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Imagination in the Classroom

By SCOTT NOPPE-BRANDON

In 2006, Lincoln Center Institute created an Imagination Award. The award is to be distributed annually to a selected candidate among public schools that meet specific criteria designed to show that these schools value imagination as a tool that can be used in shaping young minds. Candidate schools must both teach with imagination and promote learning with imagination.

The idea of the Imagination Award has received wide support. We hope to extend the competition nationwide, but more than that, we hope that the idea of the imagination as central to education will have a life of its own: for instance, we’re talking with Eric Liu, author of Guiding Lights, an inspirational volume on mentorship, about a possible book about the meaning and importance of the imagination. It’s an important step for the Institute, an important step for the world of ideas.

In my discussions about imagination with friends and colleagues, I find that sooner or later we ask ourselves a basic question: What exactly is imagination? Or, what do we think it is?

I’ve been advocating its merits in education for years, and I’ve thought a lot about it, researched it. It turns out that imagination is different things to different people. Educator John Dewey said something lovely, which I can really identify with; he said: “there is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of mind and universe, and this adventure is, in its measure, imagination.”

On Wall Street, imagination is the great new product, or the art of the deal: it’s the sharp end of the competitive edge. To many scientists, as everything else we do, it is a result of a chemical reaction in the brain. I am very fond of the notion of imagination as empathy, defined in simple terms as the ability to put yourself into other people’s shoes and feel what they feel. Our world has always been a place of turmoil as much as of joy, and without the nurturing of that ability, I shudder to think what sort of people we would have become.

Would we care about Darfur, about the victims of hurricane Katrina, about anything outside of the narrow parameters of our lives? In his song Imagine, John Lennon asked all of us to imagine a different, better world, a world without war and fear.

To us at Lincoln Center Institute, imagination is all of those things: the special energy that goes into the creative process of artists, and certainly a way to create a better world. Both begin with imagination.

It is important to understand that the imagination is a skill that can be taught and applied. The world will not change if we merely imagine it changing—it is necessary to know how to translate our imagining into action.

That is the Institute’s basic belief. When we launched the award, I spoke before an assembly that included students of the school in which the ceremony took place, and I knew that I had to convey that call to action as strongly as I could. Because if I were fourteen, my first thought would be: an award for being able to imagine—you must be kidding me! I can imagine stuff all day…How about space aliens? How about playing air guitar?

No, I had to tell them. There is a difference between imagining something and stopping there and expressing it through a concrete form that others can witness. Playing air guitar doesn’t mean you actually know how to play the guitar, and if you never make the effort of putting study next to your imagination and you’re still doing windmills through the air when you’re forty, people will laugh at you.

Knowing how to shape imagination into a constructive, productive process, is a tremendous achievement: it is knowing how to harness energy and power. In academic terms, it is a rigorous task, a discipline. It requires teachers who can guide students while encouraging their imagination, and it requires the will and the effort on the part of the student to make it work.

The idea of an imagination award really came out of a larger initiative at Lincoln Center Institute. Years ago, we started something called The Imagination Conversation, where we hosted seminars around the country and brought together people from completely different walks of life—artists, politicians, journalists, scientists, poets. The discussion focused on the effect that the imagination had in their lives and their work. Some of them were surprised to find that it had any place at all in their careers; a diplomat, for example, thought of himself as fact-driven public servant; “imagination” sounded frivolous in his mouth; yet he came out of the seminar having discovered that he often relied on his imagination for the most delicate decisions.

Imaginative problem-solving is hardly limited to the classroom. There is never a “grown-up time” when we don’t need it: think about seeking employment; think about parenthood. Among the children who study in a Lincoln Center Institute environment, there are those who will apply imagination to the way they live their lives day after day. I believe that the Institute’s approach to teaching and learning can help them do it productively. Some will become artists or businessmen and businesswomen, others will dedicate their time to their families or the preservation of nature—all of them will carry in them the endless possibilities for which imaginative teaching will have prepared them.

Nothing could make me happier than to think that they will rely on imagination as they invent spacecraft or be the best possible teachers or parents they can be. But I also hope that they will go beyond pragmatic uses of the imagination. That they will use it to ask themselves such questions as, who am I? What do I want to do in this world? That they will use it to interact with each other and with all the people of the earth with open arms. As John Lennon said, “You may say ‘I’m a dreamer—but I’m not the only one’.”

Scott Noppe-Brandon is the Executive Director of the Lincoln Center Institute in NYC and a regular contributor to Education Update.

Ancient China Comes to the Classroom, NTDTV’s Educational Outreach Program Teaches Kids About Traditional Chinese Culture

By BEN YOUNGQUEST

With China more and more in the public eye these days, people are curious to learn about this rising giant. Who are the Chinese people? What are their traditions and beliefs? What are the challenges they are facing? What is their culture like? Their dance? Their music?

These are the kinds of questions that New Tang Dynasty Television’s Educational Outreach program seeks to demystify for the tens of thousands of students in the New York metro area. With innovative lesson plans, language acquisition tools, and cultural performances, NTDTV’s Educational Outreach Program helps introduce children to the true culture of China.

The Educational Outreach program is part of NTDTV’s mission to foster a renaissance of traditional Chinese culture, and to bridge the culture gap between east and west. With this goal, for the last four years, NTDTV has put on a Chinese New Year Spectacular show that tours over 30 major cities around the globe, and for the recent two years the show played Radio City Music Hall for its New York performances. The Spectacular is a collection of large-scale dance, music, and song drawn from the deep well of China’s ancient traditions and cultural past. Field trips to the traditions and cultural past. Field trips to the
Growing up in the projects of East New York, the most important lesson I learned was it’s not where you’re from but where you’re going that matters.

EU: What achievements are you proudest of?

EL: I was the first of 13 children in my family to get a college degree. Although I was 11th child, my siblings followed in my footsteps and received higher degrees as well. I stand today as the first African American President of the Council of School Supervisors and Presidents of Principals, committed to improving academic achievement and the overall confidence of children.

EU: What were the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them?

EL: I come from a huge family, and although we did not have lots of money, we had each other. It is because of my family and my mentors that I have become the man I am today. I was guided by great leaders. Today school leaders are asked to be all things: psychologist, social worker, special education expert and parent. We are asked to climb even more rungs on the ladder in the direction of serving and underprivileged have an opportunity to continue in their relentless pursuit of educational excellence; and, those alumni who maintain their commitment to be change agents and leaders in their community.

EU: What would you describe as a turning point in your life?

EL: I had come back home. This decision was my destiny, divine intervention. I was encouraged by educators and other leaders of my generation. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others that I need not deal with, because, I know that God will take care of them.

EU: What were the challenges you faced and how have you resolved them?

EL: As a young man growing up in Virginia during segregation, the early years of my life were defined by my ability to navigate through the maze of racial discrimination. While receiving more formal academic training at Howard University in the 1960’s I was constantly bombarded with the overt and not so overt institutional racism.

EU: What is your advice to young people today?

EL: “Life is not a dress rehearsal”. Education is the key that unlocks every single door. Once you have it, no one can take it from you.

EU: Who were your mentors?

EL: I looked up to many great leaders and educators including Rose Albert (my 4th grade teacher); Milton Galamison, Pastor at Siloam Presbyterian Church. He told me to come back and do something to help the community, and that really set the foundation for me to become an educator.

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During these early teenage years I was very much aware of and fascinated by social and political events throughout the city. However, I am quite sure that I became acutely aware that a hostile environment made sure that I would be familiar with the world outside my home.

When the war was over and I had an opportunity to use my military experience, I realized that I was not the only one who had been affected by the war.

I remember on a particular day when a group of my friends and I decided to take Layton to the movie theatre on Fordham Road in the Bronx.

In southern states such as Virginia where much of society was segregated, even a black person’s opinion was not always respected. For example, during a hot summer day was outlawed. In many southern states, if you were an African American you were required to step-off the sidewalk when approaching or passing a white person.

I was very clearly trying to correlate in my mind a discussion at the dinner table. More often than not, the dinner was a way to discuss the events of the day, and how they related to our own lives.

I believe he was probably on a rampage, making false statements and trying to hurt me. Layton suddenly jumped into the street, not once, but several times as white people approached.

In December I was promoted to Full Professor. The enormous pressure to complete these two publications, while functioning as an administrator, symposium coordinator and being promoted to full professor was indeed for me one of my proudest achievements.

I had a Communications Professor, Dr. Ruth Schar and Irving Goffman. Their writing and classroom discussions helped me to fine-tune my thoughts on migration and social conflict within the American context.

My advice to young people is not to limit your education...
MOVIE REVIEW

FROM AN AFRICAN NIGHTMARE TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

By JAN AARON

God Grew Tired of Us is a sober, involving documentary about the Lost Boys of Sudan, the tens of thousands of children mostly of the Dinka people, who fled their country’s Civil War in the 1980’s. A National Geographic production, by Christopher Quinn and Tommy Walker, beautifully photographed by Paul Daley, the film, narrated by Nicole Kidman, is heartwarming as well as uplifting and inspirational.

The youngsters crossed the Sahara to temporary safety in Ethiopia and, in 1991, made another 1,000 mile march to the United Nations refugee camp in Kakuma Kenya where they remained in limbo for 10 years. Dehydration, starvation, disease, attacks from wild animals and rebel soldiers reduced their number to a few thousand by the time they arrived to the calm of this camp.

The filmmakers focus on three of the men who are selected to go to America of which they have heard so much—John Bul Dau is headed to Syracuse while Panther Bior, and Daniel Abol Pach are to be roommates in Pittsburgh, which Daniel asserts is in the country of Pennsylvania.

The enormous cultural shift is initially depicted by Paul Daley, the film, narrated by Nicole Kidman, is heartbreaking as well as uplifting. The enormous cultural shift is initially depicted by Paul Daley.

Do good ideas come in pairs? That seems to be the case with the Bank Street commitment to enhance diversity and the inauguration of the Priscilla E. Pemberton Society in late 2005. The Society’s aims reflect both its namesake’s long-time endeavors at Bank Street and a major part of the College’s Strategic Plan—namely, to focus on increasing diversity initiatives. The Pemberton Society seeks to:

- Raise funds to provide more scholarships and financial aid awards in both the Graduate School and the School for Children.
- Provide students and alumni of color with extended support services and host special events to celebrate diversity throughout the academic year.
- According to retired Bank Street librarian Lucia Jack, President of the Society’s Steering Committee, “The Society is unique because, in our effort to continue Priscilla’s work, we are not only fundraising for scholarships, but also offering support from our alumni and our steering committee to students both at the College and in their beginning years of teaching or administering in school systems.”
- Priscilla E. Pemberton ’66, tirelessly served Bank Street for more than twenty years as a member of the faculty and the administrative, staff, and as an alumni leader.
- Touched the lives of countless teachers, students, and alumni.
- Shortly after her death in 2004, the Society was founded in her name to carry on her ideals.

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TURN YOUR DREAMS INTO REALITY!
The Most Misunderstood Average

By ALFRED POSAMENTIER, Ph.D.

Most unformed students, when asked to calculate the average speed for a round trip with a “going” average speed of 30 miles per hour and a “returning” average speed of 60 miles per hour would think that their average speed for the entire trip is 45 miles per hour (calculated as (30 + 60) / 2 = 45). The first task is to convince the students that this is the wrong answer. For starters, you might ask them if they think it is fair to consider the two speeds with equal “weight.” Some may realize that the two speeds were achieved for different lengths of time and therefore cannot get the same weight. This might lead someone to offer that the slower speed, 30 mph took twice as long and therefore ought to get twice the weight in the calculation of the average round-trip speed. This would then bring the calculation to the following: (30 + 30 + 60) / 3 = 40, which happens to be the correct average speed.

For those not convinced by this argument try something a bit closer to “home.” A question can be posed about the grade a student deserves who scored 100% on nine of ten tests in a semester and on one test scored only 50%. Would it be fair to assume that this student’s performance for the speed problem above, one could find the time “going” and the time “returning” to get the total time, and then with the total distance calculate the total rate, which is, in fact, the average rate. There is a more efficient way and that is the highlight of this unit. We are going to introduce a concept called the Harmonic Mean, which is one of a harmonic sequence. The name harmonic may come from the fact that one such harmonic sequence is 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 1/5, 1/6, 1/7, 1/8, and if one takes guitar string of these relative lengths and strums them together a harmonious sound results.

This frequently misunderstood mean (or average) usually causes confusion, but to avoid this, once we identify that we are to find the average of rates (i.e. the harmonic mean), then we have a lovely formula for calculating the harmonic mean for rates over the same base. In the above situation, the rates were for the same distance (round trip legs).

The harmonic mean for two rates, and for three rates, then we have a lovely formula for calculating the harmonic mean for rates over the same base. In the above situation, the rates were for the same distance (round trip legs).

The harmonic mean for two rates, and is (2ab) / (a + b), and for three rates, a, b, and the harmonic mean is (abc) / (ab + bc + ac).

You can see the pattern evolving, so that for three rates the harmonic mean (1/4abcd) / (abc + abd + acd + bcd).

Applying this to the above speed problem gives us: (2*30*60) / (30 + 60) = 3600 / 90 = 40.

Begin by posing the following problem:

On Monday a plane makes a round trip flight New York City -Washington with an average speed of 300 miles per hour. The next day, Tuesday, there is a wind of constant speed (50 miles per hour) and direction (blowing from New York City to Washington). With the same speed setting as on Monday, this same plane makes the same round trip on Tuesday. Will the Tuesday trip require more time, less time or the same time as the Monday trip?

This problem should be slowly and carefully posed so that students notice that the only thing that has changed is the “help and hindrance of the wind.” All other controllable factors are the same: distances, speed regulation, airplane’s condition, etc. An expected response is that the two round trip flights ought to be the same, especially since the same wind is blowing and hindering two equal legs of a round trip flight.

Realization that the two legs of the “wind-trip” require different amounts of time should lead to the notion that the two speeds of this trip cannot be weighted equally as they were done for different lengths of time. Therefore, the time for each leg should be calculated and then appropriately apportioned to the related speeds.

We can use the harmonic mean formula to find the average speed for the “wind-trip.”

The harmonic mean is (2/350) / (250 + 350) = 291.667, which is slower than the wind trip.

What a surprise!!

This topic is not only useful, but also serves to sensitize students to the notion of weighted averages.

Dr. Alfred S. Posamentier is Dean of the School of Education at City College of NY, author of over 40 books on math including Math Wonders to Inspire Teachers and Students (ASCD, 2003) and Math Charmers: Tantalizing Tidbits for the Mind (Prometheus, 2003), and member of the NYS Standards Committee on Math.

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Civil Rights Leader Visits Poly Prep in Brooklyn

This year the students of Poly Prep Country Day School observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day a few days after the nation, and with good reason—they received a very special visitor. The Reverend Samuel “Billy” Kyles, a friend of King and the last living eyewitness to his assassination, spent a day with students in the upper and middle schools on the Bay Ridge campus.

“We are so honored to have Reverend Kyles share with our community his experiences about such an important time in American history,” said David B. Harman, headmaster.

Born in 1934 in Shelby, Mississippi, Reverend Kyles has been pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, since 1959 and is a longtime leader in the civil rights movement. His involvement with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began not long before King’s death.

On April 4, 1968, after holding a peaceful march the previous day in Memphis to rally community support for striking sanitation workers, Dr. King was preparing to have a home-cooked meal with Reverend Kyles and his family. Shortly before departing the Lorraine Motel for the Kyles residence, Dr. King was assassinated. Along with Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Reverend Kyles spent the last hour of Dr. King’s life with him.

Kyles has maintained his involvement with civil rights work since the 1960s and is a member of several civic and professional organizations. A nationally lauded speaker, he has received many honors and awards, including the Tennessee Living Legend Award.

Last summer, Kyles was the keynote speaker at the annual conference of the Country Day School Headmasters’ Association. Harman heard his speech and, with the urging of senior student Stephanie Darand, decided to bring the civil rights leader to Poly. Darand had also previously witnessed Kyles speak as part of the Sojourn to the Past civil rights education project and wanted her fellow students to share in the experience.

“He was such a great speaker,” said Darand, speaking about the first time she saw Kyles. “I was so glad he could come and spend so much time at Poly, especially during this time of year.”

The civil rights leader’s stop at Poly was one of a week spent in several states talking about King as the nation celebrated his birthday.

Reverend Kyles’ day at the school was a full one. He addressed Poly’s upper and middle school students separately in two morning assemblies. He had lunch with students and faculty and visited several history classes, as well.

“Hold fast to your dreams,” Kyles told students. He explained that King’s dream, and subsequent work to achieve it, is comparable to any dreams the students themselves may have today.

“Before you know it, you all will be in charge of the world,” Kyles said. “It’s going to happen so quick, and it’s my job to encourage and inspire you to be the best you can be at whatever you set out to accomplish.”

Founded in 1854, Poly Prep Country Day School is a co-educational, college preparatory school with a long and distinguished history. Located at 9216 7th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11228.
Town Hall Hosts Students for Black History Month

By LISA K. WINKLER

About 4,500 students, grades 3-8, from all the New York City boroughs will tap their feet and clap their hands to the beat of Urban Tap, at free performances at The Town Hall this month as part of its Black History Month presentation. Sponsored by Con Edison, the program marks the 10th annual cultural event that brings city children to the 86-year-old venue. After the golden age of Town Hall from 1920 to 1940, the Hall is experiencing a renaissance under the “batons” of President Marvin Leffler and Executive Director Lawrence Zucker. Through a world music and dance program, a “Helping Hands” program, and Theaterworks programs, record numbers of children have been attending programs at “Town Hall once again. Students are encouraged, through lesson plans provided to teachers, to enter a poster and essay contest after attending the performance. The Town Hall selects five winners who receive cash prizes at a ceremony in the spring. Founded in 1921 by a group of suffragettes, The Town Hall, 123 West 43rd Street, offered lectures and sponsored public debates designed to educate voters. The many notable appearances include birth control advocate Margaret Sanger in 1921, actor Paul Robeson in 1927, Edna St. Vincent Millay in 1928, and singer Marian Anderson in 1935. In the 1950’s, the hall offered programs through a partnership with New York University. Throughout the next two decades, the hall continued to attract top name speakers and performers but faced financial difficulties, ceasing operations in 1978. The building received national historic landmark status in 1980 that sparked interest in reviving the hall as a performance venue. Thanks to the efforts of executive director Lawrence Zucker and the vision of Marvin Leffler, President of Town Hall, rental bookings fund-raising campaigns have increased. Renovations were completed by 1984 and the hall has since begun producing its own events. In 1998, the Town Hall Lab in Technical Theatre and Stagecraft was created to offer New York City high school students’ apprenticeship experiences in theater. The hall has expanded this initiative to include student internships and education outreach programs for middle and high school students.

Gary Greenberg, Project Arts Liaison, PS 241 Brooklyn said of the program, Town Hall provides a terrific opportunity for students who might never get inside a professional theater. The study guides are invaluable to help the teachers prepare students for the experience. The quality of the programs has been superb. We couldn’t do this without the generous corporate sponsorship.”

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January 26, 2007 through October 8, 2007

Louis Armstrong House Museum, Corona, Queens—administered by Queens College, CUNY is featuring a fascinating look at Louis Armstrong’s views on Civil Rights, a controversial aspect of his legacy since the 1950s, when he was accused of being out of step with the movement. Did Armstrong’s response to the Little Rock Nine crisis in 1957 and his refusal to represent the United States on a State Department tour of the Soviet Union reflect a change in his attitudes, or had he been quietly breaking down doors all along? The exhibit also celebrates Armstrong’s many contributions—as jazz legend, good will ambassador, movie star and author. Included are film clips and artifacts from the period, including Armstrong’s FBI file, which will present a revealing look at one of the most influential figures of the 20th century.

For directions and other information, visit http://www.autcho.net/.

HUNTER COLLEGE ROY DECARAVA

was awarded the prestigious 2006 National Medal of Arts by President Bush at the White House on November 9. DeCarava, a Distinguished Professor of Art at Hunter, has dedicated more than 60 years to an extraordinary career as a master photographer and a pioneer in the art of photography. During a presentation ceremony in the Oval Office with the President and First Lady Laura Bush, DeCarava—a member of the Hunter faculty since 1975—was hailed for a lifetime of inspiring contributions to the arts. “In the midst of the Civil Rights movement, his revealing work seized the attention of our nation while displaying the dignity and determination of his subjects,” DeCarava’s citation read. Living and working primarily in New York City, DeCarava has been widely praised as the first photographer “to devote serious attention...to the black experience in America” and for the affection for the people and places of his hometown of New York which are so evident in his work. DeCarava has been the subject of 15 solo exhibitions. His work is in collections at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. He was also the first African American photographer to win a Guggenheim Fellowship.

HUNTER COLLEGE DR. GODFREY GUMBS

of the Physics Department has been named a CUNY Distinguished Professor in recognition of his lifetime of contributions to theoretical physics, including research into some of the most complex problems of condensed matter. It is the latest in a series of well-earned honors for Dr. Gumbs. Last year, he was named a Fulbright Senior Scholar and he received the American Physical Society’s highest prize, the Edward


Born in Chicago, Renard Allen holds a PhD in English (Creative Writing) from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Besides teaching at Queens College (including, as of fall 2007, in the college’s new MFA program in creative writing), Allen is also an instructor in the graduate writing program at New School University. He has also taught for Cave Canem, the Summer Literary Seminars program in St. Petersburg, Russia, and Nairobi, Kenya, and in the writing program at Columbia University. In addition, he is the director of the Pan African Literary Forum, a writers’ conference in Accra, Ghana, to be held in the summer of 2008. A resident of Far Rockaway, Queens, Allen is presently at work on the novel Song of the Shant, based on the life of Thomas Greene Wiggins, a nineteenth-century African American piano virtuoso and composer who performed under the stage name Blind Tom.

Queen's College JEFFERY RENARD ALLEN

is an Associate Professor of English at Queens College of the City University of New York, the author of two collections of poetry, Stellar Places (Moyer Bell 2007) and Harbors and Spirits (Moyer Bell 1999), and of the widely celebrated and influential novel, Rails Under My Back (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000), which won The Chicago Tribune’s Heartland Prize for Fiction. His other awards include a Whiting Writer’s Award, The Chicago Public Library’s Twenty-first Century Award, a Recognition for Pioneering Achievements in Fiction from the African American Literature and Culture Association, a support grant from Creative Capital, and the 2003 Charles Angoff Award for Fiction from The Literary Review. He has been a fellow at The Center for Scholars and Writers at The New York Public Library, a John Farrar Fellow in Fiction at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and a Walter E. Dakins Fellow in Fiction at the Sewanee Writers’ Conference.


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Children’s Books for African American History Month

The Escape of Onye Judge: Martha Washington’s Slave Finds Freedom, by Emily Arnold McCully ($16.00). Dubbed as “Gutsy—and very nicely done,” in a starred Booklist Review, this is the first picture book to tell the true story of the courageous Onye Judge, a young slave who took great risks to flee servitude to President George and M a r t h a Washington and have a free life in New Hampshire. Booklist also gave the title a star. Emily Arnold McCully has written and illustrated many children’s books including Mirette on the High Wire, a critical reviewer information such as telephone number, address, website and days of operation. In the back of the book are maps of the different sites and Washington’s home and libraries are located as well as related sites. Following those pages is a list of Presidents, Vice Presidents and First Ladies followed by site and contact information.

This book is a good way for people to learn about the Presidents other than the famous ones that are often covered. Aside from these books, there are many other books about prominent African Americans, distinctive Valentine’s Day Cards and much more for gifts, books, greeting cards and souvenirs to come in.

Upcoming Events At Logos

Wednesday, February 7, 2007 at 7 P.M., KVTY Reading Group will discuss The Shadow On The Wall, by Carlos Azar

Monday, February 26, 2007 at 7 P.M., The Sacred Texts Group led by Richard Curtis, literary agent, will discuss Jesus and The Sermon On The Mount

Wednesday, March 7, 2007 at 7 P.M., KVTY Reading Group will discuss Walden by Henry David Thoreau

A Knitting Circle at Logos is scheduled to begin in early February (For more information call Lori at (212) 517-7729)

Children Story Time every Monday at 3 P.M. with Dvorchak

Transit: 4, 5, 6 Subways to Lexington Avenue Station, #7, M42 Bus (86th St.), M46 Bus (79th St.), M31 Bus (York Ave.), M15 Bus (1st and 2nd Aves.)
How Can I Protect My Child from Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse?

By GLENN S. HIRSCH, M.D.

There is good news in the fight against drug use. Several year-end surveys of teenage substance use in 2006 report a decline in overall alcohol, cigarette, and illegal drug use. But that does not mean that parents should relax their vigilance. As fashions change, so do the substances which teenagers use to get high. A recent study shows that a small but growing number of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported using prescription painkillers such as OxyContin and Vicodin, as well as over-the-counter cough medicines. The use of cough medicines is legal, cheap, and easy to get. Most contain dextromethorphan, a component of cough suppressants that at higher doses can cause hallucinogenic states. And although prescription painkillers are harder to get, family medicine cabinets—and increasingly the internet—are usually good sources.

Several officials have voiced concern over these findings. “The intentional use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines is a pervasive problem that has become a far too normal part of many teenagers’ lives,” according to Stephen J. Passerbi, President and CEO, Partnership for a Drug-Free America (New York Times, 1/8/07). J. Pasierb, President and CEO, Partnership for a Drug-Free America (New York Times, 1/8/07).

Findings. “The intentional use of prescription painkillers is not high compared to the number of teens who use illegal drugs, the trend is of concern for parents,” according to the New York State Department of Health.

J. Pasierb, President and CEO, Partnership for a Drug-Free America (New York Times, 1/8/07).

Although the number of teens who reported that they abused prescription medicine and over-the-counter drugs is not high compared to the number of teens who use illegal drugs, the trend is of concern, according to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Many teens believe that if medications are obtainable in a pharmacy they cannot be dangerous, but they may not realize the danger when they overdose or combine them with alcohol or other medications.

What parents can do:

Don’t keep an excess of any medication at home—buy just enough for the treatment of a current medical problem.

Watch out for possible symptoms of abuse: slurred speech, dilated pupils, sweating, high temperature, dry mouth, blurred vision, hallucinations, delusions, nausea, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, numbness in fingers and toes, red face, loss of consciousness.

Pay attention to credit card charges.

Be aware of packages that are mailed to your home. Note empty medicine bottles.

Store your own medicines in a secure place and always throw away outdated medicine.

Monitor the internet sites your teen accesses—there are sites where teens share information on how to obtain medicines of abuse and the combinations that are most potent.

Remember that prevention, starting at an early age, is critical.

Remember you are your child’s most important role model.

Talk openly about the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol abuse.

Clearly state what you expect your teen to do when confronted with substance abuse in others. Recognize stress in your teen and help to find ways of appropriately dealing with it.

Keep track of where, with whom, and what

your teen is doing after school and other free times.

Discuss examples of substance abuse in movies and television, and point out the serious consequences.

While respecting your teen’s privacy is important, don’t ever forget to balance it with your responsibility to be an effective parent.

This monthly column provides educators, parents and families with important information about child and adolescent mental health issues. Please submit questions for ASK THE EXPERT to Glenn S. Hirschl, M.D., Medical Director at the NYU Child Study Center at glenn.hirschl@med.nyu.edu. To subscribe to the ASK THE EXPERT Newsletter or for more information about the NYU Child Study Center, visit www.AboutOurKids.org or call 212-263-6622.
African American History Month at the Bronx Zoo

The magical sounds of African drummers will fill the air as the Bronx Zoo entertains visitors on Wednesday, February 21, as the Zoo celebrates African American heritage through music, dance, and wildlife.

A full day of activities highlight African culture with special welcomes by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) host, Charles Vasser, Director of Community Affairs, and representatives from the New York City Housing Authority kicking off the event at 10:30 am at the Dunciing Crane Café where special African dance and drum performances will take place.

The Wildlife Conservation Society, headquartered at the Bronx Zoo, has over 150 international field projects in Africa alone. WCS saves wildlife and wild lands through careful science, international conservation, education, and the management of the world’s largest system of urban wildlife parks in New York. Together, these activities change individual attitudes toward nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in sustainable interaction on both a local and a global scale. WCS is committed to this work because we believe it essential to the integrity of life on Earth.

African American Heritage Celebration at the Bronx Zoo recognizes February as Black History Month and fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for the richness of African culture and wildlife. To plan a trip, visit online at www.bronxzoo.com or call 718-367-1010.

Attention.
It’s all any kid with Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder wants.

At the NYU Summer Program for Kids, they will get plenty of it. If your child is between the ages of 7 and 11 and has ADHD, consider sending him or her to the Summer Program for Kids — the only camp of its kind in New York. It is staffed by clinical psychologists and highly-qualified teachers who are assisted by psychology undergraduate and graduate students. There is one staff member for every one to two children. The staff provide the children with sustained, nurturing attention, while teaching an understanding of rules, academic discipline, and teamwork. This prepares the children to start the school year as better adjusted and more socially skilled students.

The Program for Kids offers an atmosphere of fun, with swimming and sports every day. Parents receive specialized training to enhance their children’s success and to develop a positive parent-child relationship.

The program runs for eight weeks beginning June 25th. If your child is between the ages of 7 and 11 and has ADHD, consider sending him or her to the Summer Program for Kids — the only camp of its kind in New York. It is staffed by clinical psychologists and highly-qualified teachers who are assisted by psychology undergraduate and graduate students. There is one staff member for every one to two children. The staff provide the children with sustained, nurturing attention, while teaching an understanding of rules, academic discipline, and teamwork. This prepares the children to start the school year as better adjusted and more socially skilled students.

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The Program for Kids offers an atmosphere of fun, with swimming and sports every day. Parents receive specialized training to enhance their children’s success and to develop a positive parent-child relationship. The program runs for eight weeks beginning June 25th.
Call 212 263 0760 to register. It may make your child’s summer. And yours.
The Dental Office of the 21st Century: Dr. Barry Moretzky

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

“If there’s a toy out there that’ll make my work and treatment better for my patients, I’ll get it,” says Barry Moretzky, D.M.D. His midtown practice is well named: “Contemporary Dental Implant Center.” There are probably few NYC dentists as up to date on technology as Dr. Moretzky, who, with a mix of boyish enthusiasm and well-earned confidence about his own dedication to learn about the latest machines out there, notes that his office boasts a number of high-powered acquisitions. There’s the digital x-ray machine which delivers instantly and the biolase, a spectacular piece of laser equipment that prepares a tooth and gingival tissue for treatment without anesthesia. Then there’s the star of the office—CEREC—Chairside Economical Restoration of Aesthetic Ceramics—a remarkable imaging system that can model the image of a crown, surrounding teeth and all, and “mill” a special kind of porcelain that is safe (free of noxious material, such as mercury).

As most patients know, making a crown typically involves many visits, including a series of awkward if not downright uncomfortable impressions. CEREC reduces everything to an amazing 3-D optical image. Three years ago, when Dr. Moretzky bought one there were only 1,200 available in the U.S. (3,000 in the world). Today, he points out, there are now about 1,600 such machines in the U.S. The machine, which does not take up much space, not only does crowns and onlays but does laminates as well. Of course, the more skilled the dentist and his staff, the less time is needed to complete the procedure. Needless to say, as Dr. Moretzky adds, “patients love it.” They also love what Zoom Two can accomplish, another technological innovation that bleaches natural teeth by way of an expedient concentration of light. Patients are so excited to learn of new dental technology that Dr. Moretzky brings into the office. They feel that he is keeping up with technological advances in the dental field and his office is on the cutting edge of dentistry.

The decision to acquire sophisticated technology raises questions about training and education. The dentist must learn the software packages now come with auto updates. But will dentists take time to learn about the new systems and ensure that their staffs are properly trained? Dr. Moretzky estimates that becoming proficient with CEREC, for example, requires three days in the office, three days outside and three days learning the new software packages. Then factor in additional practice in order to develop a steady hand. Though CERAC is hardly inexpensive, the payback, Dr. Moretzky says, is in volume of use. He specializes in crowns and implants. For those dentists for whom such work is not central, the $100,000 machine may be prohibitive. Still, the promise of new generations of CEREC, which will include modeling bridgework, as well as continued regular treatment, may cause dentists to consider the benefits of investment.

Dr. Moretzky points out that although fluoride has severely reduced cavities, not all cities have fluoridated water. Americans are fond of bottled water and diet soda, neither of which contains fluoride. Meanwhile, periodontal care has become an increasingly important focus for children as well as adults, though too few parents are sufficiently educated about dental hygiene (sweets, for example, if consumed in between meals do more damage than if capping a lunch or dinner).

February is National Children’s Dental Health Month, but Dr. Moretzky doesn’t wait on the calendar. He regularly visits his own children’s school and his sister’s (a teacher), eager to educate youngsters about the importance of good habits. He also spends time considering how to make his office more patient friendly and physically welcoming. His staff, which includes some dentists from other countries, share his view that the most important job of a dentist is “to learn how to listen to patients.” Now that’s a dentist who knows how to make an impact!!
Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG

America’s most important civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a role model of the city’s greatest heroes. It’s a good time to take stock of how far we’ve come toward achieving equality for all—and also how much our city’s life still need to do to make that dream a reality.

“As a result, math and reading scores are up, graduation rates—even though still too low—are improving, and we’re finally closing the intolerable achievement gap between students of different races and ethnicities. In addition, we’ve committed $75 million to create parent coordinators in every school so that parents have a stronger connection to their child’s education and can provide the support that will make a huge difference. We still have a long way to go, but we are clearly on the right track.”

Reading Reform Foundation Honors New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer

Reading Reform Foundation of New York, a nonprofit literacy organization now in its 25th year of training teachers to teach their children how to read, spelling and writing using multisensory phonics-based techniques, honored New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer (District 6) at a recent breakfast celebration, for her commitment to education. Reading Reform’s founding trustee Sandra Priest Rose and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer offered congratulatory remarks. Other guests included City Council members Maria del Carmen Arroyo (District 17); Daniel R. Garodnick (District 4); Esther Klein Friedman, director, office of Intervention Services, New York City Department of Education; Martine Guerrier, Brooklyn representative to the Department of Education; New York City public school principals and administrators, and members of the Reading Reform Foundation Board of Trustees, members and teaching consultants.

Reading Reform President Louise Arias read aloud a citation, recognizing Brewer’s “diligence, careful study of a wide range of primary sources of need, and energetic, hard work as a member of the New York City Council. She is readily available to her constituents in Clinton and on the Upper West Side to whom she listens with thoughtful understanding.” In addition to her City Council work, Brewer has served on over two dozen neighbor-hood and non-profit boards and has taught urban policy at many colleges. Her interest in education extends from early to higher education.

Sandra Priest Rose briefly described the work of Reading Reform. “We are in 95 classrooms, 21 schools throughout the city,” she said. “What distinguishes us from other literacy organizations is the amount of time we spend with a teacher and a class—twice each week, totaling almost sixty hours over the course of a school year. Plus, we charge only 26% of our costs and knock ourselves out raising the other 80%!”

This year alone, 98 New York teachers were trained by Reading Reform, and 2,700 students benefited from these teachers. As one Manhattan principal observed, “Never before have my students taken such an active role in their learning to read…My only regret is that I did not adopt the program sooner.” Reading Reform’s major fundraiser, honoring Wynton Marsalis and featuring a performance by Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, will take place Thursday, April 26. For more information call (212) 307-7320, or visit www.readingreformny.org.

New Medical School Opens in Harlem

By SYBILL MAIMIN

The Harlem renaissance continues! The opening of a College of Osteopathic Medicine (TOUROCOP) on 125th St., across from the Apollo Theater last month was announced, with much excitement and anticipation, by Touro College, the fast growing, multi-campus education institution founded in 1971. Representatives of numerous government and local community organizations applauded the news. The Harlem location is intended to increase the number of minority physicians (an increasingly small group) and improve medical care in an underserved area. Dr. Bernard Lander, dynamic and legendary founder of Touro, has a long-time interest in Harlem. The spunky, white-haired visionary with a background as sociolo-gist, educator, and rabbi, was on Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia’s 1944 Committee on Unity which became the city’s first Commission on Human Rights. He served on the federal commission that established the “War on Poverty,” and has been consultant and committee member on numerous initiatives to help troubled youth. The new medical facility fulfills “a dream and commitment,” he said. A College of Pharmacy will be added in 2008. To address the problem of “an insufficient number of black and Hispanic—even women in medicine,“ he also announced plans to establish a college of science in Harlem to “inspire and prepare local youngsters for careers in science and medicine.”

The osteopathic facility, the first new medical school to be approved in New York State in over thirty years, was subjected to a rigorous accreditation process. Dr. Jay Sextor, president and CEO of the college, explained that recently elected lieutenant-governor David Patterson was a crucial early supporter. Citing his knowledge of the city’s early work in human rights, Patterson said, “I knew this was the right institution to bring a college of medicine to this community.” Patterson announced that $100 million in Governor Elliot Spitzer’s proposed budget will be dedicated to medical research. Touro plans to include research facilities in its Unity projects that will benefit the community. Kenneth Knuckles, president and CEO of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, which has joined $4.7 million for the school, spoke of its potential to “break the cycle of poverty in this community.”

The challenges facing the new college, Dr. Daniel Loderco, president of the Empire State Medical Association, which represents minority physicians, noted that very few minorities are among the more than 800 applicants for the 125 spots in the first class. Mindful of this problem, Touro has an ambitious, long-term program with elementary, junior, and high schools in the area to encourage interest in and preparation for work in the sciences. It is necessary to change a culture and mindset, Loderco explained, and get word out that few make it as professional basketball players, but the lifestyle of MD’s can be very pleasant. In collaboration with Harlem Hospital’s public health program, Touro is co-sponsoring Project Aspire to encourage health field aspirations among the young. Dr. Deborah Williams, a physician who has joined the faculty of the new college, spoke of being one of six blacks in a class of 100 in medical school. “This is terribly exciting,” she said. “It is a tremendous opportunity to address increasing minority participation and representation in medi-cal education and in the health care field overall. Other institutions have attempted it, but I think this is the first time it is not an attempt, but a mandate, a mission.”

Osteopathic medicine is a holistic approach that embraces a whole person philosophy. Osteopathic physicians are awarded a D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathy) degree after four years of the same basic education as M.D.s including classroom work and clinical rotations. In addition, they receive extensive training in manipula-tive techniques and diagnoses. Hospital residen-ties are in specialties ranging from pediatrics to neurosurgery. Osteopaths frequently go into primary care medicine; graduates of the new facility will be encouraged to live and work in Harlem. TOUROCOP is the country’s twenty-fourth school of osteopathic medicine and the second in New York State.

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Find out more about Landmark at one of our Spring Open Houses, where you can meet our faculty, students and staff...tour our campus...and learn about our associate degree programs in Business and General Studies.

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