

Then and Now: The Alumni Corner

By Tiffany Ficklin

I was the Office Manager at Cottonwood School before going on maternity leave for the birth of my daughter, Taitum, in 2000. During that time I remember working with a little girl named Christine Swanson who shared my birthday and whose sweet little face and saucy attitude always made me laugh. Imagine my surprise when we met up again 10 years later at an Alpha Chi meeting, where I am currently the UNM Chapter Advisor.

Christine Swanson is a busy senior at the University of New Mexico. She is a proud member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority, where she holds several officer positions, and regularly volunteers for community service projects. She plans on entering nursing school in January.

Christine is an alumna of Cottonwood School, class

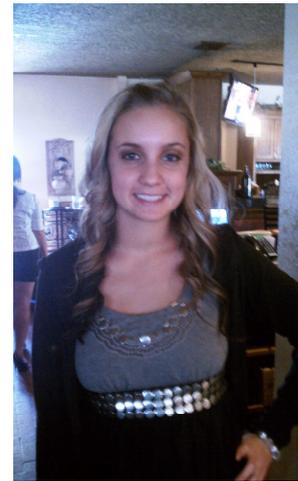
of 2000. She and her younger sister, Danielle, attended Cottonwood for fourth and fifth grade. Danielle Swanson is currently a senior at Eldorado High School. She dances on the drill team, sings in the choir, and is involved in many programs such as DECA and Best Buddies.

After Cottonwood Christine attended Eisenhower Middle School and Eldorado High School. She danced on a competitive dance team until she was a junior in high school, and participated in drill team and DECA.

“Cottonwood prepared me for middle school and high school by the hands on lessons that were provided. When I graduated from Cottonwood I felt ahead of the other students at my middle school because of the fact that Cottonwood really makes sure that every student understands every subject before moving on. I

would recommend Cottonwood because I think that it really prepares students well for middle/high school and even college. The hands on learning allows them to think critically, and the small class size allows for focused one on one learning,” Christine remarked. Her best memories of Cottonwood included building the chicken coop in Environmental Ed, going on an archeological dig with her class, spending time with her BFF Lauren, and the fifth grade tea.

When asked what advice she would pass on to the graduating fifth graders, Christine said “Don’t be nervous for middle school because you will be going into it ahead of most of the other students. Stay involved in extra activities in school just like you were involved at Cottonwood.”



I have loved working with Christine as an adult. I have found her to be diligent and cheerful, and always striving for academic excellence. She is a favorite babysitter of my daughters. Not only do Christine and I share the same birthday, but now we share the same collegiate experience at UNM in Alpha Chi, with roots starting at Cottonwood School.