

Reaching for the Clouds

A documentary portraying the lives of four young adults pursuing their *true* dreams.

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“The dream was always running ahead of me. To catch up, to live for a moment in unison with it, that was the miracle.” Anais Nin

The youth is stereotyped as apathetic. As portrayed in the media, in politics, and in households, young people seem to only sit around and get distracted by video games and material items all day. It is ironic that we are supposedly the most apathetic youth when we are in actuality an extremely accomplished generation. Our youth participation in politics is on a steady incline, the entrepreneurs are younger than ever before, and those who get into universities face acceptance rates as low as 9%. The youth is underestimated and it is time that their successes and ambitions are showcased. Zachary Morris, April Eaton, Charlie Cohen, and Christopher Castle are all under twenty-years-old and are already in the active pursuit of their dreams. They work hard, think deeply, and most importantly, dream big. Regardless of whether the dream is to be a businessman or a theatrical performer, a musical artist or a model, the pursuit of that takes drive and hard work. Zach said candidly in his interview, “My dreams are big, but it starts with the smallest thing. An inspiration.” True greatness comes from the endless, tiring, and tenacious pursuit of a dream.

“My dream is to find a place in the world that seems so confusing. I feel like the best way to do that, the only thing I’ve really truly been good at, is performing and writing.”

-Zachary Morris



“I’m a confused person. I’ve always been a confused person,” Zach Morris says as I ask him to describe himself. We sit in his cramped dorm, barely fitting all of the equipment in the room. Around the room there are multiple copies of a screenplay called *In the Living Room with John Livingston* scattered everywhere, pictures of him and his family when he lived in Paraguay for the summer, a cigar box with love notes from his latest girlfriend, and of all things, a pipe. I question him about the odd pipe and he said, “I haven’t smoked it yet. But how cool is that! Get a picture of me with the pipe.” Like all things in Zach’s world, the pipe is prop, an added element of drama to everyday life.

Zach, or Pancho as he is called by everyone else, is one of only twelve actors that made it into UCLA’s theatre program his freshman year. Out of over 6,000 applicants and tryouts, he is one of twelve male actors that made it. Needless to say, he is amazingly talented. Even before the prestigious halls of UCLA’s McGowan Hall, he began making a mark on the theatre community. His senior year, he wrote, directed and acted in his own play called *Fake Plastic Trees*. He swept the competition, placing top three in every single category, winning first for best monologue and best original screenplay. Why does he want to pursue this? “I’ve never really seen another option,” he says. “Writing, acting, performing is the only thing I’ve really been good at.”


Whether from lack of other talents or a focused passion, Zach is obsessed with writing, acting, and directing, and his creativity is matched by ambition. Currently, he is the only freshman at UCLA to be approved to direct his own original screenplay. “I’m writing this play right now, to be performed in May. I mean it’s limited in its perception, because it is from my point of view, but it’s good. I’ve worked really hard and I want people to enjoy it. I mean, I do write them for a reason,” he says. Though typically a bit dramatic, his ideas about theater art are profound for such a young person. “The amazing thing about writing is that I have an idea in my head, and I take that idea and represent it through a created story. Somebody will then take that piece of writing, interpret it, and perform it for an audience, which brings it into the world. The world then does what it wants with it. Just getting an idea out there like that is my goal.”

In 2002, only 139,000 jobs were held by actors, producers, and directors in the United States, most of whom made only 29,000 a year. Those with extra talent, ambition, or even luck made an average of \$200,000 a year. In such a make or break industry, I ask Zach whether recognition matters. He laughs knowingly, as though he’s letting me in on a funny secret. “Of course. I mean, of course. I want to say I’m doing it for the people all of the time, but there’s this evil little part of me that’s like its all for me!” As for what mark he wants to make on field, he shrugs and says, “I just want to continue telling stories.”

With all of the potential careers that are more reliable, and in many ways more safe, I am curious how Zach is sure this dream is it. In a very un-theatrical, un Zach, simple way, he just said it. “Because... because it’s the only thing that really makes me want to get up out of bed in the morning.”







“I’m very conscious at this point, at least in my young career, if I were to start doing it for the trophies instead of for the people, I could lose sight and then lose my touch. I mean certainly, I don’t believe that people become artist because they are completely selfless. But the recognition is merely motivation to continue. The recognition is merely the audience is confirming that their lives have been affected. It’s a two way street. They get something and I get something. They’re telling me continue doing your work because it’s really helped us. You wouldn’t have the Oscar ceremonies every year if those films weren’t important. I think it’s silly to insist that any deed you do as an artist will go unrecognized. Because I mean, if they did go unrecognized, the world would not be changing.”









“I just want to continue telling stories. And keep those stories relevant. I acknowledge that I’m a product of my time. I’m timelessly timely. Everyone is timelessly timely. I want to continue making stories that people can relate to themselves. I don’t want to tell the same damn story over and over and over again. I don’t want to make the same observations. Every generation... ‘Oh Ah, that’s what life’s about.’ No it’s not about ideas it’s about telling the stories of people. The ideas transcend those stories and people.”







“My cast is amazing. Each person is a profound performer. Their job is to interpret the story and get the ideals of it across. They are what is going to make the show.”







317

300 R

500 S

100 X

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“I know this is my dream because... because it’s the only thing that really makes me want to get up out of bed in the morning.”

“I really love my modeling and I really want to do it as a career, do it my whole life, it’s just not like— oh right now it’s just the thing to do, it’s just what I love doing and what I want to do with my life.”

-April Eaton



“I’m kinda the outgoing one, I’ve always been really loud and in your face, and kind of always really wanted the center of attention, I never really shy back or stay hidden.” At first glance, April might seem like any normal seventeen-year-old teenage girl. She is captain of the cheerleading team and on the Varsity Track team at school. Little do most students at Los Altos High School know that April has a whole second life, in the fashion and modeling industry. “I juggle school and work, but my work is a little different because I do modeling, and it takes a lot of time. I miss a lot of school; I have to travel to L.A. and San Francisco constantly and I miss a lot of other activities kids my age get to do because I’m always busy.”

April is currently a model for the Ford Modeling Agency in San Francisco. “Usually wake up, get ready for school and start off with school, but there are a couple times a week I get picked up early either in the middle of the day or end of the day and have to drive to San Francisco and then I get there and I do my audition and then I drive back either for track if there’s time or sometimes I get back in time for the end of school. And then there’s some days that I wake up at two am in the morning I have to drive straight to LA and then back in one day, so I miss school completely.” She probably spends on average three months out of the year out of town on modeling shoots, auditions, or runaway shows, all because April’s trying to pursue her dream. “I really love my modeling and I really want to do it as a career, do it my whole life, it just not like oh right now it’s just the thing to do, it’s just what I love doing and what I want to do with my life.”

April’s dream, “kinda just popped into my lap” when she was in about 6th grade at a family party. When her mother’s friend suggested modeling, April replied, “why not, it sounds fun and if I could do it that would be awesome.” Modeling for April, “just kind of came to me. I was always really loving the singing, and I thought acting was cool, and modeling I guess just kinda came with that... and I grew to love it like, each time I did it, and we tried out things and I just really enjoyed myself. And I turned out to be pretty good at it I guess so I stuck with it.” Starting at a young age proved that her talent came organically. Her first shoot gave her a lot of attention, “I was twelve, so I think I was in the 7th grade and it was for Gap and when it came out it was this big, huge deal cause everyone at school saw it cause it was gap online, so... it was scary but I really liked it too.” Attention and recognition are a few of the advantages of her career, but with every pro there is most likely a con.

Forfeiting her social and academic life for her modeling life has been the toughest burden April has faced so far. April spends roughly three months out of a year out of town for auditions, shoots, and runaway shows. Missing countless hours of school puts her in a position to keep up with her academics in a more unconventional way. She usually finds herself upholding her grades by studying in the car on the way to San Francisco or Los Angeles, and making up tests for material she wasn't there to learn due to trying on clothes for people. Tyra Banks once said, "A smart model is a good model," April's ability to manage good grades, athletics, and a rising career are just a few of the examples that perceive her intelligence and excellent modeling. Although April claims, "sometimes missing school isn't so bad" to the contrary she is also missing school activities and events that most kids her age might take for granted, for example school assemblies, speakers, Friday spirit activities and so on. "The one I remember the most is 8th grade we had been planning for months to go to a play or something and then two days before my parents were like oh you have a shoot that day you can't go." As for her social life, she commented, "Um, I still have one, which is good" because April has to surrender late nights out with her friends for her beauty sleep for the photo shoot in morning. So in the end she doesn't have a normal teenage life, but that is the risk she is willingly to take for something she loves. "So there's been things I've missed and had to sacrifice, but I dunno I think it's worth it."

April is so passionate about her dream that she is currently not even thinking about going to college, but intends to pursue something she finds truly irresistible: modeling. "Colleges will be there, and I could always do that later in life if I needed to or it doesn't have to be that way. This is my dream and this is what I want, no college experience is gonna get me like the dream of my dreams cuz like you can't go to college for modeling, there's no college like that and so this is like I want my dream more than that, at the moment at least." April's modeling dream is like, a little boy at the dinner table staring at the turkey at Thanksgiving; she can smell it, see it, and almost touch it, but all she wants to do is just gobble it up. April will do everything in her power to be a full-time model, because it makes her feel, "like naturally the happiest person ever, but when I am doing a photo shoot or doing a catwalk or something like that its just the most amazing thing ever, and just, I love it. It's just being in the spot light and being there and it's such an adrenaline rush but its such a happy moment that its like this is what I want this is where I'm gonna go."



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“A smart model is a good model.”
-Tyra Banks





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“I would say my passion is definitely music, and going into the industry or music, anywhere I can share music, play music, record it, in any way to be able to deal with music.”

-Charlie Cohen

Charlie is a seventeen-year-old junior attending Mountain View High school. He always has a silent smile upon his face and as he likes to say, "I don't really do that much except for play music and go to school." Charlie's first dream, like most adolescent boys, was to be a professional athlete. He looked up to Barry Bonds and Michael Jordan as tales of fame filled his mind on re-play. But his life took a dramatic turn. In the 5th grade, as his little fingers touched cold steel strings and his tummy the dark cool wood of a base guitar, Charlie's passion became music. Writing, playing, listening, recording, even to be near anything that relates to music just does it for him. His dreams are endless; He wants to open a recording studio, an extracurricular music lesson facility, or to just take that one tour around the country that would hopefully change his life as he knew it.

Charlie knows music, he knows that the industry is vast and hard, but he isn't afraid to get started in the career of his passion. "I don't think that it's ever too young to get started." He is trying to get as much experience as he can in a hands-on business. He promotes local bands at his city's YMCA, takes bass lessons one or two times a week, practices choir with his church, and plays in a band, The Glass Gesture. His band is "my biggest priority, well except for school I guess..." He juggles this secret interest with full-time school, actually two schools, his regular high school and a communication arts and technology academy 9am to 4pm Charlie will, "Um sit through school, which is not so nice, kind of unmotivating." Motivating or not, Charlie still has to deal with what most teenagers dread: high school. It isn't always easy when all you want to do is, "just go blow off homework all the time to just go play music."

You might think that Charlie is the same as any other high school band guy that you sat next to in math class, the guy you secretly had a crush on because he reminded you of a young Steven Tyler. But he is not like many of the others because Charlie's infatuation is pure. "I'm not looking to hit it big as much; I am just lovin' to do it." You will not only see Charlie playing his bass guitar in his spare time, and wishing for his band (that he hangs out with 24/7) to get a record deal, but he goes above and beyond just for the sake of music. Charlie works with mainstream recording software to enhance his knowledge of music, "I've got some software, like Reason and ProTools, that I've been messing with, which is like professional software for audio engineering and stuff like that. So I've been kinda learning how that works, kind of on my own." Charlie is even attempting to construct his own bass, "it's not a bass yet. My aunt gave me a bunch of this exotic African wood. I've put it into the body of a base and I got a neck for, but I haven't put it all together yet...I have invested so much in that project."

He invests so much into every aspect of music. Playing on average three shows a month with his band at some of his favorite venues like Slim's. "Slim's is a club in San Francisco where I usually see my favorite bands, so taking that stage was really incredible." It doesn't matter to Charlie what he is doing as long as it has to do with music. During the Slim's show, he was performing under some of the worst conditions he had ever played in before, but it made the performance that much better. "I couldn't hear the drums or guitar or vocals, all I could hear was myself, like I was really nervous. I was playing on an amp that wasn't mine, the drum set wasn't Evan's (band mate) drum set, and it was a really bad deal; we only had twenty minutes to play but all I could think about were all my favorite members of the band that stood on the left side of the stage and kinda where I was... the adrenaline was going, it was a pretty incredible experience."

Not only does Charlie know that he loves music, others can see it through the emotional aspect he brings while playing; it rubs off on others to bring music into their lives. After the Slim's show many of the attendees commented on Charlie's charisma when it comes to music, "For being such, a quiet and soft spoken guy, he just really comes alive while performing. His body language talks to you as he moves to the flow the music he makes" said Elizabeth Sweeny (a friend of Charlie's). Also from an anonymous viewer, "When Charlie plays music I just look up at him on the stage and he closes his eyes so tight, that you know that it is just empowering him. You can tell that he loves it so much, and it means everything to him." Not only did everyone who knew Charlie run up in a crowd to congratulate, compliment, and thank him for an amazing show, others that never knew him wanted to do the same, "It is really rewarding to see, to meet new people that come up after you play shows and say that they liked it, well nobody says that they don't like it, but you know I am sure people don't like it." After he played I had to wait at least fifteen minutes just to get sight of him to thank him for letting me take pictures for my documentary.

Charlie has a dream, and that dream is music. He is certain that this is the exact reason that he is on Earth for. He lives, breathes, and sleeps music, as cliché as that might be, it's true. "Not for the money because you hardly get paid, it's not for the popularity because almost like so few bands or so few writers become famous. He said that the, if you really know you should write or you should play music in this case, is when your writing or playing music you feel like you have to do it. And right now, I kinda feel like I have to do it, I dunno really why I do it, it's just like, it's what I love most and I kinda feel like that's what you should do."



ALL GEAR BELOW
THIS LINE



ALL GEAR BELOW
THIS LINE



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-Anonymous













“I have a pretty laid back personality, I’m pretty easy to get along with, and kinda just like to hang out. Don’t really do that much except for play music and go to school.”







“My dream is to do international business. I want to be able to travel around the world, experience different cultures, meet new people. Having a job that incorporates all of those things would be amazing.”

-Chris Castle





SESSIONS
SINCE 1980

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As stereotypes go, Chris Castle looks like your average beach bum. His long, long hair, session's hat, loose checkered shirt, and many surf boards leave most people assuming that his lack of formality means lack of ambition. This assumption, in actuality, is completely inaccurate. "I don't like half assing things," he says with a stern face. "I'm kind of a perfectionist and I work really hard when I put my mind to something. Rather than majoring in surf, Chris has chosen to major in Business Administration at Cal Poly. "I'm a boss," he jokes. Thousands of Cal Poly students major in business, and although it is a highly ranked school, so what? Chris has a unique experience and a fresh perspective on how a business major can help him pursue his dream. "My dream," he says, "is to do international business. I want to be able to travel around the world, experience different cultures, meet new people. Having a job that incorporates all of those things would be amazing."

Although his ideas might initially seem idealistic, his background with travel gives his views credibility. "I've been fortunate enough to travel a lot for my age. I've actually lived in a multiple foreign countries... Nicaragua, Costa Rica. The experiences there have been life changing for me."

Chris's dad is an extremely successful real estate agent, and unlike most, he refuses take the easy way out and work for his dad. "I want to make it on my own merit, not because of my dad. He worked hard for his success and I want to also. Because if I ride on his coattails, my success won't be mine." Instead, he has landed an internship at a local business firm this summer, doing what he calls "coffee boy" type work. Chris is fully aware that he has to work his way up, and that the business world is highly competitive, with vicious politics included. I ask Chris, who describes himself as "laid back," if he can handle the pressure. "Oh for sure. If you work hard and have integrity, you can just ignore all of that bullshit."

Dream choosing is a fickle process for young people; most college students change their majors at least once in their career. Chris seems to be on the path to success, but how does he know that this dream is for him? "How do I know?" he asks, and pauses. "I just know. I can feel it. My experiences thus far have pointed me in this direction."



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NO DOGS
NO GLASS CONTAINERS

NO ALCOHOL
ALLOWED ON THE BEACH AT ANY TIME

NO PORTABLE VOLLEYBALL COURTS
MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND TO SEPT. 15

NO FIRES
BARBECUE GRILLS UP TO 36" ONLY

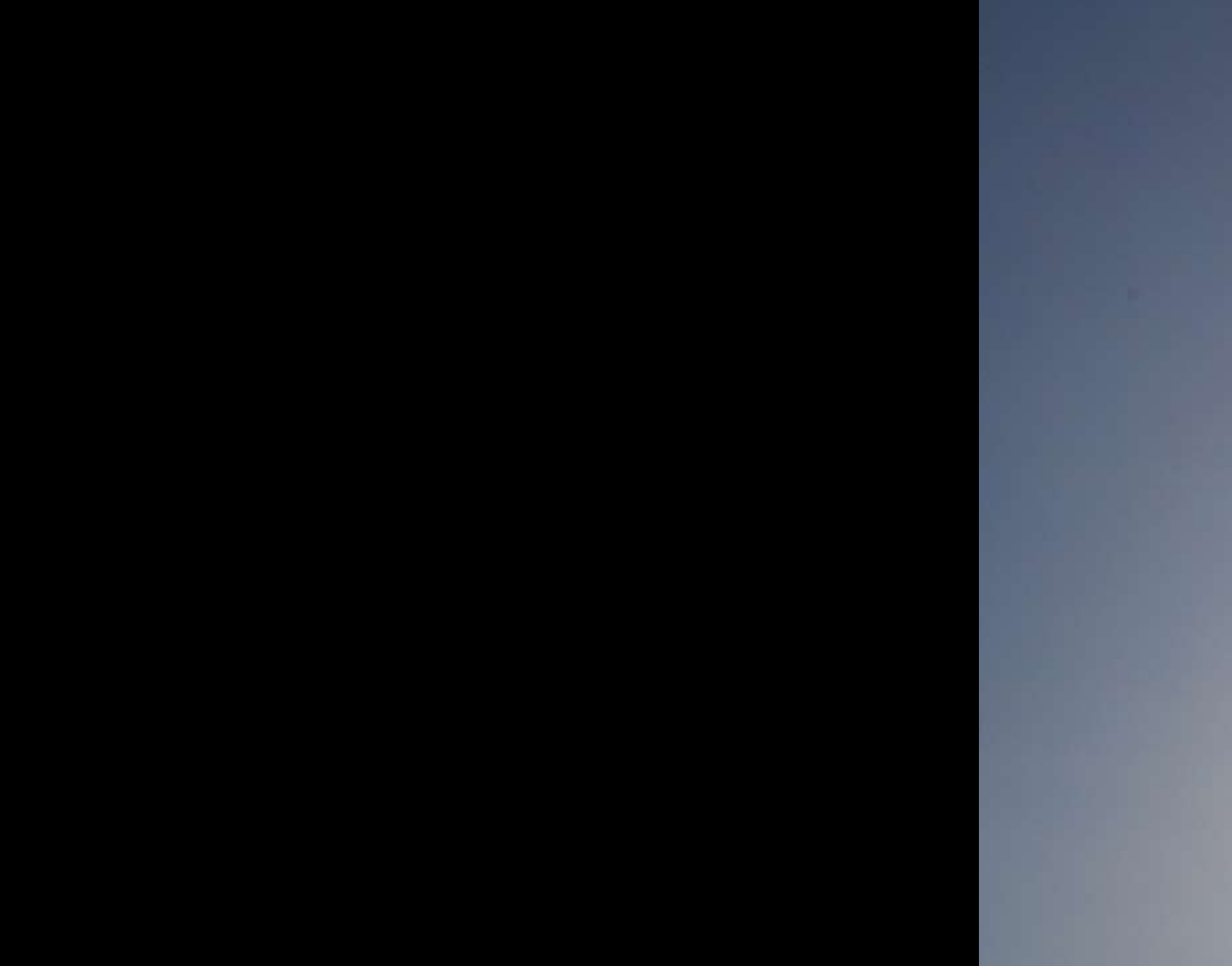
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THE CITY OF CAPITOLA



The International Symbol of Access, a white wheelchair icon on a blue background.

**BEACH
ACCESS**









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This generation of youth's standards are exceedingly high. In a world that is quickly progressing, the pressure for the youth to succeed is intensifying and the competition to "be somebody" is steep. With all of the options available and different dreams to pursue, how does the youth know which path is for them?

Everyone's life starts out with a dream, the dream to ride a bike, to be an astronaut, or even a princess. A model, a musician, a writer, and an entrepreneur: all these careers are vastly different, requiring differing skills and emotions. What common thread exists among these seemingly different paths? Through examining four young adults at the launch of their ambitious careers, we have concluded that a dream can only be pursued correctly not as a wish, or hope but as a way of life. The individuals who succeed in life feel like they must thrive upon their passion. The motivation and talents of these four young individuals present in this book are a rarity. To be so sure of your aspirations at a young age displays intense focus and impressive ambition. The students show profound insight into how pursuing a dream is a life choice. Although scary, if you are taking risks and working hard for a dream, the outcome can be great. These dreams empower them to a level that only few may know of. That is why we have written this book, to encourage our readers to follow their *true* dreams, the ones that make them feel as Charlie Cohen has expressed, "Right now, I feel like I have to do it. I don't know why I do it, it's just what I love most, and I kinda feel like that's what you should do."



