Summer Reading Project

For Incoming Juniors 2015-2016

During your Junior year you will be reading stories that deal with The American Dream. This dream has evolved over the years and before you leave the 11th grade you will have determined what YOU feel about this concept. In order to prepare you for this undertaking you will need to complete the following assignment.

Step 1- Read 5 articles suggested from the list below. Annotate these articles. (See Annotation Sheet attached)

Article 1: *The American Dream is Dead and Good Riddance*

http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/07/07/the-american-dream-is-dead-and-good-riddance.html#

Article 2: *Keeping the American Dream*

http://www.al.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/07/keeping_the_american_dream_ali.html

Article 3: *Millennials Put Their Surprising Stamp on the American Dream*


Article 4: *What Obama Can Learn from Jay Z*


Article 5: *Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%*


Article 6: *Is the American Dream Over?*

http://poststar.com/news/opinion/columns/cal_thomas/is-the-american-dream-over/article_baf0cae2-f6a1-11df-b113-001cc4c002e0.html

Step 2- Read the excerpt from *Pursuit of Happyness* by Chris Gardner and annotate the text.
Step 3- Write a 1-2 page typed response in which you develop a controlling idea about the American Dream and its role in modern society based on the summer's reading. You will be required to turn in the annotated articles as well as your response paper when you return in September 2015. This will be your 1st grade for the quarter!
HOW TO ANNOTATE
Follow the instructions below to engage in active reading. The outcome should be thoughtful dialogue with and reflection on the text.

BEFORE READING

CIRCLE the title. Consider what it means by asking a question about the title.
Identify information about the author, source, and publication date.
Identify the topic/subject and WRITE anything you already know about the topic or want to know about the topic at the top of your page.

DURING READING

Read EVERYTHING once without marking the text.
Read AGAIN.
Mark in the text
STAR the thesis, argument, or main focus of the article.
HIGHLIGHT any repetition.
UNDERLINE major points or arguments in each paragraph. Consider: who, what, when, where, why, how?
UNDERLINE what you find interesting or relevant to your life, world, and experience.
CIRCLE unfamiliar vocabulary.
Write in the margins
LEFT MARGIN: Summarize what the author is saying in each major section. Keep summaries brief – 10 words or less.
RIGHT MARGIN: Dig deeper into the text. Ask questions that arise in your reading. Note what the author is DOING (persuading, presenting information, comparing, describing). Illustrate ideas, if you are an artistic type. Formulate opinions on the information that is presented.

AFTER READING

Complete this statement: “The author’s purpose for writing this is...”
If you can’t answer the author’s purpose question, go back and reread the introduction and conclusion.
Go back to the title and ANSWER your question, and note a reflection on the significance of the title.
The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

A long walk to WALL STREET
is how others describe my life. But when I look back
at the journey from homelessness to prosperity,
I hold one thing dearer
than all else, my commitment to my son.
This is our story.

CHRIS GARDNER
WITH OUINCY TROUPE

PROLOGUE

Go Forward

Whenever I'm asked what exactly it was that helped guide me through my darkest days not only to survive but to move past those circumstances and to ultimately attain a level of success and fulfillment that once sounded impossible, what comes to mind are two events.

One of them took place in the early 1980s, when I was twenty-seven years old, on an unusually hot, sunny day in the Bay Area. In the terminally overcrowded parking lot outside of San Francisco General Hospital, just as I exited the building, a flash of the sun's glare temporarily blocked my vision. As I refocused, what I saw changed the world as I knew it. At any other point in my life it wouldn't have struck me so powerfully, but there was something about that moment in time and the gorgeous, red convertible Ferrari 308 that I saw slowly circling the lot—driven by a guy obviously in search of a parking spot—that compelled me to go and have a life-changing conversation with him.

Some years before, fresh out of the Navy, I had first arrived in San Francisco—lured to the West Coast by a prestigious research job and the opportunity to work for one of the top young heart surgeons in the country. For a kid like me who'd barely stepped foot outside the six-block square of the 'hood in Milwaukee—not counting my three-year stint as a Navy medic in North Carolina—
San Francisco was the be-all and end-all. The city was the Land of Milk and Honey and the Emerald City of Oz rolled into one. Rising up out of the bay into golden glowing mists of possibility, she seduced me from the start, showing off her studded hills and plunging valleys as she laid herself out with arms open. At night the town was an aphrodisiac—with city lights like rare jewels sparkling down from Nob Hill and Pacific Heights, through the better neighborhoods and along the rougher streets of the Mission and the Tenderloin (my new 'hood), spilling out of the towers of the Financial District and reflecting into the bay by Fisherman’s Wharf and the Marina.

In the early days, no matter how many times I drove west over the Bay Bridge from Oakland, or north from Daly City heading toward the Golden Gate Bridge, which stretches right up to the horizon before dropping down into Marin County, those views of San Francisco were like falling in love all over again. Even as time went by and I got hip to the weather—the periods of gray foggy skies alternating with days of bone-chilling rain—I’d wake up to one of those glorious, perfect San Francisco days and the beauty wiped away all memory of the gloom. San Francisco remains in my mind to this day the Paris of the Pacific.

Of course, back then, it didn’t take long to discover that she was also deceptive, not necessarily easy, sometimes coldhearted, and definitely not cheap. Between steep rents and the chronic car repairs caused by the toll the hills took on transmissions and brakes—not to mention that pile of unpaid parking tickets all too familiar to most San Franciscans—staying afloat could be a challenge. But that wasn’t going to mar my belief that I’d make it. Besides, I knew enough about challenge. I knew how to work hard, and in fact, over the next years, challenges helped me to reshape my dreams, to reach further, and to pursue goals with an increased sense of urgency.

In early 1981, when I became a first-time father, overjoyed as I was, that sense of urgency kicked up another notch. As the first months of my son’s life flew by, I not only tried to move ahead faster but also began to question the path that I’d chosen, wondering if somehow in all my efforts I wasn’t trying to run up the down escalator. Or at least that was my state of mind on that day in the parking lot outside San Francisco General Hospital as I approached the driver of the red Ferrari.

This encounter would crystallize in my memory—almost into a mythological moment that I could return to and visit in the present tense whenever I wanted or needed its message. I see the sports car in front of me just as if it’s today, circling in slow motion, with the whirring sound of that unbelievably powerful engine as it idles, waiting and purring like a lion about to pounce. In my mind’s ear, I’m hearing the cool calling of a horn blown by Miles Davis, my musical hero—who, back in the day, I was positive I was going to be when I grew up. It’s one of those imagined senses in the sound track of our lives that tells us to pay attention.

With the top down and the light glinting fire-engine-metallic red off the hood, the guy at the wheel is every bit as cool as the jazz musicians I used to idolize. A white guy, dark-haired, clean-shaven, of average height and slight build, he’s wearing the sharpest suit, possibly custom-made, out of a beautiful piece of cloth. It’s more than just a wonderful garment, it’s the whole look—the tasteful tie, the muted shirt, the pocket square, the understated cuff links and watch. Nothing obnoxious, just well put together. No flash, no bullshit. Just sharp.

“Hey, man,” I say, approaching the Ferrari and waving at him as I point out where my car is parked, nodding to let him know that I’m coming out. Am I seduced by the Ferrari itself? Yes. I am a red-blooded American male. But it’s more than that. In that instant, the car symbolizes all that I lacked while growing up—freedom, escape, options. “You can have my spot,” I offer, “but I gotta ask you a couple of questions.”
He gets that I’m offering a trade here—my parking place for his information. In my twenty-seven years of life so far, I have learned a little already about the power of information and about the kind of currency that information can become. Now I see an opportunity to get some inside information, I think, and so I draw out my trusty sword—a compulsion for question-asking that has been in my survival kit since childhood.

Seeing that it’s not a bad deal for either of us, he shrugs and says, “Fine.”

My questions are very simple: “What do you do?” and “How do you do it?”

With a laugh, he answers the first question just as simply, saying, “I’m a stockbroker,” but to answer the second question we extend the conversation to a meeting a few weeks later and then a subsequent introduction to the ABCs, of Wall Street, an entirely foreign but mesmerizing venue where I am just crazy enough to think I could do what he and others like him do, if only I can find an opening.

Despite the fact that I had absolutely no experience and no contacts whatsoever, looking to get my big break into the stock market became a major focus over the next several months, but so did other urgent concerns, especially when I suddenly became a single parent amid a series of other unforeseen, tumultuous events.

By this time period, San Francisco’s conflicting attitudes toward a growing homeless population were already well known. What officials declared was a new epidemic in homelessness had actually been developing for more than a decade as the result of several factors—including drastic cutbacks to state funding for mental health facilities, limited treatment options for the large number of Vietnam vets suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and alcohol and drug addiction, along with the same urban ills plaguing the rest of the country. During the long, cold winter of 1982, as government programs to help the poor were being eliminated, the economy in the Bay Area, as in the rest of the country, was in a downturn. At a time when jobs and affordable housing were becoming harder to find, access to cheap street drugs like angel dust and PCP was starting to get easier.

Though some business leaders complained that the homeless would scare tourists away, if you happened to visit San Francisco in the early 1980s, you were probably unaware of the deepening crisis. You might have heard about what neighborhoods to avoid—areas where you were warned about the winos, junkies, bag ladies, transients, and others who, as they used to say in my part of Milwaukee, “just went crazy.” Or maybe you did notice some of the signs—the long food lines, multiplying numbers of panhandlers, the mothers and children on the steps of overcapacity shelters, runaway teenagers, or those sleeping human forms that sometimes looked more like mounds of discarded clothing left in alleyways, on park benches, at transit stations, and under the eaves and in the doorways of buildings. Maybe your visit to San Francisco reminded you of similar problems in your hometown, or maybe even alerted you to the increasing percentage of the working poor who’d entered the ranks of the homeless—gainfully employed but overburdened individuals and families forced to choose between paying rent and buying food, medicine, clothing, or other basic necessities. You may have paused to wonder what kinds of lives and dreams and stories had been lived before, and perhaps to consider how easy it would be for anyone to fall through the cracks of whatever support had once existed, or to face a sudden crisis of any proportion and simply stumble into the hole of homelessness.

Chances are, however, no matter how observant you might have been, you wouldn’t have noticed me. Or if you did happen to spot me, usually moving at a fast clip as I pushed a lightweight, rickety blue stroller that had become my only wheels and that carried my most precious cargo in the universe—my nineteen-month-old son, Chris Jr., a beautiful, growing, active, alert, talkative, hungry
Cecil Williams, one of the most enlightened men to ever walk this earth, a friend and mentor whose goodness blessed me in ways I can never sufficiently recount. At Glide Memorial Methodist Church in the Tenderloin—where the Reverend Williams fed, housed, and repaired souls (eventually accommodating thousands of homeless in what became the first homeless hotel in the country)—he was already an icon. Then and later, you couldn't live in the Bay Area without knowing Cecil Williams and getting a sense of his message. Walk that walk, he preached. On any Sunday, his sermon might address a number of subjects, but that theme was always in there, in addition to the rest. Walk that walk and go forward all the time. Don't just talk that talk, walk it and go forward. Also, the walk didn't have to be long strides; baby steps counted too. Go forward.

The phrases repeated in my brain until they were a wordless skat, like the three-beat staccato sound as we rode the train over the BART rails, or like the \textit{clack-clack-clack} syncopation of the stroller wheels with percussion added from the occasional \textit{creaks} and \textit{squeals} and \textit{grunts} they made going over curbs, up and down San Francisco's famed steep hills, and around corners.

In years to come, baby carriages would go way high-tech with double and triple wheels on each side and all aerodynamic, streamlined, and leather-cushioned, plus extra compartments for storing stuff and roofs to add on to make them like little inhabitable igloos. But the rickety blue stroller I had, as we forged into the winter of 1982, had none of that. What it did have—during what I'm sure had to be the wettest, coldest winter on record in San Francisco—was a sort of pup tent over Chris Jr. that I made of free plastic sheeting from the dry cleaners.

As much as I kept going forward because I believed a better future lay ahead, and as much as I was sure that the encounter outside San Francisco General Hospital had steered me to that future, the real driving force came from that other pivotal event in my
life—which had taken place back in Milwaukee in March 1970, on a day not long after my sixteenth birthday.

Unlike many experiences in childhood that tended to blur in my memory into a series of images that flickered dimly like grainy, old-fashioned moving pictures, this event—which must have taken up little more than a split second of time—became a vivid reality that I could conjure in my senses whenever I wanted, in perfectly preserved detail.

This period was one of the most volatile of my youth, beyond the public turbulence of the era—the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, echoes of assassinations and riots, and the cultural influences of music, hippies, black power, and political activism, all of which helped to shape my view of myself, my country, and the world.

During my childhood and adolescence, my family—consisting of my three sisters and me, our mother, who was present in my early life only sporadically, and our stepfather—had lived in a series of houses, walk-ups, and flats, punctuated by intermittent separations and stays with a series of relatives, all within a four-block area. Finally, we had moved into a small house in a neighborhood considered to be somewhat upwardly mobile. It may have only been so in comparison to where we'd been living before, but this house was nonetheless "movin' on up"—à la the Jefferson family, who still had another five years to go to get their own TV show.

The TV on this particular day was, in fact, the focus of my attention, and key to my mood of happy expectation, not only because I was getting ready to watch the last of the two games played in the NCAA's Final Four, but because I had the living room all to myself. This meant that I could hoot and holler all I wanted, and that I could talk out loud to myself if I so pleased, and answer myself right back. (My mother had this habit too. When others asked what she was doing, she'd always say, "Talking to someone with good sense.")

Another cause for feeling good that day was that my mother happened to be the only other person at home. Even if she wasn't sitting down beside me to watch the game but was somewhere nearby—busy ironing clothes in the adjacent dining room, as it so happened—it was as if the house was breathing a sigh of relief for just the two of us to be there, something that almost never occurred, especially without my stepfather's menacing presence.

March Madness, which came every year at the end of the college basketball season, was always thrilling for me, and an excellent distraction from heavier thoughts I was having about the tightrope I was walking from the end of adolescence into manhood. The tournament was always full of surprises, Cinderella stories, and human drama, starting with the nation's sixty-four top teams in thirty-two matchups as they rapidly whittled down to the Sweet Sixteen, then the Elite Eight, and ended up with the two games of the Final Four before the winners played for the championship title. All eyes this year were on how UCLA would fare in its first season without seven-footer Lew Alcindor (soon to become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) after he had led them to three consecutive titles. The team that seemed destined to make sure UCLA didn't go home with the championship this year was Jacksonville University, a heretofore unknown college program that boasted not one but two stars, Artis Gilmore and Pembroke Burrows III, both over seven feet tall. It was unusual enough at this time for players to hit the seven-foot mark, let alone to have two of them on the same team.

Known as the original Twin Towers, or sometimes the Towers of Power, Gilmore and Burrows had helped Jacksonville obliterate their opposition and had brought them to the Final Four to face St. Bonaventure. As time for the tip-off neared, the excitement was only heightened by the announcers' predictions about the careers and riches awaiting the two giants in the NBA or the ABA.

As it happened, Jacksonville would win the game and then lose the championship to UCLA after all. And Artis Gilmore would go on to success in the NBA while Pembroke Burrows would be
I not only believed her then, at age sixteen, but I continued to believe that statement in all the days that followed, including that fateful day in San Francisco when I got the first inkling of a future in Wall Street, and in those moments pushing up the hills in the downpour with my son looking up at me from his stroller through rain-splattered dry-cleaning plastic, and in the desolate hours when the only place of refuge was in a BART station bathroom.

It was only later in my adulthood, after those days of wandering in the desert of homelessness, believing in the promised land my mother had told me about and then finding it, and only after generating many millions of dollars, that I understood why these two events were both so essential to my eventual success. The encounter with the driver of the red Ferrari showed me the way to discovering what the arena was in which I could apply myself and also to learning how to do that. But it was my mother’s earlier pronouncement that had planted the belief in me that I could attain whatever goals I set for myself.

Only after looking as deeply as I could into my mother’s life was I able to fully understand why she said those words to me at the time that she did. By recognizing the disappointments that happened in her life before and after I came along, I was able to see that, though too many of her dreams had been crushed, by daring me to dream she was being given another chance.

To fully answer the question of what it was that guided me through and became the secret to the success that followed, I had to go back to my own childhood and take the journey back to where my mother came from—in order to understand at last how that fire to dream got lit in me.

My story is hers.