awesome opportunity to come to HPA!



Valentina Villamayor | Spain

Hola! My name is Valentina Vázquez. I was born in Galicia but I soon moved to Mallorca and after a few years I moved to Madrid, which is the place I call home now. At first, coming to Hawaii and attending HPA was only a dream. One day I started learning about Hawaii's nature and culture and I fell in love with it. Since that moment I dreamt about having the chance to come here every night. Finally, after a lot of hard work and dedication I ended up attending the school. I dreamt so much about it that my expectations were extremely high and I was afraid that I had made a dream place in my mind that wasn't true in reality. But honestly, was even better than I expected. Since the first day, I felt welcomed and it hasn't changed since.

My first impression of this place was pretty spectacular. When I was still back in Spain I was worried that I wasn't going to feel comfortable or that I wasn't going to find people that would understand me, but from the beginning I felt like home: sometimes this was a dorm parent, friend, teacher or coach, but somebody will make sure that you are feeling good and comfortable. It is also important to keep an open mind to meet new people because you might find someone you like on the first day, but also on the second month.

One of the biggest challenges that I thought I was going to face was the change of language. At first I was scared that I was going to be judged for my English, and for that matter I didn't speak that much in class, but now that my classmates have shown me that it's okay to not be perfect I feel comfortable to speak all the time and my English has improved a lot! The best way to learn a language is by speaking it. The academic schedule here is more tight and that keeps me more productive. There are so many students striving for academic excellence that it inspires me to be like them and try my best!



Leilani Barnes | Hawai'i

Hello! I am Leilani Barnes and I am currently a senior at HPA. I am originally from Oahu and came to HPA my junior year. HPA has students from all walks of life coming from amazing places all over the world. Despite all of these differences, HPA is like a huge library with books coming from all different genres and topics. No matter what kind of book you are, there is always a perfect place waiting for you with a sense of belonging. If you have the curiosity to learn, you are able to learn about the entire world despite living on a small island. Personally, I have learned a lot about Germany, China, Micronesia, and many other places by simply being friends with people from those locations.

The outdoor program here creates experiences of a lifetime. Coming from O'ahu, where I was constantly at the beach, and transitioning into being a border on campus was sometimes a challenge. Because of HPA, I have had the amazing opportunity to go on magical adventures such as backpacking the Kohala coast and the West coast of the island, pulling kalo (a Hawaiian plant) in Waipio Valley, and chasing waterfalls in Hilo. The outdoor program has influenced a complex system where nature is seen through a different lens and zoomed in on the right things.

HPA has a sense of community that goes beyond its borders and gets involved with the communities all around it. There is energy flowing in the midst of HPA, and it is spread through the school's involvement in community service.

My time at HPA has been incredible and life-changing. I went into HPA not knowing too much about who I was and what it was that I wanted in this world. Now, as a graduate of HPA, I know my place in this world, the values and the experiences worth living. I know what it means to set goals and complete them. I know how to give back to my community and I know how to be a part of one. I know how to be a Ka Makani!



Dean Connors | Oregon

My name is Dean Connors, and I am 15 years old from Bend, Oregon. I have spent the past two years at HPA and am currently a sophomore. I moved to Hawaii when I was 8. When I was in 7th grade, my sister was applying to high schools. My parents chose HPA because it was a very well-known school in the area, often called the best school in the state. I never had to apply to a school before and I love challenges, so I decided to apply to HPA. I am a boarder and live in the dorms, which has been an amazing experience. I will have lifelong friends and great stories to tell to my kids.

There is a great community in the dorm and everyone is willing to help you with anything. It taught me a lot about managing my time and prioritizing. It also showed me a little sneak peek of what college life will be like. At first, I was pretty scared and nervous. I drove onto campus and was instantly greeted by students who helped me move everything into my room. I already felt like I was at home. It made me really happy to know that everyone was so welcoming. The community at HPA is one big family. Everyone says hello and wants to brighten up your day if you need it.

Teachers build a great relationship with you in the classroom by being available for help whenever you need it. I met two of the greatest friends I have ever had and I know they will be lifelong friends. I also met plenty of other people who gave me advice on things they have done. From 8th grade to now, I have grown tremendously in the classroom. I give all the credit to my teachers and friends who have given me unlimited support. I have also grown on the field, court, and track. My coaches and teammates have pushed me and helped me thrive in not just the sport but in life. I value the sense of being your best you.

I am thankful to the admissions department for letting me come to this beautiful school, the teachers for really taking their time with me, my friends for all they have done for me, and, most importantly, my family for sending me here for a great two years.