

# EDUCATION UPDATE

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— Eric R. Kandel, MD  
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## GUEST EDITORIAL

RAISING THE BAR FOR  
WOMEN BEHIND BARS

By REV. VIVIAN NIXON

**I** have had a front row seat for the past dozen years watching the transformative power that education can have on women who face extraordinary challenges. First, as a student and then—for the last seven years—as executive director of College and Community Fellowship (CCF), I have learned first hand the importance of education on the lives, not just of the students themselves, but their families, the organizations that hire them and their community.

The CCF is a non-profit organization that serves as a resource for formerly incarcerated women in New York City. We help women transition back into their communities, through strategies focusing on higher education, leadership development, increasing social capital, economic stability, and artistic expression. Our goal is not just to assist women to reintegrate into their communities, but to work to help lift them up.

Since 2000, we have had the honor to see over 400 women overcome incredible challenges. The women we work with succeed not solely because we are there to provide guidance and structure to their quest, but because they are incredibly motivated and resilient. The challenges these women have faced through



the course of their lives often have left them with a sense of hopelessness. But as we work with them we see, one by one, how they grow and once again find the hope that seemed altogether lost. For many of our clients and students, the chance of attaining any type of education was out of reach. That's why CCF's primary objective is providing educational support services to help our students

earn undergraduate and graduate degrees from accredited colleges or universities in the greater New York metropolitan area. Those enrolled in our program receive counseling, financial literacy education, peer support services, tutoring and referral services, and other extracurricular activities. Through monthly community meetings, they are able to discuss common issues as it pertains to their education, receive life skills training, and have a source of support and advice.

Their effort has paid off. Some 65 percent of the more than 400 women in our program have graduated within four years. Sixty-one of them have gone on to get Master's degrees and we have one with a doctorate degree and two more who are close to being PhDs. They get full time jobs, reunite with their families and contribute

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Educating the Whole Student

By MATTHEW G. MANDELBAUM, Ph.D.



**A**mongst a room full of young teachers for grades Pre-K to 12, I ask, "Who has heard of the concept of educating the whole child?" The room is suddenly divided between raised hands of Early Childhood and Childhood educators and hands lowered of their Adolescent counterparts. I ask one Childhood educator to define whole child education for us. She said, "It means to consider educating the student on the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical levels, always considering the student's overall development towards greater achievement in academics and in life." That sounded like a pretty good concept for a teacher and for a student. I asked the group, "Who thinks that the description offered should be a given in education for everyone?" They all raised their hands. So, I asked them, "Who has ever heard of educating the whole adolescent?" No one had. Dead silence turned to sighs. "Why not?" I wondered aloud, "Does something end in 5th or 6th grade and we forget the whole person? Shouldn't 21st Century education, with its focus on preparing individuals for success in the world, focus on the entire person, especially as they transition into adulthood? Where can we find the whole adolescent education in action?"

At least some students who need this type of learning are getting it at Robert Louis Stevenson School ([Stevenson-school.org](http://Stevenson-school.org)) on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. For over 52 years, Stevenson has been integrating social-emotional and academic education for bright adolescents in Grades 7-12, who have been underachieving due to social-emotional difficulties and/or learning differences.



By focusing on the whole adolescent, Stevenson helps students recalibrate their lives to be full of meaning, purpose, and accomplishment. The Stevenson faculty helps students set S.M.A.R.T. goals that are attainable across disciplines - in the fine and performing arts, the humanities, the sciences, in technology, and in physical education. Stevenson helps build self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. Students are able to rejoice in their successes, but also are able to tolerate and learn from their failures. Resilience grows out of these experiences with the safe, structured support of teachers and advisors. The result is a 100 percent college acceptance rate with appropriate matches. Recognition of our unique services is reflected in the fact that most of the students receive significant funding from their districts. Educating the whole person should be a focus across development as we learn to increase potential and growth for all. #

*Matthew G. Mandelbaum, PhD is the Director of Outreach, Robert Louis Stevenson School in NYC.*

## GUEST EDITORIAL

Teacher Education:  
"Who's on First?"

By MARK ALTER, Ph.D.

**I**n a recent article, Harlem Village Academies is reported as planning to open a graduate school devoted to progressive education. A decade ago, this would have been a remarkable development; however, today, Harlem Village Academy is merely the city's latest charter school to start its own graduate program. Last year, the city's largest charter network, Success Academies, partnered with Touro College's Graduate School of Education to create its own masters granting program. And in 2011, three multi-state networks—Uncommon Schools, KIPP, and Achievement First—formed their own graduate school in New York, called Relay. In 2011, Alter and Pradl wrote questioning both traditional and alternative approaches to teacher education programs: "who stands prepared to validate the merits of these pro-

grams: of their process, practice, and procedures?" Unfortunately, both existing and newly emerging approaches to teacher education are often ideologically rather than empirically driven. The fact that more than one teaching style can work successfully across discernibly different students, school, and community settings patently suggests more than one route can lead to effective classroom performance. Still, are schools of education producing the kind of valid and reliable evidence of good teacher training that will allow students of education to follow the route appropriate for them? In short, the question is still very much with us: Has anyone produced any valid and reliable data regarding teacher education to justify any particular approach?



The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) announced a proud accomplishment of the teacher preparation community and its partners as they celebrated the launch of the first nationally available, standards-based performance assessment for preservice teachers: edTPA. This new "performance-based" assessment tool and career-entry test that measures teacher preparation, is "fully operational." While no single assessment or study of teacher training can be totally comprehensive—unless teacher-educators build such an assessment program—we will have no way of adequately defending our practices, of determining how to improve existing programs, or of making sound judgments regarding proposed alternatives. So, the question remains: What features of any teacher-preparation program—undergraduate, graduate, or stand-alone—succeed in creating future teachers who can promote student learning and contribute to a school culture where teaching professionals continually assess and renew

instruction and curriculum in their collective classrooms? Ignoring this question continues to put teacher education at risk.

All the diversity that characterizes teacher education and certification—theory, practice, instruction, and student teaching—necessarily remains entangled in a wide range of curricular options and course requirements, student placement criteria, and performance accountability. Each is probably as diverse as the field of education itself. Being a teacher and preparing a teacher are informed by broad and deep understandings of range of disciplines and specializations, and by an ethical commitment to equity and social justice. For example, teachers must attend simultaneously to what they are teaching (content) as well as to when and how they are doing so (pedagogy) with respect to the learner. Teaching and learning does not take place in insular classrooms; rather, teachers must be prepared to see the classroom in its wider school and community context and to strive to understand and act within the dynamics that influence this context. Among others, this includes attending to state and professional board policies, parents and other community members, teachers' unions, other

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GUEST EDITORIAL

*NYS Teachers Union VP  
Discusses Legislative Priorities*

By ANDREW PALLOTTA

As New York State's legislative season swings into high gear, an important question underlies every discussion being held at the Capitol: What does the Empire State stand for?

Is New York State committed to benefitting all its citizens? Or just a few?

Do we support the principle of graduation caps for every child or undemocratic tax caps that hurt schools and disenfranchise voters?

Do we understand that public colleges and universities need significant investment to maintain New York's pre-eminence as a "state of mind"? Do we value and invest in the services our hospitals and not-for-profits provide to the sick, the developmentally disabled and the frail elderly?

New York State's budget reveals our state's priorities and values. That's why New York State United Teachers fights so hard to ensure state budget priorities align with what's good for all New Yorkers. As the state's largest union — with 600,000 members in education, health care and human services — New York State United Teachers is a constant and vocal presence at the Capitol to ensure legislators hear what's needed for our schools, our universities, our health care facilities and our not-for-profits.

On budget issues, NYSUT believes the continuum of public education and health care must be fully funded.

CUNY, SUNY and the state's community colleges deserve significant investment by the state to fund more full-time faculty, smaller class sizes and more sections offered in major courses to help students graduate in four years. New York State should increase aid to its community colleges and establish a \$1 billion Public Higher Education Endowment Fund. As a state, we must fully commit to investing in our public hospitals that provide lifelines to the communities and educate the next generations of health care professionals. Our campaign to keep SUNY Downstate Medical Center open and serving the community is a case in point.

To keep New York a "state of mind," with public higher education as the path to opportunity, we need to stop the slow erosion that underfunding has caused to our public colleges and universities.

A \$1.9 billion increase for public schools is essential to help narrow the achievement gap between students in high- and low-needs districts. New York State needs to invest more in community schools, provide universal Pre-K for all four-year-olds and restore important academic and extracurricular programs that students have lost in recent years. Early-childhood education — including full-day Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, and Head Start — is essential. Schools that serve the specialized educational needs of students with severe learning, emotional, behavioral and physical disabilities deserve funding that compensates for the reality that many have not had a cost-of-living adjustment since 2008.

NYSUT advocates for legislative priorities that advance quality services for all New Yorkers. A Safe Patient Handling bill, for example, is essential for the wellbeing of patients and health care professionals. This legislative session, NYSUT is continuing to press critical issues surrounding the over-testing of students — issues that have mobilized parents and educators. We speak on behalf of students. We are vigorously advocating on the issues of inappropriate testing of young children, privacy of student data and the need for a three-year moratorium on high-stakes consequences for students and teachers resulting from standardized state tests — to ensure the time needed to get it right.

The results of this legislative session will help define the future for all New Yorkers and shape the state's priorities for years to come. Quality public education and health care are essential for all New Yorkers — and we are proud to carry that message to our elected leaders.#

*Andrew Pallotta is the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Executive Vice President.*

**Did You Know That Walt Whitman  
Taught School in Queens & Suffolk Counties?**

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"Singing the need of superb children" —Walt Whitman

In the summer of 1836, having just turned 17, Walt Whitman began teaching school on Long Island. Like most country teachers, young Walt worked under difficult conditions for very low pay. During his four-year teaching career,

Whitman taught in nine different school districts, stretching from Queens through Suffolk counties on Long Island. In Smithtown, he taught 85 pupils in a one-room schoolhouse. Whitman became a fervent supporter of educational reform, and he later wrote newspaper articles on the subject.

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## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH SANDRA PRIEST ROSE OF THE READING REFORM FOUNDATION

By JASMINE BAGGER

“Language can be made fascinating,” says Sandra Priest Rose, the well-respected veteran educator and philanthropist. She has been actively training young students and teachers for the past few decades. For the last 32 years, Priest Rose has been involved in the not-for-profit literacy organization, Reading Reform Foundation of New York (RRF), which she founded. The RRF creates tools to help teachers learn how to better teach. It is a program, “by teachers for teachers,” she says. In 1963, Priest Rose took a Spalding course in Peterborough, NH, which served as one of her early inspirations. Since then, her organization has benefited over 30,000 students from the RRF methodology.

The teaching consultants that she trains work with public elementary school teachers from NYC and the surrounding areas. The program is in place to boost reading for students in K-3 classrooms. They meet 60 times over the course of one academic year, providing trainees with information on how to teach reading, writing and spelling, using RRF’s multisensory approach. The approach has been heavily influenced by the Spalding method, which is an instruction that is “explicit, systematic, interactive, diagnostic and multisensory.” The method is helpful in improving student understanding of text structure, fluency, reading comprehension, grammar and high-frequency vocabulary. It has also been helpful to those with learning disabilities and those who are learning English as a second language.

Once a teacher has been trained in areas such as phonemic awareness and fluency, that teacher then translates this information to their students by helping them see, hear and write what they are learning, simultaneously. Students are taught to examine words for their roots and meanings using flashcards and other methods which allows for more thoughtful reading and understanding. The result has been successful. With raised test scores, students have gained confidence and the ability to excel in learning. Funding is mostly from contributions and each school pays a small fee.

Over 1,600 New York City students are currently thriving from the program and 64 teachers are receiving the Reading Reform training in 16 NYC schools in four boroughs, and in one school in Port Chester, NY. At this time, 300 teachers are taking Reading Reform courses and 1,200 teachers have been part of the in-school teacher-training program. More than 20,000 teachers attended the annual conference.

Some students catch on to reading so quickly that it appears effortless, but it often narrows down to who their first teachers were and the curriculum at their schools. Functionally illiterate or illiterate adults routinely apply the lessons learned from the scientific findings in the classrooms. Elementary classrooms must incorporate certain research-based practices, she



says, including early identification of children at risk of reading failure. Daily training in linguistic and oral skills helps to build awareness of speech sounds, or phonemes, she says. Explicit instruction in letter sounds, syllables, and words, accompanied by explicit instruction in spelling is also implemented. Teaching phonics in the sequence that research has found, leads to the least amount of confusion, her findings states. This is instead of teaching phonics in a scattered fashion and only when children encounter difficulty. Practicing skills to the point of automaticity is the goal, so that children do not think about sounding out a word when they need to focus on the meaning. It also means building vocabulary knowledge through reading aloud and discussing, as well as writing about quality children’s literature and nonfiction topics. Frequent assessments and instructional adjustments need to be in place in order to make sure that children are making steady progress. Regardless of social class, race or income, roughly a third of all kindergarteners require this explicit, systematic approach to learn how to read, Priest Rose says. Over the last few decades, scientists have set out to persuade educators and policymakers of the significance of these findings. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) examined what current aspiring elementary school candidates in teaching are learning about reading instruction. They examined a random sample of teacher certifications that cater to schools of all types and concluded that five components of effective reading instruction are: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, according to the research by the National Reading Panel report, released in 2000. The RRF believes that schools would have better classroom successes if course materials better addressed each of these five components. Balanced approaches often still ignore the science of reading. National accreditation does not automatically equal adequate learning for teachers. Many reading teachers and textbooks describe the process of becoming a reader, as a natural, organic process. Many courses indicate that exposure to literature sparks a natural development of reading skill. Each teacher should still personalize the class and tailor it

## Youth Communication: Teen Journalists Promoting Reading

By LISA K. WINKLER

The five clocks on the wall above Youth Communication’s ([www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)) door are set to the same time. Unlike clocks representing time zones around the world found in professional newsrooms and hotel lobbies, these clocks show the time in New York City’s boroughs: The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Next to the door stands an overloaded bookcase, its shelves teeming with titles written by some of nearly 3,000 alumni of Youth Communication’s teen journalism programs. Writers who have participated in YC’s programs include the novelist Edwidge Danticat and Rachel Swarns, newspaper reporter and author.

Founded by Keith Hefner in 1980, Youth Communication produces two teen-written magazines: YCteen, for secondary school students, and Represent, by youth in foster care. Through personal essays, teens share their stories about issues other teens want to read about. Creating what Hefner calls “service journalism,” YC’s original goal was to dispel the media images of urban teens as wanton and violent. “We also wanted to show kids the world beyond their block, and how they could overcome the challenges they faced and transform their lives,” said Hefner.

From the magazines, printed on newsprint, YC’s products grew to include more than 30 anthologies, created from teen articles, that include titles such as “Real Jobs, Real Stories”, “Teen Guide to Sex (without regrets)”, and “Vicious: True Stories by Teens about Bullying.” Following the books, YC produced leader guides for teachers, counselors and other supervisors of youth programs to assist them in using the stories with their teens. Each magazine sponsors an essay writing contest each issue that attracts entries nationwide. The magazines, and several of the anthologies, have won top awards from the Association of Educational Publishers.

Hefner began advocating for youth voices when he was a teen himself in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

“It was the late 1960’s. There was no Internet; no Facebook. There were thousands of teens

to his/her needs and that of the students. Often teachers, make too few demands and have low expectations of certain students, and emphasize fun rather than learning. Their quality of reading textbooks is poor and their content includes little or no hard science. Another issue is fragmentation in the field of reading instruction. States need to develop strong reading standards and licensing tests based on those standards. While 29 states require reading courses, many do not implement what their trained educators should teach and how. Standardized tests create



Keith Hefner, Youth Communications

publishing underground newspapers around the country. We’d get stacks of them and shuffle them and then send out packs to the editors so they would know what everyone else was doing. From that, we started a newsletter for teen activists,” he said, referring to two friends who helped him.

When he moved to NY in 1979, he realized his newsletter readers were now adults; many were working in youth programs and sub-

scribed to keep in touch with youth issues and to use the stories with teens in their programs. This evolution is similar to the challenges YC faces today with its programs and products.

“We’re no longer just a youth journalism program,” he said. Though YC remains committed to teaching students writing, essays may go through up to 10 drafts. The focus has shifted to serving educators as people and especially youth who read less. “It used to be we’d produce a magazine with a great cover and headlines and students would automatically read it. Our books were often the most stolen from classrooms,” said Hefner, “but now, kids aren’t reading on their own, at all.” Bundles of magazines would go unopened on school doorsteps. But when the magazine or books were delivered directly to a teacher who then assigned the readings, students read non-stop.

“We realized we needed to market to the adults working with the kids,” he said. There are currently 690 teachers who order bulk copies of YCteen. (It’s free, because The New York Times donates the printing.) They use it to teach reading and writing, and in counseling settings. For example, some teachers use the YC materials to help introduce thematic units, or linked text sets. One teacher, Hefner recalled, recently used YC stories to introduce themes of family relationships in a unit that also included the Arthur Miller play, “Death of a Salesman”. YC already provides free Common Core-linked lesson plans that accompany YCteen magazine, and the staff hopes to assist teachers in linking more YC materials to curriculum requirements in the future. #

an effective system of accountability for both education schools and teacher standards. Better textbooks and legitimate experts in the field must develop and write better reading textbooks.

Priest Rose says that students must learn to sit up straight and use a pencil. This way, they can truly learn so that they can teach. “Lead the kids to great literature and learning. The intellectual journey is the right of every child,” she concludes. #

For more information, visit their website ([www.ReadingReformNY.org](http://www.ReadingReformNY.org)).

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK



## Improve School Culture, Improve School Achievement

By MARY ROBINSON COHEN

Recently I saw Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos interviewed and his message resounded with me: "Our number one priority is company culture. Our whole belief is that if you get the culture right, most of the other stuff like delivering great customer service or building a long-term enduring brand will just happen naturally on its own."

Educators often eschew having parallels drawn between businesses and schools yet many of the scholarly writings on school leadership are predicated on the work which emanates from the nation's most prestigious business schools.

I believe that one of the most important jobs of school administrators is to assess and build school culture among staff. Without a healthy school culture, the mission and vision of the leader remain just that: the leader's vision and mission and not the shared mission and vision of the school community. When I visit a school, I look and listen very carefully to ascertain what kind of culture exists; with practice, I have become adept at assessing the culture and delineating the steps that are needed to improve it.

We can probably all recount stories of work-

ing in schools where the culture was horrendous – my own "worst" recent memory includes a school where all of the employees literally punched a time clock. This factory model was replete with employees being reprimanded and having their pay docked for arriving a few minutes late and receiving neither recognition nor compensation for staying beyond the working day.

The culture in this school was completely broken; student achievement was low and staff turnover was high. This culture was an anathema to the teacher practice where so many teachers arrive early, stay late and never seek compensation.

I have been fortunate to work in a school where the culture made it pleasurable to go to work each day. The faculty room was a home away from home and collegiality and conviviality were evident throughout the school day and beyond. There was a high level of trust between administrators and teachers and friendships crossed lines. Before the term "professional learning community" was coined, we functioned as such, as we discussed students, curriculum and content and supported each other in our professional careers and our personal journeys. Student achievement was high

## BUILDING A ROBOT AT JOHN DEWEY HIGH SCHOOL

By FIL DISPENZA

Team 333, also known as the "Megalodons", is a group of students from John Dewey High School who come together to build robots. Our robotics team has been part of the First Robotics Competition (FRC) since last decade and our team members are the inspiration and recognition of science and technology for our school. Technically, we contend in the design, construction, operations and application of robotics.

Every year for FRC, we get a challenge to build a robot in six weeks. For the building of these robots, students decide how the robot is going to be built and then work together to construct the robot. Our robotics team has functioned for 12 years and has earned the reputation as being reliable and enthusiastic having reinforced a variety of robots. Last year, we were given a challenge to throw a Frisbee into different goals and to climb a pyramid. After the intense six weeks of building, our robot went into the competition and staff turnover was low.

School culture is a critical variable in impacting student achievement; administrators need to learn to assess it and build it. #


Mary Robinson Cohen, M.A., J.D. is a superintendent in a New Jersey public school district.

earned 11th place out of the 66 competing robots.

Starting January 4, 2014 our team will be building a new robot for the First Robotics Competition. We are currently unsure of what our next challenge is going to be, but we are ready to take on anything. On March 27 to March 29, we will be competing at the SBPLI Long Island regional at Hofstra University. Then on April 4 to April 6 2014, we will be competing at our home Regionals in New York City at the Jacob Javits Center. Everyone is welcome to attend these free events.

Unlike most robotics teams, team 333 has gone out to the community to demonstrate their eagerness to participate in the First Robotics Competition, and spread First Robotics throughout the community. In October of 2012, the Megalodons created a robot that can go under water to manifest the marine life. The latest robot made by our applet builders can pitch a baseball a distance of 60 feet and six inches. This baseball robot threw the first pitch during a Brooklyn Cyclones game at MCU Park in Coney Island. At the moment, we are preparing our room for competition season by setting up our machinery, tools, and work benches for the upcoming event.#

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## EDUCATION UPDATE STAFF REMEMBERS SCHOOL LESSONS

MEMORIES OF  
OUR SCHOOL DAYS

As the New Year begins, the staff of *Education Update* reflects on memorable aspects of their education. Members of our staff come from varied educational backgrounds: parochial schools, charter schools, public and private universities, and schools abroad in several countries including China, Italy, and Saudi Arabia. Despite these diverse backgrounds, the common thread we have been fortunate to share is the passion and commitment of great teachers. #

## High School Uniforms

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

“You can wear that outfit to school?” I remember being amazed, as other children on my street arrived home from school in jeans and sneakers. For most of my educational career, I woke up each morning; rolled out of bed and into a pleated plaid skirt, knee socks and a collared shirt and headed out the door to school. As a student in a parochial elementary school in Brooklyn, and later an all-girls Catholic high school, wearing a uniform was a tradition that I took part in everyday, without even realizing it at the time.

Traditions like my uniform created the sense of community that defined my education. I might not have had the largest selection of Advanced Placement (AP) classes or the best technology, but I would not trade my experiences as part of a community with the desire

to help others, for anything. I can’t remember a time in my high school years when my school wasn’t involved in some community service or philanthropic effort.

Each year at Open House, the one Sunday a year I was happy to wear my uniform, a slide show with pictures of events that went on—from basketball games to the drama club production—played to the theme song of the television show, Cheers. My high school was truly a place where everyone knew your name. With a graduating class of only 144 girls, each and every one of us represented our school. The faculty and staff worked hard to make sure that we represented them well. Although I no longer wear my school uniform, I will forever wear my experiences there like a handprint on my heart.#

IN CHINA: STUDENT’S  
NOTE BRINGS THE MUSIC

By JULIA QIAN

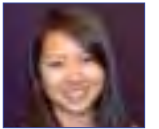
Six years ago, I was an 8th grader in a middle school in Hangzhou, China. I was required to take 12 different courses all at once from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays and extra test preparation classes on Saturdays. There were limited extracurricular activities or playtime. Students were overwhelmed with work and were undergoing an inappropriate level of stress for our age.

As naïve as I was, I wrote a complaint letter to our school president. I was too scared to put my name on the letter or to show my own handwriting. I asked my mother to rewrite the letter and put it in the president’s mailbox. At that time, complaints on heavy schoolwork and criticism on the education system were common; however, it was very rare for students to speak up in front of teachers or any “authorities”—much less the school president. I was expecting the worst: to be expelled from school or at least a school-level detention. However, I also knew that the school wouldn’t give me any punishment because I was one of few students who had the grades for the best high school in the province. Middle schools were evaluated and ranked by the number of students who tested into top three high schools

in the province. If the school had given me any official punishment, even a tardy, they would put my future and also the school’s reputation into jeopardy.

Shockingly, two months later, our president read part of my letter and announced the “music program” in a school-wide meeting. After several meetings with faculty members, he said, they decided to implement a music program to de-stress students. The music program was to play 30 seconds of classical music before each class, as both entertainment and as a way to help students get ready for class. He deliberately picked “The Maiden’s Prayer” as the first piece because “from the handwriting, the letter was a kind wish from a girl.”

I was astonished. Back then; students wouldn’t have the chance to talk to the president. Thus, his positive response to an anonymous letter was extraordinary and very unusual. Till this day, I still haven’t told anyone that I wrote this letter. Although I doubt how effective the music program was—since most of us used that 30 seconds to finish up work before class—the implementation of the music program gave me, as well as many others, a bit of hope for improvements on the middle school education.#



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Journalism Ambition:  
Writing the Right Way

By WAGNER MENDOZA

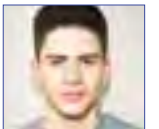
I’ve loved writing since I was in fourth grade. My sister was in her sophomore year of college and she told me how frightening her first year in college was. After being an over-achieving student in high school, she struggled with college writing. She told me that due to a lack of practice in high school, she did not feel fully-prepared to write at the college level. She urged me to read literature above my grade-level and to continuously practice my writing skills because it would be beneficial to me in the long run.

When I entered high school, my desire and hunger to write was bigger than ever. I looked for programs and internships to participate in. My first writing opportunity came when I was accepted into the Teens Reviewers and Critics program. My group and I watched theatrical performances, films, and modern art at museums that we later wrote about in our own reviews. My instructor and my peers were a great help in my ongoing journey to becoming a writer. In the writing programs I have been able to take part in, I have learned ways to structure my writing, edit correctly and compose more sophisticated pieces of writing in school and in my short-stories.

I dread math classes in school. The dif-

ficulty to memorize theorems and formulas and input them in quick quizzes and tests are not my strong suit. Because of my love for writing and reading, my history and English classes are heavens for me. Learning from past peoples’ mistakes and growing, as a human race throughout history is titillating and a great experience to have within the confines of a school classroom. Being able to relate to protagonists’ lives and problems in the literature read in my English classes help me adjust with the transition from adolescence into adulthood. After taking classes at school, I attend college courses at CUNY’s Queens College. Most recently, having taken political science has helped me meet deadlines, learn of the political and economic aspects of our world and has made me a more aware person. I am now able to form deeper understandings of how industries, economies, government agencies all come together to run countries. The classes I take are helping me mature as a writer and person.

I want to become a journalist to develop understandings of the world around me and provide insight to the people reading my work. I want to serve as the eyes and ears to my audience; to help them see and read true and unbiased information about the world around them.#





## EDUCATION UPDATE STAFF REMEMBERS SCHOOL LESSONS

## Growing Up with Choices

By YEHUDA BAYME



I was raised in a Modern Orthodox Jewish family. This term is rather new in the development of the Jewish religion. Many Jews prefer the term “Modern Orthodoxy,” because its rules allow those who practice the ability to connect to the Jewish traditions, but also offers a lifestyle that is more palatable with Western society.

From nursery through college, I attended Jewish schools. They included: Salanter Akiba Riverdale Academy (SAR) in the Bronx, The Ramaz School in Manhattan, and Yeshiva University in Manhattan, as well. My education consisted of two cores; all of these schools obligated students to take two curriculums. We had secular studies, which consisted of all of the courses that you would find in any other New York school (math, biology, history, music, art, chemistry, and English). We also had Jewish studies. Those included: Old Testament, Talmud Laws, Jewish history and Jewish philosophy. We started school each day with morning prayers that lasted around forty-five minutes. By the time I was in high school, I was in school until 5:00 pm, and would get home at around 6:00 pm. In college, classes could go on until 10:00 at

night.

The aforementioned schedule was grueling. Many times, school seemed to be a miserable place because of the workload. However, part of the advantage to the dual-curriculum is that many of the secular subjects are mastered using logic, memory, and deductive analysis. These same skills are encouraged when

one engages in the Divine Law that is taught in Jewish courses. When one studies legal and ethical issues in Jewish literature, there is a recognition that intellectual honesty is needed. By building that skill, tackling tricky math questions, or any technical skill taught in school is better seen on one’s horizon.

Modern Orthodox Jewish education has been a great tool for me, because it eased me along in the professional decision process. Having the option to weigh what subjects I have interest in over others has enabled me to see how slow the world really moves even amongst these fast-paced technologies. Regardless of how successful I will ever be, the importance of variety of choice when it comes to life decisions means a lot to me and I learned that by applying my skills I could better decide which way to go. #

## A Novel Approach

By OMOEFE OGBEIDE



Throughout my life, I have had a few teachers that made a lasting impression on me but none can compare to one. Dr. Maclean Gander is the ultimate exemplification of what it means to be a teacher. He made me believe in my capacity to write after years of struggling with it in college. In his English class, one of his opening quotes is “Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.” He immediately dispelled the popular myth of the genius that writes perfect prose in single sittings. He guided each of us to discover our individual process by teaching the connection of cognition and writing.

He also created a setting of engaging learning with his exploratory teaching style. His classes are one part teaching, two parts student contribution—each equally essential in his classroom. Being a young woman of African American descent in a sea of men, I have sometimes felt my words are not valued in discussion. It breeds a sense of otherness and in turn can create a feeling of inferiority. Dr. Gander has the unique ability of making each student feel like an individual whose perspec-

tive and mere presence is valuable to our collective academic enrichment. In a class of predominantly Anglo-Saxon males, I always had the confidence to speak up regardless of whether I thought it would be well received. Because Dr. Gander valued the pursuit of the best available truth not just a pre-determined answer, everyone’s additions brought us closer to a grasp at deeper comprehension. He was fascinated with our ability to find new meanings and connection in material he had taught numerous times. This made us all feel a desire to analyze everything that we encountered just so that we could share our discoveries with him. Of any quality teachers should have, they must be interested, not just interesting. Good teachers give to their students, but when you see them take away inspiration from your work, you learn first-hand that you have power in a world that may not always reflect these sentiments. Dr. Gander does what only a great teacher can do: cultivate novelty in a sea of mediocrity. #

*Omoeffe Ogbeide is a reporter at Education Update, a former student at Brandeis University and currently attends Landmark College.*

## Travel Is My Textbook

By JASMINE BAGER



My plane ticket was my most valuable textbook. During my early years, my parents would take my siblings and I to different cities so that we could visit relatives and learn from the locals. By the time I reached adulthood, I had been lucky enough to have lived in several countries. I was born on one continent, raised in another and had adventures in a few others along the way.

Waking up to a strange bed, with the sounds of church bells or the athan (Muslim prayer) were days in which I learned the most. Being greeted with a foreign language and forced to decipher writings in a menu full of peculiar ingredients excited me. Learning about countries in geography class was one of my favorite subjects in school, but getting up and walking on the streets taught me things that history, economics, sociology, psychology and literature class could not.

While pursuing my undergraduate studies in the States, I had the chance to study twice in

Europe. Planning the trip around my classes was a challenge. I listened to tapes of people speaking in Czech before I jetted off to Prague, Czech Republic, to study film. I studied maps of Spain before I packed my bags to study in Madrid. If you have the chance to study abroad, you should take it. A huge part of my education was travel.

Getting on planes, trains, buses, trams, cabs and on foot taught me things that no online website or book could. Speaking to the locals, walking into museums or public libraries really paved my way to understanding more about others—and myself. School should be taken seriously no matter where your classroom is and I think travel only enhanced those things highlighted in my textbooks at home.

There is a saying that goes, “The more you learn, the less you know.” When you travel, you get out of your comfort zone and walk through the streets that millions of others have walked before you. It is a humbling experience and one that contributed most to my overall education. #

## The ‘Mission’ of Being a Professor

By VALENTINA CORDERO



The teacher’s mission doesn’t end at the school’s front door. This is true. Some professors are not able to inspire students, while others can influence them so much that they can even change their lives.

Anna Maria Guida and Angelo Marco Rossi are the two teachers that you wish you could have.

They make the difference, because they are able to relate to students at every level, expecting the most from them.

With their dedication, they taught us how to look farther than a book or a board.

Anna Maria Guida is a middle school teacher. She used to teach in my little town of Priocca, Italy. She taught literature, history, geography, and Latin. We were only 13 years old, and she treated us as adults. She knew how to be strict with us, giving a lot of homework and a lot of tests in class. The room was very quiet when she was teaching, because we had to listen to her. But every time she was explaining something to us, there was always a life lesson to learn. I remember that one time there was a kind of shoe on the market that became very popular. Everybody was wearing them in our school. And one day, during a test, she underlined that “it doesn’t matter what you are wearing. A person is not good because he or she wears such a kind of shoe. Other things count much more.” Those words are still in my mind and my heart. I will never forget them.

Guida was very similar to Angelo Marco Rossi. He was a philosopher and history professor in the foreign language high school I attended. I was even afraid of him before I met him for the first time. He was considered a kind of “very severe” man that was making students over-worked. That is how he had been described to my classmates and I before we started

our first month in that high school.

Whoever portrayed him like that was wrong. Whoever was afraid of him was not able to see what his concept of “education” was. It is true that he was extremely demanding. The first lesson he told us was: “I will be bad with you guys and the tests will be hard.” But behind the word “bad” there was another meaning. “I will do my best to teach you how to open your minds,” he said. And he was right. We had to do a lot a pre-learning reading. He wanted us to come to class knowing the topic already so that we could discuss it. And I could never forget when he used to become kind of upset and nervous: crossing his eyes as he was making sure that we understood what he was explaining because as he used to say, “this is a philosophy life lesson.” He used to speak with every single student privately to make sure that he or she was feeling comfortable. He cared a lot about us.

What makes a good professor is not the number of words that he knows, but how he or she teaches you to open your eyes and mind. #

## Italian American Women Garner Awards



(L-R) Dr. Merryl H. Tisch, Chancellor, NYS Board of Regents & Dr. Christine Cea, NYS Board of Regents

The Greater New York Region of the National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW) recently held its annual Epiphany Celebration event at the Columbus Citizens Foundation at 8 East 69th Street, New York City. Each year the organization honors three wise women who have excelled in their chosen fields. This year's honorees are Lauren Ruotolo, Dr. Christine Cea and Anna Fiore.

Lauren Ruotolo is the Director of Entertainment & Promotions at Hearst Magazines and has assisted in the production of specials on MTV, E!'s Style Network and Scripps for Esquire and The Food Network & Good Housekeeping magazines.

Dr. Christine Cea is a researcher at the New York State Institute for Basic Research (IBR) in Developmental Disabilities on Staten Island. She holds the seventeenth seat on the NY State Board of Regents, representing the newly created Thirteenth Judicial District of Staten Island.

Anna Fiore is the Headmistress of La Scuola d'Italia "G. Marconi," the only Italian American school in North America. In 2005, she was appointed as the Educational Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome and Directorate General for Cultural Promotion and Cooperation.

MaryRose Barranco Morris applauded each



Lauren Ruotolo, Dir. of Entertainment & Promotions at Hearst Magazines



Anna Fiore, Head of School, La Scuola d'Italia

of the honorees "for having drawn upon their culture and heritage, using their lifelong learning to make a significant difference in the lives of adults and children and those other lives that

they will affect locally, nationally and internationally. Their unstoppable dedication exemplifies them as a source of pride and inspiration to the Italian American community." #

### BOOK REVIEW

## Reforming A School System, Reviving A City: The Promise of Say Yes to Education in Syracuse

*Reforming A School System, Reviving A City: The Promise of Say Yes to Education in Syracuse*

By Gene I. Maeroff.

Published by Palgrave Macmillan,  
New York: November 2013: 228 pp.

REVIEWED BY MERRI ROSENBERG

School reform, with its promise, challenges, and disappointments, is a perennial topic for academics, journalists and other experts who seek that magic bullet for system-wide transformation.

One miraculous concept was Syracuse's idea that offering qualified public high school graduates free tuition to more than 100 colleges and universities would be enough to alter both the school system's, and the city's, fortunes. Syracuse, a declining city of about 145,000 people with a student enrollment of almost 20,000 students, was the beneficiary of the New York City foundation, Say Yes to Education Inc, which offers scholarships.

In this engrossing volume, which deftly mingles anecdotes about students with profiles of school and city administrators, as well as teachers; classroom observations; scholarly reports, and comparisons to other programs and cities, even a lay reader is rapidly caught up in Syracuse's story.

It helps that the author, Gene Maeroff, is as good as it gets. Former national education correspondent for the New York Times, and a senior fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, he is also the

founding director of the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University. He knows his stuff, and perhaps even more important, knows how to share it in a way that matters to his audience.

Maeroff makes it clear that the problems Syracuse faces, with a largely minority public school population, many of whose families live in poverty, weren't simply economic. As he writes, "Years after the program started, some residents still did not understand that Say Yes was about a lot more than the scholarships. Say Yes intends to make post-secondary school affordable and –just as important– give students the grounding and aspiration to keep them there, once admitted, thereby leading to the completion of degrees."

To make it work, the schools needed the support of local businesses and government, which got on board, and additional services such as health clinics, social workers, even legal assistance for students' families. The district made the school day and the school year longer, and provided even more staff development to be sure that teachers were up-to-date with Common Core standards.

Even though the focus of the Say Yes initiative is on high school graduation and college admission, the Syracuse experiment is very much a "whole district" effort, which is what enticed superintendent Sharon Contreras to move from a position as chief academic officer in Providence to Syracuse. Towards that end, in Syracuse, Say Yes has slowly evolved into what Maeroff calls a "wraparound program that ... strives to fill the gaps in children's lives." #

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# CHILD MIND INSTITUTE GALA

The Child Mind Institute raised over \$6.6 million at its fourth annual Child Advocacy Award Dinner at Cipriani 42nd Street recently. These critical funds allow the Child Mind Institute to continue providing life-changing mental health care for children, pursuing scientific breakthroughs, and expanding public education and outreach efforts.

The event, hosted by journalist Meredith Vieira, honored Ram Sundaram, partner at Goldman Sachs and Child Mind Institute board member, and Pasko Rakic, MD, PhD, director of the Yale University Kavli Institute for Neuroscience. Mr. Sundaram was the recipient of the 2013 Child Advocacy Award for his foundational philanthropic contributions to children's mental health and the growth of the Child Mind Institute. Dr. Rakic received the "2014 Distinguished Scientist Award," in recognition of his outstanding contributions to developmental neuroscience. Both the "2013 Child Advocacy Award" and the "2014 Distinguished Scientist Award" were designed and donated by Michael Aram.

"Looking at tonight's honorees, I can see a brighter future for all the young people who struggle with psychiatric and learning disorders," said Harold S. Koplewicz, MD, president and founder of the Child Mind Institute.



(L-R) Al Roker, Meredith Vieira, Brooke Garber Neidich, Board Chair, Child Mind Institute and Dr. Harold Koplewicz, President, Child Mind Institute

"Ram and Pasko embody the dedication, the commitment to breakthrough science and compassionate treatment, and the resolve that can make a real difference for our children,

and our children's children."

The evening celebrated the stories of families who have struggled with these disorders, most notably a six-year old girl joined by

her parents who spoke movingly about their daughter's journey to overcome selective mutism.

The evening concluded with a hugely successful auction, led by Al Roker, to raise funds for the Child Mind Institute's Healthy Brain Network, which is pioneering innovative, collaborative approaches to brain research with the ultimate goal of developing biological tests to identify mental illness and track treatment response.

Dinner chairs included: Elizabeth and Michael Fascitelli, Debra G. Perlman and Gideon Gil, Brooke Garber Neidich and Daniel Neidich, Linnea and George Roberts, and Stephen M. Scherr. #

*The Child Mind Institute is dedicated to transforming mental health care for children everywhere. Founded by Dr. Harold S. Koplewicz and Brooke Garber Neidich, our organization is committed to finding more effective treatments for childhood psychiatric and learning disorders, building the science of healthy brain development, and empowering children and their families with help, hope, and answers. The Child Mind Institute does not accept funding from the pharmaceutical industry. For more information, visit: [ChildMind.org](http://ChildMind.org).*



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## NCLD Honors The Windward School for Leadership & Innovation

Recently, the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) presented its Carrie and Pete Rozelle Award to the Windward School of White Plains and New Dorp High School on Staten Island.

Presentation of the award, named for the founders of NCLD, was the centerpiece of the group's fourth annual "Celebrate Our Schools" luncheon November 4th at the Yale Club. Each year, NCLD honors a public and private school for innovation and leadership in addressing learning and attention challenges.

Presenting the award to Dr. Jay Russell, Head of School at the Windward School was Denis O'Leary, a former Windward student and an analyst at JP Morgan's Investment Bank. Denis spoke movingly about his experience at Windward, which he attended from 3rd to 5th grade, a time he describes as "a turning point in my life". Before he came there, his learning disabilities "attacked my feelings of self-worth,



(L-R) Monica DiBella, New Dorp graduate, Deirdre DeAngelis, New Dorp Principal, James Wendorf, Executive Director, NCLD, Andrea Pinkney, Board Member, NCLD, Dr. John Russell, Head of School, The Windward School, and Denis O'Leary, former Windward student.

Jim Wendorf, NCLD Executive Director, spoke about the organization's commitment to improving the lives of all people with learning and attention issues and its particular investment in helping schools advance their work with children with learning and attention issues. "NCLD believes that all schools can be as great as the ones we're celebrating today, schools which exemplify leadership, innovation and success. The awards are especially meaningful this year because they demonstrate the power of a unique collaboration between a public and private school."

Accepting the award, surrounded by Windward trustees, staff and family members, Dr. Russell emphasized that though in its 35 years the school had transformed the lives of so many struggling students, "thousands more children continue to struggle with language-based learning disabilities because they do not receive the help they need to become confident, successful students and adults. In fact, each year we are forced to turn away two to three times the number of students than we accept for admission." But, he asserted with pride, Windward is now well on its way to achieving a "watershed" moment with the opening of a New York City campus which will provide more than 350 children the chance to have the education program that changes lives, as it did for Denis. For these students, Dr. Russell said, "we are not merely opening a school, we are unlocking a door."#

## LAWYERS, PARENTS & SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS: FINDING THE PROPER PLACEMENT



By DANIELLE M. BENNETT, M.A.

Recently, an overflow audience of 55 eager parents of adolescents and children receiving and/or seeking special services gathered at the Robert Louis Stevenson School, a private college preparatory school in on the Upper West Side.

At the meeting, conducted by special education attorneys, Adam Dayan and Michelle Siegel and organized by Dr. Matthew Mandelbaum, Stevenson's Director of Outreach, parents learned about their rights and privileges in securing the appropriate and least restrictive educational placement for their children as well as obtaining funding with the support of a lawyer/advocate. A paper trail is very important emphasized the attorneys, for example, keeping letters that summarize the action of the district. Parents have to be aware of their rights and obligations that will help them find the best place for their child. Sometimes, the jargon used by the Department of Education is very confusing for parents. How do you request an evaluation?



Michelle Siegel, attorney

If your child is not functioning, not participating in class, you can request an evaluation. Once the parent has signed informed consent, he or she has sixty days in which to take action. When you are giving signed consent, you essentially are giving the Department of Education permission to go in and observe your child. The interest in the audience was high and the range of questions could have gone on for another hour. The attorneys and Dr. Mandelbaum were extremely knowledgeable about the choices available to parents and teachers.

For over 50 years, Stevenson has been a haven for adolescents with social-emotional difficulties and learning differences in grades 7-12, whose needs have not been met by more traditional, public setting. Stevenson, under the leadership of Head of School, Douglas Herron, has a successful graduation rate and a great ability to transform young lives. Almost all Stevenson graduates matriculate to higher education, including institutions such as Barnard College,

*continued on page 14*

confidence and capability." All of that changed at Windward -- "the lessons I learned there are with me every day and have played a major part in making me the person I am today."

The award recognized Windward's exemplary work in research-based instruction to help children overcome learning disabilities. Windward and the other honoree had a special connection—key to the New Dorp transformation was adoption of a writing program created at Windward by Dr. Judith Hochman, former head of school.

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## Hunter Autism Research, Practice, & Policy Center: Exclusive Interview with Dr. Michael Siller

INTERVIEWED By PATRICIA LAVELLE & DR. POLA ROSEN  
TRANSCRIPTION By YEHUDA BAYME & VALENTINA CORDERO

**Dr. Pola Rosen (PR):** Michael Siller is in the Communication and Play Lab in the department of physiology at Hunter College. We are going to be discussing some of his work in the field of autism.

**Michael Siller (MS):** I am a child development person and I am really interested in autism.

**PR:** Would you say that your main focus here is autism?

**MS:** Yes, almost exclusively.

**PR:** What are some of the other disabilities that kids have come here to Hunter looking for help?

**MS:** I co-direct the Hunter Autism Research Practice and Policy Center (HARPP) with John Brown. He is in special education. The HARPP center is essentially an attempt to bring people together at Hunter College who work in the area of autism. It is a very eclectic group and we are very loosely connected. The HARPP Center doesn't have space. We are not a physical entity but a faculty group that comes together. John Brown really developed a postgraduate certification for individuals who work in the field.

**PR:** Does that certificate enable people to get a job? What does it enable people to do?

**MS:** All of the people who are enrolled in this program already have a license as a teacher or social worker. Then, they get this training on top of it. It is a sort of mid-level certificate. There is one piece missing in the acronym, which is education. The HARPP Center has a sort of broad range of goals. The biggest one really is to educate students at Hunter about autism and train them in the field. We try to generate new knowledge. We strive, not only in educating our students, but also in educating those already working in the field. We provide continuous education for teachers. I work a lot with physicians, teaching them about early identification. The HARPP Center is trying to change practice in New York and are working in the policy area, as well. Hunter runs the Roosevelt House, a public policy institute. We held a round table discussion in 2011 about toddlers with autism. We hope to have another round table this fall about adults. Most people who contact us are concerned parents, a rising population due to higher awareness these days.

**Patricia Lavelle (PL):** What made you to want to get involved in autism?

**MS:** Since I was a teenager, I have been involved. At the time, which was 1989, I had worked in an orphanage in Germany where I am from. I worked with children with disabilities and one of them was autistic. He was six years old and he did not talk. He was difficult, but I found him lovable and interesting in his



own way. At the time, society seemed to blame the parents for having children with disabilities, following the tradition of Bruno Bettelheim. Many children were sent to institutions away from their parents as a result. They were very caring, but they lacked the use of research. I decided to go to the U.S. to learn about the research done in the field of autism. I really loved the work that was done in the field and have been practicing it ever since.

**PR:** What kind of research have you done that is the most impactful in dealing with this issue?

**MS:** I had an important mentor named Marian Sigman at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She was known for understanding the social difficulties early on in the child's development. She had the insight to follow the progress of each child as he or she got older and basically followed that longitudinal model until she died.

**PR:** Did you follow-up with that six-year old boy in Germany?

**MS:** When I got to visit Germany, I would touch base with him. He still did not talk and was difficult socially, but he remembered me and the games that we used to play together.

**PR:** If you met him today as a six year old, what would you do differently? Would you have institutionalized him?

**MS:** No. He should have been at home with his family. The institutions in Germany, at the time I worked there, were not very inviting towards parents. The problem they saw was that during the family visits that occurred every six months, children would be given sweets and stimulation that they were not afforded otherwise. When they would return, the institutions would not be able to successfully reintegrate the children. However, the institutions should have better understood the need for family in the children's lives and encouraged visits.

**PR:** How do you interact with kids with autism?

**MS:** I strive to exhibit the traits of a caring parent in my interactions. Marian Sigman used to videotape the parents of the children talking with them.

I would study those tapes and code them as I saw different practices representative of good

*continued on page 28*

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Windward Teacher Training Institute is a division of The Windward School, an independent school for students with language-based learning disabilities, located in White Plains, NY.



## Exclusive Interview: Dr. Donald Vogel, Director, Hunter College Center Communication Disorders

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

“Hear Today, Gone Tomorrow” is the new hearing conversation ad campaign that can be found plastered in subway cars and bus stops across the city. With the baby boomers aging and more and more individuals being diagnosed with communications disorders and hearing loss associated with exposure to loud sounds from headphone use, the field of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology is growing. In fact, both fields are expected to grow significantly between now and 2020, creating several new jobs according to the Bureau of

Labor Statistics.

*Education Update* recently toured the Hunter College Center for Communication Disorders (HCCCD), which located at Hunter’s Brookdale Campus, along with the department of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology, which provides graduate-level training for students obtaining masters’ degrees in Speech Language Pathology at Hunter College and doctorate degrees through a consortium of Hunter College, Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center. The center serves as a clinical training site for these students as well

as a state of the art center for diagnostic hearing and speech-language services and treatment.

The site is a true gem both for the future professionals that learn there and the patients who are seen there. Dr. Donald Vogel, Director of HCCCD, spoke of the advantages of receiving services from a university clinic because of the immense attention each client receives. Student clinicians who work with each client also work with a professor in the department to develop the perfect fit diagnosis and therapy plan for each client. Vogel, an audiologist, came to Hunter College after years of experience as a

clinical audiologist working at Lenox Hill Hospital, Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital and Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center. After many years as a clinical audiologist, he decided it was time to help train the next generation.

The center is open Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call HCCCD at (212) 481-4464.#



## Overcoming Poverty and Prison: Helping Teens Write

By JASMINE BAGER

Writing about overcoming adversity can help mend broken pasts was the theme of a recent Youth Communication’s “Listen v. Lockup, Unheard Stories from Teens in Trouble” fundraiser event. For the past 30 years, the New York-based organization has been encouraging impressionable teens to “reach for a pen, instead of a fist.” The Youth Communication mission has been helping marginalized youth use the power of their own words to overcome emotional turmoil from their violent pasts. The youth writing program can be done part-time during the school year and fulltime during vacations. It offers these young men and women the chance to be paid writers. Professional editors, who help the teens draft cohesive essays or poems, review each piece before publication. Sometimes it takes up to 20 edits. The result is then included in one of the organization’s magazines or books. The exercise helps these teens express themselves. It also offers

readers a true snapshot of how life can be like as a teen trying to survive in tough environments.

The night included a powerful impromptu performance by three passionate teens, who walked along the aisles of the packed auditorium, telling stories of life’s challenges on the street. A large screen played clips from the 2012 documentary, *The Central Park Five*, which showed the true story of the infamous 1989 rape case of a white woman who was jogging in Central Park in NYC. Five unlucky black teenagers, who were standing nearby, were eventually jailed for decades for a crime that they did not commit.

Raymond Santana, one of those wrongfully convicted teens in the rape case, was a panel speaker. Writing had a positive impact on him during those turbulent years. He talked about his time at Spofford Juvenile Detention Center, where he participated in a writing youth workshop, run by Youth Communication. Sarah Burns, author of the *Central Park Five* book, was also on the panel.

## Lawyers & Parents

*continued from page 12*

CUNY Senior Colleges, SUNY schools, NYU, Boston University, UMASS, Penn State, and those of recent graduates—Brandeis, Bard, Manhattanville College and Marymount-Wheaton College.

Students admitted year-round not only receive challenging, individualized academic program-

She said that the purpose of the film, like the writing youth programs, was to “humanize” and to hear “directly from the guys.” The panel centered on topics that defied the stereotype. Journalist Neil Barsky, director of the Koch documentary and co-founder of a hedge fund, stated that this initiative was “not just ticking a box, the one that says ‘least likely to succeed.’” One of the most recent participants of the program, Marlo Scott, was on the panel, too. Scott has been a staff writer at *Represent Magazine*—one of the publications of the program—since 2011. He lived a life of poverty as a child, which resulted in depression and anger.

*continued on page 30*

ming in a communal setting with small class sizes, but also intensive counseling support and advising. A faculty (1:4 faculty to student ratio) consists of teachers and counselors who are highly dedicated to their work. Stevenson is proud to be a part of a network of over 1,500 child service professionals and organizations, including substance abuse counselors, social workers,

lawyers, advocates, psychologists, psychiatrists, hospital workers, etc.

In addition to its academic and therapeutic appeal, the financial aspect for parents can be paramount in their decision to pursue this educational placement for their children. Nearly all families obtain New York City Department of Education funding to attend the Stevenson, and often courts determine that Stevenson is the most appropriate educational placement for the children. Tuition payments may be also tax deductible as medical expense.#

For more information about the Robert Louis Stevenson School, visit [www.stevenson-school.org](http://www.stevenson-school.org). To learn more about your parental rights and privileges in the special education system, consult the law offices of Adam Dayan ([dayan-lawfirm.com](http://dayan-lawfirm.com)) and Michelle Siegel ([msiegelaw.com](http://msiegelaw.com)).

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## Landmark College: Learning Disabilities Innovation Symposium

By YEHUDA BAYME

To an overflowing group of educators from across the Northeast and Canada attending the 2013 Learning Disabilities Innovation Symposium at the Landmark College campus in Putney, VT, President Peter Eden described the 28-year-old school as a collaborative space devoted solely to students who learn differently. Dr. Eden proudly noted that 66 percent of Landmark graduates succeed in obtaining a baccalaureate degree, as compared with the national average of 55 percent for all learners, and 23 percent for students who learn differently.

Dr. Matthew Schneps, Director of the Laboratory for Visual Learning at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, was this year's keynote speaker. Dr. Schneps is a scientist by profession and an individual with dyslexia himself. His recent research is focused on technologies that make reading easier for some profiles of dyslexic individuals. He said that the key to success is having a deep passion for learning and transforming that into reality, in his case, through technology. He broadened the common understanding of dyslexia, which asserts that dyslexia is caused by difficulties with phonological awareness, to include challenges to visual attention as part of the dyslexic spectrum. While individuals with dyslexia do have difficulty with phonological awareness, Dr. Schneps noticed that many dyslexics also describe their experience with reading as the text "swimming on the page." He said that,

while not everyone in the general population has difficulty with reading, we must remind ourselves that reading is not a natural human reflex, like tasting or smelling. Even those who are not dyslexic require at least seven years of practice to become fluent readers. The skills needed to read include building a vocabulary repository, phonological awareness (sound-symbol association), understanding syntax (grammar), lower order perceptual skills, and working memory. Schneps added another little-known, but very important skill to the list—control over attention. This is not inhibitory control that helps a person refrain from doing something else while reading and it is not a form of disorganization. Control over attention has to do with visual attention, which is the ability to focus in on the thing that is of interest to us while screening out all other visual stimuli. When people learn to read, they have to learn to put their attention right on the word they're trying to read. Many people with dyslexia are not able to do this and have trouble with reading because their attention lags behind their vision. Schneps has learned through his own research that iPod e-readers, which limit the amount of text on each line, can make it easier for some dyslexics to place their attention on each word and improve their reading comprehension.

During his Question and Answer session, Dr. Schneps explained that video games are perhaps the most famous example of interventions to help people improve their visual attention. He

explained that visual attention is part of vision itself and plays a significant role in everything one sees. Audible books may not be a solution either, because the person may have an auditory attention deficit, as well. However, training in that area can also be created so that students can improve control over what they hear.

Some of the other presentations during the symposium, included a session by Dr. Manju Banerjee, Vice President and Director of Landmark College Institute for Research and Training (LCIRT), which illustrated how writing could be made easier for students who learn differently, by using features within Adobe Acrobat – Standard/Pro. Adobe converts text into PDF, which stands for "Portable Document Format." Dr. Banerjee explained that PDFs maintain the same format as the original document, but can be made more malleable and accessible by using features within Adobe Acrobat. For example, you can insert hyperlinks into PDFs and attach your own text or audio to the document at any location within the document. Other features allow one to use the technology to do lower order tasks, such as searching and locating words or bodies of text within the file, thus facilitating higher order cognitive tasks such as comprehension and recall. Writing a term paper, for example, is made easier by embedding cues and notes as reminders within the text of a seminal resource document to remind oneself that this information is important. These notes, whether written or audio, embedded right next

to the text in the document facilitate learning through associative proximity. In other words, students can see their own notes and the actual text description right next to each other.

In another session, Caleb Clark of Marlboro College Graduate School, who oversees a tech program and comes from a media production background, discussed the future of apps and the internet. He noted that because of cloud computing, emails will no longer have attached files to download, but instead, individuals will be able to grant access to their own cloud for others to view any shared document or file. He also shared examples of several educational apps.

During the panel discussion, students talked about their experiences at Landmark College. One student spoke of how she uses programs such as Google Calendar to color-code and remind herself to organize her day's schedules. Another student from Woodstock, NY, who is interested in a career in electrical engineering, spoke about how he "syncs" his electronic calendar with all his portable devices and puts all of his textbooks on Kindle. Another student, with dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) talked about using her Mac computer as a text-to-speech device to aid her reading. She buys her textbooks from Coursesmart.com and uses the text highlighting tool in Adobe Acrobat to assist with reading.

Everyone benefitted greatly from the exchange of ideas and the information shared by experts. #



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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

## Interview: Professor Christine King Farris, Sister of MLK

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

In February 2004, *Education Update* had the privilege of interviewing Christine King Farris, the only surviving sibling of Martin Luther King. With us, she shared her own educational journey and the struggles she had to overcome along the way, including her student years at Teachers College, which she loved. She also enlightened us on her childhood years with her brother and the impact of his legacy. Now, in 2014, she is still a professor at Spelman College.



the mountain and make him an accessible, influential role model.

She travels a lot across the country, reading from the book, and time and again realizes that so many youngsters think her brother “came from outer space”; that he was so extraordinary, that he must have been born extraordinary. Showing that Martin Luther King, Jr. had “a normal childhood” is important to her, she says, because only then can young readers—the book is slated for ages

9-12—really identify with him, appreciate the significance of having a close-knit and loving family, and realize that they, too, can be like Martin. “Everyone must try to achieve,” she says, regardless of background, and they will try if they see that their “hero” was a youngster like themselves, full of fun. She might as easily added, however, that her own life could be inspirational.

Professor King Farris teaches in the Department of Education at Spelman College, where she directs the Learning Resource Center and is completing her 55th year! Christine King Farris has a remarkable story to tell, which she promises to do in her next book, which will be geared towards adults. An economics major at Spelman, where she got a B.A., she thought she would move into accounting and banking, so she arrived in New York City at Columbia University, a young girl from the South, and entered a graduate program in economics. She was, she soon discovered, the only woman in the class and the only black, with a professor who expressed no interest in her. For all her “daring,” the experience was “traumatic,” and she withdrew. Just down the block, however, was Teachers College and a wonderful program in education and thus began study for her first Masters in education. A second would follow, with emphasis on reading and then more courses, until the Civil Rights movement claimed her attention. She did teach in the Atlanta public schools for several years, at least until the public school system forced her out because she wanted to get married.

The apples do not fall far from the tree, however, if the tree gets nurturing. Her own children who had been close to Martin’s still constitute a close family. Her daughter, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, teaches at Spelman, too, and treasures the photos of what she was too young to recall, of herself with her famous grandfather. But again, with compassion and firmness, Prof. Farris stresses how everyone can pursue the dream. Were Martin alive today, he would still be pushing for it, knowing that “we still do not have a level playing field.” He gave us the “blueprint; we have to carry it out.” And that “we” means everyone.#

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-NELSON MANDELA

## I Don't Hear America Singing in the South Bronx

By GISELA RODRIQUEZ-MONTALVO

I don't hear America singing in the South Bronx.

As the sun rises over this low and dismal place,

You can hear the stirring of a people in bondage:

A people held together by the same broken dream;

The dream of every American to live in harmony.

Each link of the long chain that binds us,  
Represents our failures in achieving what is rightfully ours.

Our yells and calls for help fall on deaf ears.

Our captors' hearts are as solid and cold  
As the concrete streets of our land...the South Bronx.

False promises are what they make and we...

Being vulnerable, take them and are satisfied;  
But nothing is gained.

We're living circles of unending strife as  
We strive to become all that we can possibly be.

Every once in a while a prodigy is born.  
Someone who is able to break the chains  
And leave behind the memory of the land  
That raised him.

Let's hope that he remembers  
Of what soil he is from.

If I am among the lucky ones,  
I pray to God I can help my people to be equal!

*This poem was written by Gisela Rodriquez-Montalvo in 1979. Today, she is an extraordinary and exemplary teacher in the South Bronx. She earned a B.A. and M.S. from Fordham University.*

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## Nelson Mandela: His Legacy Lives On

By OMOEFE OGBEIDE, LISA YOUNG & JASMINE BAGER

The former South African president, Nelson Mandela, was an advocate for education and freedom, not only for his fellow countrymen, but also for the children of the world. We proudly wrote about Mandela in our 2005 issue, which became one of our favorites. Since then, many events have transpired. Mandela recently passed away at the age of 95, leaving behind decades of awe-inspiring work.

Sacrificing his personal freedom in the name of democratic and social principles, Mandela had a tremendous historical impact. From his early youth, he was actively involved in fighting racial discrimination in South Africa. As a student, he was involved in a protest of the white minority government's obstruction to basic rights for South Africa's majority Black African population which had interrupted his own education. He continued to pursue his degree despite the challenges and succeeded.

Receiving his law degree after several setbacks, he opened a law firm with his college friend, Oliver Tambo, which provided free or low-cost legal advice to many Black Africans who otherwise would have been grossly underserved.

During his years as a student, Mandela began his involvement with the African National

Congress (ANC), an organization promoting democratic policies in South Africa. He was instrumental in establishing the ANC Youth League and became its president in 1951.

Following the implementation of apartheid laws by the National Party (NP), which assumed power in 1948, Mandela and other members of the ANC protested apartheid laws through its Defense Campaign. In response to NP threats of disbanding the ANC, the "M" plan was formed. Named after Mandela, the plan resulted in the organization of smaller ANC units, which would encourage the earliest participation in the anti-apartheid movement.

Mandela's anti-apartheid activities eventually led to his arrest, a five-year sentence in 1956. In 1961 he was acquitted, but was again arrested in 1962 and this time sentenced to life imprisonment. During his incarceration, Mandela covertly engaged in the struggle against apartheid, releasing a statement to the ANC, encouraging Africans to come together in the fight against apartheid. The movement only grew stronger in his stead as his unjust persecution became a symbol to galvanized masses.

Following his February 1990 release from



prison, he ran for president of South Africa. He was unanimously voted into office in 1994. After being wrongfully jailed for 27 years during which his mother and eldest son died, Mandela found enlightenment, not resentment. As he described, "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I

didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison." Mandela felt that the time he spent in prison reading letters from his people gave him an insight to their struggle he may never had.

Mandela drew further veneration from his countrymen and the world, as he demanded that his former oppressors be absolved of their transgressions and face no punitive retribution. During his term, he introduced the "Reconstruction and Development Plan," which fostered economic growth and job creation, housing and basic healthcare. Mandela led South Africa's shift away from apartheid, which finally ended in 1996. The newly formed constitution of South Africa in 1996 finally guaranteed the promise he and many others had fought for: equality. Mandela's belief in a better tomorrow, despite his circumstances, separated him from

most, "I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death".

Mandela's contributions to social activism continue today, even after his departure. The Nelson Mandela Foundation works in expansive and varied ways to enrich the global community through charitable work. Their projects include construction of schools, HIV/AIDS research and prevention efforts, rural education research, and peace and reconciliation interventions.

Above all, Nelson Mandela was a loving husband, father and grandfather, and an unforgettable inspiration to the world with his wisdom and kindness. He reminded us that the good is worth fighting for and that education makes it possible. He said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." And the struggle for equality must not end. Especially for the children of today, Mandela's legacy gives us urgency: "It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to a good education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations."

## The History of Dr. King Comes Alive in Atlanta

By OMOEFE OGBEIDE

Home to CNN headquarters and the Coca Cola Company, Atlanta, Georgia is not new to big names. Although these entities have immense stature, one name resonates deeper than either one. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a man whose legacy as a civil rights leader is inextricable from the very fabric of American history. Dr. King was born in Atlanta on January 15, 1929. In the August of 1963, one hundred years after President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Dr. King confronted the American conscience with his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C. The speech was the powerful climax of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where two hundred thousand demonstrators gathered in the nation's capital to pressure President Kennedy to pass a comprehensive civil rights bill that addressed the grave inequalities experienced by African Americans.

Dr. King spoke of a world that he did not live in, but that he hoped for when he said "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down



The beautiful promenade at the MLK Historic Site



The entrance to the MLK International Walk of Fame

together at the table of brotherhood."

Dr. King's words moved the nation and the injustice could no longer be ignored. Although President Kennedy was assassinated before passing the demanded provisions, President Lyndon B. Johnson followed through the calls for equality in The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Fifty years later, Education Update celebrates the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington and goes back to where it all began.

The marvel of Atlanta is the great history it houses. The United States government established the National Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site there in 1980 in order to preserve the vital monuments of his life so that visitors could partake in these artifacts of history for years to come. Dr. Pola Rosen, publisher, is someone fortunate to have visited each of these sites personally. The house at 501 Auburn Avenue is the home where Dr. King was born and grew up for the first twelve years of his life. He lived there with his grandparents, parents, and two siblings, Alfred Daniel Williams King and Willie Christine King.



Ebenezer Baptist Church where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached

Another momentous site found in Atlanta is Ebenezer Baptist Church. This church's most notable member was Dr. King who was ordained as a minister there at the young age of nineteen. In 1960, he became the church's co-pastor with his father "Daddy" King and remained the pastor until his brutal assassination in 1968. Ebenezer Baptist Church held his funeral as the world mourned the undeniable tragedy.

Outside of the National Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site is a tribute of remembrance to Dr. King's life as well as following others that exemplified his vision for equality. The International Civil Rights Walk of Fame was created ten years ago and boasts the actual footprint imprints of great leaders of social change including Reverend Al Sharpton, Maya Angelou, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. #



## Teachers College Celebrates 125 Years



**(L-R) Prof. Anand Marri, and his wife, Marie; Dr. Charlotte Frank; Trustee Joyce B. Cowin; Dennis Walcott, Former Schools Chancellor**

By YEHUDA BAYME

Recently, Teachers College celebrated its 125th anniversary at the famed Apollo Theater in Harlem. The event underscored the creativity of the faculty and students. Honored this year were Dr. James P. Comer, Laurie M. Tisch, Jeffrey Immelt, Susan Benedetto and Tony Bennett for their humanitarian efforts to sustain and advance educational programs. The honorees shared their vision as activists to improve the organizations they lead.

Dr. James Comer is a leader in the organizational transformation of the school systems. For over 40 years, as head of the Yale Child Study Center, he has helped improve the performance of public school students by emphasizing the importance of the interactivity necessary between teacher, student, parent, school, and community. His work has been codified and used in over 600 schools across the country. He is also the associate Dean of The Yale School of Medicine.

Laurie Tisch is a philanthropist and vice Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees at Teachers College. She recently founded The Laurie M.



**William Rueckert, Co-Chair of the Teachers College Board of Trustees, and his wife, Fleur**



**(L-R) Dr. James Comer; former NYS Gov. Mario Cuomo; his wife, former NYS First Lady Matilda Cuomo; Laurie M. Tisch; TC Pres. Susan Fuhrman; TC alumna Dr. Ruth Westheimer; Tony Bennett; his wife, Susan Benedetto; Jeffrey Immelt**

Tisch Center For Food, Education and Policy at Teachers College. Through the Tisch Center, fresh and healthy foods are being made available to more people in more communities. Presented with the difficulties in nutrition that arise from rising healthcare costs, disintegrating communities, and lack of nutritional education, the Center seeks to teach about restructuring this industry for the sake of better health.

Jeffrey Immelt is the CEO and chairman of General Electric, a company that has for a long time been a leader in industry, providing innovative technologies in aviation, power, consumer and business appliances, electronics, and insurance. He is an advisor to President Obama on economics. In his address to the attendees he mentioned how corporate culture has a variety of elements such as problem solvers, teamwork, goals, and education that must all work together to create a successful enterprise.

Susan Benedetto and Tony Bennett are the founders of the Exploring the Arts organization, a non-profit that affords arts education to public

schools. The wife-husband duo have been long time supporters of arts education. Mr. Bennett, in addition to being a world famous musical performer, founded the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts in Queens, NY. His wife was a school-teacher in the arts.

The Apollo is a grand and historical venue; the evening was embellished with great music, great food and unique performances. Teachers College brought these outstanding leaders together to create a vision and culture that fortifies the stance that should be a model for all educational institutions. This gala embodied the spirit of imagination and bright hopes for the future. Tony Bennett performed to the overflowing crowd. In a tribute to millennials, Professor Chris Emdin directed high school students in a rap that was both entertaining and inspiring. The evening ended with all members of the audience dancing on stage including faculty, students, honorees and trustees. We wish Teachers College much success and look forward to many more years of leadership in education.#

### NY Architects Design Vanderbilt University's Historic Peabody College for Teachers

George Peabody College for Teachers moved to the current Peabody campus location in 1914, but the college's history began much earlier. Originally founded in December 1785 as Davidson Academy (the nation's fifteenth college), it became Cumberland College in the early 1800s. Cumberland's charter was altered in 1826, changing the school's name to University of Nashville.

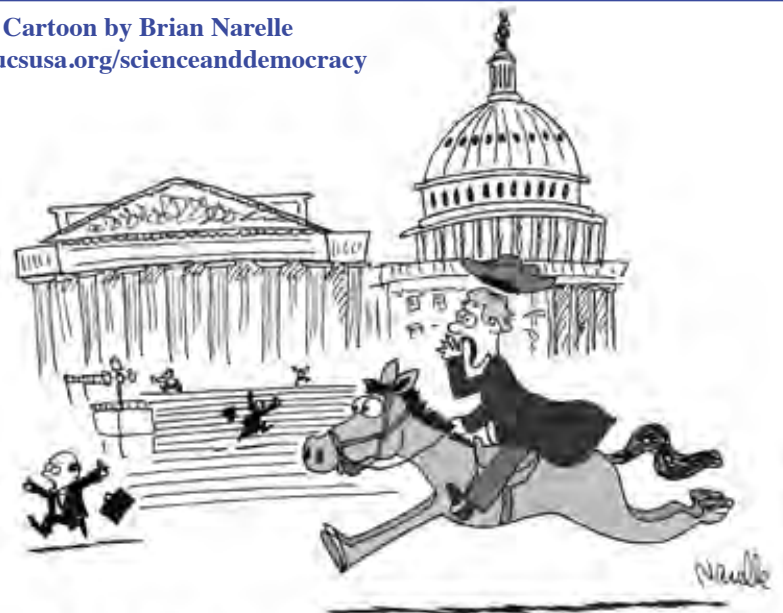
The University of Nashville was the first college to receive aid from the Peabody Fund, which was established in 1867 by philanthropist George Peabody to help rebuild the South's educational system after the Civil War. In 1875 the university began to function as a state normal school; after 1889, it was known as Peabody Normal College, and, in 1909, it incorporated as the George Peabody College for Teachers. In 1979, it merged with Vanderbilt University.

Bruce Payne came from the University of Virginia in 1912 to serve as Peabody's president. America had seen the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago and translated Europe's Ecole des Beaux-Arts into its own "City Beautiful" movement. Payne wanted an "academical village" along the classical lines of Thomas Jefferson's design for the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Payne hired architects Ludlow and Peabody of New York along with Warren Manning to realize his goal.

Sketches were produced by the prestigious New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, who went on to design the Cohen Memorial Building and the Peabody Administration facility immediately next door. The National Historic Landmarks program designated the central lawn and surrounding buildings as a historic district in 1965.#

Cartoon by Brian Narelle

[www.ucsusa.org/scienceanddemocracy](http://www.ucsusa.org/scienceanddemocracy)



The facts are coming! The facts are coming!



## Taking Notes on Student Debt: Do MOOCs Threaten Higher Education?

By ADAM SUGERMAN

Face it. At some point, the United States government—for political and economic reasons—will have to forgive a large chunk of the Brobdingnagian amount of student debt. In the short term, will the political will be there given our fractious, ideologically stagnant lower house? Writing off even a portion of the loans will be considered a form of welfare for college students and for secondary institutions. The bursting bubble will slather the colleges that charge exorbitant tuition and fees without helping students procure employment. In a society where decisions are increasingly driven by data, institutions with high default and mediocre graduation rates will be excluded from the federal coffers.

With fewer college options, how will students obtain an education to get a job where problem-solving skills will be in demand? Many colleges will cut back on course offer-

ings (at state schools, which rely on recession starved diminished state revenues, this is already occurring). With increasing competition from massive open online courses (MOOCs), universities are feeling the pressure that their future as a viable business model will have to evolve. Or will it? Higher education institutions such as California State University at San Jose have toyed with the idea of replacing remedial English courses with MOOCs. Will this approach work for remedial courses? Probably not. As a publisher who has worked with student interns over the last two decades, I know firsthand that traditional writing skills are in decline (although social media writing skills, namely the ones used for Twitter, are better than adequate). Struggling writers improve their craft when they are interested in the topic and when they receive personalized feedback. It is not easy for the ego to hear that one's writing is not up to par even if the criti-

cism is constructive.

Recently, I queried two dozen students who consider themselves poor writers at high school and college levels. The majority responded that they needed a better breakdown of how sentences are constructed, tips to improve cohesion and flow in their writing, and a more expansive vocabulary that is readily acceptable when under strict deadlines. Writing is individual. MOOCs are massive. Students are not going to receive feedback in a timely manner from the professor when thousands of students need to submit their work.

Getting back to student debt and MOOCs replacing college courses. If colleges were serious about helping students pay their debts, they would need to keep college tuition affordable and make the effort to track students closely so they could complete college. Many students drop out due to financial pressure, job pressure, family problems, and academic

issues. Schools need to reallocate some of the money that presently go into MOOCs into intervention such as counseling and tutoring. Professors and tutors get to know their students' learning styles and could help their customers—yes, students are the clients—flourish.

MOOCs do have a role in higher education. They could be utilized, for example, in specially selected graduate level and adult education courses as well as courses where students observe or audit. But again, the professor will need a system of support staff to be successful and not have to spend 20 hours a day preparing a class, teaching, performing administrative and grading duties, all which would apply if a teacher had thousands of students. #

Adam Sugerman is the co-publisher of *Education Update* and a doctoral candidate in *Computer, Technology and Education* at Nova Southeastern University.

### CAREERS

#### Careers for the 21st Century

By DR. POLA ROSEN

Given the expense of an education and that it is necessary economically as well as for emotional and intellectual fulfillment, what are the choices after graduation? So many individuals of all ages are having trouble finding work. *Education Update* thought it would be helpful to have an ongoing column interviewing people about their work, how they prepared for it, how one goal was transformed into another and in short, to show career choices available. So, here we go!

#### Daphne Pinkerson, Documentary Producer

What is your current career?

I am primarily a producer and work in documentary film production at Blowback Production.

Which college did you attend, and what was your major?

Barnard College, Political Science.

Did you have internships, and were they helpful?

My most helpful internships were during graduate school at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, where I received a Master's degree in



International Affairs with a concentration on courses at the Journalism School. I did a number of internships at documentary film companies, which were doing films about international issues. It was like going to film school for free.

Who were some of your mentors?

The documentary filmmakers: Marc Levin and Al Levin, Sheila Nevins, the head of non-fiction programming at HBO.

#### Kasia Nikhamina, Small Business Owner

What is your current career?

My husband, Ilya, and I launched Redbeard Bikes, a full-service bicycle shop, in DUMBO, Brooklyn, in the fall of 2012. One year after we opened, we moved to a new, larger location around the corner. We sell bicycles and accessories, and do repairs and fittings. Ilya and I collaborate closely on all aspects of running the shop, though I focus on the bookkeeping and marketing. I also help out in a sales capacity, especially when it comes to helmets. When I'm not working at the shop, I write plays and prose. My site is [www.TheMayorsHotel.com](http://www.TheMayorsHotel.com).

Which college did you attend, and what was your major?

I attended Columbia College, class of 2007. I majored in Comparative Literature and Society. My languages were Russian, Polish,



and Spanish.

Did you have internships, and were they helpful? Who were some of your mentors?

Two internships stand out for me: my time at *Education Update* while I was in high school, and my time assisting Frank Bohan at the Harriman Institute at Columbia. Pola Rosen would send me out into the field on assignment -- no ifs and buts, tough love—and so I began to overcome my intense childhood shyness. Frank taught me everything I know about accounts payable and receivable, while telling me stories about growing up Irish in Brooklyn, back in the day. Both offices, actually, were like home to me; they set the bar high for my future jobs in terms of warmth and close-knit teams. After college, I worked in the Rackets Bureau of the New York Country District Attorney's Office for about three years, and then another three years in Investor Relations at the D. E. Shaw group, a hedge fund.

#### Aleksandr Akulov, Financial Manager

What is your current career?

I worked on the Corporate Development team with the new financial products group, and was heavily involved with M&A targets and strategic partnerships, in addition to organic business incubation across all the financial products. I then advanced to work as an equity specialist with a focus on derivative



products providing analytical services to both the buy-side and the sell-side. Most recently, I was promoted within Bloomberg LP and work in trading systems at Bloomberg Asset and Investment Manager (AIM) that delivers global, multi-asset solutions for front-end portfolio, trading, and middle & back office operations for buy-side institutions, hedge funds, and proprietary trading desks.

Which college did you attend, and what was your major?

I attended the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College with a major in Economics and Political Science.

Did you have internships, and were they helpful?

Yes. I first interned at Scott Balice Strategies (acquired by PFM Group), ranked top-10 financial advisory firms in the country, specializing in providing financial advisory services to the largest governments, corporations and non-profit organizations. Internships are essential for many reasons: 1) exploring a new field a student may want to pursue, 2) gaining exposure to a specific industry and professionals within that industry, 3) enhancing skill-sets and resume, 4) providing a "foot in the door" for a solid job. An internship is a bit like dating. You first want to meet the girl and date her before deciding that she is the one. Sure you can get a divorce/ switch a career but it would be great to get it right on the first try. In short, internships are vital.

Who were some of your mentors?

I have many mentors. My mentors are in various industries and come from all walks of life. I think one thing they all have in common is that they are passionate, motivated, and are simply good people. I'm fortunate to know such great people. When choosing a mentor I think it is first important to decide why you want a mentor- everything else will flow into place. When you get a mentor make sure to always show gratitude. #

## Strategically Ladder Your Legal Skills

By VERA SULLIVAN, M.A.

Increased competition, changes to billing practices, and overseas outsourcing have substantially changed the legal industry. Given these changes, it is much harder, and may take longer, to distinguish yourself and achieve your goals. I counsel lawyers to think very strategically about the positions they accept and “ladder” their way to long-term success. By ladder, I mean to recognize that with each job acceptance, there needs to be a specific skillset that is acquired that contributes to a larger, long-term career goal.

Lawyers need to go beyond their specialized legal abilities and develop a wider and deeper management toolkit. For example, four of the ten core skills I help lawyers develop in my career counseling and placement practice are:

1) Know how your clients run their business. True client symbiosis comes with mastering the day-to-day. In-house positions offer intimate knowledge of the data, processes, finances, and challenges of one company in an industry. Having only one client can also allow you to develop a complete business model, pieces of which will be transferrable to other future situations.

2) Build great relationships with all the groups you touch and connect with. Remember

the old maxim that “no one gets there alone”? That’s even truer in today’s globally connected world where “everyone is everywhere”. You need to build strong relationships and networks with your associates, partners, judges, clients, colleagues and friends and always be ready to make new connections.

3) Be known for your stability and reliability. Clients, partners, associates, and judges want to know they can trust your work and your decisions. Become the go-to-attorney that people turn to in a crisis.

4) Review and Implement your Career Plan Every Month. Certain requisite business, financial, and interpersonal skills will be enormously helpful whether you end your career as a firm’s partner, an in-house counsel, running a non-profit, or opening a new restaurant in Malibu. Draft a career plan and run with it. The most important aspect to your plan is that you’re identifying and acquiring skills.

How to begin? Ask yourself: “Why did I become a lawyer?” “What do I want to achieve during my career?” and “What steps do I need to take to reach my goals?” Please feel free to share your career strategies with me via Vera.Sullivan@Diversityforce.com.

*Vera Sullivan, M.A., is the Founder and President of Diversityforce, LLC, and one of*

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crossword

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

The Crossword puzzle recently celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. The first crossword puzzle was published in the New York World and was created by the “Father of Crossword,” Arthur Wynne. Wynne originated from Liverpool and moved to the United States to pursue a career in journalism. Wynne’s editor at the time approached him to create a new mental exercise for the World’s entertainment section. Wynne’s first puzzle was the brainchild of his interest in lexicons and included many obscure words.

Originally called Word-cross, the first cross-

word puzzle was a diamond shape and contained no internal dark squares. Nowadays, crosswords are typically arranged into square shapes. The inner section of the puzzle was completely hollow. The name originated from the bisecting lines created by the words. The name was eventually changed to Cross-word and later the hyphen was dropped after a misprint.

Wynne’s mental exercise has since become a Sunday morning staple and can be found across the globe in newspapers, magazines, as well as online. Crosswords have truly become a beloved pastime.#

*New York’s leading career counselors for over 30 years specializing in the legal industry in career counseling, diversity recruiting for corporations, and outplacement. Vera is the*

*author of From Wishing to Reality: How to use The HourGlass Principle™ to define your career goals. Please visit the Diversityforce website at www.Diversityforce.net. #*

## ANNIVERSARY GUESSING GAME

COMPILED By OMOEFE OGBEIDE

2013 and 2014 hold memorable anniversaries of great significance. How many of these famous anniversaries can you name?

1. This national banking institution that was created during Woodrow Wilson’s presidency turned one hundred. Can you name this central banking system?

2. This song sang at the opening of almost every sporting event in the country was written by Francis Scott Key two hundred year ago. Can you name this popular anthem?

3. This jolly holiday of a movie premiered fifty years ago and is the inspiration for a new movie currently out in theaters. Can you name this Disney classic?

4. This author who took the road less travelled passed away fifty years ago. Can you name this great poet?

5. This gritty novel written by John Steinbeck turns seventy-five. Can you name this book?

6. This school turns one hundred and twenty

five this year and boasts prominent alumni including Christine King Farris, Merryll Tisch and Education Update’s own Pola Rosen. Can you name this Upper West Side institution?

7. Fifty years ago, this president was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Can you name this former leader?

8. This musical first debuted on Broadway with songs such as “Sunrise, Sunset” and “If I Were a Rich Man” fifty years ago. Can you name this Tony award-winning musical?

9. It was at this famous event fifty years ago that Martin Luther King told the world about a dream. Can you name this momentous event?



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- ANSWERS
1. 100<sup>th</sup> of Federal Reserve
  2. 200<sup>th</sup> of the Star Spangled Banner
  3. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mary Poppins
  4. Robert Frost
  5. 75<sup>th</sup> Grapes of Wrath
  6. 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Teachers College
  7. John F. Kennedy
  8. Fiddler on the Roof
  9. March on Washington

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MOVIES

*Saving Mr. Banks*

By JAN AARON

A plot about a dispute between a writer and a studio director over the artistic direction for a movie sounds yawn-inducing. But, if the writer is the cranky and curt, P.J. Travers, author of “Mary Poppins,” and the studio chief is Walt Disney, it commands our attention.

The director of *Saving Mr. Banks*, John Lee Hancock, also faced a major obstacle: How do you make an engrossing movie when you already know how it ends? Even more challenging however, was making a genial film about a cantankerous female author (Travers) going through one of the most challenging periods of her life?

The film doesn’t exactly adhere to historical record, but brings it all together successfully with a “spoonful of sugar” to sweeten the truth and a

performance by Emma Thompson that ignites the screen. Though co-star Tom Hanks plays a wonderful Walt Disney, it’s Thompson’s movie. Her face; perfectly powdered, her hair in tight curls, lips frozen in crimson; she insists everyone – including Walt Disney – address her as Mrs. Travers.

Script-writers Kelly Marcel and Sue Smith give her great lines. She is the kind of frank woman who comes right out and asks a young mother on the airplane to Los Angeles: “Will

the child be a nuisance?” Not impressed with the giant Mickey Mouse and balloons in her Beverly Hills Hotel suite, she pitches them and a basket of fruit out the window into the hotel’s pool, astonishing the swimmers and sunbathers.

Most of the movie deals with the weeks in 1961, when Travers, in serious financial trouble, comes from London to Los Angeles to consider selling the rights to “Poppins,” and meets with the songwriting team’s Sherman Brothers (Jason Schwartzman and B.J. Novak) and screenwriter Don DaGradi (Bradley Whitford.) “These books do not lend themselves to chirping and prancing,” she says. She disdains when Dick Van Dyke is called “one of the greats,” as she finds Laurence Olivier of *Othello* a true idea of a great actor.

The screenwriter’s script goes back and forth between

the Los Angeles period and the Australian childhood of Helen Goff (newcomer Annie Rose Buckley), the little girl who grew up to become P.J. Travers. The script tells us that the idea for *Mary Poppins* came from Travers’ childhood but it revealed that her troubles with Disney stem from unresolved childhood issues.

How then did this movie ever get made with all the disagreements? It is Disney himself who comes to the rescue with a speech about the healing power of storytelling. #



THE STRUGGLE OF  
TEACHER UNEMPLOYMENT

By DANIELLE M. BENNETT

Vassar Greene, 40, began his education career teaching elementary school in Newark in 1998, was promoted assistant principal at Irvington High School in 2005 and enjoyed his job. But as schools throughout the country responded to the economic crisis with budget cuts, Greene, non-tenured, lost his position.

From 2007-2008, Greene stayed home with his two sons but as Greene’s unemployment extended, his life at home grew strained. Eventually, the economic and emotional stress of unemployment contributed to Greene’s divorce, he admits.

Greene, who’s quite the gentle giant at 6 feet 7 in comparison to his fifth grade students, has occupied room 16 at Louverture since he was re-hired to teach fifth grade math, science, and writing last November. Although, today, he serves in a different capacity as instructional tutor in those content areas, Greene receives the same benefits as a classroom teacher.

“I’ve just been kind of on an unemployment rollercoaster,” Greene laughs. He’s glad to be off the ride. “I was not too proud to take a lower-paying job even if it meant accepting a 200-mile commute round trip from his southern New Jersey home of Sicklerville to Louverture up north in East Orange; there were no job prospects in his hometown.

Greene knows he’s fortunate to be working and will soon celebrate his second year at Louverture. Unemployment data as of September 2013 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the unemployment rate for black men over 20 remains more than twice as high, at 14 percent, as for white men the same age at 6.1. #



*Fausto Pinto Graduates*



We would like to congratulate one of our very own Education Update reporters, Fausto Pinto, on his recent graduation from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. Pinto started as an intern at Education Update in 2009 and has since become one of our most trusted reporters. He was awarded the 2012 New York Press Club Inaugural Scholarship and won the 2010 Murray Kempton Award for Best Feature Story. We are very proud of his outstanding achievement. #

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

*Exclusive Interview with Father Patrick Devine: Creating Peace in Africa*

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

As a young man, Father Patrick Devine knew he wanted to dedicate his life to working among the poorest of the world. Now the founder of the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, he has been at the forefront of positive peace efforts in Kenya and other areas of Africa and was the recipient of the 2013 International Caring Award which brought him to Washington DC with accolades by General Colin Powell among others. His work in the region began in 1988 when he joined the Society of African Missionaries and devoted his life to improving conditions in a region of the world that had been the site of persistent poverty, conflict, and social injustice. His work brought him to a poor isolated area in West Tanzania where he spent seven years as a missionary. He later became the organization’s regional superior of Kenya and Tanzania.

In 2009, Father Devine founded the

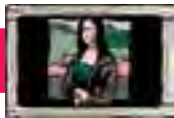
Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR) with a vision of a society where peace, social justice and reconciliation prevail throughout Africa. In his own words, Father Devine states “peace in the sense of absence of violence is not enough.” In order to have true, positive peace, there must be not only an absence of violence, but the conflicting parties must care about each other’s well being. The mission of SCCRR is to work for a society free of physical violence and unjust social structures in Africa. This mission is lived out as the organization brings together leaders and opinion shapers from both sides of conflict and teaches them analytical skills to assess the problem and the peace building tools required to address it. Prior to these meetings, empirical research is conducted and both sides have agreed to name the issues to ensure these meetings are productive.

Like parents all over the world, parents in



this geographic area also want a better future for their children. Education is the foundation on which a more peaceful future is formed. In efforts for peace, SCCRR helps to form inter-ethnic schools to bring families from opposing groups together in order to generate conversations and cooperation between them. The organization also provides solar energy to 178 schools in the area, thereby extending the learning hours so students can do work in the evening as well as providing meeting places for the community.

When asked why he named the organization the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Father Devine explains that Shalom means not only peace, but also peace with justice and harmony, holistically integrated. What a truly apt title for an organization that diligently works for conflict resolution and social harmony in Africa. It can serve as a paradigm for societies around the world. #



## 7 Painters, 7 Stories: Seeking A Synthesis Between Abstraction And Representation

"You can't escape your time - some embrace it, some fight it, as for me, I supposed I had a contrarian streak in me," notes artist Paul Resika, one of the seven artists whose work is on view at the National Academy Museum in *See It Loud: Seven Post-War American Painters*.

In the years after World War II, a group of young New York artists known as the New York School formed the basis for Abstract Expressionism, a school of painting in America that exerted a major influence on international artists. Artists Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), Willem de Kooning (1904–1997), and Mark Rothko (1903–1970) were among the movement's leaders. They abandoned formal composition and the representation of real objects and concentrated on instinctual arrangements of space and color.

During this time, abstraction and representation were not only polarized in the American art world, but seemingly irreconcilable. "There was very nearly a moral dimension to the opposition between representation and abstraction," states Bruce Weber, Senior Curator of 19th and

Early 20th Century Art and the curator of the exhibition. "American painters who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s were expected to choose an allegiance between the two."

It was in this cultural moment that the painters in *See It Loud* were beginning their careers. Crossing the line and ultimately embracing the possibilities of a dialectical synthesis between abstraction and representation, Paul Georges, Paul Resika, Leland Bell, Albert Kresch, Peter Heinemann, and Neil Welliver, born before the outbreak of World War II, ventured to claim this aesthetic no-man's land. Their junior contemporary, Stanley Lewis, born ten years after the youngest of those six, boldly joined them. Their art grew out of abstract currents, but shifted toward representation.

According to Weber, "All of the artists in this exhibition insisted on the significance of figuration and landscape painting, even when it seemed irretrievably out of fashion. All felt in some degree limited by abstraction and were, in fact, members of a larger group of American artists who wanted to go beyond abstraction."

*See It Loud*, on view until January 26, is the

## Poison at the AMNH

By JAN AARON

Back in my high school days, I had the thrill of playing one of the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. "Tooth of wolf, tongue of dog," I intoned, bending over a caldron, my pointy black hat dipping, as I stirred. This image recurred when I attended "The Power of Poison," at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). Curator Mark Siddall, from the museum's division of invertebrate zoology—and his talented team—brewed a great show, touching on every taxonomical category: Animal (including adorable looking orange frogs, each able to secrete enough venom to kill 10 humans); Vegetable (including a widely consumed plant Cassava — which in nature is laced with cyanide) and Mineral (including the gemstone "amethyst," once worn to protect wearer from poison and Ammonite fossils and once thought to cure snake bites).

first museum exhibition devoted to this group of post-war American painters. #

*The National Academy Museum is located at 1083 Fifth Avenue at E. 89th Street. Learn more at [www.nationalacademy.org](http://www.nationalacademy.org) or call 212.369.4880 x201.*

Wandering on, we learn about crabapple-like fruits that can cause severe swelling of the throat, making it almost impossible to breathe. We learn other amazing facts at a model of a South American plant, where its large leaves are cozy nests for ants of the genus *Myrmelachista*. The ants' relationship to the plants is mutually beneficial: they protect their nests by spraying poisonous acids at nearby plants of competing species, killing them off, creating a uniform patch — colorfully called a "devil's garden" in the forests of Peru and Ecuador.

Finally, the show turns to poisons that cure. A treacherous chemical may also become a powerful medication. For instance, a chemical found in the poisonous bark of the yew tree is effective against cancer (leading to the drug Taxol.) One component of Gila monster venom lowers the blood sugar of its victims and has been used to treat Type 2 diabetes. The venom of pit vipers has led to blood pressure drugs. Researchers are testing spider venom to treat breast cancer. It is clear the whether for good or bad, the power of poison is undeniable. #

*For further information or to buy tickets visit [www.amnh.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/the-power-of-poison](http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/the-power-of-poison).*

## SEE IT LOUD

Seven Post-War American Painters



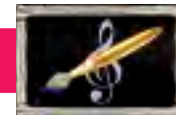
Peter Heinemann, *Untitled*, 2005

Leland Bell  
Paul Georges  
Peter Heinemann  
Albert Kresch  
Stanley Lewis  
Paul Resika  
Neil Welliver

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## A Conversation with Artist Linda Sirow

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Linda Sirow, who has a piece in a juried show at the Richard D'Amato Gallery in Sag Harbor, New York, continues to impress with her lovely abstract encaustics. The competition, a benefit for The Retreat, a well-known shelter for abused women and children on the East End of Long Island, drew 200 applications from all over the world from artists working in various media. Of course, Sirow is pleased that her work was one of 25 selected submissions, and delighted that 100 percent of the entry fees go directly to support the work of this important organization. And how serendipitous that Sirow gets major attention at the top of the stairs of the two-floor gallery, and that the piece is next to nothing else like it around.

The colorful 24" x 24" square of layered oil and beeswax on wood is called "Two Step" because she felt a kind of "dance-like" movement guiding her when she was painting it, she says, a sense that helped determine the placement of her signature slightly open circles. Indeed, "Two Step" exudes a kind of pulsing luminescence that suggests interacting images slightly in motion, nothing fixed—a bit like her life, which at one point she describes as having "so many moving parts," some not as readily apparent as others. A close look at "Two Step" reveals a subtlety of form and technique: solid circles and one-inch perimeters that have been painted over and sit under the bolder circular brushstrokes, and with slight gouge-like indentation that creative depth. For those following the evolving work of this decorative artist, who also teaches art at Dalton Middle School, "Two Step" may seem bolder than usual, though



Sirow still keeps to a restricted palette—here, a warm assemblage of shimmering yellows, pinks, mauves, and corals under thin lines of cooler hues—slashes of blue or green that subtly contrast with the overall pastel effect.

Over the years Sirow has found herself increasingly attracted to encaustic, or hot wax painting, and likes to experiment with its layering effects, noting that between oil and wax, the relationship can never be 50 / 50—one or the other must predominate and for her, the winner is wax. Why circles? She smiles, she likes the geometry—circles and squares— though she adds that she has also been looking at aboriginal work in Australia where dots and circles—

## Chagall at the Jewish Museum

By JAN AARON

When I was invited to see the Chagall show at The Jewish Museum, indelible images of Russian mythology inspired by old folktales came to mind, led by the jaunty fiddler in stove pipe hat perched on a roof.

The show "Love War And Exile" focuses on another iconic figure: Jesus. Chagall was obsessed with Jesus throughout his life, starting with his days in St. Petersburg when he was a student, the painter depicted Christ many times. Some Christs recall the Eastern Orthodox icons he remembered from his childhood. Others don't resemble Christs anywhere on earth: they wear prayer shawls, instead of loincloths and sometimes tefilin, the leather boxes orthodox Jews sometimes strap to their foreheads and wrap around their arms. These haunting ambiguous searing images dominate the show, which focuses on Chagall's life from 193—1948, the most trying in his life. It shows how he reflected in his paintings and poems the rise of Fascism, the Holocaust, and the death in 1948 of Bella, his wife.

There is a jaunty fiddler, flying blue cows, but most of the works reflect horrible dreams: villages burn, patriarchs cry, Jews clutch Torahs fleeing with others. These are not the images we

associate with the artist: Isolated men include the gaunt "Sleeping Talmudist" There's a man clutching a Torah with small Jesus on the right edge. One of the most arresting is "Descent from a Cross" (1941) which depicts an angel holding a palette and brush. Cubo-Futurist Jesus, "Calvary", borrowed from MOMA and dated 1912, proves his interest during his formative years. Among his wartime works, the artists react to the news reports of a battle in his Byelorussian, birthplace, Vitebsk, with images of Jewish villagers nailed to crosses.

While this portion shows the artists dark side, the show resurrects child-like Chagall by presenting his early life in Vitebsk, his early years with Bella, enjoying a budding romance with a woman hired to care for him, Virginia Haggard McNeil. Jesus is still there, though in "Self Portrait with A Clock" seen in a painting on the easel near a ghostly bride representing his wife. The artist here is seen as a red goat embraced by a blue-faced woman. The show leaves us with a happy ending: In "The Wedding Candles" from 1945. A bride and groom float in a mystical fog, a cow toasts the newlyweds, and as if to say L'chayim" to the world.# (Jewish Museum 1109 Fifth Ave/212-423-3200, until Feb. 2)

## HUNTER COLLEGE LAUNCHES NEW MFA & BFA STUDIOS

Hunter College celebrated the official launch of Hunter's new MFA and BFA studios at 205 Hudson Street in Tribeca. Kudos to the Bershad Professor of Art History and Director of the

Hunter College Galleries, Joachim Pissarro. His new spectacular book, *Wild Art*, is a collection of artwork that won't be found in museums.#

folk patterns and symbols—constitute much of the art. She has also been looking at related work online, and she sometimes finds herself attracted to craft items, such as bowls she saw recently that were made out of knitted string, whose textured quality seemed consonant with her own predilections.

Her openness to creative impulses affects her teaching as well, where she encourages her students to see that working in clay is more than throwing on a wheel. A recent assignment included having her middle-school students bring in found materials—wire, objects—to include in their clay sculptures in a way that would enhance appreciation of repetition and form. One student, however, for whatever reason, was averse to working in clay and wanted to use crayons, melting them with a hot glue gun. Since the girl was going to explore the idea of the assignment, Sirow supported her desire to do something different. The result was an "interesting" sculpture that had been built out of melted colored crayons originally formed

into Lincoln-log-like shapes—an imaginative take on the assignment. More significantly, the girl had been led to pursue a "passion" for and "excitement" about art. The finished piece gave the girl a "confidence" that followed her into high school.

So much of the education world now succumbs to curricular cut backs, and the first areas to go are always art, Sirow understandably laments. But when you cut away creative endeavor, it's hard, if not impossible, to go back and resurrect it later in life. Conversely, when it's there, and encouraged, it's there forever, even if not immediately recognizable. Her own oldest son, who had always loved drawing, now works in the financial world and evaluates business ventures "creatively." His visual art experiences in high school paid off, and he is now also involved with nonprofits in the arts. Needless to say, Linda Sirow loves her work at Dalton where for close to 20 years, she preaches what she practices and continues to practice what she loves.#

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

★★★★ NY POST (critic's pick)

National Yiddish Theatre - Folksbiene  
PRESENTS

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## MEDICARE RIGHTS CENTER'S ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER



(L-R) Alan Lubin, former Exec. VP & Andrew Pallotta, Executive VP, NYSUT



Joe Baker, Pres., Medicare Rights Center



Philanthropist Edith Everett

The 2013 Medicare Rights Center's Annual Awards Dinner was a success, says Joe Baker, President. With the generous supporters at the event, the organization will now be able to advance their mission of working to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through their programs in counseling and advocacy, education and public policy initiatives. The group promises to broaden their outreach in states across the country with programs including Seniors Out Speaking—which now reaches more than 60,000 individuals. The group honored Elizabeth J. Fowler, Vice President, Global Health Policy at Johnson & Johnson; Janella T. Hinds, Vice President, United Federation of Teachers and Secretary-Treasurer, NYS AFL-CIO, Central Labor Council; and Dr. Steven M. Safyer, President and Chief Executive Officer of Montefiore Medical Center, for their visionary leadership in improving health care quality and increasing access to care for all Americans.

The group looks forward to sharing their initiatives, news and achievements as they develop throughout the year. #

## BETTER FOOD CHOICES FOR BETTER HEART HEALTH

It's easier to follow a heart-healthy diet than you think. All it takes is some simple changes in food choices, reports the October 2013 *Harvard Heart Letter*.

Wholesale changes aren't necessarily needed. Instead, smaller ones can make a big difference, says registered dietitian Kathy McManus, director of the department of nutrition at Harvard-affiliated, Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"The typical American diet contains a large proportion of unhealthy fats, too few fruits and vegetables, too much sugar and sodium, and too little fiber," she says. "This contributes to risk of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity."

The *Harvard Heart Letter* asked Ms. McManus and Dr. Michelle Hauser, a certified chef, nutrition educator, and internal medicine fellow at Harvard-affiliated Cambridge Health

Alliance, how they would tweak the typical American diet to be healthier for the heart. Their suggestions lower the amount of saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, sodium, and calories, and boost the amount of fiber and nutrients.

### Breakfast

If you eat: Eggs

Try: Scramble in leftover vegetables from last night's dinner or chopped fresh tomatoes and avocado

Why: Adds nutrients and fiber; tomatoes add antioxidants, which help prevent fatty plaques; avocados add monounsaturated fat, which helps the body absorb nutrients

### Lunch

If you eat: Salad with ranch or blue cheese dressing

Try: A vinaigrette dressing made with garlic,

## National Cancer Prevention Panel in Washington, DC Moderated by Dr. Margaret Cuomo

Margaret I. Cuomo, MD, the author of *A World Without Cancer*, will serve as moderator of the panel discussion on Feb. 4, 2014—National Cancer Prevention Day—as well as the co-host of the day's proceedings with Bill Couzens, founder and president of Less Cancer. The event will be held at The Rayburn Building in Washington, DC, with the Next Generation Choices Foundation Board of Directors.

Dr. Cuomo is a board certified radiologist who served as an attending physician in diagnostic radiology at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, New York. Specializing in body imaging, involving CT, ultrasound, MRI, and interventional procedures, much of her practice was dedicated to the diagnosis of cancer and AIDS. She is the daughter of former New York Governor Mario Cuomo and Mrs. Matilda Cuomo, sister to Governor Andrew Cuomo and CNN's Chris Cuomo, and the wife of Howard Maier. She has been interviewed on many TV shows, such as Good Morning America, Good Day New York and national and regional radio programs, and has been featured in many magazines and newspapers, including *Education Update*, *Manhattan*, *New York Daily News*, *O Magazine*, *Vogue* and *Women's Day*, and on-line sites. Dr. Cuomo is a contributor and a member of the Medical Review Board of the *Huffington Post*, and is also a regular contributor to *WebMD*. She advocates nation-



Dr. Margaret Cuomo

ally for the prevention of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Dr. Cuomo will be joined by Dr. Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH, who is the Assistant Secretary for Health, US Department of Health and Human Services, and by Dr. Graham A. Colditz, MD, DrPH, from the Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine.

For more information on the event, visit: [Lesscancer.org](http://Lesscancer.org). #

## Useful Apps for Everyone

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

Smartphones have made life easier in many ways with the help of useful applications. Here are a few of our favorites at Education Update:

**Shazam:** Ever find yourself listening to radio and wondering what the name of a song or artist is? Shazam can help with that. Shazam is an app that identifies the music playing around you with the simple touch of a button.

**HopStop:** HopStop provides detailed transit maps, nearby stations, and directions for over six hundred cities across the globe. HopStop also gives door-to-door transit, schedules for subways and buses, and estimate travel times and costs for taxis.

**Charity Miles:** Looking to do good for your body and for others? Charity Miles helps with both by logging how far you've ran, walked, or biked and donates to the charity of your choice based on how far you've gone.

Dijon mustard, fresh herbs, 1/3 cup vinegar, 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, pepper, and a dash of salt shaken together in a jar

Why: Reduces sodium and unhealthy fats

### Dinner

If you eat: Pasta with meat and cheese

Try: Whole-wheat spaghetti topped with fresh

**My Fitness Pal:** Does your New Years Resolution have to do with taking better care of yourself? My Fitness Pal helps with all of your diet and weight loss needs. With this easy to use app, you can record your food, caloric intake and your exercise routines. My Fitness Pal also allows you to connect with friends and makes it easier to see your results!

**Groupon:** Groupon provides discount offers on things to do, see, and eat in over five hundred cities across the globe. With endless possibilities, you never know what kind of a deal you'll find from discount show tickets to four course dinners.

**Lumosity:** Lumosity is a fun, yet educational way to play on your phone. It was created by neuroscientists to train memory and attention through specialized games. It features Personalized Training Program, which provides an individualized approach to improving your cognitive function. #

tomatoes and herbs or extra-virgin olive oil, grilled shrimp, and a small amount of freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Why: Reduces saturated fat; adds fiber and health-protecting phytonutrients; shrimp adds omega-3 fatty acids, which may lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, and arrhythmias #



## 100 SUNY Students Receive \$1 Million in Scholarships

In 2011, the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women (JFEW) awarded grants to the SUNY Levin Institute to establish the JFEW-SUNY International Relations and Global Affairs Scholarship Program for students at SUNY Binghamton and SUNY Stony Brook. The program helps students to become leaders in international relations and global affairs through mentoring opportunities and peer networks. During the course of the program, from 2011 to 2016, 100 SUNY students receive over \$1,000,000 in scholarship money and extensive professional support through a two-year program, which includes a summer internship.

The program began with a pilot summer internship for students entering their senior year; 10 Binghamton and 10 Stony Brook students were selected. Following a four-day orientation at the SUNY Global Center in Manhattan, where they learned about international relations and how to succeed in a professional environment, the interns were placed with a variety of international organizations. Along with the experience they gained at their host organizations, they took part in topical weekly seminars, participated in networking events, kept a daily journal and completed several assignments. Students received \$5,000 for

the internship.

Deanna D'Onofrio '12, a psychology major from Poughkeepsie, N.Y., who interned with Charity Water, says, "The JFEW internship taught me essential skills regarding business etiquette, international relations and how to carry myself as a professional, all of which I will remember for the remainder of my career."

The second element of the scholarship is the two-year academic program. Completed during students' junior and senior years, it includes an academic-year seminar series, a paid summer internship with international organizations, professional development activities, and opportunities to create mentor and peer networks, with a focus on women, and leadership in international relations and global affairs.

Each year, 10 students are selected from both universities. During the previous years, students participated in monthly seminars that gave them an overview of key themes, vocabulary and resources in international relations and global affairs. They attended networking, professional development and mentoring sessions. #

For additional information, contact Dr. Maryalice Mazzarra, the JFEW SUNY Program Director at [Maryalice.Mazzarra@suny.edu](mailto:Maryalice.Mazzarra@suny.edu).

## DR. HERMAN ROSEN AT LANDMARK COLLEGE: ALLIED HEALTH IS A GROWTH INDUSTRY

By YEHUDA BAYME

Dr. Herman Rosen, a board certified nephrologist and clinical professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical School, discussed, at a recent lecture at Landmark College in Putney, Vermont, the growing field of allied health professionals (people in the medical field that are not doctors or nurses). He discussed examples of how these workers are in demand and will be in even greater demand in the next few years.

His main example came from his own specialty, nephrology. In end-stage renal disease (kidney disease in which there is no medicine that can be administered to get rid of it) treatment can be either dialysis or transplantation. Dialysis, which is a process of removing waste from the bloodstream, can keep patients alive for many years. Because dialysis is performed on an increasing number of patients three times a week, dialysis technicians are in demand.

Other examples mentioned were EMTs, paramedics, x-ray technicians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and physician assistants. Because more people are getting sick due to population growth, increase in chronic diseases such as diabetes, more technology and services are needed and the industry is in growth mode. Dr. Rosen estimates that allied health is poised to grow by 40 percent by the year 2020.



(L-R) Pres. Peter Eden, Mascot Finn, and Trustee Belle O'Brien at Landmark College

He posited growth opportunities for veterinarian assistants to work as allied health professionals in animal research. He also dealt with issues of patient confidentiality, saying that medical records personnel will be needed more. He answered concerns about safety, workers fatigue and hospital policies towards patient admissions. Dr. Rosen explained that although there are problems working in the health field such as EMTs encountering violence, exposure to infectious organisms, proper training teaches workers to avoid problems.

In conclusion, Dr. Rosen mentioned that although growing, the medical industry is requiring associate or bachelor or higher degrees, so one should plan accordingly. Most important, allied health can be a rewarding profession if one is interested and passionate about helping others. #

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## A Barnard College Professor Breaks Tradition: Let Your Body Take the Lead

By JULIA QIAN

"In an extremely competitive school, you are taught to reason, and ultimately, to follow your brain. But in my class, I want to teach my students to listen to their body."

For the students who don't know her, Professor Trainor is a well-known dance professor with one of the highest students' evaluations in an Ivy League school. For the students who know her, she is Caitlin.

"Embody the space," "fulfill the movements," "follow your guts." Caitlin always repeats those phrases in class and expresses that in her way of dancing and ultimately, living. She brings forth a wind of energy with her turns and breathes into a sharp, off-balanced pose. She dives onto the floor with her feet poking out of the "water." She fulfills every movement and every moment like a drop of water emerging from a sea.

Sometimes, only when you stop trying to think, can you then communicate with the space around you with all of your senses and listen to every crack of your body. In her dance class, from the back of the skull, to the balls of my feet, to the imaginative gut behind my belly button, I am present. It's a time when my soul, heart, mind, muscles, blood, skin, breath and the air surrounding me are all engaged in the same conversation, in a harmony.

Listening to your body is only the first step.

Letting your body take the lead means going back to your very first type of learning and the origin of our very own being.

Follow your guts, she says. After you listen to your body, you follow what it wants, from a turn, a jump, a fall, to being still. I gradually discover that if my body wants a specific movement, I do it well. And I know this principle applies to other aspects of life, as well.

The next step is fulfilling the movements—every single movement. Fulfilling the movement is a physical experience of "cape diem." When you lift up your right arm, for example, feel it being supported, not only by your arm muscles but also with your shoulder, back muscles, the tips of your toes and the ground. You are not just lifting up your right arm, but reaching for something bigger and further. You are not reaching at the air above your head, but the infinite space above you. Your fingertip is so far stretched, leading beyond your hair, neck, and balls of your feet, as if you are no longer under the law of gravity. Only when you fulfill that single act of reaching, can you "fully embody the moment." You will taste the moment of using every muscle intentionally and intensively to accomplish that one simple act. Sometimes, you even experience the moment of losing control, the fall, and then, the catch. #

## MERCY COLLEGE – THE DEAN'S COLUMN

## ON TESTING



Dr. Alfred Posamentier

By ALFRED POSAMENTIER  
& GENE MAEROFF

Are students in our elementary and secondary schools taking too many tests? It is starting to look that way and no respite is in sight.

Now, states are planning to assess the performance of students as a way to evaluate their teachers. Never mind that student outcomes also reflect the influence of the home and out-of-school factors like peer pressure and tutoring.

All of this comes alongside pop quizzes, standardized examinations that tell whether students are performing on grade level, assessments by the federal government that compare students in one state with those in other states, new examinations that measure progress as students move through the grades to find whether they will be ready for college, entrance examinations for college that students take in high school, and exit tests to get out of high school.

Not all testing is of the high stakes variety. Periodic appraisal is appropriate to see if students are achieving what teachers expect them to learn. These tests, referred to as formative assessment, contrast with the summative assessment in which the stakes are high, deciding, for instance, whether students get promoted to the next grade or receive their diplomas.

It makes sense to judge the performance of students, teachers, and schools. Yet laudable goals sometimes seem subverted by the heavy burden of tests, which cumulatively rob students of increasing amounts of instructional time and raise the level of anxiety for everyone involved. Cheating scandals arise ever more frequently as the stakes rise. Witness the alleged behavior of educators in Atlanta who are now caught up in the justice system.

Entirely too much time is spent in some classrooms in test preparation, hours that teachers might better devote to engaging students with meaningful content. Who ever

thought that test preparation would grow into what amounts to a subject in itself? In some locales pressure for better scores led schools to deemphasize subjects that are not tested, especially music and art and, sometimes, social studies.

The ubiquity of the multiple-choice examination detracts from critical thinking and problem solving, sacrificing depth for brevity. The Common Core Curriculum that is now on the horizon in most states is supposed to lead to deeper learning. Chances are, though, that the new tests of the Partnership for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) that will accompany the Core Curriculum will be replete with multiple-choice questions.

Schools certainly should be accountable. But the time has arrived to determine whether the abundance of testing is counterproductive. There are possibilities other than having every student take a test to find out how well students in general are progressing or how a school is doing. The federal government's National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, uses matrix testing in which each question is not given to every student. A composite outcome reveals what has to be known.

The pressure to prepare students for tests should not be so great that teachers lose their enthusiasm for teaching. They should feel free to provide enrichment in a subject even if it moves the lesson away from material that will be on the test. Nor should the pressure prevent students from pursuing learning simply for the sake of learning. Testing is the obverse side of the instructional coin and society ought to wonder about a currency that could be debased by too much testing. #

*Alfred S. Posamentier is Dean of the School of Education, and Professor of Mathematics Education, Mercy College, New York; Gene I. Maeroff is the Founding Director of the Hechinger Institute at Teachers College, Columbia University and President of the Edison, New Jersey School Board*

## Learning with Results: A Process-Based Approach

Many children and adults struggle with problems related to reading, spelling, and language comprehension. Factor in diagnoses like dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, auditory processing disorder, hyperlexia, and autism spectrum disorders, and it can be difficult to know where to turn for the right educational assistance.

With over 25 years of experience, Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes offers solutions for many learning difficulties. Our research-validated instruction addresses the global learning needs of all individuals. Our unique instructional programs are not age, year, or performance specific; we see students of all levels and ages, including adults. We have over 50 permanent Learning Centers and over 40 seasonal Learning Clinics across the US, UK, and Australia.

Lindamood-Bell® instruction develops and strengthens the sensory-cognitive functions of phonemic awareness, symbol imagery, and concept imagery. A weakness in one of these functions can cause reading, spelling, and comprehension difficulties, and will interfere with a student's ability to learn.

Our unique instruction and one-to-one setting allows for great growth, and the environment nurtures each student's self-esteem and con-

fidence. It is our goal that all of our students become independent, self-correcting learners in all aspects of their lives.

In order to provide the appropriate instruction for each individual, a learning profile must be established—this is accomplished with a comprehensive battery of assessments. This learning evaluation is analyzed and a consultation is then held to explain the individual's strengths and weaknesses, as well as a plan for instruction. Each instructional plan is tailored to the specific learning needs of the individual and embodies an interactive, balanced approach.

The intensity of our instruction is a notable difference between Lindamood-Bell and other tutoring services that provide learning assistance. Lindamood-Bell recommends intensive instruction, which consists of approximately two to four hours per day, five days per week. Our average results with intensive instruction may see two to three years' growth in as little as six to eight weeks.

The majority of Lindamood-Bell's students are between the ages of 7-14, but because their unique instructional program is not age, year, or performance specific, they see students of all levels and ages, including adults. #

*For more information, visit us online at [www.lindamoodbell.com](http://www.lindamoodbell.com).*

## MARINE SCIENCE PROGRAM IN BROOKLYN

By LANE ROSEN

John Dewey High School has a great location on a 12-acre property in Coney Island. It is near miles of waterfront property along Coney Island Creek and Jamaica Bay in NY Harbor, an estuary for marine life. For the last 40 years, there has been an active Marine Science Program at John Dewey.

Currently, the course is a two-credit laboratory science elective. The students do hands-on labs with live and preserved marine life in an aquarium enriched classroom and a brand new laboratory. They are offered many unique educational and career opportunities through the course. The marine biology program works with many agencies including; DEC, EPA, NY Aquarium, NYC Parks, AMNH, NYSMEA, Trout in the Classroom, Cultural Research Divers, Cold Springs Harbor Hatchery, Brooklyn College, Pratt College, KBCC, Beneath the Seas and Friends of Kaiser Park.

Students are involved in various activities and trips throughout the year. Trips include the AMNH, NY Aquarium, KBCC, Bronx Zoo, and Marine Career Exhibition. Students are encouraged to apply for internships at the NY Aquarium, Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, Prospect Park Zoo and AMNH. JDHS students recently went aboard the sailboat Pioneer Schooner at the new waterfront eco dock in Bay Ridge. They have been working with NY

Harbor Foundation are setting up an oyster reef community for which data is to be collected over a two year period. The marine biology club maintains about 12 fish tanks, turtles and lizards in the aquarium classroom. The club is also raising trout eggs to be released as small fish in the spring. Cold Spring Hatchery does an egg stripping demonstration showing the process of fertilization to the students first hand. With the support of the administration, together with the Culinary Department we are at the process of setting up a tank to raise tilapia.

Our students love Kaiser Park, a waterfront jewel in Coney Island. For this reason, we organize at least two coastal clean ups yearly, we teach marine environmental education and offer opportunities to earn community service. We study horseshoe crabs, collect invasive crab species, look at marine life, and study water quality. This all creates a sense of belonging and pride in serving our community and the environment around us.

Most importantly, students are required to complete a marine careers project, which inspires them to consider different college and career opportunities. Many alumni have said, that this has been the most educational, fun and enriching class they ever experienced. #

*Lane Rosen is the assistant principal at the John Dewey High School in Brooklyn.*

# A LOOK BACK AT EDUCATION UPDATE IN 2013



President Susan Fuhrman, Teachers College



Alan Alda



(L-R) Pres. Jennifer Raab, Hunter College & Anne Eisenhower, granddaughter of Pres. Eisenhower



His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Dr. Matthew Goldstein



Dr. James Kutsch, CEO, Seeing Eye, Inc.



President Ernest Logan, CSA



Outstanding Educators of the Year 2013 at the Harvard Club



Dr. Russell Granet, Executive Director, Lincoln Center Education



Dr. Sally Shaywitz, Yale University School of Medicine, Dyslexia Expert



President Jimmy Carter



Ann Tisch, Founder, Young Women's Leadership Network



President Lisa S. Coico, CCNY



(L-R) Pres. Mitchel Wallerstein & Phyllis Kossoff



Senator Bob Kerrey



Joyce Cowin, Trustee, Teachers College



Sr. VC Jay Hershenson, CUNY



Pres. Ellen Futter, AMNH awards first doctoral degrees from a museum



President Marvin Leffler, Town Hall



Dean Mary M. Brabeck, NYU Steinhardt

## THE ETHICS COLUMN

 **Genetics 2.0: Revoking  
The Right Not To Know**

By JACOB M. APPEL, MD, JD

Laboratories conducting tests for genetic mutations related to specific medical conditions often discover incidental mutations unrelated to the initial cause for testing. For example, a physician may send a sample of a patient's DNA to a lab to test for a mutation causing a developmental disorder and the lab might also, as a byproduct of its analysis, learn that the patient stands at risk for developing an aggressive cancer later in life. Until recently, patients retained the right to choose whether or not to be informed of such incidental findings. However, a radical decision by the American College of Medical Genetics (ACMG) last April recommended that labs have an ethical and fiduciary duty to report incidental findings for fifty-seven commonly tested mutations—whether the patients want such information or not. This approach challenges traditional notions of patient autonomy.

In theory, the incidental findings are provided to physicians, not patients, who may then decide whether to pass along the data. In practice, once such a finding becomes part of the medical record, it is unrealistic to expect doctors to withhold the information or for patients to remain in the dark for long. In other words, anyone agreeing to one form of genetic testing is essentially forced to accept a far broader range of evaluation. This all-or-none approach appears particularly problematic in that some of these fifty-seven conditions remain untreatable and manifest later in life; others display only limited penetrance, meaning some patients who possess the mutations will never develop the diseases. A perfectly reasonable individual might not want to know that he faces such an

uncertain and irremediable condition. Parents might equally wish to shield such diagnoses from their children. The ACMC approach makes that choice impossible, unless the patient or family forgoes all testing.

I have written elsewhere that there may be some conditions so devastating and so treatable or preventable that all pediatric patients should be required to undergo them. One is hard-pressed, for example, to make a case against compulsory screening for phenylketonuria (PKU)—a disease both easily treatable through dietary restrictions and highly fatal without such care. Requiring universal pediatric screening offers tangible merits, albeit at the expense of familial autonomy; requiring all-or-none testing offers far fewer. Mandating such testing for adults serves as a direct affront to the now widely-accepted ethical norm that patients may control their own body tissue and drive their own care.

Supporters of complete disclosure argue that revealing incidental findings is the accepted norm in other areas of medicine. If a chest X-ray for pneumonia reveals a liver tumor at the corner of the image, any competent radiologist will report this incidental finding to the patient. Yet genetic testing is different in kind. While a patient is unlikely to skip a chest x-ray or similar routine medical procedure out of fear for a rare incidental finding, patients may well avoid genetic testing to avoid receiving unwanted knowledge. A policy intended to increase patients' knowledge may actually scare away many individuals from all genetic studies, leaving them entirely undiagnosed. #

*Jacob Appel, a physician and attorney, is a psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai Hospital in NYC.*

that way of thought. My study showed that, although parents were not the cause of autism, what they input into the child's development matters a lot.

**PR: What intervention type is the most productive in treating the child?**

**MS:** It is complicated, because it is very difficult work. Autism is hard to identify in children ages 18 to 24 months. We work with early intervention providers, we offer workshops, but it is not always effective, because of the lack of children provided for our research studies. We are given children from Weil-Cornell, but diversity is not always well represented. Also, in the toddlers, the pace at which each child develops differs greatly and it is not easy to understand this. The parents of these children have many worries and are not always interested in anything but direct healthcare and not interactive lessons in communication.

**PL: What kinds of things do you tell the parents?**

**MS:** We give them access to early intervention providers. We encourage parents to reach

## LAW &amp; EDUCATION

 **The President's Message –  
National Character Counts Week**

By ARTHUR KATZ, J.D.

National Character Counts Week was proclaimed by President Obama this year. However, if you are like me, you, too, never heard about it and National Character Counts Week passed by unnoticed, which was our misfortune.

In his Proclamation, President Obama said: "During National Character Counts Week, we reflect on the ways we support one another, the ways we come together and seek common ground, and the lessons we teach our children about what citizenship means in the United States of America."

"The children we raise today are surrounded by proud examples of integrity, and moral courage, but it is our task as parents, community members, and leaders to teach them not only the skills they need to succeed, but also the values that keep our country strong. This week, we reaffirm our commitment to helping our children turn away from bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and to giving them the confidence and integrity to stand up for each other, imagine a brighter future, and realize their dreams."

During the past two years or so, I have noticed an increasing number of publicized incidents which demonstrated a lack of values by educators, each of which occurred under different circumstances, but all of which, in retrospect, and as reported by the media, made me pause. And it wasn't because the educator involved may not have meant well or may not have been trying to "do the right thing." Each was unfortunate in its own right and each cast a long shadow over a renowned educator nullifying, in many instances, their decades of devotion to the education process.

Perhaps, the most publicized instance was the mishandling of unwanted sexual conduct at Penn State, which in October resulted in the University's agreement to pay almost \$60 million in exchange for settlements with 26 sexual abuse victims. However, there have been less publicized incidents, from the recent indictment of an Ohio school superintendent for obstructing justice as a result of his failing to take adequate actions in connection with an alleged rape, to the mishandling of a cheating scandal at Stuyvesant High School last year, which

out to these services. We also encourage the parents to use their own judgment and play active roles in their children's development.

**PL: Do you incorporate educators into the caregiving mix?**

**MS:** We believe that everyone involved with the children should be on the same page. Teachers may not be trained in dealing with autism, but that is changing. The NEST program, originally headed by Shirley Cohen and now by her successors Angela Mouzakitis and Jamie Bleiweiss, trains teachers in the New

York City's Education Department and resulted in a report that (according to the New York Times) created an unflattering portrait of the school's leadership team, and cited its well-regarded (until then) principal and an assistant principal with a failure "to efficiently and effectively carry out the administrative duties entrusted to them".

I do not mean to single out educators, nor call for them to be held to a higher standard than the rest of us (although it would not be a horrible thought). I do not know if the recent publicity of good educators showing a lack of good sense is a sign of our times, although I hope not.

During a sentencing hearing of a former bank executive in November 2013, Alvin K. Hellerstein, a senior judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, is reported to have said "Why do so many good people do bad things;" a thought that I, too, also have had. At a minimum, it is clear that there is a perception our moral fiber is not what it should be. This was just pointed out by Transparency International in its yearly "Corruption Perceptions Index" which, in ranking 177 countries in perception of public sector corruption, ranked the United States as 19th, below Canada, Uruguay, Barbados and the UK!

But, all is not bad. Notable exceptions include Cornell's September 2013 cancellation of all fall competition for its men's lacrosse team as a result of a hazing incident as well as Harvard's 2012 required withdrawal of over five dozen undergraduate students, generally for a year, as a result of cheating on the same take-home exam. I was particularly impressed by Cornell's "Group Misconduct" and "Hazing" public website pages, which attempt to explain in clear, unambiguous language what is unacceptable behavior and, just simply, not tolerated.

However, Cornell's and Harvard's actions are just a start. We still need to instill in our children a better sense of integrity, moral courage and what is right. And more publicly celebrating National Character Counts Week in 2014, in my view, would be a good start. #

*Arthur Katz is a member of the law firm of Otterbourg, Steindler, Houston & Rosen, P.C.*

York City public school system to come up with consistent plans and goals for engaging the autistic spectrum.

**PR: New York is a culture of inclusion. Should these children be included with non-autistic children?**

**MS:** Absolutely. It is very important to incorporate these children with the rest of the environment.

**The rest of this interview can be read in its entirety online at [www.EducationUpdate.com](http://www.EducationUpdate.com).**

**Dr. Michael Siller***continued from page 13*

parenting. These included responsiveness, warmth and parents talking about things interesting to the children. Although different from the philosophy of the time to give the kids structure, I maintained that the parents would be required to be responsive in some way to the children. My findings were that children who had more responsive parents would develop better language skills later on in life. In fact, parents were not to blame for having children with autism, but rather, it was just that they would be required to be more responsive to their children than parents of non-autistic ones.

**PR: That is such an important finding. It used to be said that parents of children with disabilities were "refrigerator parents." It was the philosophy that the parents were somewhat nurtured to be incapable of bearing normal children.**

**MS:** Yes. In the 1980s, studies veered from

## Park Avenue Synagogue Hosts Good Deeds Fair

By YEHUDA BAYME

Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City recently hosted the “Vicki K. Wimpfheimer Mitzvah Day,” an event focused on giving back to society. “Mitzvah” is a Hebrew word which means “commandment,” but it is most well known to mean “a good deed.” At the gathering, different tables were set-up to provide opportunities for children and adults to get involved and make positive impacts on society at large.

One of the highlights of the program was a haircutting station for donations to Pantene Beautiful Lengths, a development instituted by the hair care products company that makes wigs for patients undergoing cancer treatments. Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation was there to take cheek swabs to find donors of bone marrow and stem cells for people with leukemia and blood cancer. Another table helped Coalition for the Homeless, a service provider for the needy in New York City, as members of this congregation prepared hundreds of bag lunches for the organization.

Other activities included making toiletry packages for the New York Common Pantry,

gift bags for babies of Women in Need, emergency preparedness kits for the United Jewish Council of the East Side, Rainbow Loom Friendship Bracelets for Met Council on Jewish Poverty, care packages for Jewish soldiers in the United States armed forces, and craft kits for children in hospice for Project Sunshine, a non-profit organization that helps medically challenged children with free services. A blood drive was also present.

This Manhattan congregation is demonstrating that giving feels good. Any type of giving, whether it means making a friendship bracelet, giving a pint of blood, or even the wonderful gesture of a hair donation, is good for the soul and good to society. These opportunities are readily available to the public and more help is always needed. Most importantly, the event made an impact on the students who were involved in the program. About 20 to 30 high school students prepared packages for the needy. The students were inspired by what they were doing. It was truly an uplifting event and really brought out the giving spirit of this season. #



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## Grace Outreach Gives Women A Second Chance

By PATRICIA LAVELLE

A true celebration of girl power ensued at the Grace Outreach Benefit, recently hosted at the Racquet & Tennis Club in New York City. The event celebrated the success of the organization since its founding in 2004, in empowering women to achieve success in both the academic and professional sphere. The evening's events highlighted this work and included performances by the Vision Steppers and a touching personal testimonial from Grace Outreach student, Aisha McBride and leader student tutor, Derrian Robinson. According to McBride, College Outreach's College Prep Program was exactly what she needed at this point in her life. While she previously struggled with her attempts to finish school, she feels completely prepared to attend college and pursue a degree in interior design because of the exposure and the support she has received through the college prep program.

The organization also honored Ann Shoket at the benefit. Shoket is the Editor in Chief of *Seventeen Magazine* since 2007, and since her arrival has made the magazine one of the top teen publications in the country. Through her work in this field, she has used her influence to inspire women of all ages to take hold of their futures and become the leaders this world needs. When she shared her experiences with Grace Outreach students, she captivated their minds and left them feeling like no goal was out of reach. Shoket underscored the unprecedented moment in history women are at right now. "Girls really are controlling the tools of power these days," she said. All



Margaret Grace, Founder, Grace Outreach

women must use these tools to be powerful and successful leaders.

The Grace Outreach provides extensive support for women from low-income backgrounds in their pursuits for higher education and employment. The organization initially was a GED/High School Equivalency education center and now offers multiple services to help these women achieve their academic and professional goals, including college preparation programs and a multitude of career services and events. Over 925 women have earned their GED/High School Equivalency.#

recognize that for long-term success teachers need the capacity to learn from and change or grow appropriately through an ongoing cycle of reflection on their experience.

Working within these mediated tensions requires a high tolerance for ambiguity, so that teachers are able to work in the real—what is—while working toward an ideal—what might be. Teachers are self-renewing individuals who have learned through their collaborative learning experiences to develop and influence a growing circle of colleagues. Teachers need to accept change as a fact of personal and professional life, and still be committed to working in dynamic environments. With shared evidence as the guiding rule, any number of critical friends, including SOE, Relay, Harlem Village Academies and Success Academies, can join the challenge of creating the best teachers for New York City.#

Mark Alter, PhD is a Professor of Educational Psychology at New York University and was the founding chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning serving as Chair for 14 years.

## Poverty & Prison

continued from page 14

He took the attitude of "I don't care, 'cause no one else cares," he said. The writing program helped him gain confidence and have a sense of purpose. He proudly talked about how he "didn't write to satisfy the teacher's curriculum," but that he wrote because it was what he was passionate about.

Founder and Executive Director Keith Hefner said that this event was "to engage those who are most disengaged: the young people who have been let down by the adults in their lives." He spoke of how he approached the probation officers with books to hand to the teens years ago. The response he got from those probation officers was, "I hope it's Facebook (the social media networking site), because that is the only book that they'll read." That wasn't so. The students not only asked if they could take those books home, but they even came earlier than their approved times to dive into the pages. Many of these were "kids who were running around in the streets for years or locked down in their homes. When they got out at 13, they had poor education and poor skills. These stories taught them

what others are going through. It helped them socialize. When the kids knew that they could read stories, they wanted to write their own." He highlighted the story of a student who was astounded when one of the books he was given mirrored the teen's own life. When the teen looked at the author of the book, he found that it was written by his very own principal, Shawn Welcome, two decades earlier. Now, a successful educator and writer, Welcome spoke to the panel and how "the fog of anger and hurt began to lift away from his life," when he used writing as a tool after years of being in trouble on the streets.

The packed house watched attentively as the lights dimmed again and the words of the two male teens and one female teen echoed loud and proud. They recited words of hurt and pain, things like, "Nobody listens to me and I dropped out of school at 14." Slowly, the teens described how writing helped them heal. Working with an editor, one of the teens says, was like holding up a mirror. Another chimed in how second chances made them proud of their own reflections now.

Hefner concluded, "if we don't allow children to speak, we rob ourselves from listening and helping them grow. The goal is to expand and to reach youth directly in the front lines." #

## Vivian Nixon

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to their communities. Perhaps the best metric of all, under two percent have gone back to prison, compared with some 40 percent of female releasees who become re-incarcerated within three years in New York State.

However, the work that we do is not just limited to serving women in New York City. Far too many women, and men, too, are still within the criminal justice system without access to higher education. It has become quite apparent that in order to compete in today's economy, a college degree is almost a requirement. Unfortunately, in response to the "tough on crime" attitude that was pervasive throughout the 1990s, legislators have made misguided policy decisions that have had long standing ramifications. In 1994, the U.S. Congress revoked federal Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals and New York State followed suit by eliminating tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants for prison programs the following year.

That is why we, along with the Fortune Society, and the Center for Community

Alternatives (CCA), formed the Education from the Inside Out Coalition (EIO). Together, we are working to remove the barriers to higher education facing currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. Our main efforts are the reinstatement of Pell Grants across the nation, TAP eligibility for incarcerated individuals in New York, and the removal of "the box" on college applications inquiring about past criminal justice involvement, which unfairly stigmatizes those who have paid their debt to society and are working diligently to move beyond their past.

There is a lot to be done to revise the mindset of many people who have strongly held negative views on people who have been in prison. Only through our combined efforts can we ensure that women served by CCF, and all people denied access to higher education, can overcome the adversity they face and get the boost they need to fully participate in society.#

Vivian Nixon is the executive director of the College and Community Fellowship and Co-Founder of the Education From the Inside Out Coalition. For more information, visit: [www.collegeandcommunity.org](http://www.collegeandcommunity.org)

## Mark Alter

continued from page 4

teachers/colleagues in the building, textbook publishers, other professionals (nurses, social workers, psychologists, etc.) and multiple tests, examinations, and measures of student work. Teachers must focus on the needs of each individual learner within a classroom community marked by fairness and social justice for all involved, often among competing interests and loyalties. In short, learning and teaching, when it works, is characterized by an interlocking complex of collaborative social activities.

Teachers must be committed to life-long learning for themselves and their students. These educational tensions reflect the complexity of teaching and learning and the inevitable fact that no teacher education program produces "finished products." That is, the beginning teacher must be prepared to succeed in the context of real schools, but success never means perfection. Both beginning and experienced teachers—and teacher educators—must

*I like the dreams of the future  
better than the history of the past.*

-THOMAS JEFFERSON



# Learning and the Brain Comes to NYC

Beginning on May 8, Learning & the Brain® will be presenting a three-day conference for educators in New York City. The theme of this year's conference is "The Science of Smarter Minds: Teaching to Think, Create and Innovate for School and Careers".

The opening keynote speaker will be Dr. Eric R. Kandel, Nobel Prize Winner in Medicine and Director of the Kavli Institute for Brain Science at Columbia University. He will be speaking on the topic of "The Age of Insight: Art, Brain and the Creative Beholder."

The focus of this conference is to present some of the latest research on getting students to think and be creative. A June 2013 report called "Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020," found that 96 percent of all occupations will require critical thinking skills. New Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards also stress

critical thinking and creative problem solving. Recent research in the fields of brain, cognitive and mind sciences are providing new insights into critical and creative thinking and intelligence. This conference will bring cognitive scientists, psychologists and educators together to explore ways to use the science of "smarter minds" to teach the skills students need to meet today's new standards, curriculum and careers.

Some of the other keynotes include Arthur L. Costa, EdD, Emeritus Professor of Education at California State University, Sacramento and former president of the ASCD, who will be speaking on the topic of "Developing Thought-Full Minds and Schools for the 21st Century and Beyond" and Sandra B. Chapman, PhD, who is the Dee Wylly Distinguished Chair and Professor of Brain Sciences at the University of Texas, Dallas

who will be speaking on the topic of "Making Students Smarter: Strengthening Thinking, Reasoning and Learning." There will also be breakout sessions during the conference where such topics such as teaching math and science and creative thinking will be addressed.

This event is produced by Public Information Resources, Inc. and co-sponsored by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, the Program in Neuroscience and Education at Teachers College at Columbia University and both the NASSP and NAESP among other organizations.

The conference will begin at 1 PM on Thursday, May 8th at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. Additional pre-conference workshops for educators will be run on the Thursday morning starting at 8:45 AM. #

## YOUNG WRITERS



### Trust Walk

By JAMIE LANDIS

During the trust walk, I felt like my whole life was in Jade's hands. Because I was last to go, I had the hardest task. We didn't have time for me to go on the walk the first day, so I had to do it on the next day. When it was my turn, first I had to put on my blindfold. I had to listen to Jade's voice, but she didn't make any sense. Her directions were not very clear, so Ms. Moretti helped everyone in the group be more specific guides for me. For example, Ms. Moretti said "Put your hand on the door and try to find the knob." I started searching for the knob. Turns out, the door didn't have a knob because it was a door that needed to be pushed open.

When I was led out the door of the library, I started to hear Jade's voice. Jade told me to walk north. I walked north, and almost fell back because I was still blindfolded and couldn't see where I was going. In my head I thought about the commercial that says "I've fallen and I can't get up!" I thought to myself that I hoped I wouldn't have to say that if it happened to me during the walk!

My major task was chosen by Ms. Moretti. I had to walk from the library to the faculty bathroom and wash my hands with soap and water. I felt so challenged because I have only been to Churchill for two and a half years, so I still don't know where some of the rooms are located. I was walking along the wall by using my hand to feel for the doors. Then Ms. Moretti pulled a surprise task challenge: I had to unlock the bathroom door with a key from her. Then I tried to move the key in the lock. I didn't get it on the first try. I didn't get it on the second try. I didn't get it on the third try. I didn't get it on the fourth try. I didn't get it on the fifth try. Then Ms. Moretti helped me unlock the door to the faculty restroom.

Once I finally got into the bathroom, I had to go find the soap. The soap was one of the hardest parts of this task. It was an automatic soap dispenser, so movement around the dispenser would cause it to squirt. When I was trying to wash my

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NEW YORK, NY

*Muriel Petioni, M.D., Saves Harlem Hospital From Closing*

To the Editor:

This is a wonderful article of the important Black Female physician whom we knew all our lives because she was at Howard Medical School. Her late father was Dr. John V. Golding, Sr. She was a legend who lived for 100 years until she passed in 2011! She was a family friend and inspiration to all female physicians regardless of ethnicity. She will always be remembered and greatly missed for all her contributions to the Harlem Community like her venerable physician father, whom we remember as children.

*Cleonis Golding*

### SOUTH AFRICA

*The Misunderstanding Of Dyslexia*

To the Editor:

It's funny how people can mistake a person's frustration for being rude or short tempered. They do understand tasks better than what they are given credit for. But when some of them do the task wrong, then they get frustrated with themselves. How can one raise awareness of

hands, I had to be careful because I almost put my hands inside the toilet!

Next time there is a trust walk, I think people should remember to move slowly and feel around for clues. The guides should be more specific when they give directions so their partner knows what to do. I would have trouble trusting someone who does not tell me enough information or give me specific clues. I would not feel safe if someone didn't guide me politely, slowly, and carefully.

Most importantly, think about being blind. A trust walk is life. Every day, every second.

Next time I see a blind person on the street, I plan to help and to be a very specific guide. #

*Jamie Landis is a 6th grade student at the Churchill School in NYC.*

dyslexia successfully? I am in South Africa and here they understand even less.

*Tanya*

### NEW YORK, NEW YORK

To the Editor:

To Dr. Pola Rosen: It is always so good to be exposed to your wide-ranging ideas, your grasp of big subjects and your enthusiasm. You are a breath of hope, of future plans, of connecting everyone.

*Sandy Priest Rose,*

*Founder of Reading Reform Foundation*

### SANTA CRUZ, CA

*Joyce Cowin: Philanthropist*

To the Editor:

I'm so proud of my cousin Joyce. I just turned 89, and in my whole life I have never encountered such a wonderful career and record of philanthropy and good works. I think Joyce has become one of the great people in our society, and there are not very many of those. Dear Joyce: may you be as happy as you deserve.

*Harry Berger Jr*

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