Sec. of Ed. Arne Duncan

A New Chapter in Education
Ringing in a New Year and a Bright Future for New York City

By MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG

Last month, more than a million revelers jammed Times Square to ring in the New Year. It was a reminder that no one puts on a celebration like New York City. And although 2008 was a difficult year in many ways, there was still much to celebrate.

Take crime for example. Our police officers drove crime down another 4 percent in 2008, bringing our 7-year decline to nearly 30 percent. Not only is our city safer than at any point in modern memory, it’s also cleaner. Our Sanitation Department, in decades, and our students performed better year, graduation rates rose to their highest level that’s critical to our city’s future: education. Last year, 2008, our teachers, schools of education, and state education departments. With this type of encouragement, it seemed not only reasonable, but prudent, to adopt a balanced literacy approach. The only problem with this tempting hybrid approach is that there is no scientific research to support it.

At Windward the Orion Gillim based reading program provides direct, intensive, systematic, and comprehensive instruction in a hierarchy of discrete reading skills with particular emphasis on how to apply phonics to decode written words. I once believed that phonics instruction was strictly drill with little concern for comprehension, but now I know that knowledge of phonics allows readers to become fluent and fluent is the key to reading comprehension. Having once been lost in the whole language maelstrom, I am now fully committed to championing the research-based instructional program that is the basis of our students’ success and the hallmark of Windward.

Dr. Jay Russell is the head of the Windward School in Westchester County, New York.

Metrobeat

Confessions of a Recovering Public School Superintendent

By JAY RUSSELL, Ed.D.

Three years ago after 30 years in public education, I became the Head of Windward School, an independent school in Westchester County. I was motivated to make this change for personal as well as professional reasons. I was well aware of Windward’s excellent reputation for teaching children with language-based learning disabili- ties and was eager to be part of this good work. After 11 years of experience as a superintendent of schools, I felt that it was time for new challenges and new learning. I knew that the learning curve at Windward would be steeper, but I didn’t anticipate that being at Windward would cause me to change my closely held beliefs about how children learn and what constitutes effective instruction. Like many educators during the 1970’s, I believed in the principles of the progressive move- ment and fell under the spell of whole language. The whole-spectrum approach of whole language by schools is not surprising given its endorsement by state education departments, schools of education and groups such as the National Council of Teachers of English. More recently the whole language movement, in response to a barrage of claims to combine the best practices of both whole language and direct reading instruction.

This seductive blend of approaches has been adopted by many well intended school districts including the one where I was superintendent. This jazzed-up version of whole language once again received support from teachers, publish- ers, schools of education, and state education departments. With this type of encouragement, it seemed not only reasonable, but prudent, to adopt a balanced literacy approach. The only problem with this tempting hybrid approach is that there is no scientific research to support it.

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Effective communication is a critical component of any family relation, and parent-child relationships are certainly no exception to that rule.

When your children come home from school, or you come home from work ask them how their day was and listen to their answers. What are they learning? Who are their friends in school? Do they like or dislike about their teachers and the things they are learning?

When your child becomes a teenager, a more concerted effort may be required to ensure that effective and meaningful communication continues. Not only do the hours of separa-
tion between parents and kids tend to increase at this age, but as children get older, they strive for autonomy and independence— a natural part of development— and often embrace new ideas and attitudes in order to establish their own identity openly in school and with their friends, but be less forth-
coming once they’re back at home. If parents are willing to take the initiative and exercise a little creativity, there are many ways to ensure that communication con-
tinues through middle and high school.

One good way to get a conversation going is to ask your son or daughter for an “interview.”

You might begin by posing a few questions and inviting your child to come up with his or her own questions in return. A starting point might be to focus on your child’s favorite subject, favor-
ite movie, favorite food, favorite music and other current likes and dislikes, then compare them to your own, and perhaps share what you liked or disliked when you were the same age. You can explore other ideas of your own and ask what topics he or she would like to discuss. Another way to encourage casual conversation is to plan time with your child. Even something as simple as taking a walk together can provide the right climate for informal talk. You may have to push a little to get your son or daughter to agree to set aside the time, but in a short time will be well spent for both of you.

These are just a couple of ways to convey to your child that you are taking an interest in his or her life, that you are willing to learn more about your own life as well. Throughout child-
hood and adolescence, knowing that parents are always willing to listen and to answer questions honestly can prove invaluable in keeping the lines of communication open.

Carole Hankin is the Superintendent of Syosset Schools in Long Island, NY.

**FROM THE SUPERINTENDENTS’ DESKS**

**Keeping Open the Lines of Communication With Your Children**

**By DR. CAROLE HANKIN**

**Community Mayors & Special Education**

**By DR. BONNIE BROWN**

Special Education in New York City has a guardian angel, a maker of dreams which come true for special needs youngsters. It is the late, great mensch-builder of the Jewish community, Demetra Roy. New York City is comprised of selfless men and women of various national, state, and city agencies: Police Department, Fire Department, Department of Transportation, CIA, FBI, and many more. They work to give their time and energy to brighten the lives of the most challenged children in the city.

By the very nature of this organization, Shelley DeLa Roca is continuing the work that her father, Dominick started which emanated from the founder, Louis Zeltzer in 1875. As the Executive Director, the Group is an organization dedicated to community and charitable activi-
ties and one of its notable members was Teddy Kollek, who left a legacy of the cultural heritage that he wished New York to have.

The mission of the Community Mayors is to bridge the gap between education and the outer communities.

First, don’t give up. A college education in the next 10 years, there has been a steady stream of teachers who have come to New York through the sponsorship of the Austrian government and the Austrian-American Ed Cooperative Association and has been enlarged to include teachers from the neighboring countries such as Czech Republic, Slovakia Germany, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, and others.

**FINANCIAL AID: EXPERT OPINION**

**Paying for College in Tough Economic Times**

**By DR. PHILIP DAY**

The unprecedented economic difficulties roiling our nation are making it increasingly difficult for families to pay for college and for colleges to provide financial aid to the increasing number of students who need it.

High school seniors, their parents, and adults who want to return to school to learn new job skills in order to enhance their employability and future job security are struggling to pay for rais-
ing college costs at the same time that wages are falling (or being eliminated) and home equity is declining. More parents are applying for the same amount of financial aid dollars.

Meanwhile colleges and universities are work-
ing to do more with fewer resources. Their operating costs and student enrollment continue to increase, and many are bracing for reduced operating costs and student enrollment continue to increase. Not only do the hours of separa-
tion between parents and kids tend to increase at this age, but as children get older, they strive for autonomy and independence— a natural part of development— and often embrace new ideas and attitudes in order to establish their own identity openly in school and with their friends, but be less forth-
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A Snapshot of a Campus Police Officer

By JUDITH AQUINO

As the economy continues to spiral downwards with many people facing bleak job prospects, Cory Gilmore, 25, considers himself fortunate to have recently secured a job as a campus police officer at Hunter College.

To become a campus police officer, Gilmore enrolled in an intensive two-month training program that included classroom instruction on state laws and local ordinances, constitutional law and civil rights, as well as instruction on the use of firearms, self-defense, first aid, and emergency response. After participating in the program full-time, Gilmore was certified to work as a police officer in New York State.

After completing his training, Gilmore accepted a job offer from Hunter College. Gilmore has been employed by Hunter College for 8 months where he works the afternoon and evening shift from 3 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. From his station at the main campus on East 68th Street and Lexington Avenue, Gilmore observes students and staff from various walks of life. Hunter College is the largest college in the CUNY system and serves students from various walks of life. Gilmore's advice is to just go for it. “You have nothing to lose and everything to gain,” said Gilmore.

Cory Gilmore, 25, considers himself fortunate to have recently secured a job as a campus police officer, however he knew he wanted a college education. Eventually Gilmore hopes to pursue a degree in Business Administration and Marketing. Being a campus police officer brings Gilmore closer to his goal since the job benefits include financial support to attend college courses. Other benefits include health insurance and a salary ranging from $28,000 to $40,000.

Growing up in Brooklyn, Gilmore never expected to find himself working as a campus police officer, however he knew he wanted a college education. Eventually Gilmore hopes to pursue a degree in Business Administration and Marketing. Being a campus police officer brings Gilmore closer to his goal since the job benefits include financial support to attend college courses. Other benefits include health insurance and a salary ranging from $28,000 to $40,000.

For someone considering a career as a campus police officer, Gilmore’s advice is to just go for it. “You have nothing to lose and everything to gain,” said Gilmore.

Have You Thought of Becoming a Pilot

By LAUREN SHAPIRO

Each day, the Federal Aviation Administration controls take-offs, landings, and flights of over 50,000 aircraft, and they expect to hire approximately 17,000 air traffic controllers in the next 10 years. That’s a lot of jobs, and some 30 colleges and universities have partnered with the FAA under a program called the Air Traffic Controller Collegiate Training Initiative. Partner Schools “…encompass the FAA’s Air Traffic Basics Course and the CFI designation requires that a school be “…willing to complete the evaluation process and participation in a site visit.”

There are an array of aviation programs from Eastern New Mexico University-Rosswell’s Aviation Maintenance Technology program to New Hampshire’s Daniel Webster College online B.A. for Aviation Professionals. Most schools partner with airlines and airports: the Lewis University Airport serves as a reliever airport for O’Hare International, Kent State University partners with Express Jet Airlines, Arizona State University partners with Mesa Air Group airlines and uses the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority.

Student Brandon Blank says “We start flying from day one. They oversee all of our training. Upon graduation, you’re guaranteed an interview with the Mesa Group.” Mr. Blank says “You get your private pilot certificate, your instrument rating, your commercial pilot’s certification, your certified flight instructor certificate. In the final year we, we fly in the regional jets. There are also simulators and slow motion simulators.

We learn about air traffic control, so we learn a lot about what’s going on, on the other side of the microphone, which is cool because anybody can make mistakes and it’s good to know how they’re thinking. All of our classes are relevant. I’ve never seen anybody, like they do in other majors, walk into a class and say “why am I taking this class?”

Dr. Thomas Schildgen, Chair for the Department of Technology Management at Arizona State says “My son went through this program. There are three components Air Transportation Management, Professional Flight, and Air Traffic Control Management which is all FAA regulated. ASU has partnered with a major airline and the mesa air group does conduct interviews with all of our graduates; not everybody gets hired but the employment rate is extremely strong in part because we have a secondary admission process - a dual review process. For someone considering a career as a campus police officer, Gilmore’s advice is to just go for it. “You have nothing to lose and everything to gain,” said Gilmore.

ASU’s flight program costs $52,000 above tuition. “Some schools are $100,000 over tuition,” says Dr. Schildgen, “Students pay for the flight provider to give you the hours that you need to get through the degree.” However, “We make ourselves available to minority and immigrant students through loans, scholarships and financial aid. Access, Excellence and Impact is the mantra.”
Doctors Without Borders: An Exclusive Interview with Dr. Nicolas de Torrente

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

The year 2009 marks ten years since Doctors Without Borders (DWB) / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) won the Nobel Prize for Peace “in recognition of the organization’s pioneering humanitarian work on several continents.” The good news is that this remarkable, independent, international NGO—founded in 1971 by doctors and journalists and now staffed also by nurses, logistics experts, administrators, epidemiologists, laboratory technicians, mental health workers -- is bringing even more quality medical care to people caught in crises, “regardless of race, religion or political affiliation,” and notwith-standing danger. The bad news, of course, is that man-made and natural disasters have escalated dramatically in the last decade due to continuing wars, new armed conflicts, natural disasters and recurring epidemics.

No one knows about the dilemmas and challenges facing DWB more than Executive Director Dr. Nicolas de Torrente, who, though stepping down this year, will continue to address related issues in his position as adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Until mid-year he will be on special assignment for DWB, researching global health activities and large donors, such as the Gates Foundation.

The Swiss-born Dr. de Torrente was graduated from the University of Geneva, has a Master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston, and a Ph.D. in International Relations from the London School of Economics. His area of expertise is “the relation between humanitarian action and political and military strategies,” which is as much to say, upholding the organization’s principles of medical ethics and impartiality and not falling into or being perceived to fall into any country’s political, military or religious agenda.

DWB is a privately funded, independent, apolitical organization.

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Breast Cancer Update

From the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

Join us for a discussion of the latest findings emerging from this international symposium about breast cancer.

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Presenter
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Dr. Charlotte Frank Moderates Secrets of Success With President Jennifer Raab, Dr. Louise Mirrer, Vickie Tillman (Standard & Poor)

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Moderated by education guru Dr. Charlotte Frank, whose many accomplishments include executive director of curriculum and instruction for NYC public schools, senior vice-president for research and development at McGraw-Hill Education/McGraw Hill Companies, and New York State Regent, a panel of three very successful women told a rapt audience at Sutton Place Synagogue how they reached the top of their professions. Dr. Louise Mirrer, president and CEO of the New York Historical Society, Jennifer J. Raab, president of Hunter College, and Vickie A. Tillman, executive vice president of Standard & Poor’s and head of its Rating Service tackled questions about early ambitions, detours along career roads, and skills needed to meet challenges.

Mirrer explained that as a youngster she often went on hospital rounds with her physician father, admired “Candy Stripers,” loved biology, and planned to study pre-med in college. Illustrating Frank’s point that, “Nothing happens without a good teacher,” Mirrer was detoured by a class in medieval history and a “great professor.” Fascinated, she changed her goal from medicine to teaching and learned Russian, and studied foreign relations only the Russian were crowded. There was a job for her at Standard & Poor’s and now, over thirty years later, she explains how she rose in this “male-dominated world.” She confesses, “I am incredibly stubborn. I wouldn’t let any kind of ceiling get in my way.” She learned “diplomacy” and was willing to “listen, be flexible, and take risks.” I was called “the change agent” at S & P, she reports, but was careful to present new ideas in “acceptable terms.” Making changes can be “incredibly difficult,” she reports as “some people are committed to no change and sometimes they are very formidable people in your organization…Bring people along with you as you make changes.” She suggests finding a mentor to “teach ways to get through political hurdles” because, “There are politics in every organization, whether in your face or behind your back.”

Tillman advises being “passionate” about your work and monitoring relevant developments, even when on vacation. “You must believe in yourself” but also need “competencies and a little help along the way.” She sees, “Some people are afraid to ask for help and think they have to prove themselves.” She hopes the next generation “will learn to say what they believe and ask questions.” Saying, “There is no straight line in a career,” Frank summed up: know your discipline, keep learning, take risks, be flexible, consider acquiring new skills, and have confidence in yourself.

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AMERICA’S LEADING COLLEGE FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND AD/HD
Learning Languages at the Age of 6

Months? Little Pim Does It!

By JOAN BAUM, PH.D.

Bonjour lecteurs et lectrices. Qu’est-ce que c’est? Check with a two-year old. Chances are, if the little one has been watching a DVD called Little Pim, you may get your answer. And in any number of languages. Little Pim, a ground-breaking immersion and repetition animation video series was created by a bigger Pim—Julia Pimsleur Levine, the daughter of a renowned language professor whose eponymous “Pimsleur Method” introduced a highly successful technique for rapid language acquisition by adults. Taking its origin from her own childhood experience, Little Pim was created for children, babies, preschoolers. It owes its prompt to Ms. Levine’s desire to offer her own children the same gift of learning languages her parents gave to her. Behind that personal motivation, however, lies a sharply focused video series based on extensive research and close observation about how young children can best learn while having fun. The pace is slow, each episode no more than five minutes, the look highly professional.

A documentary filmmaker, as well as language teacher (with fluency in French, Italian, Spanish and German), Ms. Levine, who adds “mom” to her professional titles, spent a long time studying and testing what was already available for young children and came to the conclusion that what was out there did not meet important criteria for the introduction and retention of spoken foreign languages. She had a four-year old at the time who was an “Elmo” junkie, and she appreciated the attraction that animal characters held for the very young. She wanted a program that would be engaging, easy to use and attractive to young children everywhere. It was her mother, Beverly Pimsleur, however, who suggested a panda. At the least, Pim the Panda alliterates, but at the most the adorable soft and cuddly creature has proved his worth in ways well beyond that of language acquisition.

The programs subtly introduce “panda facts,” a wee bit of China lore, and ecological concerns about saving a beautiful and exotic species from extinction. Ms. Levine also points out—one of the many sharp effects of her experience with film—that the black and white panda shows up well on screen. Little babies, she points out, see in black and white, not color, so Little Pim is age appropriate—it’s for infants, toddlers, pre-Ks. And also for monolingual adults, who are warmly invited by way of a “Parents’ Guide” to watch the DVDs with their children.

When to start? Ms. Levine wisely doesn’t go there, “that’s a personal choice,” she says, but she does note that parents and grandparents are choosing Little Pim in increasing numbers, including—great PR, this—Angeline Jolie, and customers in Babies R Us stores all over the country, not to mention libraries where companion books to the DVD series have been receiving a lot of attention. When to move on? Probably around the age of five, Ms. Levine suggests, because at that age “kids want a narrative” and more computer time—shrewd observations that suggest that Little Pim Phase Two, an interactive program for older children, is on the way. In the meantime, the panda is proving especially multilingual: in response to requests, he now pays his way around in Hebrew, Italian and Japanese, with phonetic visuals available.

For Ms. Levine, the three-year old series is not just a language-acquisition program but also a “mission” to “democratize language learning.” It just so happens that this goal is consonant with President Obama’s belief that every child should be learning a foreign language. Child friendly, affordable ($17.95), well made (by the award-winning production company, Astorisk, and the filmmaking company, Arts Engine, Inc.), Little Pim promises to “bear” 180 words in a foreign language to all who listen and watch.

LINGUIST MOTHER & DAUGHTER CARRY ON FAMILY TRADITIONS

By JOAN BAUM, PH.D.

Beverly Pimsleur has an wonderful job: with great joy and dedication she’s working with her daughter on LittlePim, a unique educational animated video series for young children, exchanging roles that once had Julia Pimsleur Levine working for her. When her daughter was four, she was “starring” in one of her mother’s videos (on Greek mythology). Later on, Julia would be a Production Assistant for ACTUEL Video, INC, a small company Ms. Pimsleur ran for a few years. Now, together, they are fulfilling the dreams of her late husband and Julia’s father, Dr. Paul Pimsleur.

On her own, however, Ms. Pimsleur continues to edit her husband’s language books (he had completed three at the time of his death) and writing others in light of his pedagogical principles. “Carrying the flame” of his passion to revolutionize “rapid language acquisition” for adults (Dr. Pimsleur also created “the first language lab in the country), Ms. Pimsleur has been moving quietly to reassert the importance of the method, an innovative program that once engaged the interest of the former Department of Housing, Education and Welfare in conjunction with its idea to create a national bank of languages. The Pimsleur Method is now the guiding force of a best-selling, updated audio tape and CD series published by Simon and Schuster.

The modest and articulate former academic (she has an M.A. in Ancient Greek History and took course work for a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at NYU and the Sorbonne. Although she is also a documentary filmmaker, she doesn’t trumpet her own professional expertise, but it’s impressive. She met her husband, a professor of French, at Ohio State; they went to live for three summers in Lyon, first with a French couple, where she realized she had better become fluent fast, at least better prepared than what dubious instruction had provided in school and college. At that time, and no doubt still part of some foreign language curricula, languages were typically presented as reading exercises—translations of literary works and, for aural acquisition, parroting isolated words and phrases. “Boring” and likely to persuade the less attuned that they had no ability to learn. During the summers in Lyon her husband devised an original and revolutionary way to teach the reading of foreign languages. He did not rely on literary standards, then in widespread use, but on short articles of topical, contemporary interest. Compiled, they became a book, the first of which was called C’est La Vie, for which she did extensive research. Her husband’s texts eventually became models for others in the foreign language field, and he added Sol Y Sombra and Encounters to the series.

But it was his innovative idea for teaching rapid language acquisition that made his wider reputation. With a grant from Washington, the newly married couple set off for Greece to try out the method which Prof. Pimsleur called “graduated interval recall.” Ms. Pimsleur describes the method as a device to ensure that words just learned are remembered by putting them in recombined contexts and “recalled just as you are beginning to forget them.” Another feature of the method is what Ms. Pimsleur refers to as “teaching a new word from the back” (not pre-fix, not root). It works for every language, she says. She still hears from professionals, among them archaeologists who learned Greek with the Pimsleur method and who went to work with the Greek Archaeological Society, about the speed and effectiveness of the method.

The fruit does not fall far from the tree. In addition to daughter Julia, Ms. Pimsleur has a son who is completing his medical internship and will be practicing in Texas where he will also be practicing Spanish. As The Pimsleur Method demonstrates, if you can learn one language, you can learn any one, including tonal languages, such as Chinese. You need no classroom, no teacher—and, because the target audience is adult, not even a panda (though you may well want to adopt).!

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Early Childhood Education:
The Commitment in 2009

By JOAN BAUM, PH.D.

Dr. Ruby Takanishi, President of The Foundation for Child Development (FCD), a national, privately endowed philanthropic organization dedicated to the improvement of education for all children, by way of nutrition, health, policy programs and advocacy, is a strong believer in the “low hanging food strategy.” That means, taking and working with whatever is available rather than reaching everywhere, especially in less fruitful times, so to speak.

Given the stated commitment of President Obama to commit $10 billion toward early childhood education and the fact that the new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, former Chicago Schools Superintendent, comes from a public school district that Dr. Takanishi calls “one of the best” in addressing early childhood needs and integrating them into a rational system, Dr. Takanishi remarks that it may finally be done about a structure that is now fragmented, incoherent and bureaucratically weighted down. Even if not all of the $10 billion is made available, she is pleased that FCD was asked for input from the transition team. Four billion philanthropic dollars (about half of which is provided by Gates) are targeted toward nutrition, but only $500 billion are required for K-12 expenditures.

As they say, do the math. And remember, we’re in an economic downturn.

“A combination of early childhood education and child development, Dr. Takanishi’s belief translates to education basically in two ways: 1) improving the quality of the pre-K to 5; and 2) integrating special ed pre-K-5 ‘culture’ into the so-the-called regular K-12 culture. The two aims are related since FCD’s mission includes understanding the language of learning and guiding the education effort toward particular disadvantages in children. No system that separates (or “silos”) special ed public school children from others, even if the gap is gradated, is sound in particular to disadvantaged children. No system.

While Takanishi fervently believes in education as a main avenue of effecting social change, an idea that guided her to come to the continental United States in 1964 and pursue her own opportunities at Stanford. FCD’s recent reports notes that among 41 nations participating in a student assessment survey, “American 15-year-olds ranked 12th in reading, 20th in science, and 25th in math in 2009.” Not a pretty picture but one that begins to “develop” early on. The National Assessment for Education Programs (NAEP), the nation’s report card, “reinforces the connection between PreK-3rd and academic achievement.”

Although several FCD grants have been clustered in the Washington D.C. area, where many high-profile policy-making national education centers make their home, FCD extends its three-pronged initiative nationwide. They are: PreK-3rd A New Beginning for American Education (the major thrust of the foundation); Child Well-Being Index (an annual external review program that measures, reports on and makes central in seminars devoted to policy issues); and New American Children (focusing on children from immigrant families, from birth to age nine), a program that encourages research by way of a Young Scholars Program. Extensive information on each of these can be found online.

A Farm to Table Education Program

By LAUREN SHAPIRO

“We call ourselves delicious nutrition educators,” says Laura Stanley, Executive Director of the Sylvia Center, a farm to table education program. “We use a farmed table, a garden table. Our orientation is pleasure, to see, taste, and understand how food can be.”

The need for such education is clear. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, warning of prevalent childhood obesity, states “schools provide an ideal setting for implementing innovative programs that focus on improving…nutrition.”

With that agenda on her plate, Ms. Stanley continues “We regard all children as being in need of good food, but we focus on neighborhoods where childhood obesity is epidemic. We set up kiosks in Soho, where children have to walk to go to a park, there are no open flames, it’s very safe, intimate. There are pictures of our farm all around and we talk about the farm. We talk to preschoolers, after school, and summer camp groups. We’ve teamed up with Big Brothers, New York Cares, and other organizations. Award-winning cookbook author Corinne Trang, designed two curriculums for us: Healthy Snacks and World Food. Both use simple, seasonal, whole, organic foods.

It’s all hands on. A typical dessert this time of year is roasted pear. We brush it with oil and put it to roast. It carmelizes, so the natural sugars come out and it tastes great. For high school course, closing the achievement gap among the various ethnicities in the country is important, she says, but even if it were achieved, if the quality of America’s early childhood education programs is not addressed — in all states, similarly — American children will not be competitive. Her passion is in part personal: born in a rural part of Hawaii, with Japanese heritage, Dr. Takanishi fervently believes in education as a main avenue of effecting social change, an idea that guided her to come to the continental United States in 1964 and pursue her own opportunities at Stanford. FCD’s recent reports notes that among 41 nations participating in a student assessment survey, “American 15-year-olds ranked 12th in reading, 20th in science, and 25th in math.” Not a pretty picture but one that begins to “develop” early on.

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WHAT ARE HALF-MILLION TEENS READING EACH MONTH?

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A PsychiAtRist exAmines Children & Sports

By RONALD L. KAMM, M.D.

Seventy percent of all children drop out of organized youth sports between the ages of 8 and 13. Over the past 25 years, such a statistic has led youth sport experts to conclude that adult-organized youth sports, as they have come to exist, are not adequately serving the needs of our children. Interestingly enough, though Little League is often regarded as the prototype for adult involvement in youth athletics, two New York City educators were really the first to take a crack at it. The educators believed, in 1903, that the New York City elementary school curriculum should include organized sports for boys. Teachers, acting as coaches, supervised their young charges as they played sports, but the innovation spread to most US schools over the next 30 years. In the 1930’s, however, educators became alarmed at the emphasis on winning that they observed in these programs, and at the physical and emotional strains that championship play seemed to put on the children. In the early 1940’s, seeing the same pattern, physicians joined educators in their concerns. Both the American Medical Association and The American Academy of Pediatrics came out against “highly organized competition of a varsity pattern for children of elementary and junior high school age”, and educator-run sports programs for children began to disappear, leaving a vacuum that would soon be filled.

Carl Stotz, an oil company clerk from Williamsport, PA, unwittingly changed youth sports forever when, in 1939, he plugged adults, and a miniaturized version of major league baseball, on a backyard game that had been played in splendid isolation by children for many years. Stotz’s intentions were good. He had originally conceived the idea when, as a boy, he was playing right field and felt bored because his teammates were arguing incessantly about whether a runner was safe or out. Young Stotz daydreamed of growing up and organizing a team with adult supervision, where such bickering could not occur.

Years later, when his two nephews came to him dejected over not being allowed to play with a group of older boys, Stotz had a flashback to that day in right field. He excitedly began describing his idea to the boys. They were wide-eyed and enthusiastic as their uncle described how he intended to outfit them in real uniforms and, using brand-new balls and scaled-down bats, give them regulation fields to play on and teams to play against. They asked Uncle Carl if he thought people would actually come watch them play, and whether there would be a band, like the Williamsport Grays had at their games.

From that grand and innocent notion, we have come down to the tennis dads and swimming moms who become so involved in their children’s athletic lives that they take the fun out of youth sports. As coaches and parents, umpires and league officials, adults are nothing if not teachers. Yet, while the dedication of many adults in youth sports is worthy of high praise, most coaches and officials get little training in child development and psychology and are not responsive enough to the individual differences among kids. More Parent-Training classes, and the filling out of pre-season checklists by the whole family would be a good start, as the two most common reasons that kids give for dropping out of youth sports are abusive coaching practices and excessive parental pressure.

From a sport psychiatrist’s perspective, it seems that adults often forget that we are really only Carl Stotz’s “invited hosts” in children’s play. Hosts have responsibilities, and one of the primary ones is to try to make the sport experience a positive and fun one for each child involved, showing respect for the individuals that they are and for the ones we hope them to be.

Ronald L. Kamm, MD, is Director of Sports Psychiatry Associates in Oakhurst, NJ and immediate Past-President of the International Society for Sport Psychiatry. http://www.minutemanand-sports.com

NEW: COACHES SERIES

Joe Jones, Coach of Columbia Lions Leads Team to New Era

By RICHARD KAGAN

During a recent Columbia Lions men’s basketball game, head coach Joe Jones met his team during a timeout. He knelt down and flashed out the assignments for his team on a small board. Jones was animated. His players, some sitting in chairs, others standing, were concentrating intently on his every word. For coach Jones, and his staff, playing the game is a culmination of hours of practice, film work, and practice on the court. The game is literally decision-time, how will the hard work film work, and practice on the court. The game is a culmination of hours of practice, film work, and practice on the court. The game is literally decision-time, how will the hard work plan on and teams to play against. They asked Uncle Carl if he thought people would actually come watch them play, and whether there would be a band, like the Williamsport Grays had at their games.

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Dr. Betty A. Rosa, serving her first term as a Regent, filling the position from the 12th Judicial District (Bronx County), was an opportunity to “come back home.” After resigning from the restructured New York City system a few years ago, Dr. Rosa became a consultant, looking particularly at public schools in Miami, Florida, and Clark County, Nevada. When she was urged, however, by several political and academic colleagues to consider becoming a New York State Regent – she was at Cornell at the time -- she found the call of her “backyard” irresistible.

Her connectedness to the city had been honed, of course, from years as a practitioner and administrator, a diverse background that included five years as superintendent for Community School District 8 and principal in District 6, and over 13 years in allied administrative positions. Named Educator of the Year in 2002 by the Bronx Puerto Rican Parade, Superintendent of the Year by Mercy College in 1999 and Outstanding Educator by the New York State Assembly, she feels that she comes to her new role with solid experience.

She has a B.A. from Harvard University. The attraction of the position, she says, was a chance to address issues that have always been important to her but that now had the chance of being translated into major policy: falling graduation rates especially for Blacks and Hispanics, Special Needs education, maintaining “rigor” in the curriculum. She’d like to do what she can to ensure that the State Education Department is more “service oriented” and that districts all over the state, urban and rural, “feel involved” in initiatives. She thinks that her familiarity with education as a practitioner, as someone who has a “sense of reality about the day-to-day operation of schools,” will be an advantage on the board. It is her intention to continue to consult with principals, those she knows for former days and those whom she has met recently, to hear their ideas. She wants “reality” to inform her work. And research. She has been looking at curricula in other states such as North Carolina, with efforts to “raise the bar” on teacher training throughout the state have been proving effective, and where the governor has been involved in a supportive role.

Particular goals? Dr. Rosa feels strongly about addressing testing. Why is the Language Arts exam offered in January? That means that many teachers are “obsessively” devoting September to January preparing their students for the exam. Then, when that’s over, they start in on preparing for the Math exam. “This doesn’t make sense.” Such an arrangement is not desirable way to deal with accountability. There must be different models out there, she says, and of course she’s looking at them, as well as reviewing recent research. The issue is more than the timing of the exams, however, she points out. It has to do essentially with the purpose and evaluation of the exams, the interpretation and use of the reported data.

Dr. Rosa is also especially cognizant of global strategies. Yes, there are wonderful schools out there, but if they remain sui generis, then the system cannot benefit. She used to think that “local problems deserve local solutions,” she says, but “if you try to compare one local district with another, in another state, it’s like comparing apples and oranges.” She is, needless to say, an advocate of national standards, if not curricula, and perhaps teacher training. As for curricula, she would have “fewer concepts, more in-depth learning.” Overall, she is optimistic about how Arne Duncan at the national helm – “he has good people skills” and his views are consonant with those of President Obama.

She has nothing but success on mind. After all, it’s what her grandmother, her ultimate mentor, would wanted. A woman who cleaned schools for a living, her grandmother taught Dr. Rosa that “education is your credit card to a better tomorrow.” In fact, when Dr. Rosa was elected to District 8, Grandma was right there, counting the votes. And she brought herself a new dress because she just knew the occasion would happen and that it would be good for her granddaughter, for education and the city of New York. And now, she would probably add, the state.
The New Year 2009

NEW YEAR’S WISH LIST

By CHARLOTTE K. FRANK, PH.D., SVP, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, MCGRaw-HILL COMPANIES

Look forward to the actions the new Secretary of Education in continuing and modifying where necessary our focus on accountability and standards. I have every confidence that he will achieve for the young people of the United States, as a whole, what he is achieving in Chicago. I also look forward to a renewed emphasis on science, the arts, as well as health and physical education if we are to bring our students to the forefront in the world of education. This clearly is in addition to the recently publicized pre-K – early childhood initiative because as the “twig is bent that is how the tree will grow”.

My congratulations to Secretary Arne Duncan and my every wish for his success because his success is our success.

A NEW DAY AND A NEW YEAR FOR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

By KATHLEEN WALDRON, PRESIDENT, BARUCH COLLEGE, CUNY

new year brings with it new possibilities, particularly when it coincides with a new administration in Washington. The change that President-elect Obama has pledged to the nation must include the return of education to the very top of the national agenda. The destiny of our nation depends, more than ever, on a highly educated populace capable of understanding the technological and financial gears that propel our global economy.

Of course, a commitment to education means little without the dollars to support it. Even in the current difficult economic circumstances, we must do everything possible to ensure that education, particularly public education, does not become a casualty of the economic downturn. Tuition at CUNY colleges will increase next year, and we must make sure that there is a commensurate increase in financial aid, including loans, grants and work-study programs, so that no deserving student is locked out by the inability to pay.

As president of a college frequently cited as the most diverse in the nation, I am surrounded by talented, ambitious hard-working young people of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We cannot afford to exclude any of them from the promise of higher education.

HOPES AND DREAMS FOR SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN

By BONNIE KAISER, PH.D., DIRECTOR, SUMMER SCIENCE OUTREACH PROGRAMS, THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

long with my hopes, dreams, and best wishes for President Obama and Secretary of Education Ann Duncan, I know that I have to be ready to serve where it counts if we are to contribute all our rich human resources to education to temper accountability with reason such that our children learn how to think and to become citizens of the world.

We hope for a brighter future. Over the past year, I have lived in more perilous times; we’re dealing with international terrorism, war and global economic crisis. In New York, we are confronting severe reductions in school funding and in many services to children and families. But we are also witnessing the fledgling administration of our 44th President, a transcendent figure who ran for office on a platform of hope and built a Cabinet on an enlightened theory of pragmatism.

As a witness to Barack Obama’s triumph, as well as his dedication to education – including a nearly unprecedented emphasis on early childhood education – I’m going allow myself to indulge in a little optimism and take a leap of faith. While I’m allowing myself this moment of belief in infinite possibility, I’ll refrain from prioritizing four of the wishes I hold in my heart.

Every wish is equally important:

At the top of my list is the wish to put the “public” into public education in a more meaningful way. Yes, our school system recognizes the value of family and community involvement. But children will benefit greatly if that recognition grows and the system allows families, as well as the community, a greater voice in the appointment of community superintendents and development of district budgets, safety and policy.

Engaging families in children’s education is particularly important for student achievement. Those who know our children best have a great deal of wisdom to impart on their behalf.

At the top of my list is the wish to introduce an independent evaluation of our schools, which would be a boon to our children, families and educators, as well as to the Department of Education, which is often accused of manipulating the data that it gathers by itself. I would like to see the Legislature create an Independent School Performance “Data and Budget Office” that would collect, analyze and provide timely information about school performance. Independent evaluation would strengthen public faith in the integrity of the system and provide an extra layer of protection for children.

At the top of my list is the wish to appoint one Assistant Principal into every school. Let’s listen to our new Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, who has referred to APs collectively “as a great pool of talent” that hasn’t been noticed nearly enough. One role of the AP is to provide leadership in the absence of the Principal. In addition, the AP plays an indispensable role in helping teachers with planning, curriculum and classroom. APs also serve as beacons to parents as they strive to become involved in their children’s learning. Already stretched to the limit, our Principals should never have to serve without an AP.

At the top of my list is the wish that school leaders be recognized as educators rather than mere CEOs. Schools don’t exist to make money and manufacture products, but to teach children and help them fulfill their potential. Considering the recent Wall Street collapse, and the revelation of corporate Ponzi schemes, perhaps we can finally put to rest the myth that CEOs know how to run things better than anyone else. It is educators who have the training and inspiration to help transform children into the most successful, productive and happiest citizens they can be.

GreatSchools, the non-profit one in three parents turn to for advice and community about how to improve their child’s education, applauded the appointment of Arne Duncan as President-Elect Obama’s choice for Secretary of Education.

“The importance of parents and the essential role they play in a child’s academic success was once again reinforced by President-Elect Barack Obama during his news conference this morning announcing the appointment of Arne Duncan,” said GreatSchools founder and former teacher Bill Jackson.

“Arne Duncan’s leadership in executing President-Elect Barack Obama’s vision of renewed parental engagement as a way to dramatically improve school performance is a strong vote of support for the 33 million parents who visit GreatSchools every year to improve their child’s education.

“We look forward to helping President Elect Obama and the incoming Secretary of Education leverage the media of our time to help parents play their role as partners and advocates for their children’s education,” added Jackson.

More than 33 million parents—one in three—visit a website called www.GreatSchools.net every year. It serves as the largest “virtual” meeting place for America’s parents to learn more about their children’s school and how they can improve their child’s academic performance. It has more ratings, facts and figures on schools: pre-K through 12th grade, both public, private and charter, than any other single resource as well as helpful hands-on guidance for parents.

Launched ten years ago by former teacher and tech entrepreneur Bill Jackson, GreatSchools was founded with the mission of empowering parents with deep information about individual schools and the ability to communicate together to fundamentally change the face of education in America today.

Parents remain the last free untouched resource to change schools and Web 2.0 or social media holds the key to unlock that potential. Recently awarded a $20M investment from the nation’s leading education foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, GreatSchools is poised to launch an ambitious web 2.0 initiative to dramatically increase college attendance.

“We intend to use the Web to transform the relationship between parents and schools in the same way that the Obama campaign changed the way voters interact with their candidate.”

On the dawn of 2009, I’m filled with promise. It’s true that we’ve rarely lived in more perilous times; we’re dealing with international terrorism, war and global economic crisis. In New York, we are confronting severe reductions in school funding and in many services to children and families. But we are also witnessing the fledgling administration of our 44th President, a transcendent figure who ran for office on a platform of hope and built a Cabinet on an enlightened theory of pragmatism.

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Don't Worry, Camp Is Not Out Of Your Reach

By EVE EIFLER, CO-DIRECTOR, TIPS ON TRIPS AND CAMPS, BALTIMORE, MD

The costs associated with camp may seem daunting to many families, especially in today’s economic downturn. However, especially for working parents, camp is not a luxury but an essential part of the summer.

What will your child do this summer if you cannot afford sleep away camp? Do you envision your child lying on the couch in front of the TV all summer long? Do you have thoughts of your teen plugged into an iPod or on Facebook for three straight months? Or worse? It is a recurring issue for all parents. Although the costs are real, camp is an important part of a family’s peace of mind as well as an important part of any child’s education. So, don’t dismay, there is a way to find a camp that fits your budget. Help is readily available to families picking a sleep away camp that matches their child’s requirements and is within their budget. A handful of companies exist that provide free consulting and advisory services to any family that knows to call them. The service is without charge, and families incur no obligation of any kind when they request guidance or information.

Camp advisors are often an unknown parental resource spread by word-of-mouth among families already “in the know.” Camp advisory services like the one I work for (Tips on Trips and Camps) have years of experience addressing families’ questions and concerns. Advisors ask families the questions necessary to make sure that the “fit” is right between the program and the child and provide families with lists of questions to ask directors.

Tips on Trips and Camps offers the following suggestions to make summer sleep away camps and teen programs affordable. If you have a tight budget but know you want to send your child away to camp:

- Be aware of early enrollment discounts. Plan ahead. Ask the camp about a discount for multiple children from one family. Inquire about shorter sessions to accommodate a tight budget.

- Make summer a part of your educational plan. Choose a shorter specialty program that will enhance the student’s profile for college or help develop a new interest or skill. Private camps are not subsidized, so the camper is paying for all of the costs to run a camp: insurance, staff, equipment, and capital improvements. You can expect to pay between $700 - $1200 a week for a private camp.

- If you have a very small budget and need to spend less than $600 per week: Contact camps run by your local county government or agencies like the Jewish Federation, the JCC, the Salvation Army, Campfire Boys and Girls or the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. These camps offer a summer experience at a reduced cost because the sponsoring agency subsidizes the camp.

- Look into financial aid, which is available at most camps. If you apply early, it is possible to get a 20-50% discount based on need.

- Camp is a wonderfully enriching gift you can give your child. No matter what your budget, there is a camp to meet your family’s financial and educational needs. Happy camping!

Tips on Trips and Camps is one of the oldest and largest camp advisory services. Established in 1971, “Tips” has advisors in 16 cities, relationships with over 600 sleep away camps and programs, and each year provides advice and guidance to thousands of families. The service is provided by phone, email and the website, which makes it available to anyone virtually anywhere. For more information and advice, to request brochures and DVDs, or speak to a knowledgeable consultant, visit www.TipsOnTripsandCamps.com.

Joe Jones
continued from page 9
his early adulthood. He was guided by Warren Isaacs and Art Kindelman, two of his coaches at Half Hollow Hills West H.S. in Dix Hills, Long Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.) Island. He speaks of his college (SUNY, Oswego) coach, Paul Callahan with affection, calling him “a great college coach.” Jones later assisted under Frank Romeo, varsity high school coach who made a great impact on the young man. “I wouldn’t be coaching college basketball if it wasn’t for him,” said Jones. Romeo took the Comsewogue (L.I.)
Doctors Without Borders

continued from page 5

The National Lampoon, and the parodies will forget the evening. Hendra, who appeared as the stairs." "What was more extraordinary," said to quickly leave because firemen were coming up throughout the school and I had to ask everyone to do Torrente says. Infant mortality overwhelm- to challenge inadequacies or abuse of the aid sys- Diminution of support. Even in trying times, Dr. de Torrente appreciates the fine... and "The National Lampoon," and the parodies “Not the New York Times," and “My Wall Street Journal," clearly had the audience in the palm of his hand. He read passages from his best-selling book “Father Joe,” that brought tears to the eyes of some fans, followed by shrieks of hilarity when he dead-panned some devastatingly irreverent

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SUBSCRIBE to Education Update Only $30 Per Year Call us at (212) 650-3552 or visit us on the web at: www.EducationUpdate.com
As President-elect Obama’s Education Cabinet prepares to tackle the problems that plague the American school system, a panel of education experts expressed their views on what lies ahead to further improve public education. Hosted by the Education Alumni Association and the School of Education in the City College of New York, the panel included Ernest Logan, President, Council of Supervisors and Administrators; Michael Mulgrew, V.P., Career and Technical Education, UFT; Dr. Richard Organisciak, Superintendent, New Rochelle School District; Dr. Alfred Posamentier, Dean, CCNY School of Education; Althea Serrant, Educational Consultant; and Dr. Lester Young, Member, NYS Board of Regents at Large. Dr. Betty Rosa, member of the NYS Board of Regents, was the moderator.

Among the topics that were addressed, the panelists each identified an issue that deserves greater attention under the Cabinet’s education initiative.

Ernest Logan opened the discussion by identifying early childhood education as a critical area in need of additional support. “We need to get our children focused on education,” said Logan. “It is the basis for all that we do. If we don’t start there we’ve missed the boat.” In his campaign for the presidency, Obama pledged to provide support for young children and their parents through his “Zero to Five” plan, which emphasizes early childhood education as a critical area that needs to be addressed.

Focusing on the need for educators that are prepared to teach effectively, Dr. Alfred S. Posamentier called for the increased professionalization of the teaching profession. “I’d like to see people go through a proper training program,” said Posamentier. “Unfortunately in education we go through one shortage crisis after another. We compromise standards and that compromises the profession.”

Dr. Richard Organisciak supported the idea of a national curriculum. “Wouldn’t it be nice to know that what you study in Mississippi applies to what is being studied in New York?” asked Organisciak. “I know that’s far-fetched but it’s my way of saying we are ready...for a national curriculum, which comes with national standards.”

Citing findings that students in career and technical schools often outperform other students in test scores, Michael Mulgrew advocated an increase in the use of applied learning. “In this day and age we find more students are successful when we put them in real world sequencing…sitting down in a classroom…not in an applied learning setting is not a good idea,” said Mulgrew.

Althea Serrant emphasized the importance of accurately identifying students with special educational needs to reduce overcrowded classrooms. The overall number of children enrolled in special education programs increased by 53% from 3.72 million in 1977 to 5.68 million in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Critics attribute the increase to the misidentification of students as learning disabled, which some say is too broadly defined. “We need to redefine special ed. and be aware of students’ learning styles,” said Serrant. “That would help reduce the number of students we’re moving into special ed.”

Dr. Lester W. Young identified high school dropout rates as a growing crisis. “In every state there is a huge disparity in who graduates from high school. If anyone believes a young person can survive without a high school education, you’re kidding yourself,” said Young. Black students are twice as likely to drop out of high school and Hispanic students are four times as likely to drop out as white students, according to a recent survey from the U.S. Department of Education.

Fellow educators in the audience appreciated the points made by the panelists. “I wasn’t expecting any magic answers, but hearing this discussion was certainly helpful,” said Dr. Lynn Tarlow, an assistant professor in mathematics at the City College of New York. “It’s given us more food for thought.”

Activities at the Wildlife Conservation Society

“Practicing the Art of Conservation” honoring Dr. George Schaller’s lifetime of work in wildlife conservation.

Fairfield Osborn Memorial Public Lecture at Rockefeller University (1230 York Avenue at East 66th Street) Hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society. February 26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. / FREE - Register online at www.wcs.org/osbornlecture2009 or email osbornlecture2009@wcs.org

A not-to-miss lecture for the dedicated and thoughtful conservationist. It is a snapshot of five decades of groundbreaking initiatives to save wildlife by preeminent conservationist, Dr. George Schaller during his years with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Speakers and subjects include: Dr. Amy Veder: Mountain gorillas; Dr. Joel Berger: Caribou & the Arctic; Dr. Lu Zhi: Giant pandas; Aili Kang: Tibet’s Chang Tang Reserve & Its Wildlife; Rafael Hoogerheide: Jaguars; Dr. Tom McCarthy: Snow leopards; and Dr. Ullas Karanth: Tigers.

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www.touro.edu/nyscas
By LAUREN SHAPIRO

Dance at a street festival? Students “trapping” about ballet in the New York State Supreme Court? A Creole version of the classical ballet Giselle? These out-of-the-box dance productions spring from the mission of Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH).

DTH co-founders Arthur Mitchell, the first African-American male member of a major ballet company, and his mentor Karel Shook, shared a vision that DTH was “about returning the arts to the people to whom they belong and in perceiving them as necessary to daily life as they always should have been.”

Returning arts to the people is staging ballet in August city street heat, or re-setting Giselle in Louisiana, or reminding lawyers racing to “move this Court” that movement comes in many forms. The unique and meaningful education program at DTH elevates these endeavors from potential gimmickry to “Classically American®.”

From their first steps as beginners, DTH students experience Russian, English, and American dance training. The faculty includes former DTH company members. Depending on the program—Community, Pre-Professional, or Professional—students have a varied curriculum of ballet, tap, modern, jazz and African dance. They also study gymnastics, music, physical therapy, anatomy and dance history. DTH is accredited by the New York State Department of Education.

Lisa Jo Sagolla, DTH dance history teacher, says, “I think you can always tell a dancer who has a sense of the history, of the style, of where the choreographer came from. It makes a difference in their style; it makes a difference in their ability to get a job. If they audition for Miami Ballet and they know something about Edward Villela, it’s not so much in technique, but you see it in their style. Style is where you see historical understanding. It’s something that permeates their dancing in a way that it’s obvious to the rest of us, the older folks, perhaps. It’s obvious when it’s not there.”

This is dance from the inside out. Most students think of dance from a technical point of view—faster movements, higher jumps, longer endurance. “There’s always one or two that are real buffs that want to know all this, but I wouldn’t say it was a top priority for the majority of the students. Some students are not at all interested in dance history, but they’re very interested in their future careers and what is going on today in the ballet world. So I use current events as the jumping off points. This year San Francisco Ballet is celebrating their 75th anniversary, it’s Alvin Ailey’s 50th, Lars Lubavitch’s 40th—I used those anniversaries as the framing device. We noted what celebration events were going on and I spoke about the history of each of those companies. I really try to find some newscast. When Lars did a new version of Othello, I went back and talked about the previous versions of Othello.”

She adds, “Whenever a famous dancer dies I bring in the obituaries. It’s an excuse to go back in history.”

If you want to see the results of this education driven institution, DTH hosts an Open House series, showcasing performances by students, the Dancing Through Barriers Ensemble®, and guest performers. The schedule is: January 11th, “Living the Dream...Celebrating Martin King Jr.”, February 15th, “Honoring The Elders: 40 Years at DTH.” March 8th “Arthur Mitchell at 75.” April 19th, “Jazz From Harlem: With Love” and May 17th, “Sweet Harlem.” Mr. Mitchell generally introduces the performers and at the reception. This is DTH, up close and personal.#

Lauren Shapiro is dance accompanist at DTH and a reporter for Education Update.

THEATER REVIEW

Green Ogre Shrek, The Musical Hits Broadway

By JAN AARON

The smelly, cranky, ugly green ogre, Shrek, starting as a slim book by cartoonist William Steig and featured and in a series of DreamWorks’ Films, has made an extravagant Broadway debut in Shrek, The Musical, a $24 million show produced by the film studio. That huge sum is definitely out to believe and enjoy what they’re doing. Shrek, perturbed by the invasion of his swamp by strangers, must travel the land to fix this. He finds romance along the way when he rescues Princess Fiona, played to perfection by Sutton Foster, and saves her from the dimwitted evil Lord Farquaad, portrayed by sly scene stealer Christopher Sieber. A buddy show as well as a romance, Shrek, the Musical also is a touching story about finding beauty in even the most unconventional looking people.

David Lindsay-Abaire’s book and lyrics are cleverly satiric and Jeanine Tesori’s score is a fine match for the story, with nods to popular Broadway shows like Gypsy, The Lion King, Chorus Line and Xanadu. Choreographer Josh Prince’s choreography is best when Farquaad lead s the ensemble in “What’s Up Duloc?” True to its’ opening tune, the show creates a “Big Bright Beautiful World.” (Broadway Theater, 53rd & Broadway, 212-2396200; $41-50-$121.50)
ALUMNI ARE ACTIVE IN EFFORTS NATIONWIDE. TAKE LUCY WURTZ AS AN EXAMPLE. A NEW JERSEY TEACHER, SHE IMPLEMENTED HER STRATEGIES. ONE TEACHER OF HER STUDENTS SAID, "A-HA" MOMENTS THAT LED HER TO HER MATH CAREER; SHE NOW WORKS TO HELP OTHERS TRANSITION INTO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

"HEAD START IS INCREDIBLY COMPREHENSIVE IN ITS SERVICES," SAID KAHN. "IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT THE CHILDREN, BUT ALSO ABOUT FAMILIES AND THEIR NEEDS."
**Review of Hugging The Middle: How Teachers Teach In An Era Of Testing And Accountability**

By MERRI ROSENBERG

As someone who initially covered education at the moment when alternative assessments (raise your hands if you remember portfolios) became popular, only to be kicked to the curb when accountability, the standards movement and "measurable outcomes" became the only game in town, Larry Cuban’s timely exploration of teachers’ roles in actually teaching students is invaluable.

For no matter how fancy the school building, or how up-to-date the smart boards in the classroom, none of that makes as much of an impact as a well-trained teacher who knows what to do to reach students. And pity the poor classroom teacher—especially the creative, slightly unconventional one, whose classroom doesn’t always conform but may leave a life-long impact on her lucky students—who has to adjust his or her approach to accommodate the prevailing pedagogical winds.

As he writes, “As important as improving boards of education, streamlining bureaucracies and getting unions to be reform-minded are in making good schools, learning still depends on what teachers do daily with students in classrooms. Inevitably, then, if critics see teachers as the problem, in students’ inadequate academic performance, these decision makers also know that teachers must also be the solution.”

Not surprisingly, Cuban—perhaps obviously to those who’ve been in the educational field for some time—concludes that “good” teaching (helping a student understand a concept or subject) and “successful” teaching (having a child recapture that knowledge in a format familiar in this NCLB era) aren’t necessarily the same, although decision-makers and parents don’t always grasp that distinction.

Cuban also argues that there can’t possibly be a one-size-fits-all approach—be it from the progressive or the traditional streams of education. In his view, good teaching is critically related to the subject matter at hand: "Good teaching of content requires knowledge of the discipline and particular pedagogical moves native to the subject matter.

The author respects and champions the ultimate pragmatism of most classroom teachers, who have to negotiate the "windblown" debates over what and how schools should teach. Instead, teachers assemble flexible lessons and become practical decision makers in these uncertain and messy but demanding settings. They hug the middle of the pedagogical pendulum.

Larry Cuban, professor emeritus of education at Stanford University and the author of How Teachers Teach, is a veteran educational reformer who knows his stuff. Not only has he taught courses about the history of school reform, instruction, leadership and curriculum, but Cuban also taught high school social studies in high-poverty urban schools. He also served for several years as high school social studies in high-poverty urban schools. He also served for several years as high school social studies in high-poverty urban schools. In this slim, yet important, volume, Cuban refreshes, well-grounded insights that remove a one-size-fits-all approach—be it from the progressive or the traditional streams of education. In his view, good teaching is critically related to the subject matter at hand: "Good teaching of content requires knowledge of the discipline and particular pedagogical moves native to the subject matter.

**January Book Reviews**

**PICTURE BOOK: AGES 5 THRU 8**

**Pirate Treasure Hunt**

By JAMIE PICK Illustrated by Adrián Yanez

(Lothrop, unaged, $16.95)

"Wanted: Pirates!No experience or bath need ed. The quest begins in this swashbuckling hilarious readaloud with lots of "Arrrrreels!" and "Shiver me timbers!" Detailed oil paintings of pajama-clad kiddies swinging thru jungle-vines and navigating the crocodile-infested waters of an imaginary land.

**The Firefighters**

By Sue Whiting. Illustrated by Donna Rawlins

(Candlewick Press, unaged, $16.99)

In Mrs. Iverson’s classroom, cardboard boxes are magically transformed into fire engines, paper tubes are fire hoses, and scarfs are oxygen masks. Bright, primary colored acrylic illustrations perfect for introducing fire safety.

**FICTION: AGES 8 THRU 12**

**The Houdini Box**

by Brian Selznick

(Atheneum, unaged, $17.99)

A would-be magician named Victor encounters his hero Harry Houdini and is even given a prize box that offers up an amazing discovery! An intriguing tale with bonus biographical information on the great Houdini and illustrated magic tricks.

**NONFICTION: AGES 8 THRU 12**

**Underwear: What We Wear Down There**

by Ruth Freeman Swain

Illustrated by John O'Brien

(Holiday House, 32 pp, $16.95)

With an energetic writing style and humorous artwork, learn the chronological progression of different types of underwear throughout the ages. A fun selection on the history of clothing for future little fashion designers.

Selene Vasquez is a media specialist at Orange Brook Elementary School in Hollywood, Florida.

Logos Bookstore’s Recommendations

**Barack Obama, Son of Promise, Child of Hope**

by Nikki Grimes

Illustrated by Bryan Collier

(Simon & Schuster, $16.99)

A new year has begun. People await with great expectation the inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States. There are a couple of very informative and inspiring books for children about our president-elect. One, Barack Obama, Son Of Promise, Child Of Hope by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Bryan Collier presents Barack Obama’s story in rich, pictorial style around the concept of Hope stopping by for a young boy, David, and his mother. The narrative of Mr. Obama’s life in this book is a combination of free verse and prose. At the bottom of several pages in colored rectangular like boxes is a running commentary by David and his mother of the story and issues in their life. The back pages of the book include notes by the author and the illustrator as well as a chronology of important events in the president-elect’s life up to now. In addition there is an Obama family tree delineating the extensive number of paternal relatives as well as the modest number of maternal relatives.

Barack Obama, Son of Promise, Child of Hope is a great visual and narrative introduction of Barack Obama to very young children. For older children a very effective introduction to him is Barack Obama: United States President by Roberta Edwards with illustrations by Ken Call and photographs. By means of photographs and illustrations, Mr. Obama is shown at different times in his life. Also the use of simple maps is effective in showing the reader where his mother and father were born and where he lived overseas. The text is very helpful, to not just children but also to adults with no time to read, in learning about Barack Obama’s life.

Here at Logos Bookstore in addition to the two books mentioned above there are the books by Barack Obama himself, Dreams From My Father, The Audacity Of Hope and Change We Can Believe In as well as Team Of Rivals by Doris Kearns Goodwin, a book he referred to publicly quite often. Logos also stocks several biographies of President Abraham Lincoln including the newest: Lincoln President-Elect by Harold Holzer. Also there are books by and about Martin Luther King in time for his birthday in mid-January.

January is also a good time to drop by Logos Bookstore. For Holiday card and select Holiday gift items discounted sales. Later in the month there will be an extensive discounted book sale. January is a good time to shop early for Valentine’s Day. Logos will have an extensive collection of Valentine’s Day cards. As to what is happening at the store do take a look at our upcoming events below. Happy New Year!!

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Sana Krasikov

POETRY

John Simon

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MARCH 12 Panel: Leaping into Print

Daphne Merkin, Charles McGrath, Andy Port, Susan Kittenlap, Ben Dickenson

MARCH 25 Bruce Jay Friedman

APRIL 13 An evening with Steven Pinker

APRIL 15 Inside Publishing

Edward Downe Jr.

APRIL 23 Toward a Jewish Theology of Christianity

Michael Kogan

For information and to RSVP call (212) 774-4810.

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Hunter in Top 10 National ‘Best Value’ Ranking of Public Universities

Hunter College President Jennifer Raab

Hunter College is the nation’s #8 “Best Value” public college for 2009, according to “Best Value Colleges for 2009,” a ranking released today by The Princeton Review and USA Today.

The Princeton Review selected the institutions as its “best value” choices for 2009 based on its surveys of administrators and students at more than 650 public and private colleges and universities. The selection criteria covered more than 30 factors in three areas: academics, costs of attendance, and financial aid. Tallies were made using the most recently reported data from each institution for its 2007-08 academic year. Of the 50 schools chosen in each “best value” category (public and private), the top 10 are ranked in order, and the remaining 40 are listed alphabetically.

According to the rankings website (PrincetonReview.com/BestValueColleges or BestValueColleges.usatoday.com), “For many New Yorkers seeking a college degree, Hunter College within the CUNY system offers the best, most affordable option available. It is the first choice among many applicants…Hunter has a lot to offer beyond its minuscule tuition. The school’s faculty is a huge asset, for one. Students agree that professors are expert and that they work hard to accommodate undergraduates. Location is another major plus, as New York City is a virtually limitless source of valuable internship opportunities.”

Said Hunter President Jennifer J. Raab, “We are proud to be on this list, particularly because it proves the ongoing success of Hunter’s mission: to provide an outstanding education at a price you can afford. Especially during the current economic crisis, it is a privilege to lead an institution where the American Dream still comes true.”

Indeed, many concur that the present economy will bring greater attention to this year’s “Best Values” list than those in years past. Robert Franek, Princeton Review VP-Publisher, said, “We have always believed finding the ‘best fit’ college should be the foremost goal for student applicants and their families. But the economic crisis and financial downturn have presented sobering challenges both to families struggling to afford college and to higher education institutions struggling to maintain their programs in the face of budget and funding shortfalls.”
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