

EDUCATION UPDATE

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EQUALITY FOR ALL



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MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. & ABRAHAM LINCOLN

GUEST EDITORIAL

**Lincoln, Abolition
and Economic Freedom**

By LEWIS E. LEHRMAN

To read carefully Lincoln's parable of the ant suggests a lost truth: during most of his political career Lincoln focused not on anti-slavery but on economic policy. Yet anti-slavery and economic policy, in his worldview, were tightly linked. In commercial terms, slavery is theft: "The ant, who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber assails him. ... The most dumb and stupid slave, that ever toiled for a master, does constantly know that he is wronged." It is a truth, he asserted, "made so plain by our good Father in Heaven, that all feel and understand it."

On his way to Washington in early 1861, the president declared, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." Earlier, he had written, "Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men. Ours began, by affirming those rights." At Gettysburg, he insisted that America — despite the flaw of slavery, accepted in order to establish the Constitution — had been "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Bound together neither by race nor blood, Americans inherit a single patrimony: equality under the law and equality of opportunity. Lincoln's equality was the latter: "I think the authors of that notable instrument [the Declaration of Independence] intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined ... in what respects they did consider all men created equal — equal in 'certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'"

Government, Lincoln believed, should enable men and women to develop their freedom, their future, and their country. Lincoln urged that government should be pro-labor and pro-business. His economic philosophy rejected the idea of necessary conflict between labor and capital. In fact, Lincoln argued that capital was, itself, the result of the savings of free labor. Thus, it follows that people are the most important resource, not wealth.



Lincoln defined the essence of the American dream: "There is not, of necessity any such thing as the free hired laborer being fixed to that condition for life. ... The prudent, penniless beginner in the world, labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself; then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way to all — gives ... energy, and progress, and improvement of condition to all." More than one hundred years later, Martin Luther King Jr. called for the economic rights that would take African-Americans one step closer to freedom: the Negro's "unpaid labor made cotton king and established America as a significant nation in international commerce. Even after his release from chattel slavery, the nation grew over him, submerging him. ... And so we still have a long, long way to go before we reach the promised land of freedom."

Born poor, Lincoln was probably the greatest of self-made men, believing, as he said, that "work, work, work, is the main thing." Lincoln's America was, in principle, a colorblind America. The great abolitionist Frederick Douglass saw this clearly, calling Lincoln "the first great man that I talked with in the United States freely, who in no single instance reminded me ... of the difference of color." He attributed Lincoln's attitude to the fact that he and Lincoln were self-made men — "both starting at the lowest rung of the ladder."

Surely we know about Lincoln's humble parents, his lack of formal education, his discreet but towering ambition. No descendants carried on his legacy of national leadership. Like a luminous comet, he had for a twinkling thrust himself before our eyes, the eyes of the world, there to dissolve into the vast deep whence he came. #

Lewis E. Lehrman is co-founder of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and author of Lincoln at Peoria: The Turning Point (Stackpole Books, 2008). The above is an abridged version of a 2004 essay by Lewis Lehrman titled "To give all a chance": Lincoln, Abolition and Economic Freedom," published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR

AFGHANISTAN

**Prison College Programs Unlock the Keys to
Human Potential**

To the Editor:

I am currently deployed overseas to Afghanistan and am desperately trying to go to college. However, even with the G.I. Bill and other tuition assistance, it is unaffordable at this time. Unbelievable!

Michelle Cherland

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

**Prison College Programs Unlock the Keys to
Human Potential**

To the Editor:

I am a very strong believer in providing education to anyone willing to take time to better his or her future. But this article really touched home because people like me, who have family members in the prison system, can truly appreciate people who are willing to lend a hand to those crying out for help. Thank you for your support.

Mahogany Durant

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Spotlighting New York's Small Schools

To the Editor:

That was a very good report in the Sept-Oct issue by Jan Aaron on the Women's City Club small school initiatives event. Just in case you haven't seen it already, I suggest you and Jan get a copy of the New School's Center for New York City Affairs report, which was released shortly after the WCC meeting. It is titled, "The New Marketplace: How Small School Reforms and School Choice Have Reshaped New York City's High Schools," written by the well-known Clara Hemphill, with Kim Nauer and Helen Zelon. It paints quite a different picture from those speaking at the WCC event.

P.S. I so much enjoy getting Education Update. Keep them coming!

Eleanor Stier

CAMBRIDGE, UK

**Professor Dennis Dalton, Barnard College:
Living an Examined Life**

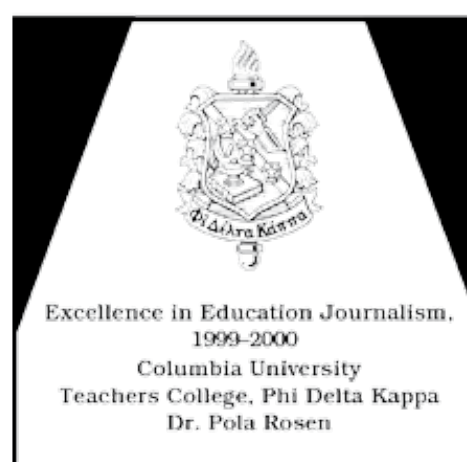
To the Editor:

He was indeed a wonderful professor — passionate, caring, brilliant and yet humble. His impact on me and others was great. I am now pursuing my Ph.D. in Education at the University of Cambridge. Thank you for the excellent and accurate article.

Edel Sanders

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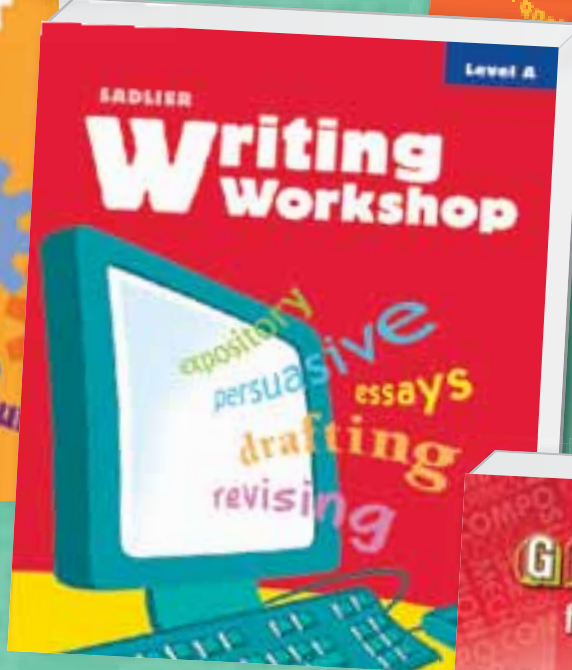
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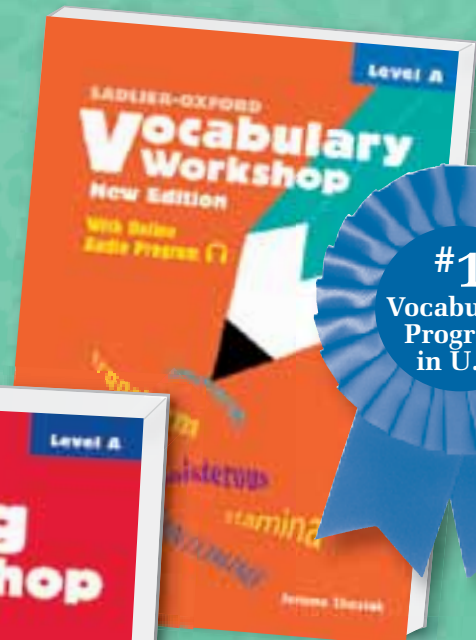
For the Classroom



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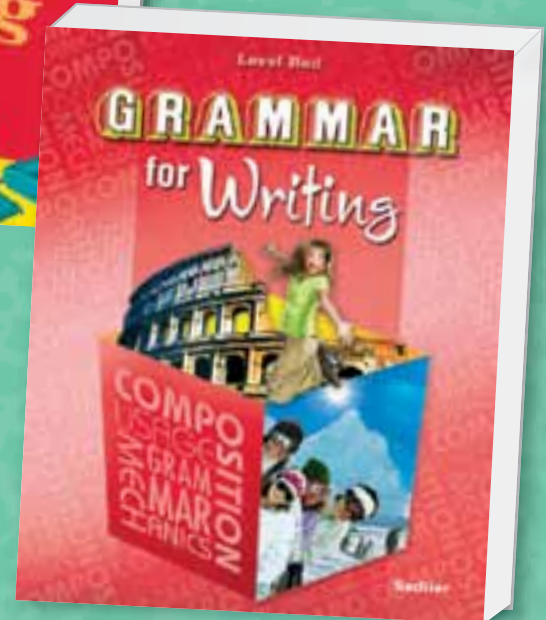
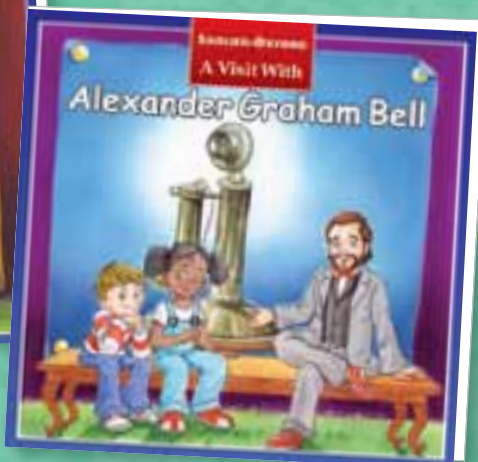
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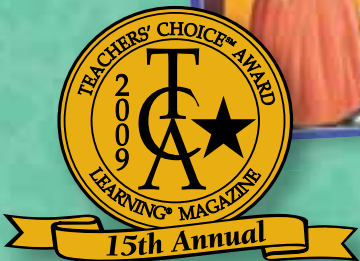
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Grades 2-3



Grades 6-12



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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

REMEMBERING DU BOIS

By AMY BASS, Ph.D.

The creation of Martin Luther King Day as a federal holiday, which recognizes the importance of civil rights movements in American history, was hotly contested by many. This year, one year into the Obama presidency, it seems particularly important to pause and consider how we think of civil rights as a national legacy, what we decide to remember about it, and where we locate the figures so important within it.

In my new book, *Those About Him Remained Silent: The Battle over W.E.B. Du Bois*, I detail the late 1960s battle over creating a memorial, a national landmark, to one of the architects of civil rights in his hometown, Great Barrington, Mass. Du Bois — one of the world's greatest thinkers on issues of race and equality and human rights — created a complicated legacy. At the age of 93, he joined the Communist Party and then expatriated himself to Ghana, where he died two years later on the eve of the March on Washington, mere hours before King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech.

The implications of Du Bois dying a communist expatriate is what first led me to this project. It began quite small: a look into why Du Bois wasn't more famous in the place where both he, in the late 19th century, and myself, in the late 20th century, had grown up. Why had he been virtually erased from local history? Why did I grow up learning all about other famous local figures — Herman Melville, Norman Rockwell, Edith Wharton, Daniel Chester French — but nothing about Du Bois?

And then I came across what I now think of as The Quote: "It's like building a statue of Adolf Hitler," said Harold J. Beckwith, a past commander of the James A. Modolo Post of the VFW in Great Barrington. "The man was a Marxist as far back as 1922 and we oppose a monument to a communist any place in the United States." It was not surprising to see a VFW member opposed to the Du Bois memorial movement. Many such folks had come forward to argue against it. Was he really a local figure, some asked. He deserted the U.S. for Ghana, others pointed out. He was a communist, most agreed.

But Hitler? Really?

Great Barrington was not alone in abandoning Du Bois. He is perhaps best known for his public disagreements with Booker T. Washington



Amy Bass, Ph.D.



and for his central involvement with the Niagara Movement, which led to the founding of the NAACP, of which he was the sole black member of the founding administration. He published over 4,000 works and traveled the world, including trips to Russia and China, and his writings and teachings increasingly focused on a socialist worldview. As such, he became disfavored by colleagues and enemies alike. In Cold War America, his writings were trashed from public libraries, and the State Department took away his passport. When he died in Ghana, a state funeral was held; here in America, little happened. Why?

Most simply: he died at the wrong time. The moment of Du Bois's death was such a politically complicated one; movements of civil rights were so deeply entangled with issues of decolonization, Vietnam, Black Power, and — of course — the Cold War that few could accommodate his late-in-life communist stance within his overarching oeuvre as a black intellectual. As he writes in his final autobiography, "I would have been hailed with approval had I died at fifty. At seventy-five my death was practically requested." His legacy created a collision among racism, global politics, and communism that few could or would accommodate.

Today, Great Barrington has slowly started to find a place for Du Bois, albeit with much (heated) conversation. But a familiar song continues to be sung, perhaps best exemplified by

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.:
A TEACHING MOMENT

By LOUISE MIRRER, Ph.D.

On August 28, 1963, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and spoke of the "great beacon light of hope" our sixteenth president kindled when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation "five score years ago." If ever there was a place to use the (admittedly over-worked) phrase, "teaching moment," it is right here, as the tissue of allusion to Lincoln's authorship — of the Gettysburg Address as well as the Proclamation — opens up the possibility for us to discuss Lincoln both as protagonist in and progenitor of King's dream.

When King speaks of America's greatness as measured by freedom ringing from the hilltops, mountains and slopes of states ranging from New Hampshire to Mississippi, he is relying on a notion of Union that Lincoln brought newly into focus with his insistence on territorial integrity. New York City, not withstanding its many Lincoln detractors (*Lincoln and New York*, currently on view at the New-York Historical Society vividly makes this point), can take pride in its role as a center for the articulation of this doctrine which saw the federal government and its executive as, among other things, a key to making good on what King calls the "note" that "was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This is why prominent New Yorkers such as Henry Bellows, Francis Lieber, George Templeton Strong, and Frederick Law Olmsted spawned a movement, expressed in the "Articles of Association" of the city's Union League Club that pledged "by every means in our power, collectively and individually to resist to the utmost every attempt against the territorial integrity of the nation." Lincoln's notion of Union prevailed after the Civil War, and though King's speech says much about the continuation of deplorable conditions for African-Americans, it is nevertheless why he thinks he may get a hearing on the topic of inequality in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana when he takes his message to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

recent comparisons of President Obama to Hitler in the midst of the debates on health care. The use — and abuse — of history in this way, just as in the way Du Bois was once compared to Hitler, demonstrates how history is never about the past — it is contested terrain that people battle over every day, whether over the creation of a federal



Louise Mirrer, Ph.D.

Lincoln also framed an important and early discourse on the promise of America's founding doctrine, and the obligation of contemporary Americans — his contemporary Americans — to finally realize it. Already in 1854, as Lewis E. Lehrman shows in his book, *Lincoln at Peoria*, Lincoln envisioned what he would later on in his Gettysburg Address call "a new birth of freedom" — a fresh chance for individual Americans to secure the principle "that all men are created equal." In 1963, King calls this "cashing" the founder's "check." Though five score years have passed, he still believes in the power of Lincoln's Union to bring forth a new birth of freedom.

This year, as we reflect on Lincoln and on King, let's take this teaching moment — that is, the opportunity that arises out of one man's role in another's dream — and see what insight we might offer our students, or they, us, into why we might celebrate both men together, and what the consequences of each of their histories might be. #

Louise Mirrer, Ph.D., is president and CEO of the New-York Historical Society.

holiday for a great leader, a memorial landmark at the childhood home of one of the world's great thinkers, or — indeed — in terms of the policies of the first black president of the United States. # Amy Bass, Ph.D., is associate professor of history and honors program director at the College of New Rochelle.



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UNION PRESIDENTS SPEAK

ERNEST LOGAN, PRESIDENT, CSA

The Cost of Education Cuts

In recent years we've been told that New York City principals and assistant principals have become so empowered that they might as well be CEOs and other high-ranking officers of their schools. In the old days, when the economy got shaky, the chancellor advised district offices what to slash. Today, budget decisions are allegedly up to principals, and they're the ones who take the heat about what gets cut first and which children get hit hardest, as they did when the number of school aides was recently reduced. The truth is that many budget decisions are dictated by the Department of Education, and the principal is left holding the bag. It may have seemed great to be empowered in good times, but it may not be so great in bad times.

Here's a new year's resolution: I've been carrying on about budget cuts and I'm not going to stop. Our principals and assistant principals spent all summer dealing with city cuts. Some of them were hit so hard that they had to throw themselves on the chancellor's mercy with budget appeals before they could open their doors in September. In January, they will be hit with another 1.5 percent city cut and, in April, with a 4 percent state cut. The governor has also recently announced immediate cuts in school aid to keep the state solvent until the new year. Many of our principals have cut to the bone and now need to figure out how to cut right through the bone and still maintain high standards for their students.

It could get worse. Partly because of global competition, President Obama is making a colossal investment in education. President Sarkozy is trying to do something similar in France, as are Prime Minister Hatoyama in Japan and Prime Minister Gillani in Pakistan. Yet while our federal government is pouring cash into education, states are drowning in so much red ink from the banking crisis that they can only use the president's dollars to backfill holes in the states' education funding. These are dollars he sent our way for only two years. The third year might be a lot uglier.

Whether they're in an affluent, middle class



or poor district, our school leaders are dreading the cuts to come. Ultimately, their most impoverished students — mainly minority youngsters, part of the emerging American majority — will suffer most. Their parents won't be able to provide them with tutors and many cultural opportunities outside of class. If they are in districts that are economically disadvantaged, their parents associations won't be able to hold auctions and fairs to pay for

such "extras."

Extras aren't extra, of course. They're our lifeblood: cultural subjects and sports help children become better people and make many of them want to go to school. Tutoring for regular course work, AP classes and the SAT determine where students go to college or if they go at all. Part of the lifeblood is also the support services offered by guidance counselors and social workers, which keep kids straight so that serious harm doesn't befall them. In the worst of times, this could be considered an "extra," too.

If principals have part-time teachers for gym or cultural subjects like music, poetry, painting, theater — the arts that have humanized us since the dawn of civilization — they soon may have to let them go. If they're in an elementary school, middle school or small high school without PSAL funding, they may have to give up the after-school athletic instructors who help those children fight obesity and illness and sometimes discover a true talent for sports. If a guidance counselor retires or moves to another town, will a principal's first choice be to find a replacement? If their intervention programs are taught by after-school instructors, could principals get stuck foregoing remediation for struggling youngsters and college prep for the more advanced? School leaders may even have to question whether they can offer AP classes during the day if class size soars above the number that works for AP.

In these fiercely challenging times, we all want to work with the chancellor to find solutions. No question we want him to cut contracts and consul-

MICHAEL MULGREW, PRESIDENT, UFT

A Story of Broken Promises

Tens of thousands of children across the city are crammed into overcrowded classrooms. Yet the city has received from the state more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in the past three years to lower class size. Despite this influx of funds — and the city's promise, in writing, to use it to lower class size — class sizes have actually increased in New York City.

That is why the United Federation of Teachers, the NAACP, the Hispanic Federation and a coalition of other groups and individuals sued the city Department of Education earlier this month. Our lawsuit charges that despite a decline in overall student enrollment and the injection of more than \$760 million in state funds from school years 2007-08 through 2009-10, class sizes have gone up by the largest amount in 11 years.

This \$760 million was part of the state's solution to an earlier case called the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, which challenged how state education funding had shortchanged urban districts, including New York City. The new funds, under the guidelines known as Contracts for Excellence, came with the proviso that the city deliberately target funds to smaller classes. New York City took that money, and then ignored its promise, permitting principals to spend the money on other things, including replacing funds lost to city budget cuts, a clear violation of the agreement with the state.

The effects of that refusal can be seen in classrooms throughout the city. Just consider what



is happening in 8th-grade classes. In the Bronx, 39 percent of such classes have 30 or more students. In Brooklyn the figure is 41 percent; Manhattan has 49 percent; Queens has 57 percent; and Staten Island has a whopping 70 percent of its 8th-grade classes with more than 30 students.

But the problem is more than a question of statistics — the effects are felt in individual schools and classrooms. For instance, P.S. 28

in Upper Manhattan, despite the fact that it got more than \$217,000 in class size reduction funds for the current school year, reduced by three the number of classes it offered and had two fewer classroom teachers. The result was that class sizes went up in almost all grades.

Anyone who has ever spent even a day in an urban classroom can clearly understand that it's easier for teachers to provide individual attention and focused instruction to students in smaller classes. That is why lowering class size is such an important priority for parents. But the DOE chooses to continue to ignore the long-standing wishes of parents and abdicate its duty to use the state class size reduction funds as intended. That's mismanagement, plain and simple.

For years DOE officials have called for holding teachers and other educators more accountable for what happens in our schools. Where's the accountability for the children in overcrowded classes? #

Michael Mulgrew is the president of the United Federation of Teachers.

tants at Tweed before anything is cut elsewhere. We also want to work with elected officials and the rich and powerful, many of whom send their children to private school, and convince them to make sure that funding for public education never gets cut at all. Slighting public education won't ever benefit society, democracy or our economy. To emphasize that succinctly, I'll quote *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, who called our

crisis in education "the greatest national security crisis." He also said, "If America is to maintain its leadership position in the world and provide a first-rate quality of life for its citizens here at home, the educational achievement of American youngsters across the board needs to be ratcheted way up." #

Ernest Logan is president of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

Charter Schools Celebrate 10th Anniversary

By SYBIL MAIMIN

At a proud celebration of the 10th anniversary of charter schools in New York state, charter enthusiasts gathered at the Harvard Club to hear a distinguished panel detail some of the history, successes and ambitions of the young movement. Harvey Newman, senior fellow at the Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association, noted, "The accomplishments of charter schools over the last 10 years give us reason to celebrate." As proof of the schools' growing reputations, last year 44,000 youngsters applied for 8,500 seats in New York City. Even more significant is the demographic makeup of the schools, which strive to raise student scores in English language arts and math. In the city, 62 percent of students were African-American and 32 percent Hispanic, groups that, historically, have performed below white classmates. "This year," says Newman, "saw a dramatic narrowing of the achievement gap."

Malcolm Smith, New York State Senate President Pro Tempore, who founded Peninsula Preparatory Academy, the first public charter school in the Rockaways, explained that local parents initially fought his plans for the school, but now plead to have their children admitted. He described the lottery process for admission and the huge crowds of hopeful parents waiting for results in the school gymnasium knowing chances are slim. In an "epiphany," he saw the answer to unmet demand — raise the number of charters allowed. Committed, he vows, "As long

as I am in the Senate, I will fight for charters and for raising the cap." Edward Cox, widely known as a son-in-law of President Richard Nixon, is a lawyer who has been active in education as a trustee of the State University of New York and chair of its Charter Schools Institute. He declared, "the issue of education is perhaps the most important issue in our time." He sees charter schools as a civil rights matter — "Perhaps that's why we're so passionate about it" — where welfare of students, and not rules, is paramount. The institute authorizes, monitors, and, "the most important part of what we do," oversees the renewal process for charter schools. "We are very tough," explains Cox. "Twenty percent of schools are not renewed. Hoping that charters become models and tools for improving education, the institute has established a policy center to study best practices.

Steven Klinsky is a hero in the charter school movement. After New York state enacted legislation in 1998 to allow charters (the 34th state to do so), Klinsky took time off from work in finance and joined the cause. In 1999, he helped establish the first public charter school in the state, Sisulu Walker Children's Academy in Harlem. To Klinsky, the primary lesson of charters is "people and leadership are the keys to success." Before charters, individuals outside of education — lawyers, businesspeople, politicians — could only watch as public schools failed. Charters, on the contrary, welcome expertise, lessons and successful practices from disparate fields. Thinking outside the box is allowed. Klinsky believes the

cap on charters (now 100 for the city) should be lifted, and a school should not be closed for underperformance if it is performing better than others in its district. "All that should matter is producing great students."

Education Update recently spied Eugene Lang, legendary creator of the I Have a Dream Program that guides and supports disadvantaged students in K-12 and funds college educations for students who graduate from high school. He was attending the anniversary celebration not only as a supporter of charters, but also to find the answer

to a question troubling him. What happens to charters when the generation that established them is no longer here? "How do we maintain a sense of mission?" he wondered. "Is there a system in place?"

Perhaps the answer is in The Charter School Center, an independent not-for-profit created four years ago to support the growth of charters in New York City. Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein are champions of the movement and, as of 2009, New York was a leader with 98 charter schools. #

SAT TIPS
Model Answer for a Perfect-12 SAT Essay!

By FRANCES KWELLER, J.D.

Model Answer to Paragraph 1 of Essay Topic on Compromise:

Many people believe that compromise is not always the best way to resolve a conflict. In fact, there are many examples in our reading, studies, experience, and observations that demonstrate how compromise is not always the best way to solve a dispute. It has been noted by a prominent writer that "we are frequently told that compromise is the best way for people to work out their differences. ... However, ... compromise does not work when there is a genuine difference of opinion about strongly held principles or ideas." One example where compromise failed was in the play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, by esteemed writer Lorraine Hansberry. Another instance where compromise did not make the grade was in the novel, *The Giver*, by prominent author Lewis

Lowery. Both literary works demonstrate that compromise does not always lead to a successful outcome.

GET IT??? Main Idea → Restate thesis → Show examples → Use transitions & high vocabulary → Ace the SAT ESSAY!

Paragraph 2: Restate thesis; introduce example 1; 2-3 sentences about example 1 and how it relates to the thesis; restate thesis; make sure to be very neat (INDENT first line!); use high vocabulary and many transitions.

Paragraph 3: Restate thesis; introduce example 2; 2-3 sentences about example 2 and how it relates to the thesis; restate thesis; make sure to be very neat (INDENT first line!); use high vocabulary and many transitions.

Paragraph 4: "In conclusion ..." — Restate thesis; restate examples 1 and 2 and say how they relate to the thesis; be very neat & use high vocabulary and transitions; restate thesis.

Frances Kweller, J.D., is founder of Kweller SAT Prep — Intense Prep for Intense Kids; visit <http://www.KwellerPrep.com> for more.



CUNY Vice Chancellor Iris Weinshall: Reshaping the University

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Vice chancellor for facilities planning, construction and management Iris Weinshall's easy-going and amiable manner belies the dynamic force that keeps her constantly on the move to ensure the efficient maintenance and operation of CUNY's 23 campuses and to initiate, superintend, and implement budgeted developments for the physical plant. The mandate is daunting, requiring financial and technical expertise, not to mention negotiating experience, especially in consensus building, in both the private and public sectors. Weinshall, who recently sat down with *Education Update* in her Manhattan office, has been on the job since April 2007, and comes with those skills and more — humor, a down-to-earth approach, and analytical abilities that suggest earlier success as an administrator for the city of New York for 25 years, including being commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation in 2000 and special transportation advisor to Mayor Bloomberg in 2003.

A cum laude graduate of Brooklyn College, with a master's in public administration from NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, Weinshall is excited about prospects related to CUNY chancellor Matthew Goldstein's "decade of the sciences" and his call for a "state of good repair" on all the campuses. Although architectural plans for new buildings easily generate excitement, much of the vice chancellor's work has to do with the unglamorous and the invisible — infrastructure. The average age of a CUNY building, she points out, is 50 years, hardly suitable for a major university that prides itself on labs devoted to state-of-the-art research and lab-supported instruction. Reviews, she says, have revealed serious problems universitywide, which she has been addressing and will continue to address with state funding, making CUNY one of the top employers in the city, if not the state.

Buildings that have enjoyed renovation testify to her perseverance by way of dramatic before-and-after photos, "night and day" the vice chancellor adds. Major projects under construction (eleven at last count), such as CUNY's universitywide Advanced Science Research Center to be housed at City College, also testify to the imaginative and bold ways in which CUNY expects to meet the challenges of the 21st century, not to mention more than meet aesthetic expectations. "I want people to look up [at the new buildings] and say, 'Wow! That's part of CUNY!'"

Much of her time, Weinshall says, is spent visiting the campuses, "all my babies," and talking with administrators, faculty and students about master-plan priorities. She wants to make sure progress is being made, and she likes to talk to contractors on site. Several projects are the work of well-known architects and design firms, but it



CUNY Vice Chancellor Iris Weinshall

should be noted that community colleges receive attention along with the seniors colleges. I.M. Pei's plan for a new Fitterman Hall at Borough of Manhattan Community College (the first new building in 40 years) adorns the new cover of the hefty *Five-Year Capital Plan Request FY 2010-11 Through FY 2014-15 and New York City Reso-A Request FY 2011* [smaller-scale projects and equipment purchases as determined by the city council and borough presidents]. A bold, experimental new community college (NCC), with full-time students only, is slated for Upper Manhattan and has as its goal improving graduation rates.

There is also serious talk of dorms, residence halls at Queens and City having proved their attraction, as applications soar for places in the Honors College, for example. Noteworthy also among approved projects is a new home for a more accessible CUNY Law School, which will relocate to Long Island City as part of a public/private partnership with Citicorp. Common to all capital projects is a commitment to being "green," to designs that sit comfortably in their surrounding communities, and to initiatives in science that reflect strengths already identified in college curricula, such as Lehman's celebrated programs in earth sciences and botany or New York City Tech's in health sciences.

It's clear in just brief conversation that the vice chancellor, who describes herself as "tenacious, organized, committed," enjoys her work. She particularly loves seeing "a product at the end of the day," and she feels grateful for having had mentors along the way, including Mayor Bloomberg, who taught her how to work within a large bureaucracy. #

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS SERIES

President Tomás Morales, College of Staten Island: A CUNY OASIS



President Tomás Morales, College of Staten Island

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Just a picturesque ferry ride or bridge crossing from Manhattan is a unique component of the City University of New York little known outside its home borough of Staten Island. The College of Staten Island, one of the senior colleges of the CUNY system, sprawls over 204 verdant acres and includes neo-Georgian buildings, indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, playing fields and a great lawn, an astrophysical observatory, a Center for the Arts with studios, gallery, concert halls and theater, state-of-the-art laboratories, a busy student center, a tech-enhanced library, and a High Performance Computational and Visualization Center housing the largest supercomputer at CUNY; in addition, prominently installed around the spacious campus are sixteen important commissioned works of art.

Dr. Tomás Morales, a native of the South Bronx, past provost at California State Polytechnic University, and former dean of students at City College/CUNY, has been CSI president since 2007; and, as he recently shared with *Education Update* in an interview in his office on campus, he is determined to get the word out about the educational opportunities available on his island campus, to "tell our story," even as he works to strengthen the institution. He sees the chance to experience college life in New York City in a tranquil, green, park-like campus as a unique draw for urbanites.

Morales has ambitious plans for CSI. He also recognizes the challenges he faces. CSI is the product of the merger in 1976 of Staten Island Community College (a two-year program) and Richmond College (third and fourth years). As the only public college in the borough, CSI continues to offer a two-year associate degree and pledges to continue to do so as a service to the local community. However, Morales is also expanding the number of graduate and doctoral programs offered, meeting the growing needs of the community. "It is a very complex institution," Morales notes that, in a consortium with the CUNY Graduate Center, CSI has seven doctoral programs; last year 154 doctoral students did research on his campus. Fifteen master's and 34 baccalaureate programs are offered. To bolster academics, Morales has appointed over 72 new faculty members, saying, "We were able to attract faculty from the most prestigious post-doc programs. I would put their credentials up against those of any institution." Based on test scores, the academic quality of incoming students is similar to that of other CUNY colleges. CSI offers three honors programs — the very presti-

gious Macaulay Honors College, found in seven CUNY colleges; the Verrazano School, a highly selective learning community for the highest achieving students; and the Teacher Education Honors Academy, an NSF-funded program aimed at addressing the shortage of teachers of math and science. Seen as a plus, CSI is unique as the only CUNY school to offer both doctoral and below-baccalaureate degrees. (The number of "conversions," or students who transition from two- to four-year programs, is significant.)

Geographic isolation is another major challenge for CSI, admits Morales, and transportation options are limited on Staten Island. In a popular move in 2008, he launched a very successful shuttle service from the Staten Island Ferry to CSI for students, faculty, staff and visitors. Fifteen-hundred riders a day use this free service, and its presence makes it possible for people from all boroughs to come to the college. Morales also wants CSI to become a residential college. Currently, 100 percent of CSI students are commuters, with 75 percent hailing from Staten Island. To broaden its catchment area, raise student quality, and attract international applicants (he hopes they will increase from the current 3 percent to 10 percent of all applicants), Morales plans to break ground on new residence halls shortly. He sees the student population increasing from 13,800 to 17,000. "New York is the consummate college town," he explains, and "CSI is an integral part of the mix."

Morales spends time in the local community "to tell our story, to celebrate excellence on Staten Island," and because "it is important for the college to serve the public good." He encourages students to perform community service, such as tutoring low-performing students in local public schools in the Strategies for Success initiative, has offered full scholarships to all valedictorians and salutatorians in Staten Island public schools (seven accepted last year), and, as a booster of public education, serves as a mayoral appointee on the Panel for Educational Policy. Recognizing the prominent role it plays currently and the potential for its future, he notes that CSI is the largest single organization on Staten Island and one of its two or three largest employers.

Inspired by his mother and mentor, Elsie Maldonado, who went from high school dropout to psychiatric social worker, he has exciting visions for his growing college. Plans range from bike lanes and more plantings on campus to strong academics and an increasingly important role in the international education arena. #

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COLLEGE PRESIDENTS SERIES

**President Ricardo Fernández,
Lehman College**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

Nestled on an unexpectedly pastoral 37-acre campus off of Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, CUNY's Lehman College is a study in contrasts. Boasting a 2,500-seat performing arts center, a cornfield that is home to researchers studying vitamin A deficiencies, and a prominent art gallery featuring changing exhibits of contemporary and emerging artists, the college also faces a host of problems endemic to city colleges today, including a high rate of student dropouts and "stop-outs" that is of no small concern to Lehman's twenty-year president, Dr. Ricardo Fernández.

"There are some issues that we just can't control," explained Fernández when *Education Update* interviewed him on campus, strains of music from the college's marching band wafting over from the nearby arts center. "If our students lose a job, they can't afford to stay in school." Indeed, for the 9,000-plus undergraduate students who attend Lehman, more than half of whom are on financial aid and only one-third of whom graduate in four years, President Fernández is a passionate and eloquent advocate. Having overseen a groundbreaking study on Hispanic dropout trends when he was a professor of education policy at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee in the late '80s, he has just chaired a task force to address issues of retention and timely graduation at Lehman, and he has some ideas for change. Noting that all first-year Lehman students participate in a Freshman Year Initiative, with cohorts of 25 students taking the same courses and working collaboratively, he mused, "One of the things we don't have is a sophomore year initiative. ... We're hemorrhaging students after freshman year. We need an early warning system."

Key to any discussion of retention for a student body that is heavily dependent on financial aid is helping the students select a major in a timely fashion and plan their credit dispersal carefully, thereby maximizing their tuition assistance (limited to eight semesters of coverage). The college is also looking to beef up its full-time faculty and thus its student advising and mentoring capabilities; although half of all classes are currently taught by adjuncts, 70 new full-time faculty members have been hired over the past five years: "We want to provide a quality education to our students," concluded Fernández.

Having grown up in Puerto Rico, Fernández knows what it's like to make a sacrifice for education. Although he was offered an opportunity to play baseball in the farm system after high school, he instead opted to attend Marquette University in Wisconsin, which did not even have a baseball team, because he felt it offered him the best academic program. Fernández later went on to obtain both his bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's in Spanish from Marquette, followed by a doctorate in Romance languages and literatures from Princeton University (he credits reading Homer's *The Iliad* back in middle school with his lifelong appreciation for Romance languages).

Now that he has made a home for himself at Lehman College, Fernández has embarked on some exciting long-range planning. "In twenty to thirty years, I believe every American student will be encouraged to have an international experi-



President Ricardo Fernández, Lehman College

ence," he asserted, highlighting Lehman's collaboration with a private university in Korea to provide a successful dual degree program in nursing. As a result of this success, other countries, including India and the Dominican Republic, have also initiated inquiries about collaborating with Lehman. He's also interested in expanding distance educational offerings. Currently Lehman offers an online degree program in nursing; Fernández is looking to add education and maybe sociology to that roster. "These [online] programs require a lot of discipline. They're not for everybody. Yet they are also a nice way to complement credit acquisition, ... and for a student to get closer and faster to a degree," he said. And his graduate programs are distinguishing themselves internationally: state of the art science laboratories house groundbreaking research in wide-ranging areas from cancer treatment using plant compounds to calcium's role in schizophrenia. Fernández himself just returned from the Brazilian Amazon with a group that included researchers from the Bronx Botanical Gardens, with which Lehman has a strong collaborative effort (there are some 55 Lehman Ph.D. students in plant sciences).

With Ricardo Fernández at the helm, it's clear that Lehman College will continue to seek ways of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (currently over 90 nationalities are represented on campus) while maintaining and expanding a strong educational program. "I'd like Lehman to become the college of choice for a greater number of students in the Bronx and lower Westchester," he concluded forcefully, leaving no doubt that he will accomplish all this and more during his presidency. #

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**President Jennifer Raab,
Hunter College**

**CELEBRATING TWO UNIQUE
COLLEGE INITIATIVES**

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Coming off a November groundbreaking ceremony for the Hunter College School of Social Work, to be relocated to Third Avenue and 119th Street and renamed in honor of Lois V. and Samuel J. Silberman, and readying for an inaugural event at Roosevelt House on East 65th Street, now the designated home of the Hunter College Public Policy Institute, Hunter College president Jennifer Raab is eager to ensure that both initiatives are understood not just as visions but as works in progress on a fast track. The uptown facility, which will also include a newly established CUNY graduate school, the School of Public Health, is scheduled to open its doors September 2011, and this February the Public Policy Institute will launch a series of major events.

Raab, Hunter's 13th president, is entering her ninth year at the helm of not just the largest college in the CUNY system, but one of its most sought after, judging from student applications. An honors graduate of Cornell University, Raab went on to earn a master's in public affairs from Princeton University's prestigious Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and a law degree from Harvard. She is also a proud graduate of Hunter College High School. With an extensive record of involvement in government and public service, having served, among others, as projects manager for the South Bronx Development Organization and director of public affairs for the New York City Planning Commission, Raab feels a particular affinity for enterprises that would focus on contemporary urban issues and model efficient ways of addressing them.

The new School of Social Work, an eight-story, 147,000-square-foot "green" building, will operate in conjunction with the newly created universitywide School of Public Health. With a curriculum that will integrate existing and proposed programs at Hunter as well as at Brooklyn College, Lehman College and the CUNY Graduate Center, the new school will be, in the words of CUNY chancellor Matthew Goldstein, the "only such program in the nation focusing on urban public health" and the "first public school of public health in New York City." Plans also call for an enhancement of Hunter's relationship with Cornell University, which does not have a school of public health. The school already has a founding dean in Dr. Kenneth Olden, an award-winning cell biologist, biochemist and renowned cancer researcher, who, prior to coming to CUNY in 2008, was the first African-American to head the National Institutes of Health. Quite a coup all around and bound to be an important recruitment draw for both faculty and students, Raab says.

The bywords of the new schools and the institute are "interdisciplinary" and "collaborative." Nothing could be more appropriate for the new School of Social Work and the School of Public Health than the move to East Harlem, President Raab points out. Given the rise in chronic diseases associated with urban populations, such as obesity, asthma, AIDS, programs that draw on a wide and diverse group of discipline professionals dedicated to exploring, educating and training new professionals could not be more "today," especially as faculty work with others outside their areas of specialization and seek to be responsive to their surrounding community.

Excitement generates excitement. A new archival and cultural center for Hunter College's Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, the largest such research archival institution in the country, will also be part of the move uptown where it will enjoy greater space and presence.



President Jennifer Raab, Hunter College



Governor David Paterson awards a proclamation to Lois Silberman at the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Hunter College School of Social Work (L to R: President Jennifer Raab of Hunter College, Lois Silberman, Jayne Silberman, Governor Paterson)



New building in East Harlem

Roosevelt House, the elegant double town house that was once the home of Sara Delano and Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and part of Hunter College since 1943, has now rededicated itself to honoring the legacy of the man who would become the nation's 32nd president and his iconic wife, a leader in human rights. It will do so by way of certificated graduate programs, research opportunities and community outreach efforts centering on public policy. Plans still under way call for classrooms, offices and a student lounge. Photos seen in a recently published booklet on Roosevelt House, especially those showing FDR in his early political years, should make this unique presidential residence and library not just a much-sought after scholarly center and locus for conferences, seminars and public lectures, but a major tourist attraction. And, except for a dramatic Great Room, under construction, President Raab notes with a smile that the house is being "historically restored to a T." A place for faculty to teach and write (and live as visiting scholars), the institute already has its first Franklin Delano Roosevelt Visiting Fellow in Jonathan Fanton, former president of the MacArthur Foundation. Roosevelt House will also be home to the college's soon-to-be-announced inaugural Joan Tisch Distinguished Fellow in Public Health. Nothing like starting at the top. #



YALE'S JAMES COMER SEES CHILD DEVELOPMENT AS KEY TO EDUCATION REFORM

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

There's not an educator in America who would disagree with these basic tenets: parents should be collaborators in their children's educational experience, and lasting education reform must value all aspects of a child's development. Yet according to Dr. James P. Comer, a world-famous psychiatrist, Yale professor, author, and renowned expert in school restructuring, these fundamental characteristics of a sound education are woefully absent in many of today's schools, leading to a persistent cycle of failure.

"When you prevent bad things from happening in schools, good things can happen," explained Comer in an interview with *Education Update*. The Comer School Development Program (SDP), created in 1968 and now implemented in more than 650 schools nationwide, allows "good things to happen" by putting in place a governance and management structure within each school that represents all of the stakeholders: parents, teachers and administrators. Working collaboratively, the team is empowered to identify problems and create life-altering changes in the school's culture, curriculum, instruction, assessment and more, enhancing both academic and social development. "It takes a little time, but eventually these [SDP] rules help create a climate, a culture, a belief system in schools. ... Everyone wants them to be successful," summed up Comer.

The SDP model has some side benefits as well: in motivating parents to improve their children's educational outcomes, they are often spurred on to changing their own lives as well. One parent in an SDP school was on welfare when she joined the management team. Her work in the school gave her new confidence in her decision-making



James Comer, M.D.

skills, and she became a telephone company administrator. Another low-income parent from a housing project was mobilized to obtain a master's degree; she went on to become a state official, raising children who became a doctor, a lawyer, and an engineer.

Comer's vision for school reform is founded on his underlying belief in the value of child development principles within the classroom. "The problem with schools of education is that they don't have many professors who are trained to teach [child development]," he said. "A child must develop along all developmental pathways — physical, social, psycho-emotional, ethical, linguistic, and intellectual-cognitive. ... Administrators and teachers should know and understand how a child grows and develops and how to create conditions in the classroom

that promote all kind of development." Comer recalled one student who had transferred from the rural South to an SDP school in New Haven and who displayed physically aggressive behavior toward his teacher. Once the teacher understood the psychology underlying his actions ("it was a fight-or-flight response for this child"), the situation was successfully managed and the violence was averted.

Reflecting on his own childhood in the steel mill town of East Chicago, Ind., Comer attributed his success (he holds a B.A. from Indiana University, an M.D. from Howard University, and an M.P.H. from the University of Michigan) to having parents who, "although they were poor — very poor — understood what was needed to

help kids grow and develop, and they provided it." Some of his best friends weren't as lucky: "I had friends who went downhill even though they were very smart. But the community was such that teachers didn't understand children who were not prepared for school or whose parents were intimidated by the school."

A perennial optimist and staunch ally of health professionals and educators alike (indeed, his three guiding SDP principles are consensus, collaboration, and no fault), Comer is still hopeful that school reform can be institutionalized: "I'd like to see an Education Extension Service that operates like our Agricultural Extension Service," he mused. "We need a systematic way to help teachers be effective." #

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TEACHERS COLLEGE

Chancellor Tisch and Commissioner Steiner Present A Vision for Statewide Education

By **EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.**

Regents chancellor Dr. Merryl Tisch and state education commissioner Dr. David Steiner took center stage at Teachers College, Columbia University recently to present their vision for statewide education. The discussion was moderated by TC president Susan Fuhrman and included a feedback session with TC professors A. Lin Goodwin and Aaron Pallas.



Tisch kicked off the program by announcing New York state's intention to join 47 other states in applying for a share of the \$4.3 billion competitive federal Race to the Top money. She outlined three of the four required assurances that New York must meet in order to qualify for a grant: a robust data system ("We are very competitive in this area"), common core standards ("We will reserve the right to increase the rigor of our standards"), and closure of 5 percent of the bottom schools in the state ("We will move aggressively on this, ... and we will present enough alternative choices [for students]"). Charter schools, which represent an educational alternative for students ("New York is a charter-friendly state," said Chancellor Tisch), will be required increasingly to enroll heretofore underrepresented populations, including English language learners, special needs students, and youngsters who are over-age, under-credited and unprepared to meet the challenges of high school.

Steiner, conceding that it has been a "dizzying eight weeks" since being appointed state education commissioner, discussed the fourth and most controversial of the required assurances for federal grant money: teacher certification. Under a new plan that is being considered by the New York State Board of Regents, teachers would face a tougher set of tests ("The current test doesn't necessarily correlate with good teaching"), which will include subject-based pedagogical knowledge and demonstrated classroom management skills. One hotly debated proposal in the new teacher certification plan includes "value added" assessments, whereby student test scores would be used as a measure to judge teacher effectiveness. Steiner emphasized that the state's department of education is proceeding carefully in this area by consulting with Stanford education professor Linda Darling-Hammond, who formerly led President Obama's education policy transition team and who is widely acknowledged as a national expert on teacher certification.

Yet another controversial element of the proposed teacher certification plan would expand alternative teacher certification programs, allowing a wider variety of organizations to train new teachers, not just schools of education. "The field lacks a robust empirical basis. ... Students of teaching need deep supervision from non-

collegiate providers as well as from teacher colleges," he stated to a somewhat skeptical TC audience. Finally, and less controversially, Steiner discussed plans to recruit and retain teachers for high-needs schools as well as in high-needs curriculum areas including science, technology, engineering and math (the so-called STEM areas).

TC professors Goodwin and Pallas were quick to challenge the more contentious teacher certification proposals, particularly the notion of using value-added assessment data to judge teacher effectiveness. "This is not ready for prime time," Dr. Pallas declared forcefully, adding that the broader state assessment system is "broken and it can't be fixed overnight. ... Clean up the state assessment system and take the time to do it right — then we can talk about value-added assessment."

Dr. Goodwin advised, "Be careful of linking student performance and teacher assessment. ... We need to move away from sole reliance on test scores." Dr. Goodwin noted that the state's reliance on standardized tests in math and English has diluted the teaching of broader subjects like social studies, science, art, music and physical education, causing teachers to "teach to the test and not do what they believe is pedagogically appropriate," adding, "We are creating monsters that we never intended." Dr. Goodwin referred to her research in Singapore, a country with strong educational outcomes which is moving toward a "holistic experiential curriculum: it's values-oriented, and it focuses on investigation, discovery, and on children being decision-makers." Noting with irony that Singapore "actually learned all of this from us, yet we are moving away from it," Dr. Goodwin queried: "How do we walk the talk that we developed?"

In the end, the devil will be in the details, as both Chancellor Tisch and Commissioner Steiner expressed a willingness to listen to stakeholders and proceed carefully in implementing their school reform proposals. "We are in fundamental agreement," summed up Steiner. "We do want deep, rich learning. ... Let's be sure we don't go backwards." #

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NYU STEINHARDT SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dean Brabeck & Prof. Pedro Noguera Address Dropout Crisis



Professor Pedro Noguera, executive director of NYU's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education



Dean Mary Brabeck, NYU Steinhardt School of Education

By **ADAM BLOCH**

The situation is improving, but still leaves a lot to be desired. This was the primary conclusion several hundred teachers, researchers, school officials and administrators received when they gathered recently at New York University's Metropolitan Center for Urban Education to attend an educational policy forum dedicated to addressing the question, "How Are Black and Latino Males Faring in New York City Schools?"

Under the aegis of Dean Mary Brabeck, NYU Steinhardt School of Education, the two-hour event was dedicated to presenting data and conclusions from recent research and hearing from a panel of experts that included Merryl Tisch, chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents, Santiago Taveras, deputy chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, two school leaders, and a banker involved in educational policy.

Professor Pedro Noguera, executive director of the Metropolitan Center, opened the forum by avowing, "It's very important that we acknowledge that New York City has improved. In many ways, New York has the best-performing urban school system in the country. If you provide the right learning environments, kids can thrive, kids can grow and learn."

Ben Meade, a doctoral candidate at NYU, then presented data from a set of research briefs published in August. The studies determined that high school completion rates for black and Latino males are improving but still remain alarmingly low. For example, in the high school class of 2005, 17 percent of Latinos and 16 percent black men received a Regents diploma in four years. By the time the class of 2007 graduated, those numbers had increased to 22 and 23 percent, respectively.

The research also indicated a strong inverse relationship between the percentage of students receiving Regents diplomas in a school and the percentage receiving free lunch, though the results are not uniform. The most notable distinguishing mark for eventual dropouts is that only 23 percent of them progress normally in their second year in high school. Students who were 16 or older in ninth grade or completed nine or fewer credits during their first year in high school were particularly at risk of dropping out. Eighth-grade performance, on the other hand, was a weak indicator of later achievement. As such, the ninth grade appears to be a critical point when eventual dropouts first



Santiago Taveras, Deputy Chancellor, NYCDOE



Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch

veer off path.

Meade also examined what sets apart high-performing schools, and emphasized that they often have high attendance rates and high ratings on school climate, which includes communication, safety, respect and academic expectations.

Noguera then suggested three policy considerations to draw from the research: consider the implications of phasing out local diplomas, which help the most vulnerable students, implement strategies that are responsive to such students, and develop resources for supporting schools that need them the most.

Tisch was the first panelist to speak, and she offered a variety of changes and suggestions in response to the research, including phasing out middle schools, using Governors Island for an educational purpose, and having schools interact with their communities more closely.

Taveras spoke about the "need to make the curriculum in our schools relevant to what's going on in students' lives." He also believes that racial differences remain one of the foremost challenges for public schools, saying, "When we talk about the dropout rate, we have to talk about discrimination, about racism. Some of us are born with skin colors that already make us at-risk."

The crowd seemed to appreciate most the remarks by the two school leaders: David Banks, the founder of Eagle Academy for Young Men, and Juan Mendez, the principal of Enterprise, Business and Technology High School. Both claimed that most problems arise from poor implementation of policy rather than a lack of good ideas. "The answers already exist," Mendez said. "We just need to develop a focused approach." Added Banks, "There's not much new under the sun in education. This is a question of political will." #

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New Specialized Movement Program Shows Encouraging Results

By DR. BONNIE BROWN

As practitioners who work with students who have emotional, social, cognitive, sensory and orthopedic challenges, we are always searching for the key to unlock their potential. We hope to find access to what is buried within each child that will serve to improve the quality of his or her daily life. Over the years, we have piloted numerous programs and spent a vast amount of funding on consultants to help us find the "silver bullet." Well, by George, we think that we may have finally found it!

District 75, a special education district within the New York City Department of Education, has partnered with Anne Buckley-Reen to implement a creative program to foster sensory-motor integration in students with developmental challenges. Ms. Buckley-Reen is a pediatric occupational therapist and certified yoga instructor with 29 years of experience. Her specialty is creating programs that foster stress reduction, balanced nutrition, restful and restorative sleep, a nurturing classroom environment, and ultimately the ability to enhance the brain/body balance. Her morning program has been used in 60 District 75 classes and was phased in over time within cohorts of 20 schools. The program depends on daily, consistent implementation practices with multi-disciplinary staff collaboration and student involvement based on varying levels of student performance.

How does the program work? It occurs in a delineated time frame at the beginning of the school day and spans approximately 20 minutes. The environment is prepared by dimming or shutting the lights, pushing furniture to make floor space, unrolling floor mats, and demanding total silence. Students are supported



by classroom teachers, para-professionals, OTs, PTs, and speech providers. The daily routine includes deep breathing, chanting, postural supports and yoga movements. Materials are minimal as they include mats, a metronome, and a DVD that students follow. We have labeled this program "Get Ready To Learn," as it sets the stage for the remainder of the school day. Each student participates on his or her own level in this therapeutic intervention strategy. Some require consistent physical assistance, some need tap assistance for motor planning, and others require minimal prompting. Over time, many students gain familiarity with the routines and self-initiate and even assist in setting up the classroom and putting it back together after the session.

What is really happening here? Students with chaotic inner lives, inability to manage time and/or space, spastic body movements, high anxiety, and a major challenge filtering out extraneous stimuli are being helped to enter a state of forced relaxation. This relaxed state is supported by chemicals such as serotonin which, when released into the bloodstream, serves to regulate mood, appetite, sleep, muscle contraction and some cognitive functioning, including memory and learning. Therefore, the results we have been monitoring seem to be consistent with a body in a relaxed state.

What are we observing and what have parents reported they are seeing at home? Successes of the program include longer attention spans, better organizational skills, improved sleep patterns, increased range of motion, increased attention

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THE McCARTON SCHOOL: MIRACLE IN CHELSEA



Cecelia McCarton, M.D.



By MCCARTON ACKERMAN

With the number of children diagnosed with autism at all time high, the expanding space and increased staff at the McCarton School is serving as a beacon of hope for families of these young students. Over one hundred people attended the ribbon cutting for the new location of the McCarton School, which has moved locations from the Upper East Side to the former St. Columba school in Chelsea. The five-story, 30,000-square-foot space features 16 classrooms, an auditorium, gymnasium, library and cafeteria, as well as an outdoor play area adjacent to the school. "For those of you who don't believe in miracles, look around the room because tonight is a miracle," said Dr. Cecelia McCarton, founder of the McCarton School.

The event also featured Bob and Suzanne Wright, co-founders of Autism Speaks, as well as Cardinal Edward Egan. "Bob and Suzanne have been a relentless support, and Cardinal Egan opened up his arms and allowed us to look at some schools. We're here tonight because of the love, devotion, and belief of these three people," said McCarton.

Suzanne Wright spoke of the devastation that autism can bring on afflicted children and their families, as well as the hope that the McCarton

School has provided her with. "In several years' time, I believe this will be the model school for autism in the country," said Wright. "Autism took away my grandson's communication skills, as well as other ones, but he is getting his wings back and I truly believe that he will fly one day."

Cardinal Egan spoke of the importance of fighting for a cause, citing his own childhood experience with illness as the catalyst for his charitable work. "I had polio when I was in the 4th grade," said Egan. "The March of Dimes raised money to fight polio at the time and helped our family immensely. It's organizations like this that are essential for us to find a cure. We're going to do everything we can to make this school an even greater success."

Founded in 1998, the McCarton School has progressed to taking on 31 children in the 2009-2010 school year, four more than the previous year. The school is also now able to work with children up to age 18. With a training institute in place for ABA, speech and language, and occupational therapy professionals, McCarton is as hopeful as ever about the future of the school. "I want people to understand what good therapy is for autism and help train the next generation," she said. "There are so many kids out there that need our help." #

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Volkmar, Yale Doctors, Present New Studies on Tourette's and OCD

By YURIDIA PEÑA

Under the aegis of Dr. Fred Volkmar, director of the Yale Child Study Center, physicians from the center recently conducted a presentation on their seminal findings and treatments of Tourette's syndrome and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder at the Yale Club in Manhattan. Studies indicate that about 200,000 Americans suffer from Tourette's syndrome, a disorder that targets the nervous system and causes a person to make repetitive involuntary movements or vocalizations called tics; experts at the Yale Child Study Center are helping hundreds of patients with Tourette's and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder to cope with their maladies using methods such as CBIT (Comprehensive Behavioral Interventions for Tics).

During the lecture, Dr. James Leckman, M.D., director of research at the Yale Child Study Center, explained the history of Tourette's and OCD and how the increase in funding and popular interest has helped their research reach advancements in the last 35 years. During this time, more patients with these disorders have come out to seek treatment. "Most of the kids that we saw were at their worst;...that's usually when they came to see us. Now, people come when they see first tics," said Leckman.

Tics are a premonitory urge that is released with rage attacks, vocal expressions and self-injurious behavior, followed by a sense of relief. According to Leckman, one of the most effective ways of understanding how to fight these disorders is by listening to the people most affected by them. "You listen to the families, you listen to the



(L-R) Robert King, M.D., Lawrence Scahill, Ph.D., and Fred Volkmar, M.D., of the Yale Child Study Center

patients; some of the best research questions arise from these conversations."

The CBIT method teaches patients how to become aware of their tics before they occur, learn how to control them, and ultimately overcome them. Experts believe that although tics are involuntary, they are mutable, suppressible and controllable. For example, at a social setting tics may become prevalent. Therefore, patients are taught methods that can assuage their tics.

CBIT therapy consists of eight 1-hour-long treatment sessions over ten weeks. During this treatment, participants will learn to monitor their tics and will practice behavioral responses that may make the tics less frequent. This treatment does not require any intake of drugs, thereby causing no side effects. "It empowers parents and kids rather than waiting for a magic pill," said professor of child psychiatry Robert King, M.D., who is also medical director of the Tourette's/OCD clinic at the Yale Child Study Center.

Patients use different techniques to help reduce tics without using prescribed drugs. "My son

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HOW LANDMARK COLLEGE IS CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION

By **FREDERICK LANCTOT-LEROY**

The world we live in today is moving faster than ever, constantly upgrading itself and making last year's trend obsolete. Education in the 21st century is moving at a heaving pace that some cannot handle. The importance of literacy in a society is vital, yet it is estimated that 50 percent of adults are unable to read at an eighth-grade level. For a student, reading and writing are the most important and basic skills. However, as with so many other Landmark students, my acquisition of these skills has been a lifelong struggle. Landmark College is a haven for students struggling with learning disabilities.

Like 15 percent of American students, I suffer from a leaning disability called dyslexia. In addition, I have been diagnosed with ADHD. I have been enrolled at Landmark College for two semesters, and this school has initiated a profound change in who I am and my outlook on life. As a kid, I stumbled in reading simple sentences while my friends told me the fascinating stories of Dr. Seuss that they had just read. At an early age, I developed my own language, to the displeasure of my teachers, in which the simplest form of phonetic spelling trumped the abstract concepts of rules and exceptions. Luckily, I have been blessed with incredibly inspiring, dedicated and loving parents. They are the rock of my world; my faulty writing will never express the gratitude I owe them. I can recall the numerous times I tried to put down my arms in a sign of defeat, but they were on each side to lift them back up.

School was always treacherous. I was never able to enjoy an environment so hostile toward me. All my life, teachers were puzzled by my inability to comprehend, and, one by one, they gave up on me. My life changed when I transferred to Landmark. Teachers presented information to me from diverse perspectives, and for the first time in my life school became fun. My curiosity overpowered my resentment toward school. Since then, I have developed a passion for learning. I began seeing my learning disability as a speed bump on the path to success rather than a roadblock. Landmark ignited a fire within me that will travel way beyond the frontiers of college.

I will forever remember the first day I set foot on the campus of Landmark College. The last thing I ever wanted was to be singled out in a special-ed



Frederick Lanctot-Leroy

school like Landmark. I strongly rejected the idea of belonging there or that I could ever flourish in such an environment. For the few first days, I refused to unpack my bags because I was scared to face something that I had denied all my life.

At Landmark College, it is mandatory to learn about learning disabilities. I did not even know about my own. In the process of researching dyslexia and ADHD, I discovered a part of me I had repressed for years. To better understand myself, I read everything I could find on ADHD and dyslexia. I discovered why I was different and how that difference was a precious gift. I started to accept myself for who I am.

Landmark forced me to accept a harsh reality that accompanies every child with a learning disability: you will have to work twice as hard as the average student. But here at Landmark, teachers, coaches and advisors were there every step of the way with individual attention, help, and guidance. Landmark College forged my character, demanding of me that I build a rock-solid determination and work ethic. If I had to summarize all that I have learned at this school, I would use a quote by legendary basketball coach John Wooden: "Don't let what you can't do stop you from doing what you can do." #

Frederick Lanctot-Leroy is a student at Landmark College and president of its student government.

Dr. Volkmar

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has found that earplugs help reduce tics that are provoked by sensory overload and loud noises," wrote a parent on a Facebook support page created by the Yale Child Study Center. "Once a tic attack (series of hard-to-control, full-body tics) commences, he practices breathing and visualization techniques that he has learned through yoga and tae kwon do." Philip Santucci wrote: "I gotta grip something and the best thing I've come up with is squeezing tinfoil ... and put my stress into a ball.

According to the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, Tourette's syndrome can affect people of all racial and ethnic groups; males are affected three to four times more often than females. Three out of every 1,000 children between the ages of 6 and 17 in the United States have been diagnosed with Tourette's. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder typically begins in childhood and reaches its apex from 10 to 14 years old. An OCD patient usually experiences feelings of distress when having intrusive thought images. Neurological disorders such as OCD may develop in a Tourette's patient; these patients tend to have symptoms related to ordering, counting, rubbing, touching, and symmetry. #

Bonnie Brown

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to sound and visual stimuli, more alert states in multi-disabled students, and increased time on task for learning.

Parents report students now go to sleep at 8 p.m. when there were previously tantrums and crying until the wee hours. Students are helping parents dress them in the morning where they had fought these attempts before. There are fewer recurrences of illnesses related to respiratory deficits. Teachers see less maladaptive behaviors and physical manifestations of anxiety. Students demonstrate improved memory and attention as well as being better at negotiating time management issues. The secondary gain is that staff is also calmer and more relaxed, and the climate in classrooms is more con-

ducive to successful teaching and learning.

Where do we go with this data? At the present time, the district is collaborating with NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development to perform research and collect data on student outcomes. The program will be expanded across many schools, and DVDs will be used for parent training to promote consistency of programming over weekends and vacation periods. The preliminary data collection is very encouraging as students are showing gains in many areas, and they are anxious to begin their morning routines every day. We hope that with the help of Steinhardt and Ms. Buckley-Reen we will have found one of the keys to unlock the hidden potential in our students. #

Dr. Bonnie Brown is the superintendent of District 75 in New York City.



JEWISH GUILD FOR THE BLIND: HELPING CHILDREN SEE



Dr. Linda Gerra, Director



An early intervention program

By MCCARTON ACKERMAN

Children who are diagnosed as being legally blind are often not given a chance to succeed, but one organization has been committed for decades to helping these kids fulfill their potential. The Jewish Guild for the Blind is a non-profit agency that serves people of all ages who are blind, visually impaired and multi-disabled. They offer a wide range of programs including medical, vision, and rehabilitative services.

The guild offers early intervention programs for children through age 3, as well as general home-based programs. "Early intervention is very strong on home-based programs," said Dr.

Linda Gerra, director of the Jewish Guild for the Blind. "We agree with that in the beginning, but advocate them coming here at a certain point for socialization skills."

The basic assessment is called a cue for early intervention. Many of the materials used to determine an infant's vision are high contrast (such as a black and white checkerboard) or reflective. Much of the focus is on visual attention and directed reach, with sound toys used to back up the visual when necessary. Once a child has been diagnosed with this condition, they work on tactile cues like touching an object hand over hand

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Peggy Ogden, Project Eye-To-Eye Board Member, Talks About Growing Up Dyslexic

Peggy Ogden attended Brown University starting in the late 1940s, when learning disabilities were virtually unheard of. While she recognized her trouble with reading early on, it wasn't until after college in the mid-1950s that a close friend who was doing research on learning disabilities introduced her to the term "dyslexic."

Although no formal accommodations existed while she was in school, Peggy found ways to work around her dyslexia. When book reports were due in school, Peggy always chose a book that had been turned into a movie, and during her college years, Peggy sought help with spelling and punctuation from roommates and peers. She also recalled how helpful it was when television news programs began in the late 1940s as she could get more information without having to read the newspaper.

Peggy's biggest challenge at Brown came when she had to take the English proficiency exam in order to graduate from Brown. "I kept failing it," Peggy recalled, "until I finally asked what the requirements were to pass. They only specified that there could be no punctuation, grammar, or spelling mistakes." Peggy retook the exam and passed by only using three- or four-word sentences with shorter words that she knew she could spell and no punctuation except for periods.

Upon entering the professional world, Peggy recognized that, in order to succeed, she would have to hide her dyslexia from her employers and she would need someone to help her with writing. Peggy went on to have an incredibly successful career. She became the first female store manager of a major retail store in the East



in the 1960s and later became director of human resources and labor relations for a CUNY college. She attributes much of her success to the help she received along the way. "I have had a great career, and that was thanks to a lot of very helpful administrative assistants."

Peggy became involved in Project Eye-To-Eye after attending an event in 2005 and joined the governing board shortly thereafter. Peggy's dedication to Project Eye-To-Eye is motivated by her desire for all children with learning disabilities to know that they should never give up hope and should always have faith in themselves. "It is so important they understand that it doesn't mean that they are dumb. They can definitely succeed with a learning disability." #

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Ready, Set, Camp! Finding the Right Camp for Your Child

You are considering a summer camp, but how to choose? There's a camp that is ideally suited for every child, providing a summer of growth and fun whether your child attends a day or overnight camp, a specialized or traditional camp. With a little help from the camp professionals at the American Camp Association, here's some sound advice that helps parents sort through the choices and benefits that camp delivers. As spring approaches, parents and children can look forward to planning for the future — a future that includes the opportunities for exploration and discovery that arrives with summer camp.

How to Decide When Your Child is Ready for Camp

Children are ready for new experiences at different stages. Parents know their children best and these questions can help gauge whether this is the summer your child will start camp.

- What is your child's age? Children under age 7 may not adjust easily to being away from home. Consider the day camp experience to prepare them for future overnight camp.

- How did your child become interested in camp? Does your child talk about camp on a sustained basis? How much persuasion is necessary from you?

- Has your child had positive overnight experiences away from home? Visiting relatives or friends? Were these separations easy or difficult?

- What does your child expect to do at camp? Learning about the camp experience ahead of time allows you to create positive expectations.

- Are you able to share consistent and positive messages about camp? Your confidence in a positive experience will be contagious.

A Camp for Every Child — The Perfect Fit

Camp can last for just a few days or stretch to all summer long. It's well worth the trouble to investigate the variety of choices offered by

camps before your child packs a backpack. These questions help you consider the options.

- Where do you want your child to go to camp? Locally or far away? While each camp experience has something unique to offer your child, this is an opportunity for families to assess what they value for their campers.

Benefits of a nearby camp include the following: They are easier to evaluate and visit; friends and family are likely familiar with the camp; travel costs are minimal; possible contact with classmates or children from the same region.

There are many benefits of camps that are far away. Advantages include more choices; different experiences, geography (e.g. mountains or oceans), and language exposure; greater independence, particularly for early and late adolescent campers; diversity of campers, chance for family to visit and vacation when camp closes.

- Session length offers another choice. Camps offer widely varying options to help parents and children reach their goals for summer fun and exploration. Talking with your child about the goals you both share helps determine which choice is right for you.

Benefits of short sessions (one to three weeks) include the following: First-time or younger campers have a chance to learn new skills; bonds develop with other campers and staff; great exposure to camp experience with less expense; minimizes homesickness.

Benefits of longer sessions (four to twelve weeks) include a strong sense of belonging to camp community; chance to learn new skills; development of specialized skills; multiple opportunities for learning and enrichment; life-long friendships; opportunities to contribute to camp culture.

- Boys only, girls only, or co-ed? Now may be the opportunity to explore the choices and ben-

efits of all boys, all girls, or co-ed camps.

Benefits of single sex camps include: Breaking gender stereotypes — girls interact with women in position of authority and boys interact with men who act as nurturers; more opportunities to "be yourself" without impressing or competing with the opposite sex; camp philosophy may be tuned into gender strengths and weaknesses; brother or sister camps may share activities.

Benefits of co-ed camps include: Breaking gender stereotypes — girls interact with women in positions of authority and boys interact with men who act as nurturers; mirrors and prepares campers for everyday living in a co-ed world; allows families with a boy and a girl to attend the same camp; offers diverse points of view; breaks through rigid divisions set up in school when campers participate in equal footing.

A Camp for Every Child — Traditional, Specialty, and Special Needs

Choices abound when it comes to camp programs. One camp may highlight a wide variety of activities geared to campers of all ages and skill levels; others, because of their setting and expertise, may concentrate on one or two activities while providing traditional activities as well. Parents of children with special needs are pleased to learn about the range of camp activities that help kids be kids first.

Benefits of traditional camps include: Wide variety of activities; chance for campers to try new activities; exposure to more campers and



staff at varying activities.

Benefits of specialty camps include: One or two specialized activities (often combined with traditional offerings); expectation for increased proficiency during camping session; deepens knowledge and skill in particular area of interest or ability.

Benefits of special needs camps include: Activities geared to campers' abilities; knowledgeable staff with expertise to understand campers' strengths and challenges; supportive and fun atmosphere to share with others.

The Value of Camp for Every Child

What happens when you make the decision to choose camp? You open up a world of discovery and learning for your child, a world that values children for who they are and who they will become. Camp gives each child a world of good. #

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SUMMER FUN IN HIGH SCHOOL

By **MARISSA SCHAIN**



College started in my high school years. Each summer throughout high school at James Madison on Bedford Avenue was spent taking pre-college courses throughout New York City. The goal was to find my purpose in life, my ideal career. My research began at Fashion Institute of Technology in 2004. I enrolled in a fashion design class, where 30 other 14-year-old fashionistas were studying to become the designers of our generation.

"Render children, render!" said our professor as we sketched the model mannequin in alternating poses. Our first assignment was to render texture on the page. She asked us to trace over a rough board in the front of our classroom that would create the texture of a tulle skirt or curly hair. "Stop rendering!" she said in fury when she realized I was coloring the wall.

Although I left fashion design as a career goal, I wanted to experiment at FIT once more; I enrolled in Marketing and Communications the following year. I enjoyed project-based learning. We created an advertisement for "Yo-On-The-Go" yogurt. We marketed our ad to the everyday woman on the go who wants to be skinny and satiated. I met some incredibly interesting students during this class. Ruthie from the Upper West Side was eclectic, Australian, and had a driver. Alyssa from Singapore was a terrific brainstormer and carried a Beatles tote bag she bought in San Francisco. Her knowledge of American pop culture amazed me. Although our "Yo-On-The-Go" woman was bested by other yogurt ideas (I still don't think yogurt as a drink is appetizing), I thoroughly enjoyed expanding my global network of friends.

My most memorable pre-college experience was at NYU during the summer of my junior year. I enrolled in reporting, introduction to nursing, and an optional writer's workshop, which I saw as a

rewarding opportunity. Six credits in six weeks seemed feasible for me, and I was eager to explore a wide array of classes at NYU. Those who enrolled in the writer's workshop were given a list of authors and a collection of their essays. From a list that included Virginia Woolf and Joan Didion, among other esteemed writers, I chose the collection, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, by Alice Walker. I was anxious to learn what we could discover from these essays and how I would grow as a student in this competitive university.

The writer's workshop was taught by Zach Udko, a young playwright from Stanford. "Forget everything you learned in high school," he said. I didn't understand. "There is no such thing as the five-paragraph essay. Have you ever seen a professional published essay written in that form?" No, we concluded. "The five-paragraph essay is boring, unyielding, and far too simplistic to accommodate any interesting ideas," he said. This concept blew my mind; in high school we were required to write essays in that form for all of our classes.

This truly opened my mind to a whole new world of literature and forms of writing I was never introduced to in high school. We analyzed essays with themes of feminism and sexuality. Zach shared with us his favorite from William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just To Say." Zach also helped us prepare our personal statements for our college entry essays. His goal was to get us to write essays that only we could write, ones in which the reader could see thinking on the page, the interaction between my writer-self and my self. I used my collection of essays for my SAT essay section and scored the maximum 12 points.

The classroom consisted of a diverse group of students from around the country with different career goals. One particular student, Didem, who chose Joan Didion's collection of essays,

CAMP IS FOR EVERY CHILD

By **PEG L. SMITH**
CEO, AMERICAN CAMP ASSOCIATION

Watching my son after he returned from summer camp was the first hint that remarkable growth was underway. He was engaged, giving, and confident. Viewing the camp experience as a respite from the real world is somehow to miss the point — it is the real world — simply getting dirty, trying to pull harder so your team wins, finding the friend you always wished for, being yourself — it's the time of your life and the promise of the future.

As a parent, I constantly ask: Where do children have their mental, personal, emotional, and physical needs nurtured? Where will they learn to get along with others, to take safe risks, to deal with conflict in a constructive way that encourages them to be creative, to explore and discover, to learn by actively doing, to try — to fail and try again? In the camp community, I find what I intuitively know as a parent: To be a positive, productive adult one needs the opportunity to truly experience childhood — that is how one grows.

Camps enjoy the opportunity of working their magic with all of our children: the gifted athlete, the budding musician, the curious naturalist, the first-time camper, and the child with a disability.

Slouching Towards Bethlehem, had a vast knowledge of literature and wrote daring poems about Sprite bottles. She is now studying comparative literature at Bryn Mawr College.

My nursing class was research- and text-based. My final project was on retention in the nursing profession, which was surprisingly low. While this class did not guide me in a nursing degree path, I gained a lot of insight about the history and profession of nursing from our professor, who was also a geriatric nurse at NYU Medical Center.

My reporting class was taught by a former *New York Daily News* writer, Judith Schoolman. We took field trips to *Reuters* and the *Daily News* offices. We met several reporters and editors and had intimate discussions in which we discussed the future of journalism and how to become better writers. We spoke to strangers on the street asking, "How do you beat the heat?" Our leads grew stronger and our articles were precise, yet colorful. I learned a great foundation for reporting, which has shaped my writing today. Professor Schoolman would constantly challenge us to keep writing. She also encouraged me to attend Brooklyn College.

When I returned to high school for my senior year, I showed my essay to Mr. Carey, who taught our elective English class, Bible as Literature. He said he was thoroughly impressed and handed me a handwritten page response. "This writing workshop must have been a great opportunity," it read. "Your writing is already college-level and will only get better." These college experiences had a profound effect on me, and helped me a great deal in preparing not only for college, but also for life afterwards. #

Marissa Schain is a student at Brooklyn College.

The idea that camp is for every child isn't just a pipe dream — it's a reality. And one that parents and children celebrate and the American Camp Association supports by promoting safe, fun, and developmentally-appropriate experiences in the camp setting.

The entire experience began with a single camp — the Gunnery Camp in 1861. As I write, I am buoyed by the recognition of just how dynamically this idea has taken flight. This popular movement testifies so loudly to the extraordinary benefits that camp provides to our young people — responsibility, exploration, engagement, not to mention the spiritual dimension of the camp experience.

Is camp quantifiable? Maybe not — but as a parent, I can only react with extreme pleasure as my son displayed those acts of kindness and generosity of spirit that follow so naturally from his time at camp. His chance to develop and grow was marked by constant changes — our camps meet those challenges every day of every session, and that's why doing what we do becomes so vital.

Camp is about firsts — a first campfire outdoors, leading a pony, catching a frog, enjoying the evening stories, and being chosen — chosen to be part of a community that values each child and his or her special gifts. It's about making memories and honoring the traditions of those who have come before. Children are alight with the idea that their acorn hangs from a rafter where their parents and aunts and uncles placed theirs so many years before.

The American Camp Association has grown through its commitment to research and education in the field of child development. We communicate these best practices for each camp member: from waterfront safety to the healthy diets and enriching activities carefully tailored to children's inherent curiosity and sense of discovery. From camper-to-counselor ratios to medical care, we understand what makes a camp community safe and fun, and our member camps make the extraordinary commitment to meet and surpass those standards.

We love what we do at the American Camp Association, for every child and every family, every camp staff director and counselor. The bar couldn't be higher for us knowing that our goals and standards are the ones that support the highest aims of the camp community — safe environments; caring, competent adult role models; healthy activities and learning experiences; service to the community and the environment; and opportunities for leadership and personal growth.

Throwing the doors wide open to allow generations of children and families to enjoy the value of experiential learning and growth, a path to self-esteem and independence is what camp is all about. From urban and rural settings to international camp opportunities, we revel in watching children discover their place in the world — making a difference is truly what makes the difference. #

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BUDDY-BUILDING CAMP

A SPECIAL NEEDS CAMP



The Buddy-Building Camp is a six-week summer, day program developed by Dr. Lesli Preuss to help families who have young boys who struggle in more mainstream camp programs.

The philosophy of the program, developed from her 14 years of experience as a child psychologist, is to use sports, arts and nature to help children with social and emotional delays overcome some of their difficulties. We enjoyed significant success over last four years and are excited for the upcoming summer.

This camp serves twice-exceptional boys, aged 8-12, with Asperger Syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Autism (HFA), Emotional Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), Speech/ Language Disabilities, and other disabilities.

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PRESIDENT JUDITH SHAPIRO, BARNARD COLLEGE, December 1996



Shapiro proudly points to what she terms “the extraordinary record” of Barnard graduates. The school ranks third in absolute number of PhD’s obtained in recent years, fourth in the number of science PhD’s and first in Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology. Barnard also sports no less than 7 Mac Arthur Fellows, a record it shares with Swarthmore College, and placed fifth in absolute numbers of women entering medical school, trailing only Harvard, Michigan, Cornell and Stanford.

ERICA JONG AND DAUGHTER MOLLY, May 2001



Motherhood “made me Everywoman. It changed my life,” says Erica Jong of her daughter Molly. She had thought that having a child would destroy her creativity. “It is the hardest and most important part of your life. You support what they have and hopefully don’t destroy it. What they express is not from you but from God.”

Molly describes her relationship with her mother as one of teamwork and deep friendship. “The better she does, the better I do. The better I do, the better she does,” she says. “We don’t read each other’s work. It’s not helpful. We do not compete with each other. We’re very different in many ways.”

JOSHUA BELL, October 2002



Education is a central concern for Bell. He cites the inner-city youngsters he met in Boston — some had never seen a violin before and were completely captivated at meeting a performer — a few would hardly let him get away. Though he himself had been bored in kindergarten and was finally skipped to first grade — “unheard of at the time in Bloomington” — he is against promoting accomplishment in ways that might turn out expert technicians devoid of soul. He admires the Suzuki technique and uses some Suzuki books, but he would prefer that the method also teach children how to read notes.

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, April 2002



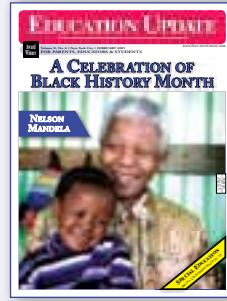
The 18th annual Jimmy Carter Work Project will take place in Africa this year, where Habitat affiliates from that continent will partner with volunteers from around the globe to build 1,000 houses in 18 countries. Former president Carter will participate at a site in Durban, South Africa, where 100 houses will be constructed by over 2,000 volunteers during a five-day period. Student volunteers report that knowing they will be impacting the lives of the family they are working alongside of is an unexpected bonus. “Their home will not only be a beautiful building, but it will be extra special because of the emotions we all built into it.”

FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH, October 2003



“Before they start school, America’s children receive care in a variety of settings. While 38 percent receive care solely from their parents, the remaining 61 percent have arrangements for care with relatives, non-relatives, and center-based care, including Head Start. Regardless of who spends the most time with children during these vital formative years, one thing is certain: the development of early language and pre-reading skills is critical to their reading ability and academic success in school, and critical to their success in life. Without this development, children can lose confidence and the motivation to learn.”

NELSON MANDELA, February 2005



Nelson Mandela’s contributions to social equality continue today. The Nelson Mandela Foundation seeks to improve rural conditions of schools by soliciting direct accounts of what conditions are like in the particular rural area.

The Mandela Foundation has helped build over 140 schools. These Mandela Schools have been the focus of a development program. One of the objectives is to create centers of excellence in learning and teaching within communities. The Foundation strives for a deeper understanding of how rural communities view education and how they can improve their own lives. The Foundation

tries to bring a deeper understanding between policy makers and the communities who need their help.

MAYA ANGELOU, February 2005



As though eight decades of a challenging and rich living were not already enough, Dr. Angelou continues to try to make a difference, especially for new generations of youngsters, in her role as Reynolds Professor at Wake Forest University in

Winston-Salem, N.C., where she teaches a master class, World Poetry and Dramatic Performance. Teaching is extremely important to her and teaching literature an affair of the soul. “To educate is to liberate,” and great teachers “remind people of what they already know instinctively,” though they have wonderful allies in great literature. Bad teaching is learning by rote and, even if unintentionally, conveying an attitude of condescension. She is sorry to say so, but she does — there are teachers today who humiliate, insult, or remain indifferent or insensitive to their struggling young charges, many of whom have no stable home. They punish instead of reward, even demanding that poor behavior and performance be met by extra reading assignments. What a distortion of literature, what a block to inculcating self-esteem! “Youngsters may do wrong but they know in their heart what is right.”

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, June 2005

Reflecting back on his education, Rauschenberg recalls Black Mountain College, North Carolina, as a place of freedom where he found out who he was; a place to milk cows, wash dishes, study dance, and learn Russian. “People did their best when they were there,” he said. When Chris

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Lina Rojas



stated that his father had found a community of people there, Bob laughed and pointed out that Chris was being carried around in a laundry basket at that point so how would he know. Darryl's humorous comment on education was "Stay in school as long as you can. It cuts down on the overhead."

ROSA PARKS, February 2006



Parks' legacy lives on today through the creation of the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development, founded in 1987 by Parks in honor of her husband, who passed away in 1977. The foundation holds annual programs

for teens titled "Pathways to Freedom," where youth have the opportunity to learn the history of the civil rights movement. Her actions leave an indelible print of all that is moral, dignified and valiant.

CONDOLEEZA RICE, January 2006



"Today, every American studying abroad is an ambassador for our nation, an individual who represents the true nature of our people and the principles of freedom and democracy for which we stand."

Similarly, every foreign student attending one of our universities represents an opportunity to enhance democracy in America and to strengthen the cause of freedom abroad. Our citizens learn from the different perspectives that foreign students bring to our classrooms. And when these students ultimately return to their home overseas, they have new friends that they have met and memories of America that they will never forget."

LAURIE TISCH, June 2006



As the founding chairperson of the Center for Arts Education since its inception in 1996, Tisch has overseen the donation of over \$30 million to support collaborative relationships between public schools and cultural and community organizations.

As chairperson, she transformed the Manhattan Laboratory Museum into what is today: the Children's Museum of Manhattan. She also chairs the board for the Teachers College Campaign for Educational Equity. Tisch has been recognized through an award from the National Child Labor Committee.

HAROLD MCGRAW III, October 2006



"We can and must do better [in financial literacy education], because we know that a basic understanding of economics is necessary for young people to comprehend how the world works and to prepare for their futures. That is why we work closely

with a number of financial literacy organizations,

including the National Council on Economic Education, with whom we have partnered since 1997. NCEE is a fantastic organization that advocates for the teaching of quality, standards-based K-12 economic education in every state. We work with NCEE in a number of ways, one of which is their annual series of Master Teacher Workshops. The workshops are designed to equip participating high school economics teachers with economic and financial literacy skills that they can then pass on to their students. All the curricula use lessons employing practical, real-world scenarios that demonstrate fundamental economic concepts and offer teachers a variety of resources, test questions, and teaching strategies to implement in the classroom."

TONY BENNETT, December 2007



The Frank Sinatra High School of the Arts bears the name of one of Tony Bennett's most significant mentors and friends. "Tony" shows up for every graduation, invites students to attend his concerts and TV specials, and tries to attend theirs.

Recently, "the kids" performed at the 75th anniversary of Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Show, and it was an especially "wonderful" event, he notes, because they had been invited only three days before. When he comes to the school, he says that he sees "young Americans full of hope — not one dropout." The data back him up: 90 percent of FSHS's 610 students are graduated within the traditional four-year period, and 100 percent go on to college. Clearly, the school must be doing something right: applications have gone up and admissions have become more competitive, with auditions playing a cen-

tral part. And how about those awards, Tony points out: The school's Wind Ensemble won a Level VI Gold with Distinction medal from the New York State School Music Association. For Tony Bennett, FSHS is simply "the best. I love this place," he says, and is especially proud that it is a public school. That was important to him, and he looks to FSHS to provide a creative arts model for public schools nation wide. "There's not enough culture in the country today. If there's more involvement in the arts, perhaps there will be fewer wars."

NEWARK MAYOR CORY BOOKER, October 2007



An advocate of school choice, Booker welcomes the diversity of education models that have developed in the past decade, including charter schools and other non-traditional institutions, which are becoming more prevalent throughout

Newark. But merely breaking up the city's large high schools that are performing below state standards isn't the only solution. "I want parents to be able to choose the best education for their children. An all-girls high school might be good for some girls but not all girls. Some parents might want vocational high schools, others something else. I don't want to say there's one system for every child," he said, adding that he's "loyal to results. What makes me excited is a school that produces high achievement."

GEORGE WEISS, DISTINGUISHED LEADERS IN EDUCATION, July 2007

It was a great day for education in New York as the city's elite in the world of learning

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EXPRESS

Student

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of Criminal Justice/CUNY

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ANNIVERSARY (continued from page 17)



came to the Harvard Club to help Education Update honor 22 outstanding public school administrators and teachers and present its 2007 Distinguished Leader in Education award to George Weiss, founder of "Say Yes to Education,"

which meets a variety of student needs, both academic and non-academic, and creates vital support systems by also aiding parents and siblings in educational endeavors." Schools chancellor Joel I. Klein, United Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators president Ernest Logan, City College School of Education dean Alfred Posamentier, and The City University of New York chancellor Matthew Goldstein all participated in the proud celebration.

JANE GOODALL, March 2007



When I asked Dr. Goodall what her greatest obstacles were, the irony of her response was not lost on me. I thought she would talk about loneliness, wild animals or the forest. Instead she spoke about the violence of man: in 1975,

four students working with her were kidnapped in the Congo. As a result, the entire Gombe Research Center in Tanzania came to an end, which included the chimp project. At the same time, she lost her part-time professorship at Stanford University. But she didn't give up. In fact, her advice to young women today is, "If you want something, never give up. Don't be discouraged; don't give up your dream."

CUNY CHANCELLOR MATTHEW GOLDSTEIN, Nov/Dec 2010

Government support is critical. In 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, enabling the development of public universities, and Congress chartered the National Academy of Sciences. During World War II, government-funded university research developed radar, medical drugs, and

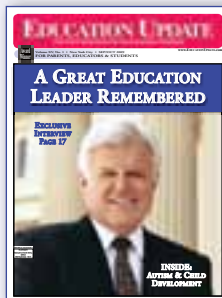


atomic weapons. Post-Sputnik, Washington pumped money into research. In the 1980s, the Bayh-Dole Act allowed federal grant recipients to benefit by commercializing the products of their research.

That federal investment has paid off handsomely. Research universities are engines of prosperity, generating economic growth, jobs, and the services and tools that companies need. Public institutions educate almost 80 percent of U.S. students, at a time when college enrollment is at an all-time high.

Yet between 1987 and 2006, the average share of public universities' operating revenues from state sources dropped from 57 percent to less than 41 percent. Meanwhile, other countries are eagerly investing in higher education, particularly in sciences, technology, engineering and math. Take engineering — the choice of 20 percent of students in Asia, 13 percent in Europe, but just 4 percent in the United States, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education. From 1995 to 2005, published articles in science and engineering grew by over 16 percent in China — and by just 0.6 percent in the United States.

SENATOR TED KENNEDY, Sep/Oct 2009



Education Update: The Kennedy Family has been involved in helping children with special needs for many decades, including the Special Olympics. How did you first become involved in special education?

Senator Edward

"Ted" Kennedy: My family became particularly committed to children with disabilities and their families because of our sister, Rosemary, who had mental retardation. In many ways she still had real potential, and my parents did their best to see that she could develop as much as possible. But it was obvious to all of us that millions of others had no such opportunities. Disabled children deserve a good education and opportunities to play and compete in sports.

Chicago News: Ariel Academy Students Learn Stock Market

By LISA K. WINKLER

Connie Moran's classroom at Chicago's Ariel Community Academy looks more like a corporate boardroom than a typical classroom. Herman Miller Swivel chairs surround long, black tables. Clocks tell the time in Chicago, New York, Tokyo and London. An enlarged photograph of Wall Street — complete with a bull and a bear — cover one wall. Hallways are named after financial districts around the world, and a morning bell like the one that opens the stock market begins the day. Students at this magnet pre-K-8 public school learn about the stock market — and how to invest — in addition to the usual school subjects.

"The goal is to make the stock market part of dinner table conversation," said Moran, who teaches financial literacy, in an interview with *Education Update*. Founded by Ariel Capital Management in 1997, the school, serving inner-city students on the South Side, infuses financial literacy into its curriculum.

Ariel and Nuveen Investments give each incoming first-grade class an endowment of \$20,000 to invest in a class stock portfolio, which they manage until the class reaches sixth grade. Upon graduation, in eighth grade, the original funds are given back to the next incoming class and any remaining profits are divided — half returning to the school as a philanthropic donation from the graduating

class. The other half is divided among the students, usually about \$150 each. Students are encouraged to deposit their earnings into a college savings plan that is matched with \$1,000 from the company.

So how do kids learn how to invest? First graders learn about goods and services, bartering, and resources. Fourth graders learn the history of money and begin looking at decisions as investors, not just consumers. Sixth graders begin to invest their class money. Through research — there's a donated Bloomberg terminal in the classroom — students learn to analyze stocks. Among the more popular stocks are Apple, Google, Disney, Pepsi, Sony. Sometimes current events drive stock decisions — this year's sixth grade invested in firms dedicated to combating swine flu. By eighth grade, students read company annual reports, proxy statements, and price-earnings ratios.

Each student receives an investment statement geared toward the grade level. For example, a first-grade statement uses apples to show the class' position, a bar graph is used on the fourth-grade statement, and by sixth grade, the statement reflects the numbers similar to any firm's summary. A glossary on the back of the statements explains terms. "Ideally, we want our parents to learn what their children are, and hopefully learn about investing as well," said Moran, a former bond analyst. #

New UFT President Michael Mulgrew Outlines the Task Ahead

By SYBIL MAIMIN

"We get into this profession to make a difference in children's lives. That's what drives us every day," charges Michael Mulgrew, the new president of New York's United Federation of Teachers. Being watched closely as successor to new American Federation of Teachers leader Randi Weingarten, Mulgrew, elected by the UFT executive board in July to complete Weingarten's term, is low-key, engaging, and passionate about education issues and the teaching profession.

He sees technology ("a huge issue") as a special challenge. The ability to have "reams of data, too much data" does not necessarily translate into meaningful uses in the classroom, he explains. He wants a sifting process that considers what is of actual benefit to students, as well as professional development, access to technology, and time for planning that ensures instructors "will be in a place where they are able to use" new systems. Describing smart boards as "a beautiful tool for teachers," he notes that using them properly requires training. "We are now dealing with ARIS [the online achievement data-gathering platform], and teachers need to learn how to use it as well as whether to use it."

The much-touted longer school day seen in Europe actually contains less time for instruction and more for planning, a need he emphasizes. He is highly critical of data-driven decisions and policies, believing that many factors of significance are no longer considered in education assessments. The union has endorsed an independent study of classroom teaching being funded by the Gates Foundation, and teachers are in the process of signing up. "Educators know all too well that one-dimensional indicators such as test scores can't begin to capture the complexities of effective teaching and learning. This study promises to look at the bigger picture, and we view it as an important opportunity to be proactive about our profession."

A critic of No Child Left Behind, Mulgrew asserts that emphasizing test scores has "gotten us into a narrow space." A pared-down curriculum does a disservice to children; special education students are particularly disadvantaged in today's environment. "We must get back to the classroom and help kids become successful with a rich, deep curriculum. No one talks about curriculum anymore." To the new UFT president, the recent report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress that shows no improvement in math scores in New York City demonstrates that focusing on test preparation is a flawed model for learning.

The growing number of charter schools is a matter of concern to Mulgrew. The UFT wants every child to have access to a good school. "There are some fantastic charters," he exclaims, and "if they are good we will work with them. In fact, the union runs two charters and partners with a third." He objects vehemently to charters that "are run like a business to make a profit. There



Michael Mulgrew, UFT President

is something in that process that is not serving the kids."

Mulgrew did not set out to become head of the nation's largest local union, which currently has 228,000 members. He wanted to teach. Born on Staten Island, he received a B.A. in English literature from CUNY's College of Staten Island, worked as a carpenter, and substituted until hired full time at William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School in Brooklyn in 1993. Always drawn to "at-risk kids," he reached them through vocational education, a program he fervently believes in. "The real beauty of career and technical education is it engages kids in learning in a place they love to be — shop." He notes that technical education has evolved and become even more attractive and today includes radiation technology, computer networking, and other high tech skills — "stuff this economy needs."

Partnerships are being established with people in industry, and academics are being integrated into CTE programs. In 1999, when the career and technology program he developed was threatened with cuts, he turned to the UFT and became a chapter leader. He did not plan a union career, but in 2005, spurred by the introduction of No Child Left Behind and a perceived danger to high-need students and struggling schools, he left the classroom to work at headquarters as the union's vice president of career and technology high schools. By 2008, Mulgrew was UFT's chief operating officer, and today he is its president.

As a classroom teacher for twelve years (the longest of any UFT president), Mulgrew developed programs and worked on policy for his district. He was able to see how district, state, and federal interests intersect and affect the classroom teacher. He believes this understanding gives him a unique and important perspective often missing in education discussions in which theory, rather than on-the-ground experience, often drives talk and decisions. He sees his current responsibility as "protecting the children inside the school system." Proud of his union's members, he explains, "No one gets into this profession without the intention of helping children. It's all about the classroom." #

Dr. Bonnie Kaiser, Luminary at Rockefeller University, Retires

By DR. POLA ROSEN

Dr. Bonnie Kaiser, director of the Pre-college Science Education Program, brought school-age students and teachers to Rockefeller University from all parts of the country, especially the tri-state area. She helped provide valuable opportunities for students to work in world-class laboratories under the tutelage of outstanding renowned scientists, including Nobel laureates, on real-world challenges. During her nearly two decades of serving the community, Dr. Kaiser inspired a future generation of scientists to develop unique insights and to discover the joy in experiencing scientific research. She also contributed her



time and expertise to the Advisory Council of *Education Update* for many years. #

NEW TEACHER: LUCY VOLKMAR

A Teach for America Story

By SYBIL MAIMIN

P.S. 46, an elementary school in the Bronx, has a Teach for America classroom instructor, Lucy Volkmar, a 2008 honors graduate with a major in psychology from Washington University. Although typical of Teach for America corps members in her idealism and willingness to work in a very challenging situation, Volkmar is somewhat unique in her motivation for joining the program. Whereas most young people are drawn by the opportunity to teach or to make a statement about social justice, Volkmar saw a path to doing work in special education. In the tradition of her family (her father, Fred Volkmar, M.D., is director of the Child Study Center at Yale University and her mother, Lisa Wiesner, M.D., is a pediatrician), she always “wanted to give back” and was active in Autism Speaks while in college. Working one-on-one with a 7-year-old autistic child as an applied behavior analysis implementer, she was struck by how difficult it was to get needed services even though her patient had the advantage of wealthy, supportive par-



Lucy Volkmar, a Teach for America participant, teaches elementary school in the Bronx

ents. The obstacles for disadvantaged children would be even greater, she surmised, and determined to find a career that would allow her to help. Teach for America seemed to fit her needs and she was among those selected from approximately 20,000 applicants to the very popular program. She has discovered she loves teaching, and has decided to stay in education. “It is the most fun, rewarding job. You go home knowing you have made a difference.”

In her second year at P.S. 46, Volkmar, with

problem, so getting them networked with these groups definitely helps.

In addition to resources, Gerra said they will also put parents in touch with organizations who can provide financial aid. The Commission for the Blind provides a \$500 stipend for families of children who are legally blind to buy appropriate educational toys. “If you bombard the children with these toys and then take them away, they have nothing to work with,” said Gerra. “This allows children to continue progressing in their mental development.”

All families who apply for their children to be part of the guild are accepted. Once these students leave, Gerra said that 10 to 15 percent

a focus on special education, co-teaches a class of 28 students with “a very wonderful, supportive” general education teacher, Kimberly Kenny. The Title I school, in a high poverty area, is very diverse racially, ethnically, and religiously. Comments Volkmar, “In my class, kids come from all over the world. It is nice — they just grow up with that.” Her class is 60 percent special- and 40 percent regular-education, a mix that Volkmar sees as “socially beneficial. Most of my students don’t know they are in special ed. It’s good that they are not labeled.” She explains, “I am the teacher for all 28 students. The general ed kids get the benefit of two teachers. Whatever level a student is at, we push them further.” As a young, new educator, Volkmar has known challenges as well as rewards. A major challenge when she began was student confidence. Pupils performing below grade level were not invested in education and learning. She believes most special education students try their best but have discouraging difficulties. “As a teacher you work hard and the student works hard and you both want results. If it is not clicking you both feel really bad. That’s where special techniques come in.” Volkmar receives support from a Teach for America program director, a mentor provided by her school and, especially, her co-teacher.

Her goal has been to find a way of learning that “clicks” for her students. She has seen improvements. A wonderful moment for her was hearing the words, “I think I’m getting smart”, from a second-grader who, after many failures, was finally learning to read.

Volkmar has high praise for Teach for America. “I think it is a terrific program. It attracts people who would not have taught without this prestigious program, myself included, and then fall in love with teaching.” She reports that most of the people she knows in Teach for America are staying in the profession. It is unfair to criticize those who leave after the two-year commitment, she says, because they have made a difference during their stay and will bring perspectives from the experience into whatever careers they pursue. Volkmar will soon be a Teach for America alumnus, but plans to stay involved in the many programs offered by the organization. She is completing work for a Master of Science in teaching at Pace University (a requirement for New York City teachers) and, as an employee of the Department of Education, hopes to continue working with the underprivileged and in special education, places where challenging and important work is being done. Volkmar is certainly making a difference every day! #

Helping Children See

continued from page 13

and learning the cue for it. There are also books in Braille once a child is ready to start reading.

Gerra said part of the focus is also on helping the family cope and giving them access to information. “We work with parents on what they can expect of their child, give them access to resources and get them in touch with parent support groups,” said Gerra. There is a nationwide tele-support group that comes out of the guild and features a guest speaker who will talk about ways to stimulate the child. Parents tend to be isolated and think they’re the only ones with this

of them will enter into mainstream Board of Education classrooms. The rest either go to private schools for the blind, public special-needs programs, or United Cerebral Palsy programs.

Gerra said that despite progress in preventing blindness in premature babies, the number of children who suffer from being legally blind has remained the same in the last 20 years, and the number of children with multiple conditions has risen. However, there are some children she has worked with during this time who stand out in their rapid progression during their time at the guild. “We had a little boy from New Jersey with no eyes, who didn’t talk for the first three years

of his life and only knew a handful of words,” said Gerra. “We gave him additional speech services and put him in preschool, and he took off. In two to three months, he went from six words to 60 words.”

All teachers at the guild are certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired. They need to attend a certain number of workshops each year in order to keep their position. The guild also has an orientation mobility specialist who helps people maneuver safely.

More information about the Jewish Guild for the Blind can be found on their Web site at <http://www.jgb.org>. #

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EDUCATION UPDATE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE



Students in scrubs view an operation.



A veterinary dentist extracts teeth from a dog.



Move over doctors! Here comes the new team!

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

PRINCIPAL: DR. ALTHEA TYSON
TEACHER: COURTNEY FENNER

Life of a Teen on Dialysis

By MORGHAN JOI PASTRANA,
NAOMI WHITE, AND SHIYING FENG

Just recently, we news writers of The Young Women's Leadership School visited a medical center in the Bronx where we spoke with some people on dialysis. We interviewed 19-year-old Ciara, who has been on dialysis for 4-5 years. She is a senior at Dewitt Clinton High School, but her life is very different from those of her friends. When she is in school, for example, she can't really do much in gym class since she can't do much lifting and other things. She has to come after school to get her treatment done. Dialysis is the process by which uric acid and urea are removed from circulating blood by means of a dialyzer. The blood first goes out of the body through a needle, is purified in the dialyzer, and then flows back into the body through another needle in the same arm. This takes about three hours. Lifting things using that specific arm is even more difficult than lifting in general.

Ciara has learned to balance between her school life and having to go to dialysis. Her top subject in school is math. Ciara's hobbies include drawing and reading, and one of her favorite genres happens to be romance. Ciara wants to become a psychiatrist some day. Her family supports her, and friends visit. She enjoys watching *Maury* on TV. When she needs help with homework, someone at the center is there for that specific reason. Since Ciara has been to the center for so long, she has learned to put the needles in on her own, which is a pretty brave thing to do. At first, Ciara didn't want to go to the center for three hours and get her blood cleaned, but she has gotten used to it over time.

A Teen on Dialysis

By TYLER COX AND CORRINE CIVIL

George J. led the average life of a bright young 21-year-old until six months ago, when he started dialysis treatments again. Dialysis is a last-resort treatment when your kidneys no longer can release the waste that your body produces. When George was 18, he had a kidney transplant, and his treatments came to a halt. Sadly, his body later rejected the kidney.

George has a dream of traveling, but can't really travel because of the three time-a-week, three-and-a-half hour dialysis treatments. He could travel, but it would be extremely difficult because he would have to set up treatments at a center in the state or country he was traveling to ahead of time. He has a goal of finishing college, but took this past semester off to restart his treatments once again. During the holidays most people overeat during big meals. George can't

Praise for EDUCATION UPDATE'S Middle School Journalism Initiative

By SIOBHÁN A. MCNULTY,
CLASSROOM TEACHER
P.S. 169 THE ROBERT F.
KENNEDY SCHOOL

Dear Dr. Rosen,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the staff at *Education Update* for establishing the Middle School Journalism Initiative. The Journalism Initiative has provided my students with a valuable learning experience that transcends mundane writing assignments.

It has provided these students with a concrete connection between informative writing and real life experiences. In addition to fostering an interest in journalism, the Journalism Initiative has encouraged my students to value written expression. It has enriched every student's understanding of the writing process, and uncovered a passion for some. Perhaps most importantly, the Journalism Initiative has cultivated a sense of pride in their writing from the moment they saw their own writings in print.



The Young Women's Leadership School students visit a dialysis unit at Montefiore Hospital.

do this because his kidneys won't release all the waste and he could get sick. George can only drink one liter of liquid per day. This is equal to the size of the average water bottle.

When you start dialysis treatments you lose a lot of weight because you have a very restricted diet. Even though George has a strenuous life, he tries to keep a positive attitude toward the treatments that are saving his life at the Montefiore children's dialysis center in the Bronx. Soon, George will have to transfer to an adult medical center, and hopes to stay at Montefiore Hospital. Hopefully from reading this article you will realize that if George can keep a positive attitude during such a strenuous life, you can too.

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY STUDENTS:

Morghan Joi Pastrana
Corrine Civil
Tyler Cox
Kayla Dale
Aaliyah French
Katherine Castelan
Mahham Fayyaz
Naomi White
Shiyong Feng
Nora Gibson

ROBERT KENNEDY SCHOOL P.S. 169

PRINCIPAL: SUSAN FINN
TEACHER: SIOBHIAN MCNULTY

Whom Are Our Public Schools Named After?

By ZAIN ADAMS,

BRANDON DEJESUS AND FELIPE PAU

We go to P.S. 169 Robert F. Kennedy on 88th Street and Lexington Avenue. Our school was named after Robert F. Kennedy. He was born in 1925 in Massachusetts. He was a politician and the brother of John F. Kennedy. He was a U.S. senator and the 64th attorney general of the United States. He was assassinated in 1968 at the age of 42.

In kindergarden, Brandon went to P.S. 83 Luis Muñoz Rivera School. Brandon went there until third grade. P.S. 83 is named after Luis Muñoz Rivera. Luis Muñoz Rivera was born in Puerto Rico on 1859. He was a poet, journalist and politician.

Zain's sister goes to P.S. 87 William T. Sherman. It is located on West 78th Street and Columbus Avenue. William T. Sherman was general in the Union Army in the Civil War. He was also a businessman, educator and author. He was born in 1820 and died in 1891.

Our Class Trip to the Animal Medical Center

By TIMOTHY MILLAN

Our class recently visited the Animal Medical Center. The Animal Medical Center is located on East 62nd Street and York Avenue. It is a hospital for pets and other animals. Veterinarians and veterinary technicians take care of sick animals. Some of the animals have kidney failure and cancer. Some have broken bones. There is an emergency room there too. We got to see an operation on a dog with a back problem. They even have a dentist there. If my cat were sick, I would take her to the Animal Medical Center.

Our Class Trip to Rockefeller Center

By TIFFANY COLE

Our class went to Rockefeller Center. We took the 6 train. We went to Saks Fifth Avenue and saw the window decorations. The windows told about a story about a snowflake. It was really cool. Then we saw the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. It was colorful and had a bright star at the top. There was an ice skating rink under the tree. There were big nutcrackers all around. We took pictures of them. It was really cold. We went into St. Patrick's Cathedral. There were candles there and it was warm. Then we took the 6 train back to school. It was a fun trip and I loved it!

continued on page 21

Harlem's Aspiring Journalists Visit Animal Medical Center

By GILLIAN GRANOFF

An eager group of fifth-graders from The Young Women's Leadership School recently got their first experience in on-the-job training as working journalists. Their assignment: cover a visit to the Animal Medical Center of New York City. The field trip was part of *Education Update's* newly launched Middle School Journalism Initiative, targeted at improving students' critical thinking and writing skills by giving them hands-on experience as actual journalists in interviewing, reporting and research. The positive impact this program has had on these young women was evident from the curiosity and excitement on their faces as they eagerly scribbled notes on their notepads and scurried up and down the crowded corridors of the facility.

Students were treated to an extended tour of the facility and learned about the rich history of the institution, which dates back to 1910 and has been a national leader in animal medical care for nearly a century. Veterinarians fielded a variety of questions, ranging from how they cope with the grief of having to euthanize a pet and how to deliver the devastating news to the owners, to the differences between human and animal dialysis procedures.

Under the gentle guidance of their teacher, Ms. Fenner, Dr. Pola Rosen and the *Education Update* staff, the young students embraced their new responsibility with confidence and excitement. With notebooks in hand, students tran-

scribed information they collected from interviews with the center's generous and impressive staff of veterinary specialists. The girls had the opportunity to speak with interns and doctors specializing in areas of veterinary radiology, oncology, endocrinology and dermatology. They even met with a grief counselor on staff who helps grieving pet owners deal with their emotions. The students were also able to observe some of the everyday activities at the hospital — they huddled with compassion and fascination around the large tank in the physical therapy unit where a black Labrador retriever receive his daily exercise routine on an underwater treadmill. The visit concluded with a visit to the center's intake unit and an interview with Dr. Nolan Zeide, a veterinary technician at the hospital who was doing his internship after graduating veterinary school at Purdue University.

At the end of the day the girls left the center wide-eyed and enthusiastic, outfitted with notebooks in hand, filled with newfound knowledge and exposure to the field of veterinary medicine, ready to write. But whatever angle the students choose to take on their stories, one quote from Dr. Zeide is sure to lead them down the right path. When asked what it takes to be a veterinarian, Dr. Zeide replied, "Hard work is the number one requirement. You have to want to do it and really love it!" After their trip, the students now understand that this attitude applies to all careers, from veterinary medicine, to journalism, to everything in between. #



Morgan Roman

ROBERT KENNEDY SCHOOL P.S. 169 STUDENTS



Felipe Pru



Brandon DeJesus



Tiffany Cole



Timothy Millán



Zain Adams



Catia Alvarez

Robert Kennedy School P.S. 169

continued from page 20

MUSIC REVIEWS

The Best Rapper: Lil Wayne

By ZAIN ADAMS

Lil Wayne is a rapper. He is one of my favorite rappers of all time. He runs Cash Money Records. He is popular because his songs are good. One of my favorite songs is "Prom Queen" from his "Rebirth" album. I like it because it has a good rhythm.

Mozart: A Great Composer

By FELIPE PAU

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a great composer. He wrote over 600 works. He wrote his first opera at age 9. His music is amazing. His music is important because he wrote classical music that people liked. His music is calming and relaxing. He took classical music to another level.

Check Out Chris Brown

By CATIA ALVAREZ

One of my favorite music artists is Chris Brown. He is an amazing R&B singer and songwriter. My favorite song by Chris Brown is "Crawl." "Crawl" is on Chris Brown's "Graffiti" album. This song is about a boy that loves a girl and does not want to lose her. The song is also about having the strength to keep moving on. I love it because it is inspiring.

SPORTS

Bay is the Way

By TIMOTHY MILLÁN

Jason Bay is going to play for the Mets. He plays left field. Bay used to play with the Boston Red Sox. Jason Bay went to Gonzaga University. He is a really good defensive player. He has 185

home runs. He is a great base stealer and a fast runner. He is an All-Star and has won the Silver Slugger award.

MOVIE REVIEWS

Avatar

By BRANDON DEJESUS

Avatar is a great movie. I would give it five stars. I liked it because there are people that go in a machine and become giants. It was interesting because it had a lot of action. It was sad sometimes.

2012

By MORGAN ROMAN

Some people are saying that the world will end in 2012, but other people have different opinions. Some people believe this because the Mayan calendar ends on December 2012. There are many theories about the end of the world being in 2012. But what is the truth about 2012?

There is a theory that a planet called Nibiru, or planet X, will hit Earth. NASA scientists are saying this is not true, and that planet Nibiru does not exist. If it did exist, NASA space scientists would have seen it in space.

Another theory involves the planets aligning. Scientists are saying that it happens often and we should not worry. Another thing people believe might happen is a shift between the North Pole and the South Pole. Scientists say there is no proof that this will happen in 2012. There are a lot of theories. My opinion is that they are making books and films about 2012 on purpose to scare citizens.

The movie *2012* is based on a new world and big arcs that have people aboard. The arcs help people and animals survive. The movie shows the end of the world and how the end of the world starts. It shows big floods, volcanoes erupting, meteors falling from the sky, lava spreading around burning everything, and big earthquakes making big holes that lead to Earth's core. The earthquakes make things like houses, buildings, cars, landscapes, people, flying machines, animals, and a lot of other things fall into Earth's core. In my opinion, *2012* gets a total of five stars out of five. *2012* is phenomenal. It inspires me to go green and help the world.#

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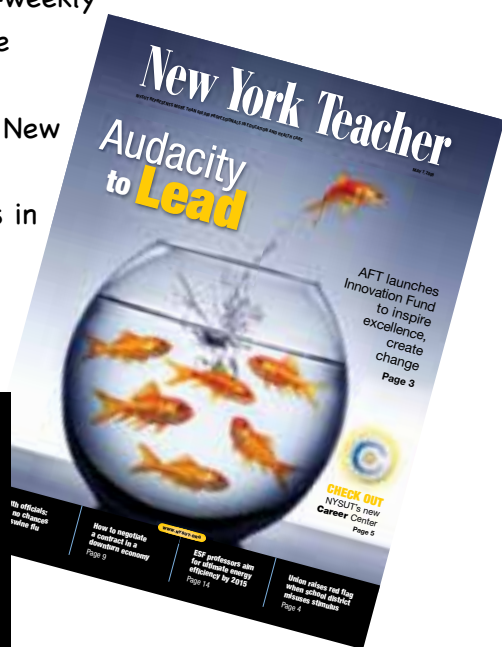
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CSA Conference Addresses State of New York Education

By YURIDIA PEÑA

More than 1,400 educators, parents, politicians and advocates recently attended the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators' 45th Annual Educational Leadership Conference at the Hilton New York. The agenda included a plethora of professional development workshops, networking opportunities, a plenary session with New York state education commissioner Dr. David Steiner, and a gala luncheon.

Logan addressed this year's conference theme, "Keeping the Promise in Challenging Times," at the luncheon. He emphasized the ramifications schools face due to the financial crisis, the exorbitant salaries the Department of Education pays to outside consultants, the lack of transparency in how education dollars are allocated, and how too much focus on standardized test scores neglects the emotional learning of students. "Because

it's not just about changing the tests, it's about getting us back to the point where we start to engage our children in a curriculum that's meaningful to them," he said. "How do we provide our children with a sound education — one that realizes the possibilities that they have within them — with fewer resources and while we're still under the data drumbeat: test scores, test scores, test scores?"

During his speech, Logan addressed funds from C4E, a foundation aid from New York State. The city received C4E money for the first time in the 2007-08 school year. These funds, under state law, must be distributed to certain schools and be spent by those schools on specific initiatives, such as class size reduction, English language learners, or students with disabilities.

Logan called for equal distribution of funding
continued on page 26



CSA President Ernest Logan



NYS Education Commissioner
Dr. David Steiner

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Bronx Institute Helps Foster Local Academic Excellence

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

“People said we couldn’t do it,” said Dr. Herminio Martinez with a touch of wonder in his voice as he told *Education Update* about Lehman College’s Bronx Institute, a nonprofit organization he directs that is helping underprivileged adolescents in the Bronx to expand their academic and social horizons and prepare them for college.

Martinez, a professor of middle and high school education at Lehman College, knows what it’s like to be poor and hungry for an education. A Cuban refugee, he arrived in this country at age 14 without his parents, and it was only through the good graces of a neighbor that he was able to officially enroll in middle school. Martinez is now repaying that favor many times over — that is, 8,000 times over. In the ten years since he’s been at the institute, he has built it into a multimillion dollar, grant-supported program serving more than 8,000 Bronx students and families in 48 middle and high schools throughout the Bronx.

Largest among the Institute’s far-reaching programs is GEAR-UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a Department of Education-funded initiative that focuses on getting kids ready for college in ways that are as diverse as the imaginations of Martinez and his staff, including SAT preparation, parent education, peer counseling (the oldest cohort, now juniors in college, serve as role models for the younger institute students), training for students to take entrance exams to specialized high schools, college tours and financial aid advisement, and a Saturday science and math enrichment program. Cultural outings to museums, theater and opera are an important element of the program: “We’re bridging the gap between the isolation these kids face and the cultural wealth of New York City. ... We get the kids out of the Bronx,” explained Martinez.

Some kids get even further out of the Bronx; through the Experiment for International Living, the institute offers travel experiences abroad to

countries as varied as China, Japan, England, while high-performing students may attend paid residential summer programs in Ivy League schools like Harvard and Yale. “These experiences change the culture in the schools when kids hear what their peers are doing,” explained Martinez. He’s especially excited about a reading initiative that provides each child with several books and brings contemporary authors to the New York Public Library for inspirational book discussions (a recent author, who wrote about being a child soldier in Africa, was especially powerful for the students). To cross the digital divide, Martinez raised grant money for 6,000 students to have laptops (“Now we’re looking into Kindles,” he added with excitement). A smaller but no less important program within the Bronx Institute known as ENLACE (Engaging Latin Communities for Education) helps Latino students of high academic promise to attend competitive colleges and universities.

The success stories from this astonishing, decade-long program would bring tears to the eyes of even the most stonehearted policymaker. They include a quiet Latino boy who solved a challenging math problem (“It was the most brilliant answer the teacher had gotten in 30 years!”) and ultimately gained admission to a select high school, augmented by a summer session in a gifted and talented program at Johns Hopkins University, and a young Latino woman who matriculated at Wesleyan University after spending a post-graduate year in a private boarding school to beef up her prerequisite coursework. “She’s now a junior, studying abroad for the semester,” said Martinez with obvious satisfaction in her remarkable journey.

Martinez is clear about the challenges in his work. “Families have many barriers [to success] that are both real and perceived. We try to break down the barriers between reality and perception.” Those conflicting emotions are perhaps best articulated by Denise, an ENLACE student who had an opportunity to be a summer scholar in the U.K.: “I was afraid of stepping outside of

MYSPACE WOES

By MARTHA MCCARTHY, Ph.D.

Several high school students in Indiana received substantial publicity recently when they were disciplined for pictures taken at a slumber party. In some pictures, the female students had dollar bills tucked in the lingerie they were wearing, and they were pretending to kiss or lick a large phallus-shaped lollipop. After two of the students posted the pictures on their MySpace pages for their designated friends to see, an unknown person gave copies of the MySpace pictures to school personnel. The high school principal then suspended the students involved from all extracurricular activities, including sports, which all the girls participated in, for the rest of school year; but, this disciplinary action was reduced to 25 percent of their extracurricular activities for one semester if they attended counseling sessions and apologized to the Athletic Board made up of the school’s varsity head coaches.

The Indiana Civil Liberties Union has sued the school district on behalf of the students, claiming that the punishment for expression outside of school, which did not cause a disruption, violated the students’ First Amendment rights. The suit argues that the pictures were intended to be humorous and viewed only by the students’ friends, and that nothing in the pictures identified the participants’ high school. The principal contends that posting the pictures violated the school’s Athletic Code of Conduct, which gives the principal authority to exclude student athletes from representing the school for their out-of-school conduct that reflects discredit on the school or creates a disruptive influence on school discipline. School authorities are relying

my comfort zone,” she reflected. “If ever you are given the opportunity to learn or experience something new, to meet new people, I encourage you strongly to take that opportunity because if you don’t, you will regret it. You’ll be missing out on a life-changing experience, and that’s what this program was for me.”

Indeed, for Martinez and his caring staff at the Bronx Institute, changing lives is what it’s all about. #

in part on the fact that conditions can be placed on extracurricular participation that could not be attached to school attendance because extracurricular activities are considered a privilege rather than a right. For example, training regulations that prohibit drinking on weekends or even attending parties where alcohol is served have been upheld.

The outcome of this case, T.V. and M.K. v. Smith-Green Community School Corporation, is difficult to predict and may be a close call. There have been conflicting decisions to date involving challenges to MySpace postings. Some courts have required a link between the students’ MySpace material and a school disruption for disciplinary action to be enforced. But other courts have upheld school authorities in disciplining students for lewd and vulgar MySpace postings found to interfere with the rights of others.

Regardless of the decision in the Indiana case, we can be assured that additional controversies involving MySpace and other social networks are on the horizon. Students should be aware that materials posted via social networks might unintentionally be seen by some people, such as school personnel and potential employers, who may not be amused by the postings. #

Martha McCarthy is Chancellor’s Professor and Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University.

David J. Kahn, who writes the EU crossword puzzle, will be hosting a fun-filled crossword puzzle program at the 92nd Street Y in April. A crossword enthusiast’s delight! Learn to think outside the box while you’re working inside the boxes. Work your way through a crossword especially written for the Y.

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AAUW URGING WOMEN TO PURSUE STEM DISCIPLINES

By CATHERINE HILL, Ph.D., & ANDRESSE ST. ROSE, Ed.D.

Women have made tremendous progress in education and the workplace, yet in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, known as the STEM disciplines, women remain underrepresented. In an era when female doctors, lawyers, and businesswomen are increasingly common, why are so few women becoming scientists and engineers? In March 2010, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will release a report addressing this question.

“Numbers Are Male, Said Pythagoras, and the Idea Persists” stated a *New York Times* headline in October 2006. The ancient and erroneous belief that men are better equipped to tackle advanced mathematics persists in many circles today. Research profiled in the AAUW report shows that in timed tests of word associations, about 70 percent of men and women were more likely to associate science (physics, chemistry, math, engineering) with men, and arts and humanities (philosophy, literature, music, history) with women.

Negative stereotypes about girls’ abilities in math are harmful in measurable ways. Research profiled in the report indicates that even a subtle reference to the gender stereotype adversely affects girls’ math test performance. In other research profiled in the report, stereotypes are found to influence girls’ self-assessment. Among children with similar grades and test scores in math, girls assess their math abilities lower than do boys. Lower self-assessment in mathematics partially explains why girls express less interest in pursuing math and science. Luckily, research



(L-R) Catherine Hill, Ph.D., and Andresse St. Rose, Ed.D.

also shows that actively countering stereotypes can lead to improvements in girls’ performance and interest in math and science.

A foundation in science and math is laid early in school, but scientists and engineers are created in college. Yet, relatively few women pursue STEM majors and, when they do, many capable women leave these majors before graduation. Research described in the AAUW report finds that small improvements in the culture of a department, such as offering coursework that appeals to a wide range of student interests, can have a positive effect on the recruitment and retention of women. Likewise, departments that work to integrate female faculty and enhance a sense of belonging are also more likely to recruit

and retain female faculty.

Bias against women — both implicit and explicit — still exists in the sciences and engineering. Research profiled in the report finds that even individuals who actively reject gender stereotypes often hold unconscious biases about women in scientific and engineering fields. Women in “male” jobs like engineering can also face overt discrimination. Successful women in these “male” occupations are less likely to be well liked compared to their male counterparts. As “likeability” and “competence” are both important for professional advancement, women in these fields are in a double bind.

AAUW has been a leader in efforts to increase the number of women in science and engineer-

ing for over 125 years. Today, AAUW works to dispel negative stereotypes about girls and mathematics through its fellowships, advocacy, and its research, as well as through local conferences, workshops, summer camps and mentoring programs. AAUW is a partner in the National Girls Collaborative Project which seeks to connect local programs devoted to increasing the number of girls interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

For more information on AAUW programs and for information on the upcoming release of *Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*, please visit our Web site: <http://www.aauw.org>. #

Catherine Hill, Ph.D., is director of research at AAUW, and Andresse St. Rose, Ed.D., is a research associate at AAUW.

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THE DEAN'S COLUMN

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AMERICAN EDUCATION?

By DR. ALFRED POSAMENTIER

Recently a nationally known mathematics education leader spoke at a conference and extolled the Japanese system after having just come back from an official visit there. In particular this educator was impressed with the relatively small classes and with the individual attention students got in their classes — often broken up into smaller groups. Coincidentally, a week later I had a Japanese graduate student and teacher visit me to discuss his own research project. After his agenda was completed, I casually asked him about the Japanese system to get further clarification about some of the points raised by the speaker I heard a week earlier. He was amazed at my report of the speaker's comments, saying that if this person saw such classes, they were far from the rule and quite the exception to what is generally offered in Japanese schools. It is hard to generalize any country's educational system, and we ought to bear that in mind when we look to other countries for educational ideas.

It is a time-honored tradition to complain about our educational system, and look to others as being superior to ours. (This is analogous to the "grass is greener on the other side of the fence" syndrome.) We seem never to be satisfied with our process of education. Clearly, no country should be complacent about its educational practices. With the passing of time, lots of factors in society change. Some notables in this regard are population shifts — both in size and nature — and technological advances, which have redefined communication, and made information gathering and processing highly effective. These among others have had a profound effect on our teaching strategies. For example, with today's dynamic geometric software (such as Geometer Sketchpad), we can show aspects of geometry that we could never have shown students in the past, thus presenting the subject in a far more enriched and meaningful manner.

There are several international comparative educational studies, such as the PISA and TIMSS studies, that seem to motivate change among the participating countries — largely those in the European Union. Politicians use this as fodder for developing their educational platform. School systems in the United States do not pay much attention to these comparative students as they often provide controversial comparisons. That is, they compare the United States populations that participated in the studies to countries with a very different societal composition and where the mores affecting education are very different from ours. For example, some countries that perform very well on these comparative studies do not have the cultural diversity that we have and parents are expected to expend extremely huge amounts of home time to support the child's



school work. There are also a fair number of countries in these comparative studies that sort out students as early as age 10; namely, placing the better performing students on a college-preparatory track and providing a more general education or vocational education to those who do not demonstrate early signs of profiting from a higher academic education. When the latter students are compared with American students, where open opportunity and academic access is the overriding philosophy, legitimacy of the study is put into question.

My experience when I visit other countries — most notably in Europe — is that they enquire into our methods of educating our youngsters, our procedures for developing and selecting teachers and supervisors, and the nature of our curriculum. One sign that the European Union has been looking at our educational system is the results that came from the so called "Bologna Process," which mandates that all member countries conform to the American higher education system by awarding baccalaureate, master's, and Ph.D. degrees. This requires each country changing from their former degrees, such as Magister, Diploma-Ingenieur, Licentiate, etc. to ours.

In short, we have nothing to be ashamed of in our educational process. This should not mean that we can become complacent about our educational program, but we should make meaningful changes — ones based on solid education research, and evolving societal factors and technological advances. #

Dr. Alfred Posamentier is professor emeritus of mathematics education and former dean of the school of education at City College of New York, author of over 45 Mathematics books, including: Mathematical Amazements and Surprises (Prometheus, 2009) Math Wonders to Inspire Teachers and Students (ASCD, 2003), and The Fabulous Fibonacci Numbers (Prometheus, 2007), and member of the New York State Mathematics Standards Committee.

GREECE: A WOMAN AT THE HELM

LOUKA KATSELI: MIXING POLITICS & ACADEMICS

By MARYLENA MANTAS

"Greece is a country of opportunities, not problems." With such optimism, Louka Katseli, the Greek minister of economy, competitiveness and shipping, began her first speech as minister in the United States during a recent working breakfast organized by the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce at the Harvard Club.

The speech came at a time when Greece faces one of the worst economic crises in decades. Katseli, who has been at the helm of the ministry since October when PASOK, the Panhellenic Socialist Party, won the election, acknowledged that there has been a "fiscal deterioration in Greece," but noted "there is determination on the part of all ministries to put our house in order." According to Katseli, PASOK's victory brought to Greece a new team of people who have had careers outside of the government and remain "determined to do something for the country and the public interest."

Katseli is no exception. She holds a bachelor's degree from Smith College and two graduate degrees and a doctorate in development and international economics from Princeton University. She has taught at Yale University and the University of Athens and has published more than 40 scholarly articles in international journals and books. A member of PASOK since 1976, she has served as director general of the Center of Economic and Planning Research in Athens, special advisor to the minister of education and special economic advisor to the prime minister. Prior to taking over her new post, she was the director of the development center at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris.

A seasoned academic and one of several women in the new government, Katseli spoke confidently about the status of women in Greek politics, noting, "PASOK as a party has been extremely active since the 1980s in women's empowerment. I would venture to say that in Greece a lot

has been done in terms of political participation. We are lagging behind in terms of support mechanisms to help women with career development."



Minister Louka Katseli

Katseli identified three objectives for the ministry: "sustain and re-launch economic growth, [focus on] fiscal consolidation, and use all tools at our disposition to undertake structural reform for long-term production goals." The objectives will enable Greece to become a "land of opportunities," noted Katseli, and added that to do so, the new government must capitalize upon the country's advantages, which include its "strategic location at the crossroads of three continents," its "tremendous renewable energy potential," its "unique physical and cultural environment," and its "human resources."

To reach that point, however, the country, according to Katseli, must reduce certain disincentives. These include the existing regulatory framework, which makes it "highly costly to do business in Greece." As such, her first "priority for 2010 is to push legislative reform to simplify the procedures for startups. This will unleash tremendous potential. It is not easy because there are interests around the bureaucracy. But, unless we unblock this potential, we cannot move forward." The second challenge is to "use funding and tools to upgrade and invest in certain areas" such as education, infrastructure, renewable energy."

Katseli remained confident that a combination of "regulatory reform and investment promotion can unleash reform" and expressed her "hope that in a year's time I can tell you that we have pushed this agenda forward." #

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Instructional Time: The Case for Direction Instruction

By DR. JOHN J. RUSSELL

In an article titled, "The Under-Worked American: Children Are the Exceptions to the Country's Work Ethic," the June 13, 2009 edition of *The Economist* reports significant differences in the length of the school year in various countries around the globe. The 180-day school year that is the average for American students is among the shortest in the world. The article goes on to chronicle that the six and a half hours that American students spend in school per day is one of the shortest school days in the world. As disconcerting as these statistics may be, *The Economist* misses the most salient, and in my opinion, the most disturbing point about the American educational system. While American students clearly spend less time in the classroom than their counterparts around the world, the real issue is how this precious, short instructional time is spent in American classrooms.

The September 2, 2009 edition of *The New York Times* described in vivid terms a new educational trend that exemplifies how time is used in American classrooms. The article reports that in middle school classrooms across the United States teachers are turning over all the decisions about which books to read to the students: "Students choose their own books, discuss them individually with their teacher and one another, and keep detailed journals about their reading." The author goes on to say that while there is no clear consensus among teachers, variations on the approach, known as reading workshop, are catching on. Some schools are setting aside as much as 40 minutes of instructional time every other day for students to read books of their own choosing. While the teachers and schools that are adopting this approach may be well intended, they are nonetheless misguided. There is a large body of research that thoroughly evaluates the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and confirms that this type of "student centered" approach to teaching reading is not a particularly effective strategy, especially for at-risk students.

With the goal of maximizing the impact of instructional time, the National Research Council, the National Reading Panel, and a host of other researchers have identified scientifically verified effective instructional practices. Among the many instructional strategies used in American classrooms, one methodology stands out among all others: direct instruction. The term "direct instruction" refers to a rigorously developed, highly structured method of teaching that requires teachers to develop specific learning objectives and provides constant interaction between students and the teacher.

Support for direct instruction comes from a plethora of research studies, but none more important than Project Follow Through, which was the most extensive educational experiment ever conducted. This study, which began in 1968 and continued through 1977, was designed to identify the best way of teaching at-risk children from kindergarten through third grade. Thousands of children in over a hundred different communities were included in the study, and 22 different models of instruction were compared. The programs were implemented over a five-year period and the results were analyzed by two different independent research institutes. The 22 programs studied were grouped into the three classes (Basic Skills, Cognitive-Conceptual, and Affective-Cognitive). The program that produced the best results in general was direct instruction, a subset of Basic Skills. The other program types, which would include current instructional methodologies such as student-centered learning and whole language, produced inferior results. Students receiving direct instruction did

better than those in all other programs when tested in reading, arithmetic, spelling and language. Contrary to assertions of proponents of whole language and other student-centered approaches, direct instruction improved cognitive skills (higher order thinking skills) dramatically relative to the control groups and also scored the highest improvement in self-esteem scores compared to control groups.

Since this groundbreaking work, Jeanne Chall, John Hollingsworth, Silvia Ybarra, and other researchers have reached the same conclusion: direct instruction works not only for at-risk students, but for all students. Since it produces rapid improvement in skills and knowledge and these gains persist over time, direct instruction optimizes precious instructional time. Year after year at Windward, we see the positive effects of direct instruction. Our analysis of student achievement data confirms the rapid acquisition of skills and knowledge reported in the literature. On average, students leave Windward after a stay of 3.5 years with 90 percent scoring at the average to above-average range on standardized tests. We also find that these gains persist over time. Windward surveys the schools that our alums attend after they leave. Administrators and guidance counselors at these independent and public schools consistently report that after two years at their new schools, Windward graduates are academically at or above their grade-level peers.

Despite a preponderance of evidence supporting the use of direct instruction, especially with at-risk students, far too few teachers make use of this strategy. At Windward, direct instruction is used in every classroom by every teacher. The



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENTS' DESK

Encourage Your Kids to Try Something New

By DR. CAROLE HANKIN
With BRIAN SUTCH

Parenting is a difficult and often unpredictable endeavor, and as our children grow, many parents and families develop regular routines to help keep things running smoothly around the house. These routines can involve after-school and weekend family activities, the kinds of food we eat on a daily basis, the types of television shows or movies we watch as a family, or the kinds of sporting and cultural events we enjoy together. Routines are not a bad thing — in fact, the level of consistency they provide to young children can be quite beneficial as they develop. However, it is important that our default way of doing things does not become our only way of doing things. Sometimes it is important to think outside of the box, be open to new possibilities, and be willing to try different things, both individually and as a family.

It's good for children to have consistency in their lives, as well as constant exposure to new ideas and activities in which they may develop a strong personal interest. Once in a while, it is a good idea to try new activities together and see where they lead. For example, a family of sports fans may consider taking in a play or a musical theater production, be it on Broadway or at a small local playhouse. A family that prefers quiet weekends at home may find they enjoy a nature hike or a bicycle ride through the park. These are simple experiments that may open up a whole new world for your children. Parents and kids alike may be surprised at finding your family enjoys some of these new activities that you once

may never have given a second thought.

Conversely, it may be the children who open up a new world for the parents. Of course, we parents might not always embrace a new venture the way our kids do, but it is important to encourage their exploration and, while we may not share their interests with the same degree of enthusiasm, show support for their choices. In my family, for example, my husband and I have never had a great deal of interest in sports. Each of my children, however, discovered an affinity for skiing when they were in high school. This is a direction in which our parenting likely never would have led them, but they discovered it nonetheless. It's important for us as parents to keep our minds open to the possibilities of what may interest our children, as well as to encourage our children to explore activities outside their comfort zone.

By providing our children with as many opportunities as possible, we open all sorts of doors for them and perhaps new arenas in which they have the potential to excel. In addition to helping our kids discover new interests and talents that can serve them well for years to come, experiencing a variety of activities together and supporting their independent explorations strengthens our family relationships. #

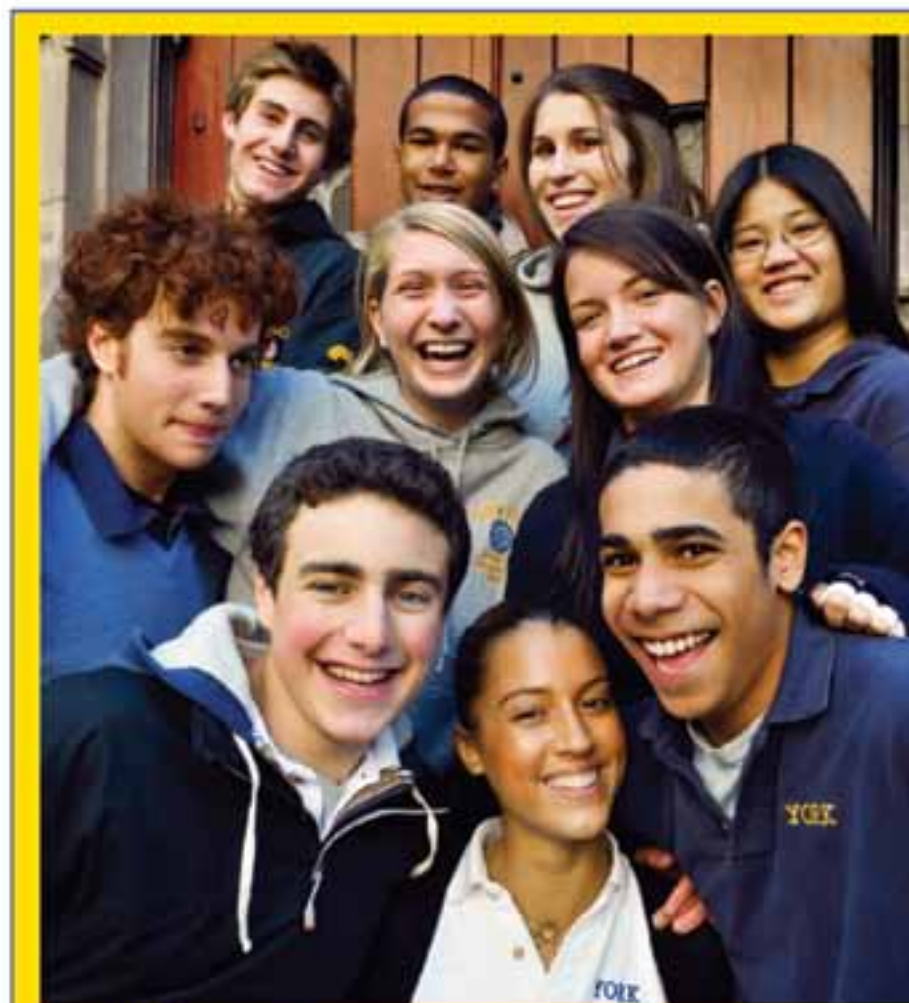
Dr. Carole Hankin is the superintendent of Syosset Schools, Long Island, N.Y.



significant and long-lasting academic gains that our students make, and the improvement to their self-esteem that accompanies real achievement, are further evidence of the value of direct instruction. If American students are going to compete with students in other countries that have longer

school days and longer school years, our schools will have to maximize every minute of instructional time. Research-proven strategies such as direct instruction will need to be part of every teacher's repertoire. #

Dr. John J. Russell is head of Windward School.



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As a new year begins, it is a good time to mention that besides having books and high-quality greeting cards for all occasions, including Martin Luther King Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and African-American History Month, as well as an eclectic collection of CDs and cassettes of music ranging from Gregorian Chant to music of Brazil, Latin America, Africa, Greece, Italy and France as well as jazz and Celtic music, Logos Bookstore also features affordable fine art.

Prominent among Logos' art is the fine work of Yorkville resident Peter Pereira as exemplified by his hydrangea prints inspired by the botanical nature of nearby Carl Schurz Park. This art is a combination of photography, painting and digital processes. His most moving and rich prints are his depictions of the Star of David and the Cross, with the combination of gray/white/purple-blues, pinks, browns and greens. His gray/white/purple hydrangea brings a sensation of plants, snow, winter, a distinct universe of its own. For those who are looking forward to spring and summer, there are numerous prints with green backgrounds. Prices are: basic prints, \$20 each, matted prints, \$30 each, and large matted prints, \$150. Peter Pereira, when not busy with his art, works part-time Monday and Thursday evenings at Logos and is available there for further discussion and consultation about his art.

Another Yorkville resident artist whose work is exhibited here is Judith Gwyn Brown, illustrator of several children's books and animal portrait painter. Two of her works are part of a window featuring Aslan, the lion from the Chronicles of Narnia. One picture is a small square of the face of a mermaid looking at what appears to be either an opened apple or a pomegranate (\$75). The other is a color print of a gardener with a pot of flowers in a garden-like park with a grass-filled

stone circle complete with statue (\$30). Both works demonstrate well the artist's use of color to create a magical, ephemeral world. Her framed black and white print of a couple having drinks in a café (\$45) is quite a *trompe l'oeil*.

Meanwhile Logos' regular activities resume with Kill Your TV Reading Group discussing *Bridge Of Sighs* by Richard Russo on Wednesday, January 6, and *The 19th Wife* by David Ebershoff on Wednesday, February 3, both discussions starting at 7 p.m. The Sacred Texts Group, led by literary agent Richard Curtis, will discuss the Gospel of John, Chapter 2, and the Talmud on Monday, January 18 (Martin Luther King Day), at 7 p.m. Children's Story Time is every Monday at 11 a.m. with Lily. And there is a Holiday 50 percent off card sale the first week or so in January. There is an ongoing book sale of 30 percent off in specially marked sale sections.

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Wednesday, January 6, 2010, 7 p.m. Kill Your TV Reading Group (KYTV) will discuss *Bridge Of Sighs* by Richard Russo.

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Irving Spitz, MD, Renaissance Man

By **DR. POLA ROSEN**

Irving Spitz, M.D., recently gave a lecture titled, "Images of Pregnancy in Western Art: An Odyssey over 30,000 years" at the New York Academy of Medicine. The charismatic Dr. Spitz delivered a brilliant synthesis of art, music, medicine and history in an unparalleled manner, divulging unusual details culled from his assiduous research.

Dr. Spitz graduated M.B., Bch from Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa. He subsequently obtained his M.D./Ph.D. and D.Sc. from the same university. In 1997 he was elected a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in London.

Currently, he is director of the Institute of Hormone Research in Jerusalem, Israel. He is professor emeritus of endocrinology at Ben Gurion University in Israel and adjunct professor of medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University. His eclectic range of hobbies includes music, art, archeology, history, and cartography of the Holy Land, and he often lectures on these topics. He is also the music editor of *Education Update*. #



Shakespeare on the Hudson River



(L-R) Terrence O'Brien, Founder, HVSF and Christopher Edwards, Ed. Director, HVSF

By **BARBARA LOWIN**

Question: Who's afraid of William Shakespeare?
 Answer: A lot of people! Why? It's too fancy, too elitist and too high-minded for us regular, everyday people. The affected sound of the voices, the highfaluting speech, the body language — too fancy!

We therefore owe a debt of gratitude to Terrence O'Brien and Melissa Stern, who originated the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival (HVSF). Their efforts, taste and sensitivities have brought the art of Shakespeare to an ideal that makes it accessible rather than fearsome to American audiences. Its mandate is to present Shakespeare in uncluttered, spare productions, often in modern dress, spoken in clean, neutral, American English.

On a summer night in 1987 in a meadow at Manitoga, home of Industrial designer Russell Wright in Garrison N.Y., 50 miles north of Manhattan, the stage was set. The debut play of the HVSF was a modest outdoor production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In spite of the fact that this performance and the following three were rained out, forcing the run to be finished in a school gymnasium, the audience exercised persistent support for the group of actors. In what today seems like an omen of Shakespearean import, the HVSF is now a critically-acclaimed annual event.

Christopher Edwards, the company's director of education, graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he also earned a Master of Fine Arts in theater. He was later associated with the prominent Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. During the past ten years in New York he has worked as freelance director, actor, teacher and teaching artist. As co-director of the HVSF, he is also the dynamic leader of the company's five outreach and professional development programs, which offer teachers and students the "Shakespeare experience," enabling them to study, read, discuss among themselves or with the professional actors they see on stage, and participate in the plays themselves. They are encouraged to relate the universal truths and emotions in the plays to their own life experiences, thereby gaining an appreciation of Shakespeare's works in an instinctive rather than a purely intellectual way. Also, care is taken that the teacher, or director, not define the work or the words for the students. "Whenever you, the teacher or director, defines a word, it takes away the possibility for the student to define it for himself, thus allowing him to take ownership of the text," asserts Edwards.

He admits, a little shyly, to an early irreverence for classical theater in general, including Shakespeare. However, ironically, this may have

been just what freed up his approach and has made him an inspiring teacher of Shakespeare for modern young people. "Americans tend to approach Shakespeare with kid gloves, afraid that it is strictly property of the elite, when in fact, here's a man who wrote for the masses — from peasants to kings. People have written many treatises, dissertations and have theories on Shakespeare, making him seem too intellectual. Our teaching artists and I try to bring to the table an approach to Shakespeare that comes from a visceral place that gives kids an experience that is physical, intellectual, and emotional," explains Edwards.

Terrence O'Brien, who grew up in Watertown, Minn., as a Catholic youth, was imbued with the splendor of the ritual of Catholic mass — that is, until masses began to be conducted in English. "The lack of mystery made it less interesting to me. However I sometimes notice now in my own work that I have often dredged up some movement that goes back to that". He studied acting in Minneapolis with John Orlock, later performing with the Guthrie Theater. Following that, he went to San Francisco to the American Conservatory Theater, where he met Melissa Stern, with whom he later founded the HVSF in 1987.

When asked about the simplicity of the productions, O'Brien replied with reference to Shakespeare's texts: "The language is so dense, but the less information you give [the audience], the more directly they can get hold of the language. Layering on visual and environmental things forces people to have to decode a lot more." He goes on to avow the timelessness of the plays. "Shakespeare wrote something that exists out if its own time. He was writing about things that were not time-specific, illustrating values like erotic attraction, ambition, fear of death, jealousy, people's foibles, mistaken identities. On any night in our theater, there should be five hundred versions of the play going on."

In the words of Professor Ed Quinn (Emeritus, City College/CUNY), author and noted Shakespeare authority: "It is the job of the actors and audience to translate the works, the words of Shakespeare, into something personal and real to the audience, giving them 'a local habitation and a name.'"

The long-range aspiration for this company is to make Shakespeare style-neutral — neither a British nor American art form. Rather, through its philosophy of performing Shakespeare, it aims to alert companies and students all over the world to the timeless universality that makes Shakespeare one of humanity's greatest resources. #

CSA Conference

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when it comes to schools in affluent neighborhoods having more advantages. "We like to say that Brown vs. Board of Education changed everything, but do you know that in our city we still have some schools where things are falling apart, where buildings are dilapidated? ... We're not leveling the playing field," said Logan.

A midmorning plenary session led by Steiner addressed teacher preparation programs, an issue U.S. Secretary of Education Arne

Duncan addressed earlier this fall in a speech at Teachers College.

During the gala luncheon CSA presented the Peter S. O'Brien award to CSA historian and former CSA president Jack Zuckerman. Thomas P. DiNapoli was this year's recipient of the Leadership in Government award, and Michael Haberman, president of PENCIL Inc., received the Leadership in Education Award. In addition, CSA presented Shelia Evans-Tranum, the recently-retired associate commissioner of the New York State Department of Education, a bouquet of flowers recognizing her work with children. #

Home Schooling: Education In (and Beyond) the Home

By MARISA SUESCUN

Special from Las Vegas: Consider the scene at Cactus Wren Park in Henderson, Nev., a suburb of Las Vegas, one recent afternoon: dozens of children climbing jungle gyms, throwing baseballs, riding scooters. Several little ones clustered at a picnic table, painting toy airplanes. Mothers sat helping them, chatting, keeping an eye on the older children, doling out orange sections and homemade chocolate chip cookies. It was a scene of commonplace pleasantness, nothing unordinary, unless you paused to wonder: Shouldn't the kids be in school at 1:00 p.m. on a Tuesday?

The answer: they are in school.

They are among the 1.5 million children across the country who are home-schooled — educated by parents and guardians outside of public or private schools. Home-schoolers' ranks have swelled in the past decade: the most recent count from 2007 represents a 77 percent increase from the 850,000 who were home-schooled in 1999, the first year that the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics started keeping track. Nearly 3 out of every 100 school-aged children in the country were home-schooled in 2007, up from 2.2 percent in 2003 and 1.7 percent in 1999.

No one is sure of the impetus for this trend; families choose to home-school for various reasons. In 2007, two of the top reasons for home schooling cited by parents reflected concern about the local public school: its environment (88 percent) and its academic instruction (73 percent). Parents also cited special needs of their child, including disability and mental illness. Sixty-five percent expressed desire for a "non-traditional" approach to education.

These reasons motivated many of the parents gathered at Cactus Wren Park. They belong to the Las Vegas Valley Homeschool Network, a group of over 100 home-schooling families that shares support and resources and organizes field trips, community service, and group academic classes.

Kristina Krist is the network's co-owner and mother of four home-schooled sons. She was once a public school teacher herself, considering a Ph.D. in special education; she never expected to be home-schooling. But when her husband and four sons moved to Henderson, she faced bureaucratic challenges ("it was impossible to get a zone variance" to keep her oldest in his first school), scheduling hassles ("I was always dropping one kid off and picking up another"), and concerns that the school system could not meet the diverse needs of her children, one (Kyle) in special education and another (Adam) "blowing through the gifted program."

Adam, now 11, is "working at a sophomore level" in literacy and math, Krist said. Articulate and outgoing, Adam is a budding pianist, guitarist and actor in community theater productions. He described the advantages of home schooling this way: "I get to sit on the couch and do my work, and when I'm done, I go to the computer." He added that in public school, "since I already knew all the stuff, I usually got ahead of the class. I got really bored."

Krist said that shaping instruction around Adam's interests, pace and learning style makes it more meaningful and effective. Adam recently finished Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; when he was seven, he read and loved "a watered-down version of *The Odyssey*" aimed at middle-schoolers, Krist said. "What second-grade class is discussing the themes from *The Odyssey*?" (Adam, with good-natured dismay: "I read a watered-down version of *The Odyssey*!?!")



Around 150 children and 80 parents learned about the weather in a class taught by TV meteorologist Amanda Sanchez. The Las Vegas Valley Homeschool Network organized the event.

Krist said Adam works "a couple of hours per day" on academics, much of it independently at this point. "Two to four hours of quality academic instruction is better than six hours in a classroom... where the teacher doesn't have time to give you feedback," she said. "I can honestly say I know everything about my child and how he learns."

Frank Schnorbus, chair of the Nevada Homeschool Network and father of seven children ages 16 to 30, all of whom have been home-schooled, agrees. "Home schooling means you can provide education at the child's level, at the child's pace," he said. "If you have particular things that you as a parent want to impart to your child, you can do it."

Schnorbus, like Krist, came to home schooling unexpectedly. After moving to Nevada, Schnorbus and his wife faced hurdles enrolling their daughter in the Gifted and Talented Program, which she had been part of in California. "I just got very frustrated with the bureaucracy," he said. "We thought, 'If you can't meet our children's needs, we will.'"

Other parents plan to home-school from the outset. In the 2007 survey, 83 percent of parents listed religious and moral instruction as one reason they chose to home-school. Moreover, when asked to rank which factor was "most important," 36 percent cited religion — well above the 21 percent most concerned about the school environment, the next highest factor.

The Hale family knew from the start that they wanted to home-school. The Hales, who are Mormon, wanted daily prayer to be part of 12-year-old Timothy's education. "We have a big problem with the way evolution is taught in schools," said Laurie Hale, Timothy's mother. "We taught him the theory of evolution, and also how we believe the world was created."

Despite these reservations, the Hales did end up trying public school for Timothy's kindergarten year and brief stints in first through third grade, and enrolled him in a "distance learning" charter school catered toward home-schoolers this fall. But they pulled him out when they felt the school was too demanding without meeting the needs of Timothy, who is diagnosed with AD/HD and Asperger's syndrome.

On a recent afternoon, Timothy, with tousled brown hair and a quick smile, was busy setting up an elaborate Christmas village, complete with a blanket of cottony snow, in the living room. "We're counting this as his art today," Hale said. On an easel in the kitchen was a list of "Timothy's Chores," another showcased a verse from the Gospel of John, and a third listed his academic schedule for the week, including daily

reading and math activities.

Laurie Hale, who is diagnosed with bipolar disorder and chronic fatigue syndrome, acknowledged that she struggles to keep to the schedule, especially when her husband, who serves in the military, is deployed overseas. She sleeps late if she isn't feeling well, and Timothy "won't do the work if I'm not there." For example, on the day he set up the Christmas village, Timothy had not completed any other assignments, and had a journal entry and math worksheets outstanding from the previous day.

Timothy is articulate and self-reflective about his learning style. "It's easier to work at home in my own surroundings," he said. "I can choose my subjects, and take breaks when I want to. It's easier to work toward what I'm interested in." His interests include ancient history, Greek mythology, and all things computer. "I can take apart and rebuild this computer in 20 minutes," he said, calling Bill Gates "practically my hero."

Hale sees the value in Timothy having the freedom to pursue these interests spontaneously. Rebuilding the computer "wouldn't have happened if he was at school," she said.

Other parents seek to create a classroom-like structure in the home. Joselle Free educates 9-year-old Griffin in what she describes as "traditional home schooling." Griffin, an early reader who felt bored at private-school kindergarten, has been home-schooled ever since. Like Adam Krist, he is advanced in reading and math; unlike Adam, Griffin follows a structured schedule that includes daily spelling and math, three days of reading and composition per week, and social studies and science twice weekly.

"My husband and I work in the military," Free said, by way of explaining their ordered approach. She was sitting at a picnic table in Cactus Wren Park with several mothers. Griffin, fresh from a scooter ride, came by the table, excited about something that had happened on the playground. "Hay-yo!" he exclaimed, pumping his fist.

"Excuse me, I was speaking," Free said to him in a quiet, stern voice.

Griffin stopped jumping and raised his hand high, waiting to be called on.

His mother paused. "Yes?" she asked.

"Hay-yo!" Another fist pump.

Free smiled. "Thanks for sharing."

The difference between the educational approaches of the Free, Krist, and Hale households illustrates the extent to which home-schoolers have autonomy to decide how to educate their children and what to teach them. The accountability measures for home-schoolers vary by state. Ten states, including Texas and Connecticut, do

not require home-schoolers to initiate any contact with the state; on the other side of the spectrum, New York and four other states require regular reporting of test scores or professional evaluations, and submission of curriculum for approval. Nevada falls toward the lax end of the spectrum, requiring only that parents register and submit a broad educational plan.

This parental autonomy concerns critics of home schooling. They worry about the arbitrariness of the curriculum, of parents lacking the skills and knowledge to teach their children, of home-schooled children growing up with serious gaps in their education. And what happens when the child moves beyond the basics to advanced subject matter? Is the mother who struggled in math really equipped to teach her child trigonometry? What kind of household has materials on hand for a chemistry lab? "I can't teach algebra," acknowledged Laurie Hale. "When we get to that point, we'll have to hire a tutor."

As their children reach the teen years, many home-schoolers turn to tutors, online classes, and community college. Some home-schooled children attend public high school for certain classes. Groups like the Las Vegas Valley Homeschool Network organize classes taught by members with content expertise.

Frank Schnorbus thinks home-schoolers are, on the whole, a particularly self-aware group. "My wife and I know where our weaknesses are. I suspect that most people who take the responsibility of educating their children seriously have the same awareness," he said. "And that's when you reach out to these other venues."

Of course, awareness does not always lead to remedying action. Hale said that 12-year-old Timothy is "not up to par" in math. "He doesn't know long division," a skill usually taught in fourth and fifth grade. "I'll teach it for two weeks, break for a week, and go back to it and he forgets. ... I don't know what to do with it."

Critics also decry the lack of socialization for home-schooled children. The children may work well independently, but how will they learn the life skill of working with others, the flexibility to adjust to different learning styles, the discipline to complete a project not designed around their interests?

Here, Kristina Krist's response echoes that of many home-schoolers. "I think our group has better socialization than kids at a lot of public schools." At school, she said, unstructured social interaction is limited to maybe 30 minutes; home-schooled children in networks like Krist's socialize for longer periods and with different ages. Plus, the flexible schedule allows them to participate in multiple extracurricular activities without burning out.

Additionally, home-schoolers add, their children develop a deep sense of familial ties and responsibility that teaches them the importance and skill of teamwork. Krist said her sons Adam and Blake "know that they'll be the ones responsible for Kyle," their autistic brother.

"We're a family unit," is how Schnorbus explained it. "The oldest children have always stepped up to the plate to help the younger children."

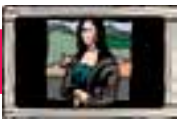
Back at Cactus Wren Park, Adam Krist seemed to illustrate this very point. Looking across the playground, he spotted his 5-year-old brother, Aidan, attempting to skateboard. "I've gotta go watch him," Adam announced to his mother with a sigh that illustrated both his reluctance to drop what he was doing and acceptance of the responsibility. He hustled across the playground as another afternoon of home schooling in the park drew to a close. #



Adam Krist performs in a community theater production of "Saving Christmas." He is an avid actor, pianist, and guitarist.



Timothy Hale, 12, can take apart and rebuild his family's computer in under half an hour. He hopes to pursue his passion by studying computer engineering in college.



The “New” El Museo del Barrio



Tony Bechara

By SYBIL MAIMIN

El Museo del Barrio, or “Museum of The Neighborhood,” recently reopened with great excitement and sense of purpose. The night lights on top of the Empire State Building shone with a rich mango-yellow color to mark the event, the proudly conceived inaugural exhibits beckoned visitors, the museum’s El Café began to dish out pan-Latino flavors, and the new, striking glass façade and redesigned courtyard signaled openness and inclusivity. After being under wraps during a year and a half of major renovations, the museum space in the fortress-like 1909 Heckscher Building — it had been built as an orphanage — on Fifth Avenue and 104th Street has been lightened and brightened and brought into the 21st century. In celebratory ceremonies, Tony Bechara, chairman of the board, remarked, “It’s a long time coming, but we finally look like a museum ... We now have the tools to project our mission — to present the culture, history, and arts of Latinos — in a proper venue.” He noted, “We are at a juncture where Latinos are playing a greater role in the city ... and El Museo is a unique institution which gives a voice to Puerto Ricans and Latinos.” He cited the museum’s role as a resource for the community and its plans to engage schools in El Barrio so that “children can express their talent and pride in their heritage.”

The design and construction were funded by the city with help from the state and federal governments, and Julián Zugazagoitia, the museum’s director and CEO, spoke of the benefits that will accrue to New York. Although valued as a community resource, the museum is a world-class institution that has broad appeal. Annual attendance went from less than 20,000 twelve years ago to 125,000 before the closing, making it a significant economic resource for the city as well as the neighborhood.

It has an enviable geographic position as both the anchor for Museum Mile and the introduction to El Barrio and East Harlem. Jordan Gruzen of Gruzen Samton Architects praised his client for “allowing us to reach out with an expressive spirit” and praised the city’s art commission for “encouraging us to take chances, to be as bold as we could.” The result includes strong colors,



Julián Zugazagoitia

contemporary materials, and a modern look that also respects tradition.

The inaugural shows include *Voces y Visiones*, selections from the permanent collection that celebrate the 40th anniversary of the museum. Organized chronologically in three sections, the exhibit mirrors the aspirations and history of the community and its artists.

Founded in 1969 by a coalition of educators, parents, artists, and activists who wanted Puerto Rican art included in school curricula, El Museo del Barrio’s first location was a classroom, which featured Puerto Rican art and artifacts. The institution moved to its current location in 1977, where it grew and broadened to include other Latino and Caribbean artists and cultures. From 1992 to the present, the focus has been on contemporary art, including photography, videos, installations, and examinations of post-colonial and political issues, and includes local as well as international artists.

Another major inaugural exhibit, *Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis*, illustrates how interactions between Latino and non-Latino artists in New York between 1900 and 1942 significantly impacted the world of art and culture, particularly avant-garde movements. Mutually influential pairings that are explored include Diego Rivera and Lucienne Bloch, Alice Neel and her Cuban husband, Carlos Enriquez, Alfred Stieglitz and Marius de Zayas, and Adolph Gottlieb and Joaquín Torres-García. They and others interacted professionally and socially, showed together, influenced and learned from each other, and spawned important movements. Supported by relevant books, letters, photos, and other original documents, as well as works by the artists, the exhibit is a fascinating and important scholarly journey.

A handsome and proud local resource and gathering place, the new El Museo del Barrio offers the broader community a chance to enjoy and learn from one of the oldest and most important collections of Caribbean, Latin American, and Latino art in the country. Visit <http://www.elmuseo.org> for a calendar as well as free educational offerings, including clips of programs, art works, and exhibits. #

The Queens Museum of Art: Something for Everyone

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

To have *Time Out New York* call The Queens Museum of Art “the essential New York museum” may strike some parent- and educator-admirers of the museum as inadvertently amusing considering that “time out” is a familiar injunction aimed at misbehaving children who need a pause to cool down. The fact is, The Queens Museum of Art is indeed a great place for time out regardless of blood pressure. Located in Flushing Meadows Park, QMA is just the kind of institution *Time Out New York* typically celebrates as providing an experience of timely and significant value — an “essential” place where youngsters and adults can be engaged and educated.

The museum can lay claim to being not only essential, but unique, as QMA director of education Lauren Brandt Schloss points out. Alone among art institutions nationwide, QMA serves the largest number of adult immigrants, many from local Spanish-, Mandarin- and Korean-speaking communities (seven out of ten Queens residents are foreign born children or children of foreign born adults). Queens is the most diverse county in the country. Also unique among art institutions, QMA collaborates in continuing partnerships with community representatives to ensure that programs reflect and generate the interests of this population demographic as well as the general public.

QMA boasts a unique staff — the only art institution with two art therapists on board who work closely with education program teams at the museum. Schloss oversees this program, one of several in the department, which is the largest in the museum, both in staff numbers, contractual and teen educators, and budget. A magna cum laude graduate in art history from Princeton with a master’s in arts administration from Columbia, she has in the seven years she has been at the museum made impressive moves in making QMA a leader in forging model collaborations with area schools and libraries.

In conjunction with Debra Wimpfheimer, the museum’s director of strategic partnerships, Schloss is ensuring that the museum maintains and enhances its mission to serve not only the Queens community at large, but other underserved populations as well. Seniors are courted as part of QMA’s New New Yorkers Program, a slide show and conversation series, run by long-time museum staff member Miriam Brumer. This fall, five artists are being studied for ways their changing styles are each distinctive. Children with special needs, including those with autism, are also a major focus at the museum, and participate in Art Access; this program, Schloss points out, is part of an expanded initiative that began



Lauren Brandt Schloss, Director of Education, Queens Museum of Art

25 years ago as a project designed for the visually impaired. In concert then with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, QMA designed a tactile learning project that turned on touching plaster casts of famous sculptures (a “Pieta” remains in the basement as a reminder of those days).

All of the museum’s education programs are designed to attract individuals and families, children pre-K–12 and adults. Diversity and variety rule. Schools, for example, can partner with the museum either in the form of regular grade-level visits or one-shot tours. A particularly successful feature of the program is the museum’s Tiffany collection. World’s Fair, yes. New York City Panorama, yes. But Tiffany? Why not, Schloss replies: the exhibit is a perfect way to teach children about color, shapes, materials, and to encourage them in their own creative endeavors.

Schloss, who radiates enthusiasm as well as evidencing expertise, attributes her career move from art history into art education to various mentors. These include John Pinto, an architectural historian and her advisor at Princeton, Cynthia Nachmani, schools programs administrator at MoMA, and (laugh) Peggy Guggenheim, for having founded the Venice Guggenheim, where it was apparent to the then young but upcoming education director working abroad that Americans struggle with art in ways that Europeans do not. Schloss also cites Lois Olshan at P.S. 144 in Queens as continually influential, a woman who knows the “nitty gritty of art education in children’s lives.” She would gladly expound on other programs, but she’s being hailed by staff members eager to discuss new curricular ideas. The excitement is palpable. #

HONEST ABE AND THE BIG A

By JAN AARON

President Abraham Lincoln made only five visits to New York in his lifetime and only one as president, but the city played an essential role in polishing his enduring public image. This is the main point of a handsomely mounted exhibit, *Lincoln and New York*, at the New-York Historical Society. The exhibit will be on display until March 25, 2010, marking the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth.

The show begins with Lincoln’s historic two-hour lecture in New York at Cooper Union in 1860 and the famous Matthew Brady photograph taken that same day, more than two months before he won the Republican presidential nomination. The events led Lincoln to say later, “Brady and the Peter Cooper speech made me president.” The exhibit closes with his 1865 funeral procession down Broadway, attended by 150,000 mourners.

This is just one of many Lincoln bicentennial exhibits around the country. “But this is the only one that captures how Lincoln achieved the status he did and how it morphed into something

like secular sainthood in a mere four years,” said Howard Holzer, the exhibition’s chief historian.

Filling six galleries, the show’s fascinating exhibits show how New York, as a center for media, finance and commerce, played a powerful role in transforming Lincoln’s image from “debater and jokester to a serious, learned, dignified politician able to steer the country through what became a secession crisis,” said Mr. Holzer, the author of several books on Lincoln, including *The Lincoln Image* and *Lincoln at Cooper Union*. During the 1860s New York had 174 daily and weekly periodicals, all exerting enormous influence over the emerging and ever-changing political scene.

Brady, the nation’s most renowned photographer, had his studio in Lower Manhattan, as did the engravers, printers and journalists churning out editorial cartoons, political tracts, and caricatures of Lincoln. Some examples on display include those by the famous lithographer Currier and Ives, which produced both elegant portraits of Lincoln as well as vicious anti-Lincoln cartoons, many of which have racist themes.



The Lincoln Family by Francis Carter

Only his death was able to end the battles over his reputation, and the exhibit displays several texts of sermons from that week. An anonymous diary contains a collection of public sentiments, “Our country weeps,” says one, and “In God we trust,” says another.

Visitors can also see a video reenactment of Lincoln, played by actor Sam Waterston, delivering the Cooper Union speech, as well as the

lectern he used there, funeral photographs, and his reply to newspaper mogul Horace Greeley’s severe editorial criticizing him for not issuing the emancipation proclamation earlier. Another immersive exhibit allows visitors to enter a tavern, where they can hear voices vilifying Lincoln for the war.

Be sure to immerse yourself in this compelling show! #



EMINENT DOMAIN

By David J. Kahn (Kibbe3@aol.com)

David J. Kahn has been dazzling crossword puzzle fans with his creations for many years. Almost 150 of his puzzles have appeared in the *New York Times*, with many others in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Sun* and other newspapers and magazines. His books include *Baseball Crosswords*, *Sit & Solve Hard Crosswords* and *Sit & Solve Movie Crosswords*.

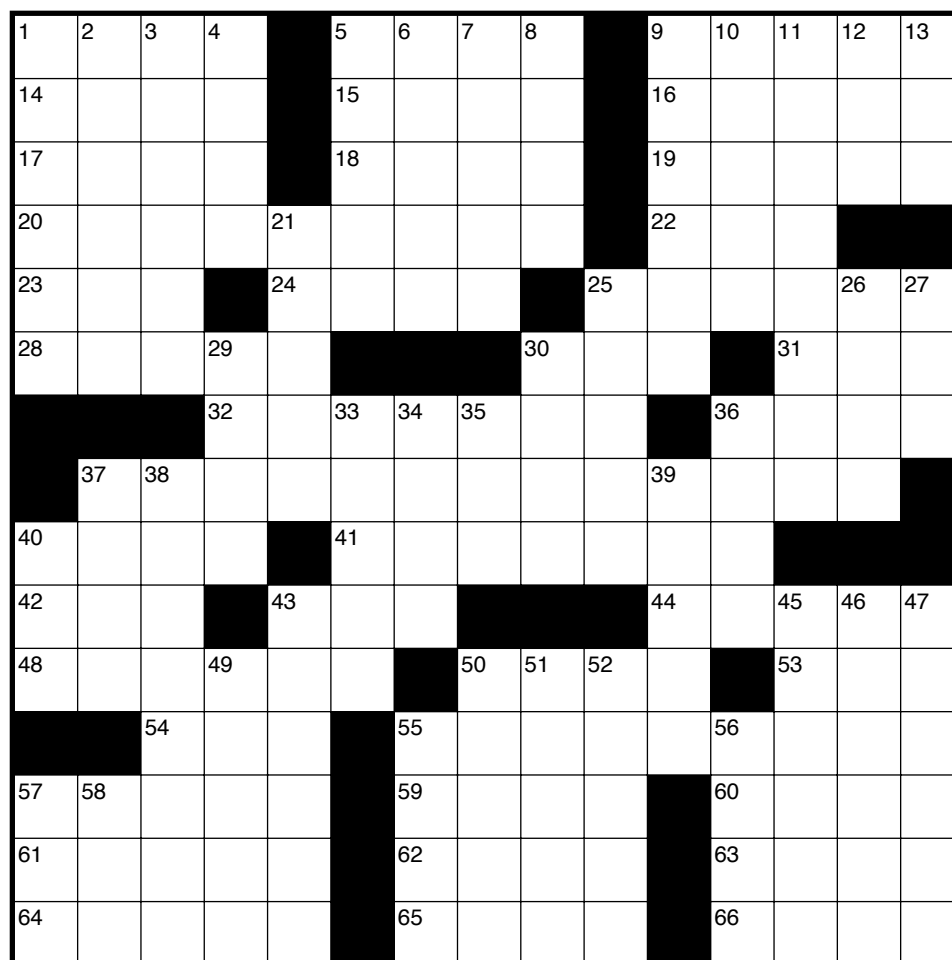
ACROSS

- 1 Bop
- 5 Soccer star Mia
- 9 Spine-tingling
- 14 Shortly, to a poet
- 15 Theater award since 1956
- 16 Be immediately payable
- 17 "I, Claudius" role
- 18 Lorgnette feature
- 19 Some 62-Across dwellers
- 20 Jump-rope game
- 22 Debussy's sea
- 23 Slip-___ (shoes)
- 24 Vaulted place
- 25 Kind of break
- 28 Post-op program
- 30 Luau serving
- 31 Reed in music
- 32 Minsk is its capital
- 36 Jack Horner's find
- 37 It's funded by tax revenues
- 40 Secretary of Education Duncan
- 41 Added, as to a batter

- 42 Free from, with "of"
- 43 QB Luckman
- 44 Farewell note blotches
- 48 Tax-___ bond
- 50 Castor's mother
- 53 Gunpowder, e.g.
- 54 Canapé topping
- 55 Best Actress of 1976
- 57 Give a lift
- 59 Ear-related
- 60 Canvass
- 61 On sale
- 62 See 19-Across
- 63 First name in courtroom drama
- 64 In a suitable way
- 65 P.T.A. and N.E.A.
- 66 "The ___ the limit!"

DOWN

- 1 Honesty
- 2 Early game score
- 3 "Take your time"
- 4 Turning point?



- 5 Hid from pursuers
- 6 Helps do wrong
- 7 Pie type
- 8 Dovetail
- 9 Garlicky dish
- 10 Apple gadget
- 11 "The Yellow Rose of Texas"
- 12 Fix, as a voice-over
- 13 "Undoubtedly"
- 21 Record company
- 25 1960 Everly Brothers hit
- 26 It may be proper
- 27 Wrigley field?
- 29 French cleric
- 30 Brownish purple
- 33 Age ___
- 34 Battery contents
- 35 Brought back
- 36 Tar source
- 37 Grand finale?
- 38 Just walk through a role
- 39 Colossus
- 40 Is for two?
- 43 Quick
- 45 On the job
- 46 As a matter of fact
- 47 "Sunshine State" director John
- 49 Inn's cousin
- 50 Not now
- 51 Gawking at
- 52 Takes off
- 55 Snap, informally
- 56 Goons
- 57 Disco ___
- 58 Preceded, with "to"

SPORTS

MADDY SCHAFFRICK, TEEN SNOWBOARDER ON THE RISE

By RICHARD KAGAN

There's a new young star on the rise in the world of U.S.A. snowboarding, and her name is Maddy Schaffrick, 15, of Steamboat Springs, Colo. Schaffrick, who turned pro at 14, is currently in qualifying events to determine the finalists who will compete for a berth on the 2010 U.S. Winter Olympic snowboard team. *Education Update* caught up with Maddy as she was in the midst of a United States Ski & Snowboarding Association-sponsored event in the Halfpipe competition at Copper Mountain, Colo.



and high winds are commonplace. Schaffrick said she takes advantage of the opportunity and goes out and snowboards a lot. At age 7, Maddy was watching a snowboarding event on television. She tried it out and "fell in love with it." She likes the freedom of snowboarding. When she is in the air, "nothing can touch you." She has an adventurous spirit and takes her sport very seriously.

At Copper Mountain, Maddy finished 6th overall, and 4th in U.S. women's

Snowboarding is the popular winter sport in which the rider uses a single wider, shorter slalom ski to do tricks, jump, create moves in seconds, and at times, move at fast speeds. You can snowboard on a mountain, hill, or a halfpipe surface. The halfpipe looks like a U-shaped bowl and can be made out of wood covered with snow or snow itself. The snowboarder learns to move up and down the sides of the bowl to generate speed in order to do tricks.

Maddy said the halfpipe is her favorite event. "There are endless possibilities that you can do," said Schaffrick. In the meet before the finals, she said she "landed a run," meaning that she didn't fall. A typical run might last about 40 seconds, and performing a trick could be fast, 2 to 3 seconds. She is working on her "720s," a trick in which one performs two full rotations while in the air. She has gone out at 10 feet, giving her space to make quick rotations.

Her home is in the middle of the Rockies. She lives at an elevation of 10,000 feet and is accustomed to wintry conditions. Heavy snowfall

qualifiers. There were 200 snowboarders, 150 of them men, trying to secure a strong finish.

She travels a lot on weekends competing in events across the country, so she keeps up with her schoolwork via e-mail. She is a sophomore at Steamboat Springs High School. Her favorite subject is math. What do her parents think of this teenager with a vision? "They don't like me gone, but they support me 100 percent," Schaffrick said.

She trains with Bud Keene, the U.S.A. Olympic halfpipe coach who has coached in two previous Olympics. Training can be arduous. She works out four days a week, four hours a day. She spends time working on the trampoline and working on strengthening her core abdominals.

There are four more USSA-sanctioned meets in the upcoming weeks to see if she would qualify, including two at Park City, Utah. She's only 15, so if she doesn't make the team there's always the 2014 Winter Olympics, when she would be 19. But Maddy is in her season right now doing what she loves, and that's a lot of fun. #

For puzzle answers go to www.EducationUpdate.com/puzzle

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

STUDENTS LAUD INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION AT AIFL BANQUET

By ADAM BLOCH

Maybe it was the taste of schnitzel and hummus that got Jordan Rivera thinking of ways to get back to Israel. Within a few minutes, he was contemplating the feasibility of hiding himself in a suitcase and stowing away on a flight to Tel Aviv.

Rivera, a voluble student from Herbert H. Lehman High School in the Bronx, was an anomaly among the several hundred teenagers gathered for a banquet held recently by the America-Israel Friendship League. Unlike the rest, he was an alumnus of the organization's Youth Ambassador Program, and his unfettered zeal for his experiences the previous year was only augmenting the sense of anticipation throughout the room at the Bnai Zion America-Israel Friendship House on East 39th Street.

Since 1977, the AIFL has annually facilitated a student exchange, sending high schoolers from Israel to the United States and vice versa. The group at the luncheon included Israelis who had already stayed with American hosts for a week in one of several locations: New York City, Tucson, San Diego, Virginia Beach, or Oklahoma. Now, after spending time touring New York and Washington, D.C., together, they were preparing to reverse the process by traveling to Israel. "What makes it special is that it becomes a yearlong commitment to come back to our communities and share what we learned," said Gabriel Garcia, 16, of Tucson. Another participant, 17-year-old Ela Hamovitz from Rishon Le'Zion in Israel, added, "The point is to see that even though we are from different parts of the world, we're basically the same. We have the same interests and the same hobbies."

The Youth Ambassador Program started in 1977 and has since involved over 5,000 students from each country. "Students apply, there are essay contests and they're selected after

interviews," AIFL chief operating officer Bill Behrer explained. "They have to be good students because they're out of school for a number of days, and they have to show great maturity. They're selected in a way that will best represent their school, their state and their country."

The banquet began with a short recital by three student musicians, a promotional video, and then remarks from several students, officials and dignitaries, including Garcia; Behrer; Benjamin Krasna, the Israeli deputy consul general in New York; Moshe Vidan, a representative of the Israeli Youth Exchange Council; and Dr. Charlotte Frank, a former administrator with the New York City Department of Education.

"Creating new ties, bringing in the new generation of leaders, getting people to see where each other lives — that's unique, that's special, that's what building relationships and building friendships are all about," Krasna said. "That's why this program and the work of the League are so special."

Vidan emphasized the potential he saw in the youth ambassadors. "If you are examples of the students in your school system, then the future of Israel and the U.S. looks promising," he said.

The Israeli students repeatedly highlighted the impact their travels in the U.S. had had on their understanding of different cultures and different places. By the time their American counterparts returned from Israel in late November, their reactions were eerily similar. "When I first heard about the trip, I thought it would be a vacation from school," said Heather Gong, an 11th-grader from Lehman. "But it wasn't. It was very informative and changed the way I thought about Israel. I used to have a very limited view of Israel. The hospitality was amazing, and as soon as I got there I felt an amazing sense of friendship."

It's no surprise that like Rivera, Gong can't wait to go back. #

NYU Steinhardt Launches its Latest
Policy Breakfast Series

By JUDITH AQUINO

As the Obama administration increases funding for early childhood education, researchers and education practitioners focused on ways to improve preschool education in the first part of this year's NYU Steinhardt Policy Breakfast series. The three-part series, "Educational Transitions from Childhood to Adulthood: Research and Policy Initiatives," kicked off with a talk by Bridget Hamre, associate director of the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. "We're at a unique point in terms of educational policy reform. There's a real push for innovation and there's a lot of money on the table. Early childhood is playing a larger role in this than it has in the past," said Hamre at the Kimmel Center for University Life.

Under the new federal initiative, the Early Learning Challenge Fund, \$8 billion would be provided over eight years to states with plans to improve programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In acknowledging the vast amount of support aimed at early childhood education, Hamre stressed it was important for researchers to "move within our space of opportunity in a very careful way."

Hamre gave an explanation of the observational tool she and her colleagues developed, which measures three distinct domains of teacher-child interactions in a pre-K setting: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Known as Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), the instrument has been vali-

dated in over 2,000 classrooms and is currently used by the federal program Head Start to train its grantees nationwide.

Following Hamre were Steinhardt's Cybele Raver, professor of applied psychology and director of NYU's Institute of Human Development and Social Change, and Fabienne Doucet, assistant professor of education. Raver discussed the development of concrete steps that school districts and programs can use to improve classrooms. She described her work with the Chicago School Readiness Project, a federally-funded model that provides professional development and coaching to Head Start teachers. In discussing her use of the CLASS measurement tool, Raver emphasized the need for more resources to help teachers monitor and improve their performance. Doucet addressed the need to promote "school readiness" between teachers and families. There is often a communication gap between parents and teachers that has to be solved, explained Doucet. "We would like to develop a way for parents and teachers to talk collaboratively about the curriculum. ... How can we build on parents' local knowledge and bring in parents in an organic way?" Cultural awareness is a key component of bridging that gap, added Doucet.

The second part of the series will take place on March 4 and will focus on educational transitions during the middle school years. On April 16, the series will conclude with its final section, which will focus on transitions to post-secondary education, careers, and adulthood. #

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN SENDS RESEARCH
SCIENTISTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLDSoybean Agriculture Threatens
Biodiversity in Brazil

By SCOTT A. MORI, Ph.D.

An image showing a small green patch of forest in the midst of a treeless area prepared for soybean cultivation appeared on a recent front page of *The New York Times*. The accompanying article explained that the fertile soils underlying forests in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, are suitable for supporting large soybean plantations. As evidence of the magnitude of the forest destruction, the author noted that an increasing demand for Brazilian soybeans led to the conversion of 700 square miles of forest to soybean fields in that state during the last five months of 2007 alone!

The future of plant and animal diversity in Latin American forests depends on an understanding of how fragile the plant/animal interactions of tropical ecosystems are and the role human consumption plays in altering natural ecosystems. The relationships between plants and animals in the tropics are so closely co-evolved that man's utilization of tropical forests almost always results in some loss of biodiversity. Soybean cultivation is an extreme example because in this agricultural system soybeans entirely displace the plants and animals that formerly occupied the destroyed forests.

Trees remaining after forest destruction do not effectively reproduce. While this tree and others like it may still live for many years, they no longer produce the next generation of trees because the forest conditions needed for the pollination

of their flowers, the dispersal of their seeds, and the growth of their seedlings into adult trees no longer exist.

In his book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, Thomas Friedman writes: "We are the only species in this vast web of life that no animal or plant in nature depends on for its survival — yet we depend on this whole web of life for our survival." Yet, human beings as a society do not universally acknowledge or accept this.

Clearly, the increasing human population and increased consumption throughout the world is not compatible with the preservation of biodiversity anywhere. In contrast to the soils of Mato Grosso, many tropical forests grow on soils that are so nutrient poor that they will never support high human populations without massive inputs of fertilizers and pesticides. If tropical areas are not productive enough today to contribute significant support to a world population of 6.5 billion, how will it support a population of 9 to 11 billion humans by 2050? In short, residents of the tropics and the world in general will not be able to protect biodiversity at acceptable levels if both human population growth and consumption are not controlled.

Globalization has placed environmental pressures on the world's ecosystems that were unforeseen 20 years ago. Two forces that stimulate the demand for Brazilian soybeans illustrate



how developments in one part of the world can negatively impact forests, such as those of Mato Grosso, in other parts of the world. In the first place, much of the demand for Brazilian soybeans comes from the emerging Chinese market, and in the second place, conversion of soybean acreage to corn fields in the United States to meet the demand for biofuel production has caused soybean buyers to turn more and more to Brazil for their supplies of this legume. Hence, all large-scale agriculture, water utilization, carbon emission, and other resource uses in a globalized world must consider the impact they have worldwide.

Finally, the true cost of tropical forest exploitation must be considered in any scheme to modify tropical ecosystems for human profit. Simply stated, in the long run, consumers will have to pay more for oranges, soybeans, bananas, etc. to offset the loss of ecosystem services formerly provided by the forests that large-scale agriculture either replaces or modifies. The increased prices will need to include the cost to establish reserves of tropical ecosystems large enough to 1) maintain the ecosystem services they provide and 2) protect the biodiversity they harbor. As an example, the cost of maintaining tropical forests to continue to sequester carbon must be shared by the entire world as part of the global effort to control climate change.

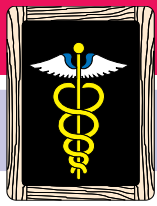
Biologists now have enough knowledge about tropical forests and the conditions under which they grow to determine which areas are appropriate for sustainable agriculture and cattle grazing,

which areas should be managed as extractive reserves, and which areas should be set aside as biological reserves. It is no longer the responsibility of conservationists to demonstrate that tropical rain forests are valuable because they provide ecosystem services to the entire world. It is incumbent upon those who wish to "develop" the forests to demonstrate that the use they propose justifies the accompanying loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services that will occur when they are exploited for individual human gain.

There is a growing recognition that the world has to act together to set aside forest reserves as well as to pay farmers to keep private land in forest. A leader in this effort is Norway, which has created a fund committed to providing up to \$1 billion for conservation in the Amazon.

Scientists at The New York Botanical Garden and throughout the world collaborate with their Brazilian colleagues to describe the plant diversity of Brazil, one of the world's most biologically rich countries. Knowing the names of species, understanding where they grow, and identifying which are the most threatened allows the Brazilian government to establish the reserves needed to identify areas where the greatest numbers of plants and animals can be protected. #

Scott A. Mori, Ph.D., Nathaniel Lord Britton Curator of Botany, has been studying New World rain forests for *The New York Botanical Garden* for over 30 years. Over the course of his career, Dr. Mori has witnessed an unrelenting reduction in the extent of the tropical forests he studies.



NEWLY DISCOVERED GENE FUSION MAY LEAD TO IMPROVED PROSTATE CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Researchers from New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center have discovered a new gene fusion that is highly expressed in a subset of prostate cancers. The results may lead to more accurate prostate cancer testing and new targets for potential treatments. Experts believe that gene fusions—a hybrid gene formed from two previously separated genes—may be at the root of what causes cancer cells to grow more quickly than normal cells.

The new findings, published in the journal *Neoplasia*, are exciting because unlike two previous fusions co-discovered by the same Weill Cornell Medical College laboratory group, this fusion, called NDRG1-ERG, produces a protein that may be a potential target for drug therapies.

“The prostate cancer gene fusions, and proteins they produce, are important because they serve as a cancer-specific marker,” says Dr. Mark A. Rubin, the Homer T. Hirst Professor of Oncology in Pathology, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, and vice chair for experimental pathology at Weill Cornell Medical College. “Currently, PSA testing is the standard of care, yet it is not

accurate enough to predict prostate cancer because many men may have an elevated PSA level but have benign conditions such as inflammation of the prostate.”

It is important to distinguish harmful cancer from non-lethal diseases such as benign prostatic hyperplasia or enlarged prostate disease, which exhibits similar symptoms to prostate cancer, in order to provide effective care, explains Dr. Rubin. Gen-Probe, a biotechnology diagnostics company, has licensed this technology and is currently working with Dr. Rubin and his collaborator, Dr. Arul Chinnaiyan, at the University of Michigan to develop urine tests to screen for gene fusions as a means of improving upon the current standard PSA test.

“In the future, these fusions, specific to certain types of prostate cancer, may help physicians prescribe tailored therapies for their patients by avoiding the trial and error that is often associated with cancer treatments,” says Dr. Rubin, who is also the associate director of translational research and a pathologist at the Weill Cornell Cancer Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. #

LIVING IN EMERGENCY: DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

By GILLIAN GRANOFF

Elizabeth Vargas, anchor of ABC News, in conjunction with Doctors Without Borders, recently presented a one-night screening of the critically-acclaimed and gripping documentary, *Living in Emergency: Stories of Doctors Without Borders*. The event, hosted at NYU’s Skirball Center, was screened in simulcast on several screens throughout the city. The film provides an unrelenting look at the courageous efforts of four doctors, and portrays their experience living on the edge in post-conflict Liberia and war-torn northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As the doctors wrestle to practice medicine with primitive technology, they must overcome helplessness and frustration to make brave life-and-death decisions without the use of modern technology. One of the doctors, Dr. Tom Kreuger, must struggle to diagnose and treat a young boy without the aid of modern diagnostic tests; the boy was unable to breathe and had massive swelling in his belly and under his eyes. Despite Kreuger’s efforts, the boy’s mother, who feared and mistrusted Western medicine, took the boy away in the night. In another case, the head of mission in Liberia, Dr. Chiara Lepore, working on a project in Mamba Point Hospital in the

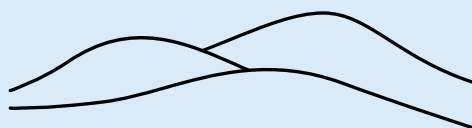
capital, Monrovia, tries to maintain his ideals and manage his frustration as he attempts to secure a transport of the medical supplies provided by MSF (short for *Médecins Sans Frontières*, the French name for Doctors Without Borders).

This film is a sobering and graphic glimpse into the realities of practicing medicine in these areas; it allows us to see how the pressures the doctors face, intensified by cultural differences, compound the struggle to earn the trust of patients and colleagues. Despite this, the doctors’ interpersonal struggles, professional disagreements and diagnostic clashes are ultimately eclipsed by the needs of their patients, and they demonstrate inspiring teamwork to accomplish their mission. The film also gives us a glimpse into the lighter moments of their time abroad, like playing at the beach, dancing at a club, or drinking a beer. In doing so, the film allows us to see the real bravery of these doctors; it sends an inspiring and hopeful message to the viewer amidst the bleak landscape of war, chaos, and poverty.

Mark Hopkins, the film’s producer, created the film independently with the cooperation of MSF. *Living in Emergency* has already received accolades and critical claim, and is one of fifteen films being considered for an Oscar nomination. #

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YOUNG SCIENTISTS REAP AWARDS AT NYU

By JUDITH AQUINO
REPORTING CONTRIBUTED BY
GIOVANNY PINTO

Four New York City teens walked away with thousands of dollars in prize money as winners of the 2009 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology. At NYU, Ruoyi Jiang, a senior from Ward Melville High School in East Setauket, was recently named the individual grand prize winner and received a \$100,000 college scholarship for his research on chemotherapy drug resistance. Xiao (Cathy) Zhou and Israt Ahmed, juniors at Francis Lewis High School in Fresh Meadows, and their teammate, Stephanie Chen, a junior at Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, grabbed third place in the team category and a \$40,000 scholarship. Based on their analysis of fossil samples, their project provided new insight into hominid migrations out of Africa.

Through a joint partnership between the College Board and the Siemens Foundation, the contest, which was launched in 1998, awards over \$600,000 in scholarships annually for individual and team research projects in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. Students from around the country submitted 1,348 projects this year — a 14 percent increase from 2008, reported the Siemens Foundation. “Their [the students’] energy and excitement is extremely refreshing,” said Dr. Sonal Jhaveri, a neuroscience professor at MIT and the lead regional judge. “They’re not ashamed to be geeks, and that’s wonderful.”

When asked to explain what excites him about science, Israt Ahmed noted, “We are learning new things. ... Kids changing timelines of nomadic patterns is amazing.” Ahmed and his teammates met as members of the Robert F. Kennedy Summer Science Research Institute. Their mentor was Dr. Bonnie Blackwell, a research scientist at Williams College in Williamstown, Mass.

The students spent approximately 2,400 hours



Grand prize-winner Ruoyi Jiang stands with Siemens officials holding a check for \$100,000. From left: Tom McCausland, chairman; Jim Whaley, president; Jennifer Harper-Taylor, VP; Tom Jones, lead judge.

working on their projects, analyzing primitive tools and fossil samples from Russia and France. Together they determined that hominids actually moved into Eurasia about 850,000 years ago instead of the often-cited 600,000 years ago.

Ruoyi Jiang, who hopes to become a research lab director, evaluated drugs that prevent cancer cells from developing resistance to chemotherapy. His mentor was Dr. Carlos Simmerling, a chemistry professor at Stony Brook University. “Through computational methods we were able to provide detailed insights into an extremely complex mechanism of chemotherapy drug resistance,” explained Jiang in his project presentation. “We were also able to provide insight into the means by which a newly discovered drug is able to overcome this drug-resistance mechanism. Based on this, it is possible to design drugs that are even more effective and can overcome this form of resistance in clinical studies.”

In regards to reports that students in the U.S. are falling behind in science and math, Michael Podowski, a professor of nuclear engineering and physics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a national judge, commented, “The system has to change, we need more homegrown scientists. The challenge begins at teaching.” #



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