

EDUCATION UPDATE

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FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

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A BIRTHDAY AT THE NY FOUNDLING HOSPITAL



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FROM THE NYU CHILD STUDY CENTER: ASK THE EXPERT

What Can I Do If My Child Has Anxiety at the Start of the School Year?

By GLENN S. HIRSCH, M.D.

As I get older it feels like the summers get busier and shorter each year. And so it is time to talk about getting the kids ready to go back to school.

For most children the return to school is greeted with eager anticipation combined with a mild dose of anxiety. Greeting old friends, sharing their summer experiences, and wondering who the new teacher(s) will be are all part of the mix of thoughts leading up to the first day of class. The new school year presents new possibilities and opportunities, a chance to start fresh, and make new friends.

A minority of children, however, approach school with trepidation and fear, and some will be so paralyzed by their anxiety that they will refuse to go to school.

Preschoolers' fears are often due to separating from their parent. They will often cry and plead for their mother or father to stay with them when being dropped off at daycare or preschool. For most children this anxiety is transient, but for some this may be part of a pattern that includes anxiety and fearfulness going to sleep at night, going to a peer's house for a play date, or being left with an unfamiliar person.

By the time children get to elementary school we no longer expect them to experience sustained separation issues. However, some will continue to have the same anxiety they had in the preschool years, and others will develop severe anxiety for the first time. Anxiety can be triggered simply by the start of the school year, a move, or change



in school. Children who are reluctant to attend school often express some upset in the evening before school, especially after a weekend, and many children with separation anxiety complain of stomach upset or headaches on schooldays. When asked, these children may tell you that they are worried about something bad happening to their parents or that they fear being kidnapped or their home being burglarized. Often they will call home several times a day to 'check-in'.

If your child does express some anxiety at the start of the school year, the following suggestions are offered by the clinical faculty of our Institute for Anxiety and Mood Disorders:

If your child expresses concern about starting school, accompany your child on a visit to the school and meet the teacher before school starts.

Do not deny the child's anxiety or worries, but acknowledge them and reassure him/her. For example: "I know you're worried I won't be there to pick you up, but there's no reason to worry. I'll be there."

A child with separation anxiety breaks the heart of any compassionate person. Yet, the best remedy is to help the child to not give in to anxieties. As much as possible, you should prevent accommodating the child by allowing him/her to avoid separations.

Taking Giant Baby Steps: Early Intervention Services Under Part C

According to recent statistics done by the Developmental Disabilities Branch from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, about 17 percent of children under the age of 18 develop and cope with learning, behavioral and developmental disabilities. Out of these children less than 3 percent of those under the age of three are participating in the federally funded Early Intervention programs. Early intervention, with proper diagnosis and support, is crucial in these kids development.

Educational law expert Randy Chapman has answers for parents and educators on how they can use Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to enhance their child's development and minimize developmental delay. In his new article, "Taking Giant Baby Steps: Early Intervention Services Under Part C," Randy answers some

commonly asked questions regarding early

intervention services for infants, toddlers, and their families. Some of the questions that he covers in his article include:

- What is Part C is out of the IDEA?
- What early intervention services are available and who is eligible for them?
- What are the signs of a child with a disability and steps to take after diagnoses?

Randy Chapman is the Director of Legal Services at The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People, Colorado's Protection and Advocacy System. He is the author of three books, including *The Everyday Guide to Special Education Law*, (The Legal Center 2005). The Everyday Guide is also available in the Spanish/English version, *Gui? a de la Ley de Educacion? Especial*. For 29 years, he has been promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities.

But, you may ask, how can I do that if my child is so unhappy? Try to find ways to enable the child to go to school. For example, a child is likely to feel reassured if times are set for him or her to call the parent from school. In extreme cases, a parent may stay with the child in school, but only for a specified length of time, which is then gradually reduced. It is most important to tell the child exactly what s/he is to expect. There should be no "tricks" or surprises.

Do not quiz the child about why s/he feels scared. The child often does not know why. Reiterate that the fears make no sense and that the child has to fight them.

If your child is not flourishing, is visibly

unhappy, has physical symptoms before leaving for school, or develops sleep problems it is time to seek professional help.

I hope the end of the summer and beginning of the school year are enjoyable and successful.

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. Hirsch, M.D., Medical Director at the NYU Child Study Center at glenn.hirsch@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.#

"Our son is failing spelling. He tries so hard, but it's not helping."



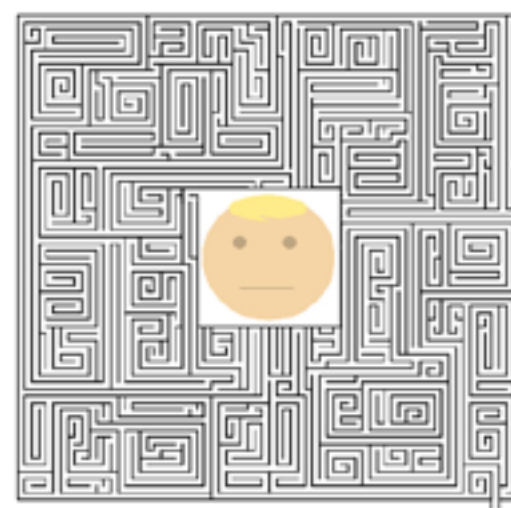
If your child or someone you know is struggling with reading or writing, we can help.

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The New York Branch of the International Dyslexia Association provides information, referrals, workshops and support to parents and professionals on the impact and treatment of dyslexia.

INFORMATION Contact us at 212.691.1930 or visit www.nybida.org.

Aa-Ss



asperger-syndrome

Learn about Asperger Syndrome. Children with AS can't navigate the complexities of social interaction. If they don't get enough age appropriate social experiences as they grow, they can become increasingly isolated from their peers. Treatment and educational intervention are critical. To learn more contact the NYU Child Study Center.



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BANK STREET'S LEADERSHIP PREPARATION INSTITUTE (LPI)

As long as New York City schools continue to need leaders dedicated to bringing effective learning to students who represent a wide spectrum of abilities, Bank Street College of Education's Leadership Preparation Institute (LPI) will be there.

"The Institute prepares school leaders for the opportunities, realities and challenges present in urban school contexts," said Dr. Sabrina Hope King, the newly appointed LPI Director.

The three programs that comprise the LPI regularly turn out scores of teacher-leaders, coaches, assistant principals, and principals, all of whom are dedicated to the special needs of students at all levels of achievement.

These programs include:

The Principals Institute (PI), whose goal is to increase the pool of women and leaders of color in the city's public schools. PI's mission is to prepare public school leaders who are ethical, reflective, and collaborative. In addition, they leave the PI with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to create a school environment where staff and students can reach their highest potential.

PI students work towards a master's degree and state certification as School Building Leaders, which enables them to get jobs as principals and assistant principals.

Students are assigned into cohorts for the eighteen-month program, participating in and supporting each other in classes together. Each student is assigned an advisor who meets with him or her throughout the program.

"The advisors sat with you, helping you to become a more reflective practitioner," recalled Trevor Naidoo, principal of Landmark High School in Manhattan and a graduate of the PI.

Another program under PI is the Bilingual/ESL Teacher Leadership Academy (BETLA), a collaborative effort between Bank Street and the New York Education Department's Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages. Dr. Lillian Hernandez, of

Bank Street, is the program coordinator.

BETLA, a specialized teacher-leader program, offers 13 graduate credits to students who take a series of courses in advanced curriculum and instructional practice, staff development and leadership development. BETLA-trained teachers are prepared to lead and counsel other teachers of English language learners.

Laura Ascenzi-Moreno, a 2004 graduate of BETLA, says she learned at Bank Street how to develop sound relationships and nurture professional development skills with the teachers she coaches.

"Now I sit in on classes in my school, then help the teachers without a leadership background by studying how language intersects with their students' cognitive experiences," she said.

The third program of the LPI is the Teacher Leader Program, a certificate program that prepares students to support teacher development in their schools. Similar to BETLA, the Teacher Leader students are prepared to assume formal and informal roles as teacher leaders while retaining their positions as classroom teachers or while gaining release time to assume additional roles.

After taking a class in literacy as part of the Teacher Leader program curriculum, former student Krista Senator decided to become a literacy coach in her school.

"A literacy coach is a staff developer focusing on literary professional development, which helps meet school goals in that area," she said.

All three of these programs under LPI focus on student mutual support, collaboration with instructors and personal as well as professional growth, with an emphasis on group meetings.

"Reflective questioning in groups really helps, especially when it is as active as possible. That kind of group work is key," said Senator.

All three programs, LPI's King said, "share something else in common and that is a strong commitment to young students most in need."#

Bergen Academies

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labs, is that it is staffed by two medical professionals, each with decades of experience in genetics and molecular biology. Students in AMST are learning medical diagnosis through the use of robotic patient simulators, typically reserved for training medical professionals. "Sim-Man" (robotic patient) can be programmed to exhibit symptoms of hundreds of medical conditions to challenge students to make accurate diagnoses based on symptoms obtained through sophisticated instrumentation.

Venture into the nerve center of the Academy of Engineering and Design Technology and witness students bringing the blueprints they create in state-of-the-art graphic design programs to life with computerized 3D modeling machinery.

A visitor to the Academy of Business and Finance will find students versed in the use of SAP, the software that major manufacturers use to run their companies.

The Academy for the Advancement of Science and Technology boasts a math team with hundreds of members. Their passion for problem solving is evident through their practice schedule that includes Saturdays and Sundays.

The Academy for Computers and

Telecommunications is also a futuristic take on education. Working with Cisco Systems, students build their own networks from the ground up.

The Academy for Visual and Performing Arts boasts three powerful strands: music, art, and theatre. At the heart of the music program is a symphonic orchestra, a jazz band, and a host of other ensembles and quartets. The Academy Choir, which has been invited to the White House, has won National recognition for excellence. The Visual Arts Academy is outfitted with a complete 4-camera television studio, capable of broadcasting around the world.

The challenge at BCA is not what to sample, but finding enough hours in the day to experience the countless opportunities for learning and self-growth. At Bergen County Academies, the future is bright indeed.#

Danny Jaye is Education Update's "Outstanding Educator of the Year 2005" as well as former chair of the math department at Stuyvesant HS in NYC.



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NCLB

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• NCLB holds schools accountable for test scores, but does not effectively hold high schools accountable for whether their students actually graduate.

• 71 percent of the nation's eighth graders read below a proficient level, yet there is no federal effort to improve reading and comprehension in middle and high school as there is in grades K-3.

• The limited tools NCLB provides to improve low-performing schools reflect neither research nor best practice and are not effective for high school reform.

Wise continues, "The present NCLB does not effectively reach high schools, and too many children are being left behind by the ninth grade. With the law up for renewal this year, this is the time to build on the ideals of 'no child left behind' and pass legislation that will lead the nation toward 'every child a graduate.'"

Instead of what the brief calls "shortsighted proposals" that merely extend testing requirements to high schools or simply reserve portions of current funding streams for high schools, the Alliance calls on Congress to reauthorize NCLB with "a systemic solution that reflects all that is known about improving high schools from research and best practice."

According to Wise, "Research and best practice have demonstrated that there is no excuse for failing to address the needs of our high school students. NCLB reauthorization must include provisions to improve the calculation of graduation rates, invest in data systems, support educators, drive meaningful accountability linked to high school improvement, and ensure the necessary resources and capacity to provide an excellent education for every student. Some of these issues are addressed in existing proposals from Members of Congress, including the Striving Readers Act of 2007 (S. 958 and H.R. 2289) and the Graduation Promise Act (S. 1185)." #

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A UNIQUE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT THE NEW YORK FOUNDLING HOSPITAL



William Baccaglini Jr., Director, The NY Foundling & Gillian Granoff



Gillian Granoff & children

By DR. POLA ROSEN

Gillian Granoff, a Brown graduate, had celebrated her 10th reunion at Brown University, when she decided she would have her birthday party with 15 children, ages 4 to 12 whose birthdays, and indeed existence, had been ignored by absentee parents for years. With her customary thoughtfulness and concern for others, Gillian (a reporter for *Education Update*) planned the party with the Foundling Hospital's director William Baccaglini Jr., arranging for 6 huge pizzas, salad, bottles of soda, cake, pin the tail on the donkey, hokey pokey and prizes for all. Gillian asked friends and family to bring small stuffed animals and toys in lieu of gifts for her.

There was lots of fun and good old fashioned cuddling and hugging of all the children interspersed with the excitement of the games, goodies and toys.

One of the Sisters had the children say a blessing before eating and Gillian shared a bib-

lical Hebrew prayer before eating as well. The warmth and love in the room was palpable, the exchange of prayers made each person aware and accepting of religious differences.

Covenant House, founded in 1859 by the Sisters of Charity, was to provide shelter and respite to poor orphans as well as abused and abandoned children. Today, there is an acute unit for ill children as well as the unit where Gillian had her party which contains a Department of Education School, and in addition, a unit for pregnant teens where their babies can be born in safety.

Are you having a birthday soon? Follow Gillian's tradition; consider sharing your special day with children less fortunate who will remember your birthday forever and treasure the small toys that no one else cares to give them. #

Contact Gillian at gilagran@aol.com for more information.

ADOPTIVE FAMILIES' SUMMER READING GUIDE

It's July, and time for Adoptive Families' yearly crop of summer reading picks. Below, you'll find powerful adoption memoir excerpts. To the right, you'll see our first annual Best Adoption Books list. Visit AF's bookstore for even more recommendations. Happy reading!

Love in the Driest Season

by Neely Tucker

"She blinked again. Then she reached out and, in a wobbling gesture, wrapped her hand around my little finger...." Read more.

China Ghosts

by Jeff Gammage

"These kids, with their wan smiles and growling stomachs, follow you across the ocean, move into your house...." Read more.

The Mistress's Daughter

by A.M. Homes

"I have allowed this because I understand the need for proof, for some true measure of our relationship...." Read more.

AF PICKS: Best Memoirs

- *The Waiting Child*, by Cindy Champnella
- *I Wish for You a Beautiful Life*, Sara Dorow, ed.
- *Borrowed Finery*, by Paula Fox
- *ITHAKA: A Daughter's Memoir of Being Found*, by Sarah Saffian
- *The Kid*, by Dan Savage
- *In Their Own Voices*, by Rita J. Simon and Rhonda M. Roorda
- *An Empty Lap*, by Jill Smolowe
- *Love in the Driest Season*, by Neely Tucker
- *The Adoption Reader*, Susan Wadia-Ells, ed.
- *Secret Thoughts of an Adoptive Mother*, by Jana Wolff

AF PICKS: Best Adoption Storybooks

- *Sam's Sister*, by Juliet C. Bond; illustrated by Dawn Majewski
- *How I Was Adopted*, by Joanna Cole; illustrated by Maxie Chambliss



Gillian & her mother Perry Granoff

"A life of homelessness and poverty is devastating for a child. The stigma of being a social outcast erodes a child's sense of self-worth. For a homeless child, education offers probably the only road out of his seemingly hopeless situation. It offers contact with a stable, sheltered world; it provides examples of strength and courage; it teaches self-worth and initiative. And it provides badly-needed skills."

Broken Lives: Denial of Education to Homeless Children. National Coalition for the Homeless. December 1987

EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO SPOTLIGHTS EMERGING ARTISTS

By SYBIL MAIMIN

For those unfamiliar with El Museo del Barrio, the exciting Latino cultural institution on Fifth Avenue between 104th and 105th Streets in Manhattan, now is a great time to become acquainted. For those who are already fans, the current show, *El Museo's Bienal: The (S) Files*, which runs until January 6, will reward a return visit. Featuring the work of 51 emerging Latino/Latin American artists who currently reside in the New York area, the *Bienal* is brimming with ideas and talent. (S) Files means "the selected files" and alludes to the choice of most of the work from unsolicited submissions to the museum's Artists' Archive. In addition, a "guest country," Ecuador, that does not get much exposure in the New York art world, has contributed the work of five of its artists. The art is contemporary and wide ranging in medium, subject, and style. Curator Elvis Fuentes explains, "People tend to think there is a style of Latino art." The show "is not about denying traditional Latin American art, but about showing variety. Artists look for new ways to express traditional subjects." Three themes emerge. "A Wild Eye" encompasses nature and global warming. "Adrenaline" includes the cult of hyper-masculinity, violence, and war. "Agora" addresses current "hot" political and social topics.



on the floor illustrates "the beauty of horror," in the words of Jesus Rivera (Cuba). Adriana Lopez Sanfeliu's (Spain) photos of women in Spanish Harlem capture conflicted roles in a machista, dominant white society. An installation of a floor-based Calder-like mobile that resembles an oil field infrastructure together with pertinent documents is Alessandro Balteo Yazbeck's ("Venezuela) bitter commentary on the Iraq war. Fernando Falconi paints himself into large-scale copies of illustrations in popular children's textbooks in his country (Ecuador)

to reread his nation's image of itself. Some work utilizes video, light, sound, and interactive elements and others are site-specific installations.

El Museo del Barrio director Julian Zugazagoitia speaks of "the Latin American contribution to defining the cultural landscape of New York" and his goal of "strengthening support of Latino artists" in the city. Rodolfo Kronfle Chambers, curator of the art from Ecuador, explains his nation has "mostly traditional art which is a problem because artists have to go outside the country to become known." Participating artists, several being shown for the first time, are clearly appreciative of the opportunity. Reflecting sentiments of many of his colleagues, Augusto Zanela (Argentina), whose outsized black and white wall graphic frames entry to the exhibit, speaks of the show as "very important, the most important show in my career so far."

El Museo del Barrio was founded in 1969 in response to concern in the local community that Puerto Rican culture was not represented in New York museums. In 1994, because of local and national demographic changes, the museum extended its representation to all Latin American and Latino communities in the United States. Thanks to the MetLife Foundation, admission to the museum will be free during the run of the *Bienal*. Tours are given on Saturdays at 1 pm (English) and 2 pm (Spanish).

MAGNIFICENT, RARELY SEEN TAPESTRIES ON VIEW AT METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

From the Middle Ages through the late 18th century, the courts of Europe lavished vast resources on tapestries made in precious materials after designs by the leading artists of the day, and works in this spectacular medium were prized by the aristocracy for their artistry and also as tools of propaganda. *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*—on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art beginning October 17—will offer the first comprehensive survey of high-quality 17th-century European tapestry, and will demonstrate the importance of tapestry as a prestigious figurative medium throughout that century. "This exhibition will provide one of the grandest displays of Baroque tapestry that has been seen since Louis XIV strolled through the galleries of Versailles," said Philippe de Montebello, Director of the Metropolitan Museum. "As a visual experience, it will be without parallel for a modern audience."

Drawing from collections in more than 15 countries, *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor* presents 40 rare tapestries made between 1590 and 1720. Commissioned by kings, popes,

and noblemen, these woven frescoes embody the grandest artistic ambitions of their patrons. The pieces have been selected for their condition and color, and together will provide an unprecedented insight to the role of tapestry in 17th-century court culture.

The secondary theme of the exhibition is the stylistic development of tapestry during this era and the contributions of artists like Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, Simon Vouet, Charles LeBrun, Pietro da Cortona and Giovanni Romanelli, as they responded to the challenges of the medium in unique and individual ways. The exhibition will include about 25 designs and oil sketches, demonstrating the thought and artistry which these woven frescoes required.

About half of the tapestries in the exhibition derive from Flemish workshops, reflecting the preponderant role of the Low Countries in the greatest tapestry production of the day. Highlights of the Brussels tapestry industry include the *Triumphs of the Church* designed by Peter Paul Rubens for the archduchess Isabella in 1626.#

MUMMIES IN BROOKLYN MUSEUM COLLECTION TO UNDERGO SCIENTIFIC STUDY



The Brooklyn Museum Conservation Laboratory is beginning a study of the human and animal mummies in the Museum's collection, using the tools of modern-day scientific investigation to reveal new information about mummification practices in ancient Egypt thousands of years ago. The project will bring together scientists from the Brooklyn Museum, the Getty Conservation Institute, in Los Angeles and the University of Bristol in England. It will begin with the X-ray fluorescence (XRF) of the first-century C.E. mummy known as Demetrios, which will be a part of the forthcoming exhibition *To Live Forever: Egyptian Treasures from the Brooklyn Museum*.

X-ray fluorescence will allow analysis of the painted surfaces associated with the wrapping of mummies, including painted linen bandages and shrouds. Preliminary results have shown that the red paint used on the Demetrios mummy may have been made, in part, from components imported from Spain. The lead in the paint is suspected to have come from a Spanish silver

mine, but it remains unclear whether the paint itself was manufactured there or, alternatively, whether if the lead ingredient was traded to Egypt with the paint then produced locally.

In addition to X-ray fluorescence, the team will use CT scanning: this will permit a non-invasive examination of the mummy interiors, providing medical information related to, for example, the condition of the bones, as well as examining other burial materials that might have been included within the wrapped linens. Carbon 14 dating will also be used to help provide an accurate date of the mummies' creation. Finally an analytic method known as GC Mass Spec, will help determine which chemicals were employed in the technical process of mummification and how their composition changed during the three thousand years these techniques were in use.

The Brooklyn Museum's world-renowned collection of ancient Egyptian material includes five human mummies and nearly fifty animal mummies, among them cats, crocodiles, and birds.#

THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM YOUTH PROGRAM

The Studio Museum in Harlem is dedicated to creating a safe environment for youths to express themselves creatively. The Museum hosts free programs for high school students outside the school environment. These programs offer students opportunities to meet and converse with prominent visual artists, express their ideas through discussions, facilitate tours and hands-on workshops and develop important communication and critical thinking skills.

• Hands On: Design with Gregory Grey, Tuesday, August 14th—Friday, August 17th, 2007, 11:00am - 3:00pm

This fun filled, four-day workshop exclusively for middle school students will provide an opportunity to work with a professional New York designer who will introduce the basics of design practice. Students will be guided through the process of creating their own functional interior-designed spaces based on their own needs, interests and personalities.

This is a great summer opportunity to meet other creative teens, learn from a professional artist and develop new skills! Space is limited

so please RSVP by August 1, 2007 to (212) 864-4500 x264

Family Programs

Are you looking for something fun to do with your kids instead of watching Saturday morning cartoons? Bring the family to the Studio Museum and experience art in new and exciting ways!

The Studio Museum acknowledges the need for families to spend time together. Nurturing bonds between parents and their children through art, the Museum offers programs and activities that allow families to share in the creative process. Bring the family and explore our exciting exhibitions. Become an artist in a hands-on workshop and create works of art with your kids!

Family programs are designed for families with children ages 4 to 10 years old. Family programs are FREE. Pre-registration is required. Please call (212) 864-4500 x264 to register.

Family Programs are funded in part by public funds from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, made available through the office of Assemblyman Keith L. Wright.

This NEW MUSEUM SECTION will be a monthly feature. To advertise, email ednews1@aol.com



CAREERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

WORKING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ADULTS IN RESIDENCES

By SKIP HOLIDAY

Autism is a perplexing neurodevelopmental disorder that has befuddled the medical community for many years. It is a disorder that surfaces before a child turns three years old and is more prevalent among males than females. It is a disorder that can affect anybody regardless of race, social class or gender. What makes autism so complex is that the medical community still can't pinpoint the causes and while there are various methods to treat autism, there is still no cure for it.

I have been working with the autistic population for over three years in a residential setting. I work as a direct care counselor for a mental health/social services agency in New York City in what is called an IRA (Individualized Residential Alternative). An IRA is similar to a group home but there are differences between an IRA and a traditional group home such as an ICF (Intermediate Care Facilities). In an IRA you typically work with a small number of consumers compared to an ICF. Also, an IRA is designed for high functioning consumers who can complete their ADL skills (Activities of Daily Living) independently. An ICF tends to be for low functioning consumers who need assistance in completing tasks of daily living that we take for granted such as showering, tooth brushing, shaving, eating and toileting to name a few. These consumers work "one on one" with a staff that works with them to complete their ADL skills with verbal, gestural and physical hand

on hand prompting. These are tasks that we tend to take for granted but for the autistic population it takes years of treatment plans to learn how to master these tasks and as direct care staff we help and guide these consumers to master these tasks.

In the residence where I work, two staff members are assigned to a house with four consumers. We rotate depending on the shift that consists of evening and overnights during the week. The consumers we work with range from medium to high functioning and each of them have their own behaviors, peeves and disorders. Some of them only have autism but others have autism along with other mental disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis and mental retardation. We work with several consumers who have Asperger's syndrome, which is an autism spectrum disorder common in high functioning consumers. These consumers are allowed to travel on their own. We also work with non-verbal consumers who despite the fact they can't communicate verbally, can read and write and understand every word that is spoken to them.

Our work in the IRA is fairly simple because most of the consumers can do things on their own such as washing and drying their own laundry, cleaning their homes, cooking their breakfast, ironing their clothes and so on. We are also responsible for tasks such as maintaining a personal log of their behavior and daily activities as well as administering their medications.

Their autism is treated primarily with ABA

(Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy. Since their functioning and behaviors vary their treatment as well as their behavior and goal plans are different. We have consumers that have tooth brushing and showering goal plans because their functioning is behind some of the high functioning consumers. We also have high functioning consumers who are on community awareness and socialization goal plans so they can learn to socialize and integrate themselves in a community setting. We have consumers who are on money management goal plans to learn how to manage their money effectively.

With ABA, a team of QMRP (Qualified Mental Retardation Professionals) implement the behavior plans and methodologies with the hope of getting all of these consumers functioning at an independent level where they can maintain a job and live on their own instead of a group home setting.

Our consumers are also treated with medication therapy such as Risperdal, Zyprexa and Prozac. Unfortunately these medications are designed to control and modify behaviors and peeves. There is no magic pill that can stop these consumers from behaving violently when they are upset or stop making them behave hyperactively when they are in a community. There is no miracle surgical procedure that can cure autism and for me that is the saddest part about working with these consumers. This disorder doesn't go away.

Through all my years working with this population, ABA therapy is probably the best way to treat

this disorder. The goal is to have these consumers functioning at a level where they can behave and socialize appropriately without the use of medications that can have adverse long term side effects such as dementia. But I have found that if the methodology of ABA isn't executed properly than it can be useless. That is one of the criticisms that I have about this field and the agencies that are entrusted to treat the autistic population. In the agency in which I work, we are trained to administer medications and learn how to appropriately handle situations of crisis but we have no training in ABA therapy and how to execute these behavior and goal plans properly and that is a problem if we are the ones that work with them in a residential and community setting.

When implemented and executed properly ABA therapy can be a wonderful method to treat autism; when not executed properly, the results can be mediocre. These consumers didn't have a choice in being afflicted with this disorder so the least the hierarchy of these mental health and social services agencies can do is provide these consumers with the best chance to succeed and part of that starts with integrating direct care counselors in the implementation of these treatment plans and methodologies that fall under ABA therapy.#

Skip Holiday is a pseudonym for an employee that has worked with autistic individuals for many years.

National Institute for the Deaf Receives \$900,000 Grant

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, has received a three-year, \$900,000 Steppingstones of Technology for Individuals with Disabilities program grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Grant monies will be used for the project, Evaluation of the Use of Tablet PCs and C-Print to Support Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, which will be led by Michael Stinson of NTID's Department of Research and Teacher Education. Co-principal investigators are Lisa Elliot, Susan Foster, and Marc Marschark, all of the Department of Research and Teacher Education. Marschark also is affiliated with NTID's Center for Educational Research Partnerships.

Tablet PCs are mobile computers whose touch screen or "tablet" allows users to operate the computer with a stylus or digital pen instead of, or in addition to, a keyboard and mouse. The computer is linked to a network using a wireless or wired connection.

The project will evaluate two options for using tablet PCs to provide support services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. One option uses the tablet to provide real-time note taking support, and the other uses it to provide graphics as well as real-time text. Middle and high school age stu-

dent participants with moderate to profound hearing losses, enrolled in public school programs in four locations, will receive either real-time note taking or speech-to-text plus graphics support.

The research team will examine the effects of tablet PCs on classroom achievement by conducting a study of retention of a simulated lecture with 90 students, a study of fidelity of implementation by the service providers, and an observational study of 16 classrooms using one of these two options. The materials that service providers, teachers and parents can use to facilitate students' use of tablet options also will be refined during this project.

The project will yield knowledge that will be critical in moving toward subsequent widespread implementation of tablet-based note taking and speech-to-text services.

NTID is the first and largest technological college in the world for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. One of eight colleges of RIT, NTID offers educational programs and access and support services for the 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from around the world who study, live, and socialize with 14,400 hearing students on RIT's Rochester, N.Y. campus.#

For more NTID news, visit <http://www.rit.edu/ntid/newsroom>.

CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

Marsh & McLennan Mentors Bklyn HS's New Legal Academy

By JOY RESMOVITS

Two groups huddle on either side of the boardroom overlooking a sunny urban panorama, enthusiastically negotiating their clients' claims with an insurance company—just like a real case. The only difference: the average age of the opponents is 16.

The boardroom is in Marsh & McLennan Companies' (MMC) New York office, site of the recent culmination of the firm's collaboration with the students of Brooklyn High School for Public Services' nascent Legal Academy. For months, attorneys from MMC came into Legal Academy on a regular basis to work with students for the final simulation and for encounters with law later in life. Attorneys had visited the school, encouraging students to learn the ins and outs of law via games such as the wheel of misfortune, which entailed matching insurance options to unfortunate events.

Corporate Legal Diversity Pipeline made the match. Pipeline is an initiative of Street Law and Association of Corporate Council that matches corporate law firms with local high school students in order to engage diverse people to pursue a legal profession early in life.

After each side negotiated—one side made significantly more money than the other—the lawyers and students reflected on the negotiation process. They all recognized that bargaining skills used in court are only applicable only to law. Kevin Crowley, an MMC attorney, said he saw "fire in everyone's eyes," during the process.

At the end of the day, the students gathered in the auditorium to evaluate the program. "You were our guinea pigs today," Chief Legal Ethics Officer & VP of Litigation, at Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc. said of the pilot program.

Patricia Anderson, teacher of the Legal

Academy's first students involved in Pipeline, stressed the importance of continuing the program. "What more can we do with the group?" she asked. She said she hopes the program will "show them that there is more to the legal profession than what they see on TV."

The next step is a continued mentoring program. "The goal of Street Law is to promote diversity so that the best and brightest are interested in and anxious to enter the legal profession," Crowley said. "Fear of the unknown may have existed before this program," he added.

Student feedback was phenomenal when students read from their evaluations. Erica Moody, who claims her attention span is "really short," said everything was an "attention grabber."

"My interest got higher in being a lawyer," Nikita Felix said.

"It expanded me," Natak Hemmings said. "Negotiations, I loved them. It's set. I know I want to go into corporate law," she added.

Lee Arbetman, director of US Programs for Street Law is also coordinator of the US Department of Justice's national law-related education program, Youth for Justice, and an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University, helped launch pipeline. He co-teaches a Supreme Court Summer Institute for teachers. Arbetman stressed not only the pipeline's goals in involving diverse groups in legal professions, but also in teaching law skills that are applicable to daily life, such as negotiation. "Street law is practical law," he said.

Arbetman said that school visits and games were "attempts to work off kids' brains, not adults' brains." When he was studying in law school, Arbetman realized, "the stuff here could be remolded and reshaped into excellent teaching materials. It's too important to leave it all to the lawyers."#

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October 31, 2007 Early Childhood Services: Birth to 5 10 AM-1 PM

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Central Library Grand Army Plaza Flatbush Ave. and Eastern Parkway 11238

October 30, 2007 Getting Appropriate Educational Services 10AM-1 PM

November 27, 2007 Early Childhood Services: Birth to 5 10AM-1PM

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Chancellor Recognizes 2007 Graduates Who Have Overcome Extraordinary Odds To Receive A Diploma

Walton High School graduate Keila Matos receives diploma while battling lupus

Keila Matos was diagnosed with lupus when she was nine years old. The disease left her weak, and at times she received home instruction when she was not able to attend school. She is currently in dialysis three times a week for her failing kidneys. However, she returned to Walton High School in the Bronx for her senior year and has flourished, despite her physical limitations. Keila will graduate on time with her class, and plans to attend Hostos Community College in the fall. "This has been a great year," Keila said. "I haven't felt that sick. I'm really going to miss this school, my teachers and my guidance counselor." Keila plans to study Computer Science. Her teachers say her determination has been an inspiration and motivation to the entire school community.

Fannie Lou Hamer High School graduate Yulisa Ramirez first in family to receive

diploma

19-year-old Yulisa Ramirez learned to grow up at an early age. When she was five, her parents were deported to the Dominican Republic and Yulisa ended up in foster care in Massachusetts. Eventually, she returned to the Bronx to live with her sister. For the past four years, she has attended Fannie Lou Hamer High School while holding down a full-time job. Of the ten children in her family, Yulisa is the only one to receive a high school diploma. "To be able to say that I got my diploma is amazing," Yulisa said. "It took a lot of work and a lot of effort, but I did it. I am very lucky."

Yulisa will attend City College in the fall where she plans to study accounting or psychology.

New York City Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein will congratulate Keila, Yulisa and other students who've beaten the odds to graduate at a ceremony at Department of Education Headquarters. #

IN MEMORIAM

PEGGY BENJAMIN



Only 26 years old, she was a heroine to her mother, Josette, her husband Alix and her 3-year-old son Junior. Battling for years with lupus, suffering pain and numerous hospital admissions, she never complained. Tall, slender and beautiful,

her radiant smile and large brown eyes were full of compassion.

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CCNY Senior Jessica Tibbets Wins Fulbright Scholarship

Jessica Tibbets, a graduating senior at The City College of New York (CCNY), has received a 2007-2008 Fulbright Scholars Award to study Arabic and learn about the deaf community in Yemen.

As part of her research, Ms. Tibbets will produce an ethnography and documentary about deaf people in Yemen to show to hearing and non-hearing people in Yemen and abroad. The Wichita, Kan. native is expected to graduate from CCNY magna cum laude June 1 with a B.A. in International Studies with a concentration in Culture and Communications.

"This is really exciting," she said of her Fulbright award. "I spent six months in Yemen last year teaching English so that I could fund my stay while improving my fluency in Arabic and learning Yemeni sign language and I loved it. I can't wait to return to my friends there!"

"The award gives me an opportunity to continue my study of Arabic as well as my research and work with the deaf community in that country," she added. "I started learning Arabic in my freshman year at City College and fell in love with it. That's the main reason I went to Yemen last year."

While there, she decided to apply for the Fulbright. Yemen's Ministry of Social Affairs, the Deaf Association in Aden and a research center in Sana'a, Yemen's capital city, backed her application. The three organizations provided the supporting letters required from all applicants by the Council for International Exchange

of Scholars, which administers the Fulbright Scholar Program.

Ms. Tibbets wrote her senior thesis on the possibility of a global sign language. She says she believes a more cohesive and broadly understood sign language would empower deaf people who currently use different methods of signing.

At CCNY, Ms. Tibbets received the Anne S. Kheel Scholarship from the College's Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies. The scholarship paid her tuition since her junior year.

She also received the Winston Fellowship from CCNY's International Studies (IS) Program for a study trip to Brazil in 2004 through Columbia University, and taught English in El Salvador in summer 2005 with the Presidential Scholarship. The latter was in conjunction with the school's International Studies "Service Learning in El Salvador" program. In addition, she was a member of the women's soccer team and was named All City Player in 2005.

Currently living in the Bronx, Ms. Tibbets teaches Arabic to second graders at an After School Program at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and interns at AFS, a not for profit intercultural exchange program for high school students.

Ms. Tibbets says she chose to study at CCNY in 2003 because of the College's highly regarded International Studies Program, beautiful campus and diverse student body. She plans a career in health care policy, particularly as it would benefit citizens of underdeveloped countries. #

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MSPinNYC at Hunter College: A Model Educational Program



Stanley Blausler



Dr. Faith Muirhead



Dr. Charlotte Frank



Ernest Logan

By LIZA YOUNG

With mass media exploding with news of the latest innovations in technological devices, it's refreshing to see the mentor-mentee model used with dramatic success to enable failing HS students to score high on regents exams after a summer at Hunter College. *Education Update* visited Hunter College to see the *New York City Mathematics and Science Partnership* (MSPinNYC) summer program at work, hosted by Dr. Faith Muirhead, project director of the program, accompanied by guests Ernest Logan, president of the Council of Supervisors and administrators (CSA), Dr. Charlotte Frank, Senior VP, McGraw-Hill, and Marianita D. Damari, NYC Department of Education MSP Liaison. At the meeting we observed the comprehensive and successful summer program in action with lively class discussions, intense teacher planning sessions, and a tutor analysis meeting with respect to student performance.

The MSPinNYC five and a half week summer program is a productive learning experience for teachers, tutors, and of course for students, with 2006 data revealing a stunning 70 percent pass rate on the chemistry regents compared to the traditional city summer school program pass rate of 27 percent; a 90.6 percent pass rate on living environment compared to 35.8 percent for public school summer programs; 58.8 percent passing rate compared to 30.6 percent on the Math B regents exam; and a 56.7 percent pass rate compared to 32 percent on the Math A regents exam.

Several complementary factors differentiate MSPinNYC from traditional summer school programs including the heavy role of professional development, where teachers collaboratively discuss and analyze lesson plans; use debriefing sessions after classes for further analysis; and incorporate feedback from students to modify teaching methods. Tutors, comprised of high school and undergraduate students excelling in math and science, are an essential element of the program and play the role of "co-facilitator" during class sessions, Muirhead indicated, with more traditional tutoring on a three-to-one level during the afternoon.

Participating teachers underscored the uniqueness of MSPinNYC as collaborative teacher planning. Stanley Blausler, math teacher at the Gateway School for Environmental Research, appreciates the opportunity at MSPinNYC program "to see the subject from other teachers' points of view." He has additionally been able to test creative approaches to teaching math, and bring them to his regular classroom during the school year.

Hassan Laaroussi, participating math teacher from Truman HS also enjoys being able to share ideas with other teachers, and experiment with new teaching methods. He described the program as a place in which "wherever kids turn they will find help. If they turn to the left they will find tutors; forward they will find teachers..."

He, as well, has been able to import techniques he practiced during the summer program to his classroom at Truman HS.

Four teachers involved in a science planning lesson shared how students, working on a metal reactivity task, engage in inductive reasoning; while not being told the point of their task, they discovered on their own a determination of chemical hierarchy through data collection and examination.

Muirhead further explained that students use college provided materials such as a petri dish—which some students have never seen before—to study their everyday interests including mouthwash and sunscreen. Following their experiments some students have exclaimed, "I felt like a scientist."

During our visit to a Math A tutoring meeting, we watched tutors analyze student performance on regents questions, breaking down student errors, tackling misconceptions, and how to address the math problem from a different angle.

Tutors, Muirhead pointed out, actually take mock regents exams on a weekly basis, to monitor their expertise in the area. This year, MSPinNYC experimented with recruiting tutors who excelled as well as those who did not, in order to have a more empathetic group of tutors who had grappled with similar problems. Interestingly, as Dr. Frank indicated, research shows that mentors often learn more than mentees.

Careful analysis of class lessons for research and evaluation are being conducted this year by college professors, based on taped sessions, which will serve to further enhance the program in the future.

Of great interest, currently, is how to translate the program to additional high school sites. Presently, features of the summer school model are operating at two schools, Harry S. Truman HS and Columbus HS, although the two schools are using their own general models. MSPinNYC has provided tutors and professional development in the incorporation of tutors.

At the conclusion of the tour of the program, President Logan promised he would work toward incorporating this model in schools throughout the academic year. There are currently partnerships with colleges, where undergraduates majoring in math and science serve as tutors in high schools, and the hope is to solidify and increase such partnerships in the future.#

Innovative Teaching Methods At Hunter College Summer School



By ALBERTO CEPEDA

The two most interesting things that I observed taking place in these classrooms were the teaching techniques used by the teachers and tutors to get these at risk students to comprehend the material being taught in these classes and the number of tutors who were in the classroom to provide support to these students.

The first classroom visited was a living environment class that consisted of about thirty students with three teachers and three tutors on hand to teach them the material. The lesson was centered on taking scientific terms and breaking them down into concepts from the biggest to the smallest.

It was startling to see that the teaching techniques being applied by the professors weren't limited to writing on the blackboard. The teachers challenged the students to explain the terms and how they got their answers. A simple right or wrong answer would not suffice in this class. Memorizing these

concepts and terminologies weren't the goal of the lesson. The teachers and tutors demanded that their students thoroughly comprehend the material through reviews that took place every ten to fifteen minutes within the lesson.

I was also surprised how proactive these students were as they participated and how thoroughly they explained their answers. It was clear that they fully grasped the lesson which consisted of scientific terms such as nucleotides, chromosomes and DNA. The teachers as well as the tutors challenged these students to fully grasp the material which is the key to getting the students to succeed.

Dr. Faith Muirhead, Program Director of MSP in NYC and her staff are on the right track to meeting the goal of MSP and fulfilling the dreams of success that every student deserves.#

Alberto Cepeda is a student at CCNY & an intern at Education Update.



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USDAN CENTER CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

By REVA COOPER

Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts (www.usdan.com), called by Time Magazine "One of the most unique camps in America," is now celebrating its 40th Anniversary Season of introducing young people to the arts, and addressing children's educational needs in exciting new ways. In addition to its annual seven-week summer season offering more than 40 programs in the visual and performing arts, Usdan, America's largest summer arts day camp, presents its second annual *Summer in September* intensive-workshop weekend on September 29-30, 2007. *Summer in September* will include "Essay Writing" for high school students, designed to prepare high school juniors and senior for their college admissions applications; "The Craft of Broadway" for aspiring high school stage actors, consisting of audition workshops and lectures on "the business of show business" and a day of study on Broadway; and the "Audition and Admissions Workshop for Advanced Conservatory-Bound Musicians".

Annually attended by 1,600 children ages 6 to 18 from throughout the Tri-State area (including Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, Westchester, Northern New Jersey and Southern Connecticut) Usdan students are picked up five days a week by air-conditioned charter buses, and transported to the Center's 200-acre woodland campus in Huntington, Long Island. No audition is needed for most classes, as the essential prerequisite is interest—the Center, in other words, is open to all. In addition to their studies in the arts, students attend Usdan's daily on-site "Festival Concerts," educational performances by world-famous artists such as the Tokyo String Quartet, the Limon Dance Company, jazz singer Jane Monheit, current Broadway stars, and members of the New York City Ballet. After the first few weeks of the season, student ensembles present the daily performances.

Another Usdan feature is the caliber of its teachers, many of whom are internationally renowned artists. Many return year after year, drawn by the interest and commitment of the Center's students. For example, world-famous jazz pianist and educator Dr. Billy Taylor founded the Jazz Studies



Students from the "Craft of Broadway" workshop, with Bob Martin, writer/star of *The Drowsy Chaperone*

Department in 1986, and subsequently brought stars such as Marian McPartland, Jimmy Heath and Jon Faddis to conduct workshops at the Center. Other teachers have included members of the New York Philharmonic, the Rockettes, the Chicago Symphony, American Ballet Theatre, Broadway productions, and artists such as painter Frank Stella.

Although the aim of the Center is merely to create a lifetime relationship with the arts, its unique stimulation has caused many to go on to professional careers, and alumni include Mariah Carey (who has since established a scholarship), Natalie Portman, jazz singer Jane Monheit and members of major symphony orchestras, Broadway shows and dance ensembles. August 1 will be the 40th Anniversary Usdan Gala Concert; an evening featuring Jane Monheit and students in performance, and Alumni Awards will be given to the many achieving former students.

The Usdan season runs through August 10 at 185 Colonial Springs Road in Wheatley Heights (Huntington), and registration for the following season begins immediately afterwards. For information and registration for *Summer in September* and the 2008 season, call 631-643-7900 (also, beginning in September, call Usdan's New York City office, at 212-772-6060) or visit www.usdan.com.

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MOVIE REVIEWS

FROZEN TREAT: ARTIC TALE

By JAN AARON

The fluffy bear cub struggles in the snow to keep up with his mother and sister bear, named Nanu, on the prowl for food. The two bears in the lead turn back to comfort and urge him on but he is lost. This is just one of the life and death moments in *Arctic Tale*, a live-action movie set in the remote Canadian Arctic. The film comes from National Geographic Films, producers of *March of the Penguins* and Paramount Classics, the studio that distributed *An Inconvenient Truth*.

It depicts the lives of a polar bear, Nanu, and a walrus named Seela, two natives of the icy north, and their struggles to survive in a changing environment. Is this the film for your scientific research? On the intricate realities of climate change? No. But for those seeking an entertaining way to enlighten youngsters about the potential dangers of global warming, it is definitely fine.

Over 15 years, Adam Ravetch and Sarah Robertson, National Geographic's Natural History Unit and others, compiled an astonishing 800 hours of film footage. From the start, their goal was to make a movie closer to mythic tale adventure—yet a tale woven out of real events caught on film in the wild.

Nanu and Seela's stories are linked in narration by Queen Latifah and include fantastic images like a polar bear standing on her hind legs and then crashing her claws through the ice to show her cub how to hunt and a newborn walrus cradled in its mother's flippers. There also are rarely seen events like an underwater fight between a polar bear and walrus, a flight of thick-billed murres, a gathering of narwhals, (single tusk whales), and



a little white fox tagging along.

The narration is a little cute, but doesn't joke about the realities of life and conveys the amazing ways massive bears and walruses survive and care for their families under truly tough circumstances. One moving scene shows a bear casting off her growing cub because she can no longer fend for both of them.

The film's narration includes some choice facts: For instance, polar bears can smell through three feet below snow and ice to catch prey, and a young walrus memorizes its mother's face by brushing whisker to whisker.

A real accomplishment of the film is how the principal creatures are perfectly made composites of several animals over periods of time. Drama is heightened by the undeniable changes in weather patterns depicted over time and how it puts many interdependent creatures at risk. It's a cool movie on a hot summer day.#

Fun For All: Shrek The Third



By JAN AARON

When asked if he wanted a birthday party, Nicolas, a hip about-to-be seven-year-old I know, shook his head and said: "No, I just want to see Shrek with my cousins." And they were not disappointed. The big green-colored ogre is back with laughs for every age, from silly slapstick for the kids to pop culture jokes for adults. In fact, some of the satiric sharpness of the first two films is missing here. Shrek (Mike Myers) is still irascible but a little softer and Donkey (Eddie Murphy) is less of a compulsive talker and more of a friend.

This film begins with a medieval version of a dinner theater where Shrek and his wife Fiona (Cameron Diaz) disrupt the ceremony while struggling with their stiff royal clothes. Then there is a jousting duel, a magic act, dancing, and some atrocious singing.

As the story ramps up, Shrek and Fiona are summoned to the deathbed of the Frog King (John Cleese), and Shrek becomes next in line to be king of Far Far Away. But he must refuse given the oafish way he performs royal duties. "I'm an

ogre," he says. "I am not cut out for this."

So he's off to find another heir to the throne, Fiona's long-lost cousin, Arthur Pendragon, (Justin Timberlake) a nerdy outcast at a medieval prep school across the seas. As Shrek and his two buddies, Donkey and the suave swashbuckling Puss in Boots (Antonio Banderas) set sail, Fiona surprises her husband with the news that she is pregnant. The panicked Shrek imagines himself surrounded by multiple baby ogres.

A fun subplot features Prince Charming (Rupert Everett). Jilted by Fiona for Shrek, he enlists a band of storybook losers—Captain Hook, the Big Bad Wolf, the Evil Queen and the Headless Horseman among them—to stage a palace coup in Far Far Away and be granted their own happily ever after ending for once.

Thus the film is set for a classic showdown. But guess what? They are opposed by heretofore-sweet young damsels—Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and Rapunzel—while Shrek, Fiona and Arthur settle their futures.

Finally Shrek becomes a father, undoubtedly setting the stage for Shrek the Fourth. #

Harry Potter 5: A Treatise on Education

By JOY RESMOVITS

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix is not about magic. The tricks, stunts, special effects, sweeping panoramic shots of wizards flying on broomsticks over London, and the ascent of the dark wizard Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes)—they're all secondary to education.

The movie begins as Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) uses a complex Patronus spell outside of his school, Hogwarts, to fend off soul-sucking dementors in the presence of his muggle, non-wizard, cousin Dudley. Technically, it is forbidden for wizards under the age of 17 to use magic outside of school. Despite the life-threatening circumstances, Harry is tried in front of the Ministry of Magic, facing, potentially, expulsion from Hogwarts. Harry's mastery of the spell he learned in school seems to have gotten him in trouble with the very people who oversee the curriculum: the government.

A major aspect of the movie was the ministry's overarching intervention at Hogwarts, and the consequences of leaving educational controls in the hands of government personnel who have no background in education. This motif is personified by Dolores Umbridge (Imelda Staunton), a ministry representative who lands the coveted, yet cursed post of Defense against the Dark Arts teacher.

At the first meal of the school year, Umbridge interrupts headmaster Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon), stands up, and orates about her (the ministry's) approach to education: rote memorization without hands-on experimentation. During her first class, Umbridge hands out the course textbook based on the theory and history of defense spells, but without relevance to their real-world application. When know-it-all Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) asks why they won't be learning any practical magic, Umbridge answers

by saying real applicable knowledge isn't important. After all, school is all about standardized testing according to Umbridge.

The students, however, know better. Unwilling to face the dark world unprepared, the students take their education into their own hands by forming Dumbledore's Army. Dumbledore's Army is a student-lead—and Umbridge-banned—enrichment program in which Potter teaches practical defense spells. Umbridge becomes so paranoid about her power that she uses truth serum on students to locate the meetings.

Later in the year, Umbridge sits on a throne in front of a giant pendulum as she administers the Outstanding Wizarding Levels, standardized tests comparable to the Regents. By this point, Umbridge has been appointed as High Inquisitor of Hogwarts, a position that provides the power to dismiss tenured professors. After deciding they weren't meant to remain in the academic realm, the notorious class clowns Fred and George Weasley spark an astounding show of the wizard equivalent of fireworks during the test. "You know, I really hate children," Umbridge said shortly following the spectacle.

Harry's involvement in education comes to fruition when he and his friends go on a mission to save his godfather. The adolescents use their newly acquired spells to fend off fully-grown Death Eaters, Voldemort's followers. Voldemort, partially a spirit, possesses Harry's body for a few moments in this battle of consciousness. But Harry's memories of friendship and positive sentiments in Dumbledore's Army separate him as the victor this time, for Harry has something Voldemort doesn't—not only friendship, but more importantly, friends concerned enough to help each other seize control of the course of education.#

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NATIONAL SUMMIT ON AMERICA'S CHILDREN

By SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI

When I was sworn in as Speaker, I did so surrounded by children, because they must be the center of our work here. But it is time to update our policies, recognizing the connections between neurons and neighborhoods and that children who grow up healthy and happy become contributing citizens as adults.

Our job is to take the critical science we will be presented with today from the halls of academia to the homes of America's families. We must match every aspect of our current policies on early learning, health and mental health, and family and income support against the wealth of information produced by our leading scientists and scholars.

Great strides have been made in understanding how children's brains are shaped and developed, how positive behaviors can be encouraged, and how investments in early childhood create success in later years. We must ensure that our policies match the latest research and that families are given what they need to take advantage of these scientific advances.

Democrats will set a new direction for the next generation by prioritizing legislative initiatives that strengthen the future of America's children. They include: reauthorizing Head Start, with a focus on Early

Head Start for children three and under—Head Start has helped ensure some of our most vulnerable children become successful adults for more than 42 years, and Early Head Start is doing the same for infants and toddlers; improving early childhood workforce quality through the Higher Education reauthorization act; expanding SCHIP—9 million children in America have



no health insurance, even when we know that healthy kids do better in school and are better prepared for a bright future; and making housing affordable for families, because a good start in life begins with a place to call home.

For too long, America's children have come in last in the competition for government invest-

ments. For too long, we have allowed outdated ways of thinking to determine our policies regarding our children. And for too long, there has been not enough political will to make children our number one priority in our work

here in Congress.

I pledge to you today that those days are over. We take seriously our responsibility to America's future—our children. As the brilliant author and activist Pearl S. Buck said: 'If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.' We must commit to ensuring our children are given the tools they need to succeed.#

Pearl S. Buck said: 'If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.'



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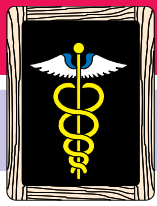
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MEDICAL UPDATE



New York City • AUGUST 2007
FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

• 21

49-Year-Old Weill Cornell Graduate Shows New Diversity in Medical School Classes After Naval and Business Careers

One graduate of Weill Cornell Medical College's Class of 2007 did not take the usual route to gain his degree. Louis Cooper, of Brooklyn, recently earned his medical degree at the age of 49, following a long and diverse career.

"Many students are coming to medicine after they have gained expertise and life-experience," says Dr. Antonio M. Gotto Jr., dean of Weill Cornell Medical College. "A wealth of experience in other fields helps to add to the diversity of the class, and even to one's ability as a physician."

This holds true for the newly anointed Dr. Cooper, who decided to go back to medical school after a varied and remarkable career. He says that he has always been drawn to fields that required both a facility with the sciences and strong interpersonal skills. Medicine seemed an obvious choice to him from an early age, but he explains that he decided to postpone medical school in order to take advantage of other unique opportunities.

Before enrolling at Weill Cornell, at 46, he was drawn to other fields, including service as a submarine officer in the U.S. Navy, where

he earned his Bachelor of Science degree with distinction and a double major in physics and history from Annapolis, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University, which he put to use working for more than 10 years on Wall Street.

But after witnessing the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, Dr. Cooper felt a strong desire to devote the rest of his life to helping people. "Like all New Yorkers who witnessed the September 11 attacks, I felt a sense of helplessness," says Dr. Cooper. "I wanted to be of service to my fellow man, but I was not equipped to do so. The best way I thought I could help others was to become a physician."

Dr. Cooper, a U.S. citizen, spent a large part of his childhood in Europe. His father was in the movie industry, which took his family overseas to France, Norway, Italy and England. After finishing secondary school, he moved back to the United States.

In New York, Dr. Cooper began an internship at New York University, studying blood disorders. However, after years living as an American abroad, he felt out of touch with the American lifestyle and culture. He decided

that the best way to regain his connection with the United States was to join the U.S. Naval Academy.

After attending Annapolis and serving more than five years as a submarine officer during the height of the Cold War, Dr. Cooper left the U.S. Navy to pursue a career in business. He earned an MBA at Harvard Business School, and went on to pursue a successful career as an investment banker in mergers and acquisitions at Morgan Stanley & Co., Inc. and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Inc. in New York.

Dr. Cooper graduated from Weill Cornell Medical College with "academic distinction" and "honors in research." He is now a resident physician in Emergency Medicine at New York University/Bellevue, because he feels that in the ER he can help the most people with the widest range of problems.

"The emergency room is a unique environment where a physician is called upon to help individuals at the moment of their greatest need and anxiety," says Dr. Cooper. "One is challenged to treat both body and soul and to quickly diagnose an extraordinarily wide range of problems," he explains.

"Compared to many other medical colleges, Weill Cornell is more open to enrolling older applicants and students with a wide array of backgrounds and experiences. The customary path of going from undergraduate straight to medical school is less common here," says Dr. Charles Bardes, dean of admissions at Weill Cornell. "Our students' average age is older than many other medical schools—25 to 30 percent of each class is older than 25, which was unusual a generation ago."

In addition to his leadership and management experience in the Navy and on Wall Street, Dr. Cooper is a glassblower and sculptor. In 2006, he was awarded the "David Clayson Prize for Creativity" as the third year medical student who best demonstrated the ability to balance ongoing involvement in the creative process with the rigors of a medical education.

Adds Dean Gotto, "Louis is a wonderful person whom I met on the student boat trip, as we were the oldest people aboard. He will be a superb physician."

Weill Cornell Medical College boasts a long history of diversity in gender, race, religion, ethnicity and background of experience.#

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Back to School Tips from Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital

The first day of school always requires preparations—notebooks, pens and a new set of clothes. But don't forget to prepare for your child's health, says Dr. Pamela F. Gallin, a pediatric ophthalmologist with the Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York-Presbyterian, a mother of four, and the author of *The Savvy Mom's Guide to Medical Care*. Dr. Gallin provides parents and caregivers with tips to help their kids get a smart start to the academic year.

• Have your child's vision screened. It is important for children to have an annual vision screening because young children, especially, often don't know if they can't see adequately. If your child wears glasses, be sure that the prescription is current. If your child cannot see, they cannot learn properly.

• Have your child's hearing tested. Most states now mandate hearing tests for babies. But many school-age children have not been tested. If your child is listening to the television or music at a very high volume, or tends to favor one ear over the other when listening to you speak, it may be a sign of hearing loss.

• Be equipped for sports. For children who wear glasses, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends one-piece wraparound polycarbonate sports frames for all contact sports, including soccer, field hockey and basketball. All children wearing spectacles need sports frames for gym. All children are being urged to use sports frames for contact sports.

• Are your child's immunizations up-to-date? The last thing you want is for your child to be turned away from school on the first day because he or she was not properly immunized. New immunizations, such as Hepatitis B, are now required. Check with your child's pediatrician.

• Have you noticed your child scratching his or her scalp since camp ended? It may be a sign that a case of lice was contracted during the summer.

Head lice will not go by itself, but can be treated with over-the-counter remedies.

• Does your child receive medication on a regular basis for diabetes, asthma or another chronic problem? School nurses and teachers must be made aware of your child's needs, especially if they are the ones who administer the medicine. Make sure emergency medications are close at hand—that your child, their teacher and the nurse know where they are.

• Is your child anxious and apprehensive? Most children are naturally anxious about the new school year. It normally takes about a month for children to adjust to new situations. A new school, fear of a class bully, or taking a school bus for the first time may cause anxieties. If after a few weeks, your child continues to be anxious and apprehensive, bring this to the attention of his or her teacher so that you can identify the source of his anxiety and work out a solution.

• Do you suspect a learning disability or dyslexia? If you suspect that your child is not processing information as he or she should, speak to the teacher or learning center in your child's school as soon as possible.

• Does your child eat breakfast? Studies show that children who eat breakfast are more alert in class. Also, be sure that your child has a balanced, nutritious lunch, whether it is one you send or one provided by the school cafeteria.

• Are your up-to-date emergency phone numbers on file? Make sure that both the school and your child know how to reach you or another caregiver at all times.

"Your child will have a great year in school if you make sure that the teacher understands all your child's special needs," says Dr. Gallin. "But remember, just as a child may be overwhelmed by school the first day, often so are the teachers." For more information, patients may call (866) NYP-NEWS. #

Logos Bookstore's Recommendations



By H. Harris Healy, III, President, Logos Bookstore

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Killing Dave Henderson, Etc.

By James Nelson
RDR Books, \$17.95

You are not sure whether you want to read fiction or nonfiction? Why not read a book that has both and some humor too! James Nelson's *Killing Dave Henderson, Etc.* fits the bill. The title piece deals with the time the author, as correspondence secretary for his Yale class introduced a classmate unknown to the rest of his class: Dave Henderson, a man always traveling on several boats around the world, throwing parties and avoiding disasters. Nelson goes on to reveal more about Henderson until he passes out of the alumni news. An interesting tidbit is that the author is somewhat of a baseball fan and follows the Oakland Athletics (A's), a local team for him. At one point in time, the A's had an outfielder named Dave Henderson.

Another humorous account is that of the author trying to sell commercial art correspondence courses, announcing he was from the Bureau of Engraving causing the sales prospect to think that he was from the government as he presented the student art sample book to the prospective customer while admitting that a subsidiary of the Bureau of Engraving, Art Instruction, Inc. was the vendor of record for the commercial art course.

James Nelson, avid watch collector as revealed in *A Brief History Of Time* would also like to

redo time. Let us have 100 minutes in an hour and go metric as he proposes in 'It's 4:80-How About Lunch'. He writes about an interesting leaf collection from a tree that has dollars growing out of it in *The Wonderful Leaf Collection* Other stories like *April 14 In Fry's Landing* and *My Private War With Herman* are stories that hold the reader's attention.

Meanwhile, here at Logos, movie night continues every Friday night at dusk. Call (212) 517-7292 for information. See upcoming events below for what else is going on. Come to the store to get your leisure reading for the summer and greeting cards and music.

Upcoming Events At Logos

Monday, August 13, 2007 At 7 P.M., The Sacred Texts Group led by Richard Curtis will meet to discuss *Jesus and The Sermon On The Mount*.

Wednesday, August 15, 2007, AT 7 P.M. KYTV Reading Group will discuss *Tender Is The Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Wednesday, September 5, 2007 At 7 P.M., KYTV Reading Group will discuss *March* by Geraldine Brooks.

Movie Night is every Friday Night at dusk.

Transit: 4, 5, 6, Subways to Lexington Avenue & 86th St., M86 Bus (86th St.), M79 Bus (79th St.),

M31 Bus (York Ave), M15 Bus (1st & 2nd Aves.)#

ANOREXIA REEXAMINED

Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy Of Hating Your Body

by Courtney E. Martin
Published by Free Press; New York, April 2007: 332 pp.

By MERRI ROSENBERG

So this is what our daughters think of us. I'm a member of the second wave of feminism, who has a daughter not that much younger than 25-year-old author Courtney E. Martin, who is a self-described third wave feminist. Martin and I even share the same Alma Mater (Barnard College), and I shudder to think that it's totally our fault that we're the reason for the epidemic of eating disorders that plagues this generation of young women and girls.

But that's pretty much what Martin says in this book. Although she acknowledges other culprits, such as the impact of popular culture—with those stick-thin models and impossible-to-wear fashions for any woman with a non-prepubescent body—sports competition for the first Title IX generation, the gym obsession, television and film images, fathers' mixed messages, even other girls' snarky comments to one another as part of the—sometimes—ruthlessly unforgiving middle school and high societies, there's no escaping the relentless indictment of mothers.

Consider this harsh assessment: "My generation sees our mothers' lives for what they are—often well-intentioned but failed experiments at being superwomen. Their bodies were the casualties of so many of these experiments." Ouch. As an emphatically non-superwoman who never wore a power suit and abandoned the corporate world within two years of graduating from college (and whose daughter has a blessedly healthy attitude towards food and her body image), I realize I shouldn't take what Martin writes personally.

But it's hard not to, especially when I think

about some of my younger relatives who are image-obsessed and on the verge of being too thin, or the high school and college-age daughters of some of my friends who've had their bouts with eating disorders. Did we, as a generation, really do that much harm?

Martin clearly thinks so. Part of the problem, she asserts, is that too many mothers told their daughters that they "could do anything one wanted", with limitless potential. The shadow message, as it were, that daughters heard was to be perfect in every way possible, whether it was SATs, GPA, athletic triumphs, or a svelte body. Writes Martin, "We despise nothing more than weakness."

Instead of changing the world, many of these young women are preoccupied with themselves and what they've achieved and how they look. It's no surprise, then, that Martin writes, "We can't look up and out because we are too busy looking down...my friends and I harbor black holes at the center of our beings...A perfect girl must always be a starving daughter because there is never enough—never enough accomplishment."

Further, Martin observes, "Our bodies are the place where our drive for perfection gets played out." She cites one study of 1,300 women that shows about half of them are obsessive perfectionists.

Is there a solution? Martin suggests that letting go of their insatiable need to be "perfect", however it's defined, is a start. "Perfection and thinness are not your most potent sources of authentic power; your potential is." She offers a useful resource guide, (who knew there was something called Size Acceptance Activism?) as well as a reader's guide, co-authored with her mother, Jere E. Martin, a social worker, with questions to help readers identify their own sense of self and body image.

One doesn't have to agree with her analysis even her conclusions. This is worth reading—even if it makes you angry.#

Review of Learning Like A Girl: Educating Our Daughters In Schools Of Their Own

By MERRI ROSENBERG

Learning Like A Girl: Educating Our Daughters In Schools Of Their Own

by Diana Meehan
Public Affairs, New York, 2007: 324pp.

I've read many worthwhile and significant books during the past few years as a reviewer for these pages.

Until now I haven't come across a book that I wish some Hollywood producer would option for a movie, or even a television movie-of-the-week.

But Diana Meehan's thoroughly engaging, engrossing, accessible and brilliantly written story about her efforts, with similarly committed colleagues and advocates, to found a girls' school in Los Angeles is one I'd love to see on screen.

The story is compelling, complete with the drama of reluctant neighbors protesting the arrival of a girls' school in their community (and not only a girls' school, but a school that embraces Caucasian, African-American, Latina and Asian students) as well as Meehan's personal drama centering on a health crisis (fortunately resolved with a good outcome). Plus there are quirky anecdotes about the challenges of launching a school from scratch, including raising funds, selecting board members and teaching staff, and finding classroom space to making sure there's something as mundane—and necessary—as toilet paper in the bathrooms for the first day of school.

She's so good at what she does, and how she tells her tale, that you come away believing that given enough passion, determination and sheer strength of will, anyone could accomplish what the founders of the Archer School in Los Angeles did only a decade ago.

Meehan is too modest by half. Obviously she and the other founders brought something special to the table that made it possible for the Archer School to become a reality and to flourish. Not everyone, after all, can get Academy Award winning song writers like Alan and Marilyn Bergman to write the school song, for example.

But this is not about glitz or privilege. The Archer School is very much about giving girls from a diversity of backgrounds the chance to become "the best they can be. Given a chance, they create worlds better than our dream for them." (p. 205), through rigorous academics and a deep understanding of girls' need to learn through networks and connections rather than competition.

It is a school that has learned from the examples of other distinguished single-sex girls' schools around the country, such as the Emma Willard school in Troy, NY; the Atlanta Girls' School, The Young Women's Leadership School in Manhattan, Young Women's Leadership Charter School in Chicago, IL, and the Irma Rangel School in Dallas, TX, among others.

As an academic who specializes in media and its messages, Meehan is especially smart at explaining precisely why a girls' school is needed to counteract the predominant consumer culture that values brand names, shopping and popularity rather than academic achievement and intellectual pursuits. Founding a girls' school is, quite simply, a provocative counter-cultural move, especially in an era when educators were beginning to worry about how boys were being left behind. Meehan and her colleagues understood that there

needs to be a place where "there must be acceptance and support for taking a challenge." (p.190)

She's also good at explaining the research into how girls learn, and what those differences may be, whether she's citing Carol Gilligan, Mary Pipher, Peggy Orenstein or Myra and David Sadker, among others. The take away message is simple: "Girls' schools are good for girls." (p. xvi).

And the results are impressive. The first graduating class earned accep-

tances to some of the nation's most prestigious colleges, such as Harvard, Vassar, Princeton, Stanford, and the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Even more important, perhaps, Meehan writes poignantly and eloquently about the metamorphoses many of the students undergo, thriving in the school's unique atmosphere to emerge as academically strong students and impassioned leaders. These portraits are vividly brought to life through Meehan's deft descriptions—one wants to meet each and everyone of these students to find out more about them.

And the school community, as led by school head, Arlene Morgan, absorbs and integrates the unswerving missions of the school. As Meehan writes, "At Archer, students adopt honesty, respect, and responsibility as official shared values, and they talk about applying those values to interactions with teachers and among themselves in the classroom, in peer counseling, on the sports court, on the bus. There are unstated values, too, shared by this communal body, which include a commitment to hard work and high expectations to become what a girl named Sofi identified as "tomorrow's dreamers and tomorrow's leaders." (p. 172)

As the product of a historically single-sex high school (Brooklyn's Berkeley Institute, now known as the Berkeley Carroll School) that went co-ed my sophomore year, as well as Barnard College, I am biased in favor of education that supports girls' specific development.

Read this. I defy you to read it without getting a lump in your throat or a tear in your eye. It will make you believe in the power of education, as demonstrated by gifted, caring teachers who Meehan notes are truly "present" for their students, and the transformations that can result when students and teachers are truly allowed to do their best.#



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HOME SCHOOLING

By JOY RESMOVITS

In September, Staples will overflow with eager youngsters eyeing the star-shaped post-its, flanked by frenzied parents, frantically checking the school supply list.

But for Leo Nacinovich, age 3, Number 2 pencils and Marble notebooks have little to do with education. Many parents in the New York area, such as Leo's mother Amy Bay, opt to guide their children's learning outside a classroom, by home schooling them.

Bay and her husband Wade Nacinovich both have vocational backgrounds in public education. When Bay became a parent, she thought the family would be aligned with "progressive schools." But conversations with friends convinced them that home schooling was the best choice for Leo. "We felt excited about the possibility of learning alongside our son and the ability to tailor his education to his needs," Bay wrote in an email.

Bay said she declined mainstream schooling because she was turned off by the volume of standardized testing in public schools and the unbalanced student-teacher relationship. "When I worked in the schools I was always uncomfortable with the role of teacher as someone who was expected to dole out punishment or rewards for everything from academic progress to discipline," she wrote. "It seemed to me that there was not a lot of trust in the students within the system," she added.

Bay said that she is specifically "unschooling" Leo, a "child-led" at-home education with no curriculum—Leo's interests guide the academic agenda. "We go to the park, we go to museums, he plays with his trains and blocks and toys, we read a lot of books... we tend to our garden in our backyard, we cook real food, we cook pretend food, we meet friends, we ride the subway around..." Bay wrote. "We don't actually believe in benchmarks, nor do we believe that there are certain subjects that are more important than other subjects. We believe that living life provides so many opportunities for learning all kinds of things," she added.

Although home schooling is not the most popular option in New York, there are many support groups, such as New York City Home Educator's Alliance. The organization supplies information to parents and organizes events for home-schooled children, compensating for the lack of social interface that students have with peers every day.

But Bay said socialization in schools alone is artificial. "I believe that socialization is really about developing a comfort level with people of all ages, so in this way, the socialization in schools

is really limiting. At the moment, Leo has friends who are his age and friends who are older and younger. His oldest friend is a woman in her 80's who lives across the street from us," she wrote.

Bay said she sees herself as a "facilitator" of Leo's education, not an instructor. She added that down the line, if Leo is interested in something Ms. Bay doesn't know much about, she would consider hiring an instructor.

As a facilitator, Ms. Bay encountered surprises in her son's learning methods along the way. I set about to 'teach' Leo how to make art and assumed that he would love making art because children love making art. But there were times when Leo would lose interest in a drawing and ask me to make letters and numbers for him on his paper... He would insist and often lose interest all together, so I reluctantly started to make the letters and numbers for him... At a certain point he wouldn't even pick up a pencil, he just wanted me to show him how to form the letters and numbers. It became clear to me, then, that he was learning the alphabet and numbers by watching me write them. He quickly learned the alphabet and numbers this way when he was a little over two years old."

Although it may be logistically difficult, veering from a standardized curriculum has obvious advantages. According to a Rudner study, the average home-schooled 8th grader performs four grade levels above the national average. The median per-child cost of home schooling is \$450. Bay suggested decreasing the emphasis on benchmarks and standardized testing to incorporate unschooling methods into public schools, giving all children a taste of the unique and individualized approach.

In form of the educational style of unschooling, Bay said she and Wade would never perform formal assessments. "We spend most of our time together so it is clear when he knows something. For example, when he learned to walk, we knew he could walk because we saw him walking... we try to resist the urge to test his knowledge or quiz him on things. Part of this comes from a belief in 'process' rather than 'results.'"

Home schooling may not be the option for everyone, but Bay said she is confident that every parent is properly equipped to delve into the rich world of following their child's educational whims. "All you really need is a desire to be with your child(ren), to be willing to support their interests, and be open to an educational path that might not follow the traditional ideas of content and subject mastery and that may lead you into areas you never expected." #

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Making Sense of College Prep Courses

By DR. CAROLE G. HANKIN
WITH RANDI T. SACHS



If your child is in middle school or entering high school, it won't be long before your mailbox regularly holds offers to enroll in a college testing prep course. Getting that perfect score on the all-important SAT can be within your child's reach, they claim, with a little help from their experienced tutors and coaches.

Should you toss these offers, put them aside for later, or start figuring out how to fit a course in your son or daughter's busy schedule? The answer depends on several factors, and the decision will not be the same for everyone.

First, what kind of student is your child? Is he or she at the top of the class and has been having dreams of attending an Ivy League school all his life? Or is your child an average student who earns mostly B's, with the occasional A or C, and plans to attend a good, competitive college in which he or she fits comfortably in their freshman class profile?

The first college test your child will likely take is the PSAT, which is given in eleventh grade. Many high schools give tenth graders the opportunity to take a practice PSAT. We would suggest you strongly advise your student to take advantage of this practice test. Don't be swayed by arguments that they can take a practice test from a book at home. There's a difference between the experiences, and it is helpful to have the realistic experience of a true test situation.

Until you get that test score back, we wouldn't suggest you even consider starting any test preparation course. The best advice we can give college-minded students starting high school is to take the most challenging course load they feel they can handle and to do their best to keep their grades high, and to make reading a daily

pleasure.

There is really no secret to scoring high on the SATs. Students do it every year. Are these the students who took the most preparatory courses and crammed for the tests the hardest? Usually, no. The formula is simple. The students who attain high grades throughout school, who take learning seriously, and—very important—who read books enthusiastically will be the students with the highest SAT grades. When was the last time you heard about a C student acing the SATs?

That said, if your child is a good student and strongly desires to attend a school that has a specific SAT score as a requirement for admission and is falling short of that magic number, it is perfectly reasonable to enroll in an SAT prep course or to arrange for sessions with a private tutor. Many students have reported increases in scores after using these tools. It may also be that your child is very strong in math or English but weaker in the other subject and a course geared to improving the weaker score would be worth the cost and effort.

Keep in mind that students have several chances to take the SATs, and the highest scores in each category are the ones that count. Unless your child has a history of difficulties in testing situations, we suggest you see how he or she scores on their first try before committing a lot of time to a prep course. Before you join those signing up for prep courses, decide if your child actually needs to improve his score. A perfect SAT score will not open the Ivy League doors if your child doesn't have the straight A grades to back it up. Even the combination of both is no guarantee of admission.

Help your child to decide the right way to prepare for their SATs, and remember that there are many, many colleges to choose from.#

Dr. Hankin is superintendent of Syosset Central School District.

FADING TO ZERO

By KEN SIEGELMAN

I'm often daydreamed in a fluted memory
Of tribes which once were nations.
Now, they tapestry in make-shift souvenir dolls
Sold by those who clutch a cloud of my identity;
Mixed African and white, held to their heritage
Mostly by the geography of reservations...
Some break cheap wine bottles
On rusty wrecked tireless cars
Tilting inebriated in their hopelessness
Reflected in their socket stares
Of silence, and broken headlights looking blind
from birth...
Strangers tell me I have good color
And I laugh because I never take the sun in
summer.

I shave less frequently than others
Above my lip and on my chin,
And hardly every razor
The few turkey hairs sprouting from my face...
I'm a hybrid of unresolved bastardy,
Fractioned into superficial evidence
Like a mongrel whose one or two distinctive
traits
Tie it to a pedigree lost somewhere
In an elusive past...
All my progeny will forget the flute
Or feathered headdress,
As they become engulfed inside guitars
Strumming an alien legacy.

Ken Siegelman is the Poet Laureate of Brooklyn, NY.

RESOURCE & REFERENCE GUIDE

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