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America's Misguided Education Policy

By DIANE RAVITCH, Ph.D.

Education is at a crossroads in the United States today. After eight years of the regime of No Child Left Behind, we are worse off than when we started. I say we are worse off because that federal legislation, which promised so much, has failed. Despite hundreds of millions or billions of dollars invested in testing and test prep materials, test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress have barely budged.

Math scores are up, but they have risen more slowly than in the years preceding N.C.L.B. Reading scores have not improved at all. The reading scores of eighth-grade students were the same in 2009 as they were in 1998. These are students who grew up with N.C.L.B. They were tested regularly in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. And they saw no gains on the federal test, which is intended as an audit of state scores.

N.C.L.B., which is still alive even though it is not well, has had other corrosive effects. First, it encouraged states to dumb down their standards, in hopes of reaching the elusive goal of 100 percent proficiency. Second, it created utopian expectations by mandating that all students would be proficient by 2014, a goal that was unattainable. Third, by setting an unrealistic goal, it has undermined public confidence in public education and set the stage for privatization. Fourth, it promoted the simpleminded belief that "accountability" meant "punishment." If all students don't reach proficiency, someone must be held accountable. Their school must be closed or taken over by some private entity or by the state. Heads must roll.

So, as states lowered their standards or rigged their testing systems, state scores rose handsomely, but the scores on the national tests did not. At the same time, the clamor for privately managed charter schools grew louder. Entrepreneurs discovered that they too could open charter schools, winning public acclaim while trumpeting their superiority over regular public schools. The charter school founders and advocates worked hard to avoid any linkage to "privatization," but they were nonetheless busily engaged in demonstrating that private management would produce better results and higher test scores than public management of public schools.

Many, probably most, educators assumed that the election of Barack Obama would mean an end to the harsh and joyless culture created by N.C.L.B. and an end to efforts to undermine public education. They were wrong.

The Obama administration is as committed to accountability and choice as the George W. Bush administration. The Obama-Duncan Race to the Top fund offered nearly \$5 billion to states in competitive grants if they only agreed to remove



their caps of charter schools and to eliminate any legal barriers to evaluating teachers by test scores. Because the money was derived from the stimulus funds, the Race to the Top was never subject to Congressional authorization. It is unlikely that Congress would have approved these priorities, which please Republicans but are inconsistent with the customary Democratic support for equity.

The Obama administration has proposed to reauthorize N.C.L.B. by removing its name, eliminating the 2014 target for 100 percent proficiency, and relieving most districts from its regime of "measure and punish." However, the administration proposes to target the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools — some 5,000 schools — for draconian action. They may be closed, they may be turned into charter schools or turned over to private management, or handed over to the state.

This approach is based directly on N.C.L.B. It is harsh and punitive. There is no evidence that any of these "remedies" will produce better schools. Charter schools, for example, now enroll 3 percent of pupils; they range in quality from excellent to abysmal, and on the whole, they do not produce better performance than regular public schools.

Every low-performing school should be carefully evaluated to determine the reasons for its low performance. Where help is needed, the state should provide it. Education is a helping profession, one that teaches the importance of investing in improvement rather than punishment.

Federal education policy today is on the wrong track. The more we pursue the failed policies of the past, the more disappointed we will be. We must strengthen the education profession with better superintendents, principals, and teachers. We must improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. It is time to think boldly and constructively about the real changes needed to strengthen and rebuild American public education. #

Diane Ravitch is research professor of education at New York University and author of The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education.

Great Teachers Yield Excellence for Students



By JOEL I. KLEIN

The past decade brought long-overdue accountability to public education and cast a spotlight on a shameful achievement gap that had gone unaddressed for generations. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) — known currently as No Child Left Behind — rightfully demanded that all children, regardless of background, have access to a high-quality education.

There is widespread consensus that this legislation can be improved. Its focus on absolute achievement, instead of progress, labeled many schools as "failing" even when students made significant gains.

As Congress debates how best to reform E.S.E.A., however, it is essential that legislators do not abandon aspects of the law that have benefited students. In particular, we must resist the premise that we can never fix education until we end poverty. This is exactly backward: We will never eliminate poverty until we fix education.

It is easy to understand the appeal of claims that schools cannot overcome family circumstances, as it allows us to evade blame for the fact that so many schools are failing. But we have clear evidence that great schools can make an enormous difference for our children, and it is our moral responsibility to take the tough, and even controversial, steps necessary to ensure that all schools help students succeed.

Consider the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress math scores, which show significant variation among similar, high-need students in different cities. In Boston, Charlotte, New York and Houston, fourth-graders scored 20 to 30 points higher than students in the same socio-economic group in Detroit, Milwaukee, Los Angeles and the District of Columbia. To put this in context, 10 points approximates one year of learning, which means that by fourth grade, students in some urban districts are two to three years behind their peers in other cities. If these data were broken out for different schools and classrooms, that gap would likely grow.

Research clearly demonstrates that teachers are the most influential factor in student success. An excellent teacher significantly boosts student learning, and having three highly effective teachers in a row can actually eliminate the achievement gap. Meanwhile, a student who has three low-performing teachers in a row falls so far behind that it is difficult to make up that lost ground. Regrettably, students with the greatest needs have more limited access to top-notch teachers, and that is driving the achievement gap among districts, schools and students.

As Congress considers reauthorization of E.S.E.A., members should focus on strategies to attract and retain excellent teachers, ensuring that the most effective teachers are distributed equitably. Taking the following steps will go a long way to improving achievement nationwide, but especially among our highest-need students.

First, we must attract teachers who performed well in college. Countries that do best on international tests draw teachers from the top third of college graduates. In the United States, most teachers come from the bottom third.

Second, we must create sophisticated evaluation systems that reward excellence rather than seniority alone. We also must make it easier to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom.

Third, we must incentivize excellent teachers to work with high-need students and in high-need schools and shortage subject areas.

These are game-changing reforms, but they are grounded in common sense.

While poverty and difficult family circumstances present real challenges, our most talented educators help students overcome those challenges every day. As we reform E.S.E.A., we must have the courage to take on a status quo that puts the concerns of adults before the needs of children. We must adopt fundamental changes that — if done right — will transform students' lives and advance the future of our nation. #

Joel I. Klein is the chancellor of the New York City Department of Education.

EDUCATION UPDATE

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PREPARING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:

Hong Kong's Educational Reform and Attraction for Foreign Youngsters

HONG KONG—AN INTERNATIONAL CITY IN ASIA

Hong Kong is a place where East meets West. People from different parts of the world come to Hong Kong for education, business, enjoyment, and for exposure to the blend of Chinese and Western cultures. Hong Kong provides an attractive learning environment for preparing students to meet challenges in a globalized world.

The English environment and English-speaking tertiary institutions facilitate overseas students to study here. The cosmopolitan nature of campus life is nurturing the inter-cultural competence students require to be future world citizens. The rich Chinese language and cultural environment prepare students who are interested in developing their career in Asia, particularly in the Greater China region.

In Hong Kong, we welcome overseas students to study, to conduct academic research, and to take part in educational exchange activities.

THE NEW ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

In September 2009, Hong Kong started the implementation of the *New Academic Structure (NAS)*, which marked the beginning of a new era in education. The NAS facilitates the development of the human resources necessary for sustaining the position of Hong Kong as an international city, amidst worldwide changes brought by globalization, economic restructuring, and rapid development in Mainland China. The first cohort will complete their senior secondary education in 2012.



Lecturer and students from different parts of the world share a lively intellectual discussion

MAIN FEATURES OF THE NAS

- Comprises three-year junior secondary, three-year senior secondary, and four-year undergraduate education.

- Offers a broad and balanced secondary school curriculum (i.e. no more streaming of Arts, Science or Business subjects); emphasizes generic skills like critical thinking, creativity and communication, and learning to learn; caters to students with diverse interests, aptitudes and needs by offering more choices.

- Students are required to study **four core subjects** and choose **two to three electives**.

- ▶ Four core subjects—Chinese, English, Mathematics, and Liberal Studies*

- ▶ Elective subjects that range from traditional subjects like Sciences, History, and Geography, to Applied Learning courses and other foreign languages courses like French, Spanish and Japanese

* The Liberal Studies aims to broaden students' knowledge base, enhance their social and national awareness and global outlook, and develop their multi-perspective and critical thinking skills through studies of a wide range of issues.

- **Other Learning Experiences (OLE)** and **Student Learning Profile (SLP)**—both within and outside of the classroom, such as moral and



A beautiful and tranquil campus for university students

civic education, community services, career-related experiences, aesthetic development and physical development – form an essential part of the new senior secondary curriculum. Students will be encouraged to develop an SLP on their OLE, awards/achievements gained outside of school, and self reflections for reference of admission to post-secondary and university education, as well as for employers.

EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT UNDER THE NAS

- At the end of the sixth year of the secondary curriculum, students will sit for one single public examination in order to obtain the *Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)*.

- Standards-referenced Reporting will be adopted for the HKDSE Examination for reporting a student's overall performance. Levels 1 to 5 will replace the existing Grades A to F. Each level will be accompanied by descriptors that depict the performance of a student at a given level. Results of candidates indicate the standards achieved in terms of knowledge and skills, regardless of the performance of other candidates taking the same examination.

- The new examination articulates to multiple pathways in local post-secondary and higher education institutions.

- It has gained positive international recognition. *The National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC)* and the *Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)* have conducted benchmarking studies on the recognition of the HKDSE Examination and its articulation to overseas universities. The NARIC study shows that the HKDSE compares favorably with alternative qualifications in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The UCAS benchmarking studies enable comparisons of the HKDSE Examination with awards in the United Kingdom and other regions for university admission purpose through a tariff point system. The Australian Government has also recognized the HKDSE as equivalent to the *Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education*. International recognition of HKDSE, together with students' SLP, will serve as a reference in student admission for overseas universities.

HONG KONG AS A REGIONAL EDUCATION HUB

- Hong Kong aspires to be a regional education hub to nurture talents for the region.

- Hong Kong has many world-class institutions. Of the 12 degree-awarding institutions in Hong Kong: three were ranked within the top 50 in 2009 by the *Times Higher Education Supplement*: The University of Hong Kong (24), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (35), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (46); and another two within the top 200: The City University of Hong Kong (124) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (195). We adopt international standards in curriculum design and quality assurance.

- Hong Kong universities host the world's best executive business management programs. The EMBA program offered by The Hong Kong

University of Science and Technology, in collaboration with Kellogg School of Management of the Northwestern University, was ranked 1st by the *Financial Times* in 2007 and 2009. The MBA programs offered by two universities were ranked 9th (The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) and 28th (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) by the *Financial Times* in 2010. Our performance in other fields is equally impressive. For example, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University was ranked 2nd in the world in 2009 among academic institutions in hospitality and tourism based on research and scholarship according to the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*.



Hong Kong - an ideal place for study and making friends of diverse cultures

NON-LOCAL STUDENTS IN HONG KONG

- Hong Kong welcomes international students. Out of around 70,000 university students in Hong Kong, 13%, or 9,300 are non-local students. Tuition fees in Hong Kong's universities range from US\$9,000 to US\$13,000 per year. To enhance internationalization of our campus –

- ▶ We have doubled the quotas for non-local students at publicly-funded institutions from 10% to 20% since 2008.

- ▶ We have set up a scholarship fund with one billion Hong Kong Dollars (about US\$128 million) to award government scholarships to outstanding local and non-local students.

- ▶ We have relaxed employment restrictions to allow non-local students to take part-time jobs during their studies. Non-local students may also stay in Hong Kong for 12 months, without any restrictions, after graduation.

- A number of universities in Hong Kong offer student exchange programs with major universities around the world. In addition, many overseas students pursue short-term studies in Hong Kong.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN HONG KONG

- In 2009, we established a *Research Endowment Fund* with 18 billion Hong Kong dollars (about US\$2.3 billion) and shall create, in phases, 800 additional publicly-funded research postgraduate places.

- We launched the *Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme* in 2009. This scheme aims to attract the best and brightest students from around the world to pursue their PhD programs in Hong Kong's institutions. The scheme provides a monthly stipend, conference attendance, and research-related and travel allowance for the awardees for a period up to three years.

NON-LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN HONG KONG

- There are over 1,200 courses in Hong Kong offered by institutions outside Hong Kong, leading to the award of a non-local higher academic or professional qualification.

- Among them, 62% are from the UK, 22% from Australia, 8% from the US and Canada, 6% from Mainland China and 2% from other countries.



Local and overseas students enjoy a happy campus life

FURTHER INTERNATIONALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF HONG KONG'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

- As part of our efforts to support the internationalization and diversification of Hong Kong's higher education sector –

- ▶ We grant land sites at nominal premium to self-financing non-profit-making post-secondary institutions for the construction of purpose-built premises to offer locally accredited programs. We will invite interested institutions, local and non-local, to express their interest in developing a self-financing higher education institution on a site which can provide over 100,000 square metres in gross floor area and can house 8,000 students with residential facilities.

- ▶ We have a Start-up Loan Scheme, which provides loans to support self-financing post-secondary institutions to develop new college premises and re-provision existing premises.

- ▶ We operate the Quality Enhancement Grant Scheme that supports projects/initiatives that can improve students' learning, teaching methods, course quality and career guidance.

ENQUIRIES

For more information about our NAS and our higher education institutions, please visit our website www.edb.gov.hk/334/EN; websites of the individual institutions listed below:

- City University of Hong Kong (www.cityu.edu.hk)
- Hong Kong Baptist University (www.hkbu.edu.hk)
- Lingnan University (www.ln.edu.hk)
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong (www.cuhk.edu.hk)
- The Hong Kong Institute of Education (www.ied.edu.hk)
- The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (www.polyu.edu.hk)
- The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (www.ust.hk)
- The University of Hong Kong (www.hku.hk)
- The Open University of Hong Kong (www.ouhk.edu.hk)
- The Hong Kong Shue Yan University (www.hksyu.edu)
- Chu Hai of Higher Education College (www.chuhai.edu.hk)
- The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (www.hkapa.edu)

You are also welcome to contact the Education Bureau of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region via email at 334@edb.gov.hk

Contributed by: Education Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government



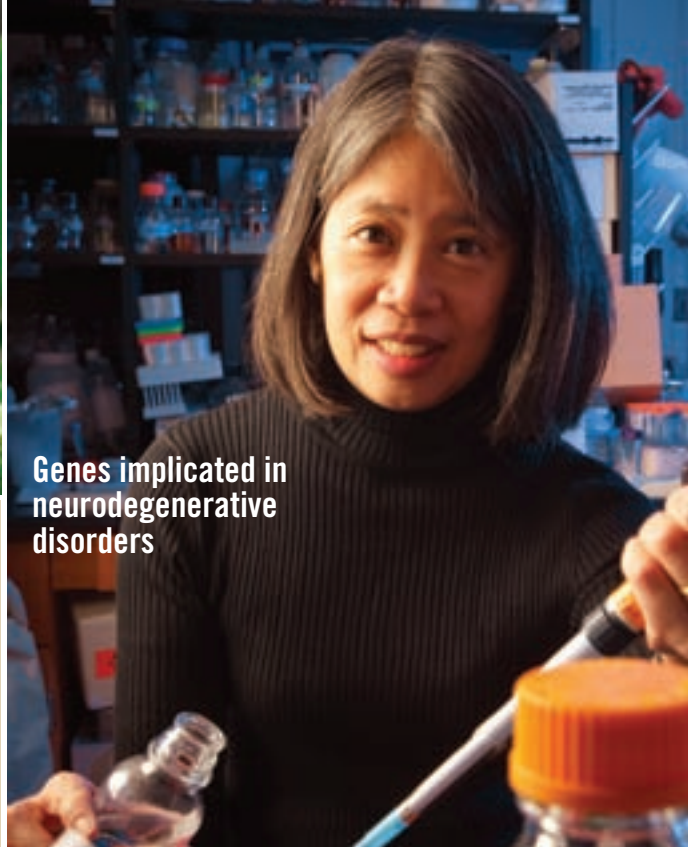
Impact of chemotherapy drugs on target genes

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

IN SCIENCE RESEARCH II




Genomic development of high-vitamin food crops

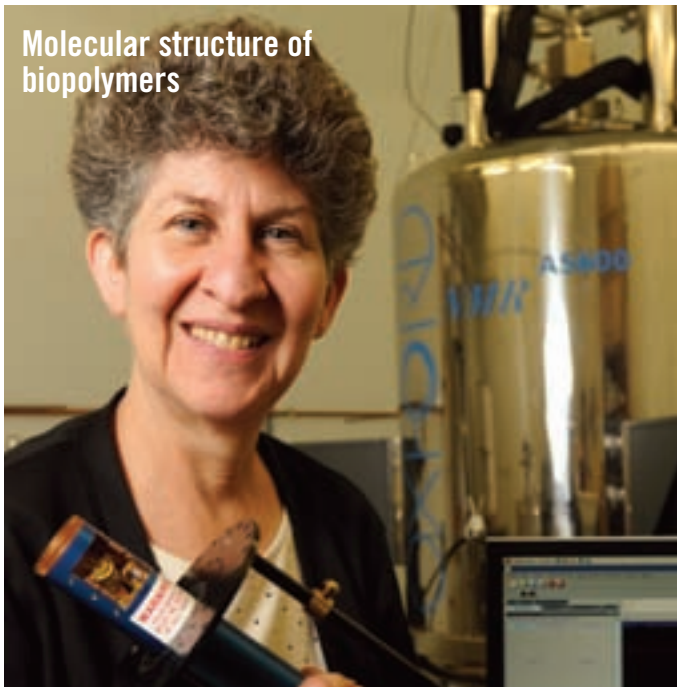


Genes implicated in neurodegenerative disorders



Evolutionary developmental biology of palm trees

Top row, l to r: Dr. Jill Bargonetti, Professor of Biological Sciences, Hunter College and CUNY Graduate Center; Dr. Eleanor Wurtzel, Professor of Biological Sciences, Lehman College and CUNY Graduate Center; Dr. Christine Li, Associate Professor of Biology, City College of New York and CUNY Graduate Center; **Bottom row, l to r:** Flor Henderson, Assistant Professor of Biology, Hostos Community College; Dr. Ruth Stark, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Director of CUNY Institute for Macromolecular Assemblies, City College and CUNY Graduate Center; Dr. Corinne Michels, Distinguished Professor of Biology, Queens College and CUNY Graduate Center.



Molecular structure of biopolymers



Regulation of gene expression



B

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Matthew Goldstein
Chancellor

For more information about CUNY women in science visit www.cuny.edu/decadeofscience



Hurricane Ivan Scholarship Winner Lerone Bleasdille of Grenada

Selected as Class of 2010 Valedictorian at City Tech

Out of devastation emerged opportunity for Lerone Bleasdille, New York City College of Technology's (City Tech) 2010 valedictorian. He arrived at City Tech as a result of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, which decimated most of the buildings in his native country, Grenada. The former resident of St. George's Parish had a few scares but was lucky: the hurricane destroyed only one room in his father's home, where he lived with his oldest sister. Unable to get through to the rest of his family in the Northern Parish of St. David's for a week, he eventually found out that his mother, stepfather and siblings were safe and had opened their home to neighbors who had no place to stay.

It was Bleasdille's mother, then an administrator in the prime minister's office, who learned that The City University of New York, in partnership with the Grenada Mission, was offering 15 college scholarships to Grenadian students as a humanitarian initiative.

At the time, Bleasdille, who held an associate degree in information technology from Grenada's T.A. Marryshow Community College, was working in a local bank as a commercial teller. He applied for and won one of the CUNY scholarships, and chose to study at City Tech because it was the only one of the four participating CUNY colleges to offer computer science-related majors. The scholarship paid for his tuition during his years at City Tech.

"If I hadn't received this scholarship, I would have stayed in my bank job for two more years. Then, I would have taken a loan to try and get into a U.S. college," notes Bleasdille, 24, who will graduate with a bachelor of technology degree in computer systems and deliver the valedictory address at City Tech's commencement in the Theater at Madison Square Garden.

What drives Bleasdille, an East Flatbush resident, in his academic work and many community activities is passion. "My valedictory speech will have two themes: finding your passion, which is going to push you to succeed, and appreciating the value of negative people in your life as well as the positive, supportive ones," he explains. "If someone negates what you want to do, it makes you want it more. It actually helps. You may not realize it at first."

He says he learned this lesson when a professor told him to drop a class because he'd missed the first two weeks while completing an internship and wouldn't be able to catch up. "I took the opportunity to prove him wrong and ended up getting an A," he says.

Grateful for his own scholarship experience, Bleasdille, who served as president of City Tech's Student Government Association (S.G.A.) and later as senator-at-large and treasurer, recognized the need to provide scholarships for international students who ordinarily were ineligible due to residency requirements.

With the strong support of the City Tech Foundation and its executive director, Jewel Trowers-Escobar, he and some fellow students established the merit-based S.G.A. Trust Award, which soon will announce its first awards of \$2,000 each to three full-time students.

Leadership and creativity are two qualities Bleasdille exhibits in abundance, having served as lead reporter of the college's student newspaper, New Tech Times, president of the Martial Arts Club, and vice president of the E-commerce Club, in addition to his student government posts.

While gravitating toward a career in technology, Bleasdille says he "found himself as a creative writer" at City Tech. "I used to write poetry in high school and sometimes perform it," he explains. "My first English professor at City Tech gave me great feedback on my writing and encouraged me to enter the college's Literary Arts Festival competition. I won first prize in both the poetry and short story categories two



years in a row," he proudly notes.

Says Professor Caroline Hellman, the festival coordinator, "Lerone helped pioneer S.G.A.'s involvement in the festival; now there is an annual SGA writing prize, usually on a community or academic

topic." This year, says Bleasdille, "I entered all sections of the competition: poetry, fiction, drama, humor and essay. It's my last semester. I might as well go all out!" He received prizes this year for fiction, poetry, essay and drama.

Bleasdille credits his drive and multiple interests partly to the example set by his late father, Leroy Neckles, who died in 2008. Neckles, a U.S.-educated business turnaround specialist, held numerous executive posts, such as first general manager of Grenada's Point Salines International Airport, manager of government agencies in Grenada and Guyana, and president of Rotary International. Says Bleasdille, "He told me, 'Leaders are never people who want to lead; they are the people others ask to lead.' I always remember that statement; it means you're doing something right when people believe in you. You're already a leader to your supporters — now they want to make it official."

While Neckles did not live to see Bleasdille graduate from City Tech, he was instrumental in his son being able to come to the U.S. to study. One of the criteria for the Grenada-CUNY scholarship was having a friend or relative living in New York. At the time, Neckles was here being treated for kidney disease, which meant Bleasdille qualified.

Bleasdille also credits his mother for "her indomitable spirit and unquenchable support," he says. "She's read all my stories and poems. While my father set the education bar high, my mother built my character."

His mother, as well as his stepmother, two aunts, two uncles and six cousins, will be attending City Tech's commencement.

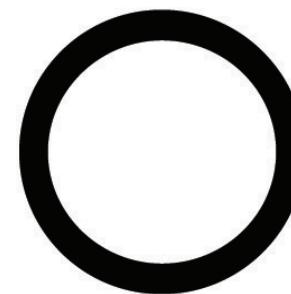
Bleasdille applied himself to his coursework in his major, completing four honors projects for his math and programming courses. He also did three internships, instead of just the one required, picking up experience in his field at Goldman Sachs, the Department of Education, and Mixed Media Solutions, Web-design company. Of his interest in software development, creating programs and designing Web sites, he says, "I like the creative aspect of computer systems, designing solutions for challenging problems."

To gain more work experience, he is applying for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Optional Practical Training program. It places non-immigrant full-time students (F-1 visa status) who have completed or have been pursuing college degrees in STEM majors (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics) in full-time jobs for up to 29 months.

One of the most important things he has gained from his time at City Tech is a broader understanding of life. "I've been exposed to different cultures; I've met people from most of the countries in the world — it's like the United Nations here — and I've made many friends."

To anyone considering attending City Tech, he advises, "Come in and see it for yourself, talk to students and professors in your major, research what kind of job you can get after graduation. Find your passion; you can make a career of it; prospective employers will pick up on your enthusiasm." #

New York City College of Technology of The City University of New York is the largest public college of technology in New York state. Located at 300 Jay Street in Downtown Brooklyn, the college enrolls more than 15,400 students in 61 baccalaureate, associate and specialized certificate programs. An additional 15,000 students annually enroll in continuing education and workforce-development programs.



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Session 1S: June 1-June 24

Session 1L: June 1-July 1

Session 2S: July 6-August 9

Session 2L: July 6-August 12



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Goe Twins Provide Hope for New Parents



By McCARTON ACKERMAN

Autism has become a more widely discussed topic in the news, perhaps due to the rapid increase in the number diagnoses over the last decade. Most reports on disorders among children tend to focus on the negative implications. However, with appropriate and aggressive treatment at an early age, these disorders can be overcome.

Sammy and Steve are 5-year-old twin boys born to Ricki and Stephen Goe. Raised in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., the twins were born 24 weeks early and were in neo-natal intensive care for over 100 days. Sammy would have to be rehospitalized on two more occasions, one of which required him to be placed in a coma to undergo throat surgery.

"It was shocking and disturbing because they told us there was a 30 percent chance of survival and a 5 percent chance of not having neurological impairments," says Ricki. "We were just told to worry about getting through one day, then getting through the week. We were praying for the best."

Although Sammy started receiving therapy a month after birth, he was eventually diagnosed with cerebral palsy and spastic dysplasia, which involves spastic movements below the waist. Sammy now receives speech, physical, and occupational therapy through C.P.S.E., while Steve receives physical therapy in addition to occupational therapy one day per week. "When Sammy first began therapy, he couldn't write a single recognizable letter," says Stephen. "He's been working on that and his speech with therapists and sitters who are specialized with this population, and it's gotten much better."

Ricki says that although there were multiple signs of progress throughout therapy, there was

one in particular that stood out. "When he was six months old I said to get the blue ball, and he crawled to it. I started to cry. I despaired a lot in the beginning, but that moment made me realize that things were going to work out."

Under the recommendation of Sammy's speech therapist, both twins attended the same preschool together and received therapy outside the school. Attending preschool proved to be a huge help for Sammy. Within a matter of days, the progress in his speech was apparent to everyone. "His vocabulary exploded after a week of being around other children," says Ricki. "It also helped that we had a better understanding of what his non-vocalizations meant."

This progress is also showing up on standardized evaluations. Although Sammy is only in the 6th percentile among similarly aged children for speech, this number is up from what it was previously. Conversely, he is in the 98th percentile for being able to follow instructions.

Stephen says that he feels extremely lucky for the services that the school district has provided for his children. "You hear stories about families not being able to receive adequate services for their children, but I can honestly say that we've been blessed with what we've been given in that regard. The therapists educate the families as well as the kids."

Above anything else, both Ricki and Stephen encourage families of children with developmental disabilities to remain strong and have hope. "You can get overwhelmed by what you read online sometimes," says Stephen. "However, just because you read someone else's story doesn't mean that will happen to you. Have faith and hope because you just don't know what will happen two or three years down the road." #

TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES

By DR. BONNIE BROWN

We live in a technological age in which educators are struggling to keep students on task and focused on learning. They are challenged daily by students who are enthralled with Facebook, Twitter and other social networking platforms. We evidence student achievement using Web-based intervention programs such as Read 180, Achieve 3000 or 24 Game.



Thus, it is readily evident that our students are mesmerized by their ability to socially interact online, interface with their peers/classmates in classrooms using Smartboards, and improve their content area skills using Web-based programs. However, our students with cognitive and learning challenges, although equally motivated by the Internet, often do not have the requisite skill set to use these programs to improve their functioning in classrooms or in the community. Therefore, it becomes imperative for creative program designers to fill the void and allow our students with disabilities the same access to Internet resources and to further their skills in an adapted, real life environment.

One such program is the 3D World Project in District 75, which was designed as a substitute program for real life community-based learning experiences for young adults either on the spectrum or with developmental delays. In neighboring suburban school districts, BOCES or the school community have purchased actual homes where students can report daily to participate in community living and to develop habilitative living skills, such as caring for a home, banking, shopping, socializing, or dealing with emergen-

cies. This type of program assists them in developing necessary survival skills in a real-life environment and then in generalizing those skills to other environments in the community. Unfortunately, New York City does not have access to the type of real estate necessary to implement a similar program. Therefore, the district has developed an online community where students are represented by an avatar bearing their name that they can dress and operate, facilitating the learning of the necessary skills for living independently.

The actual course content of the program is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards in Language Arts, Mathematics and, more importantly, the Career Development curriculum. Much of the program focuses on the development of social skills, a lack of which is the primary reason our graduates are not successful either in job placements or in community living. They often can get a job and learn the prerequisite skills to do it, but are dismissed for inappropriate behaviors, poor personal hygiene, or lack of coping skills. By giving our students an opportunity to learn these skills in an online environment and then to practice them in class and in the community at work sites while still under teacher supervision, we are optimizing their opportunities for post-school success. Students are taught how to deal with common social nuances we take for granted in our daily lives, such as how many times you can ring a neighbor's doorbell in one day, how to prepare when inviting guests to spend some time at your home,

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Working Toward Empowerment and Inclusion: Tim Shriver



Tim Shriver with young children in South Africa

By McCARTON ACKERMAN

Although the special-needs population has been receiving far more media and press attention in recent years, one trailblazer was pioneering this movement well before activism for this group ever took place. Tim Shriver, part of the famous Kennedy clan, has been working with disadvantaged and underprivileged youth throughout his life. In addition to being a board member of Malaria No More, he is the chairman and C.E.O. of Special Olympics and a former teacher in the New Haven public education system.

Born in Boston, Shriver attended Yale University before receiving his master's in religion from The Catholic University of America and his Ph.D. in education from the University of Connecticut.

Although he served as a teacher in the New Haven school system, it is his work with the special-needs population that Shriver is arguably best known for. "My mother was very active with this population, and we followed suit as a result," says Shriver. "That was where the Special Olympics came from. It was the platform that showed all kids matter; they have value and they can contribute."

The Special Olympics is an international athletic competition held every two years for people with intellectual disabilities. There are also local, regional and national competitions in over 150 countries worldwide. More than three million athletes are involved in Special Olympics training and competitions.

"When you talk to kids with special needs and their parents, the problem isn't so much an

issue with learning," says Shriver. "They're not participating in things, they're not invited to events by their classmates, and that's because they're seen as different. I'd like to see kids more involved as being part of the future of inclusion."

Shriver says this issue could be solved through curriculums in public schools that directly address diversity. "Many public schools have done a great job with special needs, but I think schools should have lessons about human difference and what it means to feel excluded," says Shriver. "In the end, parents or teachers can't make a child feel welcome. The only person that can make 13-year-old feel welcome is another 13-year-old."

In addition to his work with schools, Shriver is still very much involved with the Special Olympics. He's set a goal of having 100 million fans on the Web by the next event, and hopes to make as many people aware of the organization as possible. "I'd love it if no matter how old you are or where you are in your career, you've been asked or had the opportunity to participate in the Special Olympics," says Shriver. "I'd like to think my children are better off for their experiences with it."

Shriver insists that outdoing the legacy of his father, Sargent Shriver, a former U.S. ambassador to France and the first director of the Peace Corps, would be impossible, but he says that he will have fun trying to come close to it and has learned countless invaluable lessons from him. "My father knew how to see and solve problems. There's no limit to what you can do and no limit to successful empowerment." #

Bonnie Brown

continued from page 8

how to use an A.T.M. to access cash, and how to recognize an emergency and knowing whom to call. These skills are taught in much the way the three R's are taught, and students get to generalize them by working at job sites in the community and by involving parents in the program, who assist in making sure students get opportunities for skill practice at home to maximize generalization of the material taught.

The secondary gain of such a Web-based program is that students, many of whom are socially isolated outside of school, get an opportunity to participate in "community days" online where they can hang out on a virtual street corner with their peers and chat about music, movies, clothes, etc. This ability to use an avatar to practice friendship-building skills and get feedback from peers, which is then discussed offline with teachers, offers our students a rare opportunity to hone their skills in a protected environment. Since each community day is archived in snapshots and can be viewed offline, the students can go back over social interactions with their teachers and counselors and strategize better ways to communicate

or alternate methods of interaction with difficult people. It also affords these fragile and isolated young adults an arena in which to feel that they can be like their peers and freely socialize without parents having to worry about them being out alone on the actual streets.

This is just the beginning of the journey with the 3D World Project; students are enamored with the environment and seem to be thriving with the opportunities offered to them. They are making friends across different schools and boroughs, and teachers can already see the changes it has made in their self-esteem. The hope of the district is to train and involve parents in this initiative to ensure that skills learned will generalize to student homes and communities and afford them an opportunity for improved life outcomes. Technology should be more than a point of entry for students with disabilities. It should offer them the same social networking opportunities and access to motivational curricula. It is the work of visionary educators and creative teachers to design these programs and carry them to implementation. #

Dr. Bonnie Brown is the superintendent of District 75 in New York City, which includes all special-needs children throughout the city.



Mental Health and Suicidality on College Campuses: Optimizing the Safety Net

By NANCE ROY, Ed.D.

“Unrecognized and untreated depression is currently the most common serious public health problem in college students. The impact of depression is substantial, including reduced student retention, learning and success. The National College Health Assessment, the American College Health Association’s annual student survey, reported that the percentage of college students who reported receiving a diagnosis of clinical depression increased from 10 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2005. In a population of nearly 18 million students, as many as 2.35 million college students may experience significant depression during their college years. Of the 94,806 students who participated in the 2006 National College Health Assessment, 52.4 percent reported ‘Feeling things were hopeless’ between one and 10 times during the past school year; 36.7 percent were ‘Feeling so depressed it was difficult to function’ between one and 10 times; and 9.3 percent found themselves ‘Seriously considering attempting suicide.’”

—Dr. Henry Chung and Dr. Michael Klein,
National College Depression Partnership*

These findings highlight the extent and gravity of the issues of depression and suicidality on our campuses. Further, research has demonstrated that the majority of college students are much more likely to access medical services at their college than counseling services. As such, students who are struggling with depression and other mental health issues often go undetected and untreated, and as recent tragedies on college campuses have shown, most students who commit suicide have never accessed services at their college counseling center.

In an effort to identify those students who may be struggling with serious depression and/or suicidality and who don’t voluntarily access the counseling services on campus, Sarah Lawrence College has joined with other colleges and universities across the country in the National College Depression Partnership (N.C.D.P.), spearheaded by Dr. Henry Chung and Dr. Michael Klein at N.Y.U. (quoted above). The N.C.D.P. project is a public health initiative aimed at engaging primary care providers in the identification, detection and treatment of depression in college students, utilizing an outcomes-driven approach to depression care that embraces clinical, developmental, and learning outcomes. While not all students who may be struggling with depression and/or suicidality will find their way to the campus counseling center, most students do utilize their medical services, whether it be for a cold or flu, allergies, physicals, etc. The N.C.D.P. project involves administering a depression screening to all students who present for services at the Health Center, whether it is for a medical or mental-health appointment or walk-in services. The provider reviews the screen with the student and, if indicated, helps to get him or her connected in treatment.

All students who obtain a score on the depression screen that indicates moderate depression and difficulty in daily functioning are entered into the N.C.D.P. registry, and their progress is tracked over time. The screen is administered four times over a 12-week period along with a functioning and flourishing measure, which is administered at the outset and conclusion of the treatment. These measures assess the degree to which students’ academic, social and interpersonal functioning and satisfaction changes as treatment progresses.

As a result of the project, we were successful in screening 80 percent of all students seen at Health Services during the past academic year, representing 60 percent of the entire student body. More importantly, primary care was responsible for screening 20 percent of these students,



many of whom were struggling with serious depression and suicidality and who were having extreme difficulty in their daily functioning.

For this subset of students identified by primary care, their depressive symptoms diminished from moderately severe depression to experiencing only minor depressive symptoms. This same group

of students improved their flourishing and functioning levels from the low end of the moderate range to the higher end of the moderate range. Further, primary care was successful in identifying populations who are typically underrepresented in the counseling center, namely males and students of color. Primary care was responsible for identifying 24 percent of all males and 16 percent of all students of color who were struggling with depression and successfully referred them to treatment. These were students who were struggling with significant depression and may have gone undetected and untreated had they not been identified by primary care.

A second initiative aimed at preventing high-risk students from falling through the cracks has been the development of a tracking system for those students who receive mental health services off campus. When a student comes to the attention of Health Services for engaging in high-risk behaviors that may put themselves or others at risk and who prefer to get treatment off campus, we developed a system that “tracks” the off-campus treatment. While we prefer to see these high-risk students on campus so that we can more closely monitor their treatment, oftentimes they are in need of long-term, ongoing treatment that college counseling centers may be unable to provide. In addition, there are times when the student may simply prefer to be seen in the community. As such, it is often our highest-risk students who are referred off campus for services.

In an effort to monitor these students as closely as those seen on campus, students sign a release of information allowing us to have communication with their clinician in the community. At the outset, a treatment plan is agreed upon by the student, the community provider and the college counseling center, and a letter is sent to the community provider outlining and confirming the treatment agreement. The provider is then asked to fax back a clinical contact form each month to the counseling center confirming that the student is keeping appointments and adhering to the treatment plan as agreed upon. Further, the community provider agrees to notify the counseling center if any emergencies arise or if there are any significant changes to the treatment plan, such as an increase or decrease in the frequency of visits or a discontinuation or addition of psychiatric medications.

During the 2008-09 academic year, 36 high-risk students were seen by clinicians in the community and were “tracked.” Of the 36 students, only 4 ended up having to take a medical leave. Of the remaining 32 students, all successfully completed the year, none required a reduced course load, and there were no psychiatric hospitalizations and no discipline-related referrals from student affairs. This is not to say that students are always compliant with the treatment, which is precisely why the tracking system is so effective. When a student begins to miss appointments or experiences an exacerbation in symptoms, the tracking system allows for the counseling center to be notified, at which point we are able to have a conversation with the student to figure out what may be going on or what may be preventing the student from engaging in treatment. We are then able to get the student reconnected with their community provider or, if appropriate, redesign

SUICIDE ON CAMPUS

By MORTON M.
SILVERMAN, M.D.



A student death, especially by suicide, is a tragic event that often results in a painful disruption in the life of an educational institution. Although a statistically rare event, a suicide brings to a halt the daily patterns of school life and community and calls into question concerns about safety,

security, monitoring, protection, and prevention.

After motor-vehicle accidents and homicides, suicide is the third leading cause of death in young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Data from a C.D.C. 2007 study indicated that during the prior 12-month period, 14.5 percent of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide, 11.3 percent had made suicide plans, 6.9 percent had made suicide attempts, and 2.0 percent reported making at least one suicide attempt that required medical attention.

When the American College Health Association surveyed college students in the fall of 2008, 63.7 percent reported having felt very sad at least once within the preceding 12 months, 30.6 percent felt so depressed it was difficult to function, 6.4 percent had seriously considered attempting suicide, and 1.3 percent had attempted suicide. In addition, 5.5 percent reported intentionally cutting, burning, bruising, or otherwise injuring themselves. With over 18 million students enrolled in higher education programs, these numbers are quite concerning.

Despite national attention to the problem of adolescent and young-adult suicide, the suicide rate in this age group hardly changed from 2000 to 2006 (10.2/100,000 vs. 9.8/100,000), representing almost 4,200 suicidal deaths in 2006. Without a doubt, suicide and suicidal behaviors are a major public health problem in this age group.

Fortunately, more parents, teachers and school personnel are identifying students with mental-health problems and helping them obtain treatment. Because of earlier diagnoses and better treatments that are available to high school students (and younger), more students are now able to complete high school and enter college. College and university student counseling services are challenged to provide services to at least three categories of students: those coming to campus already diagnosed with a major mental disorder and actively seeking continuing treatment, those who develop major mental illnesses while enrolled, and those with pre-existing emotional disorders who decide to forgo further treatment once enrolled and subsequently have relapses.

The Jed Foundation and the national Suicide Prevention Resource Center have developed a comprehensive approach to promoting mental health and preventing student suicide. They recommend that high schools and colleges/universities:

Promote social networks that reinforce a sense of community and relationships among students. Schools should work to reduce student isolation and encourage feelings of belonging. It is not simply a matter of urging each student to “get involved,” but of creating opportunities in an environment of caring and connection. For example, the trend on many college campuses is to create smaller living-and-learning environments that help foster relationships among students and between students and faculty members. Such relationships

can be a significant protective factor against depression and suicide.

Help students develop life skills to face challenges. High schools and colleges should encourage and create programs that improve students’ management of the rigors of student life and equip them with the tools and techniques to manage triggers and stressors.

Educate students about mental health and wellness, and encourage them to seek appropriate treatment for emotional issues. It is important to create a school environment that will reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and the barriers that prevent students with suicidal thoughts and behaviors from seeking help. Schools should teach students about the signs and symptoms of mental illness and suicide, and provide online self-assessment tools and information.

Identify students who may be at risk for suicide or violent behaviors through the use of outreach efforts, screening, and other means. Administrators, faculty members, and students should learn how to identify and refer a student in distress to the people who can help that student, and then practice those skills on a regular basis.

Increase access to effective mental-health services that accurately diagnose and appropriately treat students with emotional problems. For high school students, the schools should, with the help of guidance counselors and school psychologists, serve as a resource for mental-health services at the school and/or in the surrounding community. For college and university students, the counseling centers should institute policies and procedures that improve counseling services, work with other organizations in the community that focus on mental-health issues, and train counseling center staff members and others about confidentiality, parental notification, and other legal issues.

Create policies and procedures that promote the safety of distressed or suicidal students and outline how to respond to crises, including suicidal acts. That includes policies and procedures that respond to suicide attempts and high-risk behaviors, as well as the development of a comprehensive disaster and follow-up plan.

Restrict access to means to potentially lethal sites, weapons, and other agents that may facilitate suicide attempts. Such actions might include limiting access to roofs of buildings, replacing windows or restricting the size of window openings, denying access to chemicals, such as cyanide, that can be found in chemistry laboratories, prohibiting guns on school grounds/campus, and controlling the use of alcohol and other drugs.

Developing a comprehensive school/campus plan that incorporates such strategies requires collaboration from many people, who are as diverse as bus drivers, coaches, faculty, administrators, campus ministers, dining service personnel, facilities managers and students. Maintaining student safety and well-being is everyone’s responsibility. #

Morton M. Silverman, M.D. is the senior medical advisor to The Jed Foundation (New York City) and senior advisor to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (Newton, Mass.). He was the senior scientific writer for the Surgeon General’s National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2001).

the treatment plan to better meet the current needs of the student.

In both the N.C.D.P. project as well as the tracking system, follow-up seems to be the key. It is not enough to identify those students who are struggling with mental health issues, including suicidality, nor is it enough to simply offer services. It appears that active and ongoing follow-up is critical to ensuring that students not only get the help they need, but continue to stay connected and engaged in treatment. By provid-

ing the scaffolding these students need, we not only help to prevent them from falling through the cracks, but we may become more effective in preventing some of the tragedies occurring on our campuses. #

Nance Roy, Ed.D., is director of health services at Sarah Lawrence College.

*NCDP-Rationale, 2009. National College Depression Partnership Web Site. <http://www.nyu.edu/ncdp/about/rationale.html>. Updated January 22, 2010. Accessed May 04, 2010



THE WINDWARD SCHOOL

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

By RICH MONETTI

Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen of the Florida Center for Reading Research recently presented “Teaching All Students to Read — Is it Really Possible?” at the Windward School in White Plains, N.Y. Since, according to National Assessment of Educational Progress results, 33 percent of all American children fail to achieve basic reading standards by third grade, it’s a crucial question. Before an audience of about 100 educators, Dr. Torgesen outlined an overall strategy and presented results to back up the claims.

“When you learn to read, it changes your life and opens the world to you on numerous avenues,” he says. On the other hand, an early gap in reading grows proportionally over time and puts students at a disadvantage to learn in all other areas.

Nature-wise, he says, some students lack certain inherent abilities to master comprehension, while the nurture aspect may diminish a child’s vocabulary upon entering kindergarten due to a family’s economic condition. Either way, Dr. Torgesen suggested the main obstacle emerges from the diverse range of ability contained within

classrooms. Most schools haven’t figured out how to organize classrooms to meet individual needs, he says.

Putting the primary responsibility on the principal is the place to start, according to Dr. Torgesen. In the lead, the principal must effectively provide the tools to identify struggling readers and help teachers move forward with targeted intervention strategies.

One such principal, David Montague of Kennewick Elementary School in Washington state, was presented with the challenge of upping his school’s 57 percent third-grade proficiency rate to the 90 percent range. Given the skills students had coming in, he thought the school board was crazy, according to Dr. Torgesen. Upping their efforts in a labor-intensive manner, the school was able to bump up their score by 15 points.

But simple hard work was not enough to climb any higher over the next few years. For one thing, no matter where change is being attempted, the identification and interventions need to begin in kindergarten. Otherwise, once students are broken down by ability, teachers can make a crucial



Dr. Joseph K. Torgesen

mistake. “They don’t differentiate the instruction enough between groups,” he says.

Of course, providing teachers with tools via ongoing professional development and hiring enough support staff is paramount to success. In turn, principals must make walkthroughs the norm to keep the process from stagnating with ongoing feedback and decision-making initiatives among staff.

Looping into the stream of information, leadership must be on top of making sure assessment data continues to flow for students. Who’s

making adequate progress? What are individual strengths and weaknesses, and when are students ready to move forward? As such, he says, efforts must be refocused on an ongoing basis.

And intervention usually needs to be staggered. “The further a student is behind, the more resource-allocation it takes to get them back up to speed.”

At Kennewick, some students receive upwards of 210 minutes of reading instruction per day. In the end, the school came in with a 99 percent proficiency rating one year and have remained in the high 90s since.

The time certainly comes at the expense of other things, but Dr. Torgesen believes the time allotted is worth the cost. In the F.C.R.R. document “Teaching All Students to Read in Elementary School: A Guide for Principals,” Kennewick officials put it succinctly: “It matters little what else they learn in elementary school if they do not learn to read at grade level.”

Dr. John Russell, who as head of the Windward School has overseen 20 years of similar success with Dr. Torgesen’s strategies, expanded on Kennewick’s conclusions. Facing an almost insurmountable challenge, middle- and high-school students lose access to the rest of the curriculum without adequate ability to read. In turn, he concludes, they are much more likely to have both academic and behavioral issues, and that gap never goes away. #

Student Suicides

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aspiring counselors the importance of self-care. They also urge practicing school counselors to develop their own supports in order to manage their own grief and stress as a matter of ethical and professional responsibility. Moreover, Everall notes that current counselors need to see their own recovery and self-care as vital, not only for themselves, but also for the students and their entire community. #

DSM-5

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subject to different plausible interpretations. The stigma question cuts both ways. The services issues will have to be dealt with whether there is one diagnosis or two.

As I see it, there are four real issues that cut below the controversies: 1) the importance of reducing false positive diagnosis by refining the criteria sets and raising the threshold requirements (at a minimum, the goal should be a

diagnosis that has considerable stability over time and reduced wiggle room for careless use in general medical and educational settings); 2) the need to educate doctors, psychologists, educators, families and patients that not all eccentricity is mental disorder; 3) the need to educate the public and the press that diagnostic habits and systems change far faster than people do; and 4) getting past the ridiculous idea that this has anything to do with vaccination.

The way to avoid definitional “epidemics”

is to be cautious in changing definitions. The way to avoid panics about them is to be mindful that labels can be misunderstood and can be misleading. #

Dr. Allen Frances is professor emeritus at Duke University, where he was previously chair of its department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. He was also chair of the DSM-IV Task Force and principle investigator on the DSM-IV Field Trials and has written a number of commentaries on DSM-5.

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How Will DSM-5 Deal With the 'Epidemic' of Autism?

By ALLEN FRANCES, M.D.

There has been an "epidemic" of autism in the last 15 years. This used to be a very rare condition diagnosed less than once in every two thousand kids. Now it is diagnosed once in a hundred. We will elsewhere discuss the foolish theory that this was caused by vaccinations. Here we will trace the real causes.

People change slowly, if at all. In contrast, fads in psychiatric diagnosis can come and go in a fast and furious fashion. The autism fad resulted from changes in DSM-IV (published in 1994) interacting with a strong societal push.

There were two DSM-IV contributions: 1) the inclusion of a surprisingly popular new diagnosis, Asperger's Disorder; and, much less importantly, 2) editorial revisions meant only to clarify the criteria for Autistic Disorder, but which may have inadvertently lowered the threshold for its diagnosis.

The societal contributions were: 1) expanded school and therapeutic services whose reimbursement often required an autism diagnosis; 2) increased advocacy; 3) reduced stigma, especially when many successful people admitted to having Asperger's; 4) extensive press coverage; 5) an explosive growth in Internet information and social interaction; and, as a result of all these, 6) improved surveillance and identification by doctors, teachers, families, and by the patients themselves.

For many of the newly identified patients, getting a diagnosis has brought the advantages of: 1) improved school and therapeutic services; 2) reduced stigma; 3) increased family understanding; 4) reduced sense of isolation; and 5) Internet support and camaraderie.

But there are always costs. With its lowered diagnostic thresholds and resulting increased inclusivity, Asperger's brought autism to the fuzzy boundary with normal eccentricity and social awkwardness. Some people are misidentified as having the diagnosis, when they really don't. This is especially true when the diagnosis is made in less expert hands in primary care medical facilities and in school systems.

Overdiagnosis creates the personal costs of: 1) stigma; 2) reduced self and family expectations; and 3) having to undergo unnecessary treatment and educational interventions. The societal costs of overdiagnosis are: 1) the diversion of scarce educational and therapeutic resources away from those who most need them; and 2) the parental panic and confusion occasioned by the false "epidemic."

The diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder was introduced by DSM-IV because its advantages were judged to outweigh its risks. It seemed important to have a specific category to cover the substantial group of patients who failed to meet the stringent criteria for autistic disorder, but nonetheless had substantial distress or impairment from their stereotyped interests, eccentric behaviors, and interpersonal problems.

The public panic about the seeming spread of autism resulted from a misunderstanding of how psychiatric diagnosis works, i.e., how arbitrary it can be and how sensitive prevalence rates are to changes in definition. As chair of the DSM-IV Task Force, I am partly to blame for not having anticipated this risk. We should have proactively taken steps to educate the public. It would have been useful in advance to predict the changes in diagnostic rates and to explain their causes. We were aware that Asperger's would have a much

higher prevalence than classic autism, but we greatly underestimated the magnitude of the difference and the rapidity and degree of the public's panicked sense that the world, rather than just the labels, had changed. We failed in our responsibility to make clear to the public and to the press what the labels meant and what they do not mean.

A new revision of the diagnostic manual is now in its first draft and can be viewed at <http://www.dsm5.org>. DSM-5 proposes another radical reorganization in how autism is defined. Instead of separating classic autism from Asperger's, there would be one unified "autism spectrum" disorder with a single criteria set. The rationale is that there is no clear boundary between the two, and that autism is more conveniently seen as one disorder, presenting with different levels of severity. The DSM-5 proposal also has the virtue of attempting to raise the diagnostic requirements for the milder presentations of autism above those required for Asperger's in DSM-IV. The Work Group is appropriately worried about false positives and the proposed criteria set would theoretically reduce the rate of misidentified autism.

There are two perhaps equally strong arguments against this possibly useful DSM-5 proposal: 1) that it will increase the stigma attached to the milder forms of (Asperger's) autistic behavior if they are lumped together with the much more severe, and 2) because clinicians often ignore the fine points of what is required by the criteria thresholds, the "autism spectrum" may in practice actually expand even further to capture ever milder forms of eccentricity, contributing to an even higher prevalence of misidentified "autism." This is obviously the opposite of what the Work Group intends, but it could be an unintended consequence.

The reply to these objections could be that: 1) autism will lose some of its stigma if the public comes to associate it with milder cases; and 2) the Work Group can only do what the science says and can't be expected to predict or prevent misuse once their work is in the public domain.

The first point can be argued either way, but I would strongly disagree with the second. Our DSM-IV experience makes clear that the Work Group must consider all the possible risks once the changes are applied (or possibly misapplied) in general medical and educational practice. Ideas generated in rarefied research environments often take on an unfortunate life of their own in the real world.

The DSM-5 proposal is highly controversial both within the professional community and among the advocacy groups, which have both strong supporters and equally strong critics and probably about an equal weight of argument on both sides. When it comes to labeling, the heat of the argument is often a direct reflection that there are no clear right answers. The major point is to ensure that DSM-5 not provoke a further misleading "epidemic" of autism. The criteria set should retain and enhance items that will reduce the risk of false positive diagnosis. Proposed changes and alternative wordings need careful field-testing in nonspecialist settings to determine their likely future impact on rates. Even small wording changes can have a profound impact on who is, and who is not, diagnosed.

Ultimately, there will not ever be a clear correct verdict on the DSM-5 proposal to unify autistic disorders within one rubric. The scientific evidence is not overwhelming either way and is

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School Counselors Suffer in Silence When Dealing with Student Suicides

By JAMIE HANLON

School counselors who have dealt with a student's suicide, and those who work with at-risk students, need more and better supports, says Carley Christianson, director of student support for the University of Alberta's faculty of education and a former school counselor. Christianson, along with co-author Robin Everall, department chair in educational psychology, recently published a study in the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* based on interviews and input from school counselors who have dealt with a student's death by suicide.

Their research has indicated that these professionals, while helping others in the school community deal with the loss, lack the supports to deal with their own grief and lingering feelings of guilt over the loss of someone with whom they had a personal connection. And, in addition to the difficulty counselors or psychologists experience in private practice, the loss of a patient in a school setting can be particularly unsettling.

Christianson notes that the study participants displayed a tremendous resilience by remain-

ing in the profession despite being surrounded by constant reminders and triggers, as well as potentially having new patients with similar problems. However, the initial traumas often remain in the background, leaving counselors to deal with a host of their own problems, including post-traumatic stress or stress within interpersonal relationships.

Because of the distinctiveness of their role, counselors need to recognize their own need for healing. Everall notes that this could truly be considered as a case of "physician, heal thyself," and one that requires them to employ one of the most basic tenets of trauma recovery: communication.

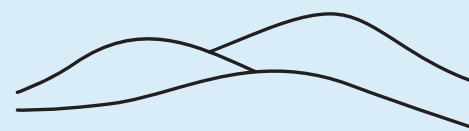
Christianson recommends that schools ensure that counselors have the supports and resources in place to help students in crisis. And when divisions are looking to cut costs and save money, she hopes that parents will recognize the important role school counselors have, and that they will remain vocal in keeping those vital services in place.

Christianson and Everall advocate teaching

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PREPARING & PACKING FOR THE PERFECT CAMP EXPERIENCE

The countdown to camp is fast approaching, and the American Camp Association has the following tips to help families prepare and pack for a fun-filled camp experience.

Plan Ahead — Remember your happy camper will be living out of a duffel bag, trunk or suitcase for the duration. Packing light helps campers keep track of items and guarantees that they can handle their own luggage at camp.

Review Camp Packing Lists — Individual camps should provide a recommended camp packing list, complete with any required equipment, preferred footwear, etc. Be sure to carefully review what is needed, with special attention to those items that may not be permitted at camp. Before packing your camper's favorite Nintendo DS, be sure that the camp permits electronic items. If you have questions, be sure to speak with the camp director.

Label Everything — Laundry pens, iron-ons, and press and stick labels will distinguish your

camper's belongings from those of other cabin- or tent-mates. Most camps ask that you label each item, including clothing, personal items and toiletries. Make sure that your child can identify the label used.

Break in Shoes and Boots Before Camp Begins — Make sure that your child's clothing and footwear are comfortable and appropriate. Sending a camper in brand new hiking boots can result in sore feet and time spent sitting out of exciting activities.

Prepare Together — Decisions about camp, like what to pack, should be made together. The more ownership your camper has in these decisions, the easier the adjustment and transition to camp will be.

For individual and special questions, contact your camp director. Camp directors welcome the opportunity to assist you and your camper as you prepare for this exciting and life-changing experience. #

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENTS' DESK

EDUCATION OPENS DOORS TO FRIENDSHIP

By **DR. CAROLE G. HANKIN**
With **BRIAN SUTCH**

Our education system is all about providing opportunities — opportunities to learn, to explore ideas both practical and abstract, to acquire new skills, to nurture hidden talents, and to open doors to promising careers. One of the most important opportunities our schools provide, however, is the opportunity for students to grow as individuals, to meet new people and to develop meaningful relationships that shape their lives well into adulthood.

Building friendships is a very real part of education. Think of your closest friends; how many of them did you first meet in school? It may have been college, high school or, in some cases, even elementary school when you first met these people with whom you've enjoyed years of friendship. And really, it is no surprise that this is so often the case. School can be a scary place for a child, especially in the beginning. Fortunately, it is a place where there are dozens of other children of similar ages and backgrounds all feeling equally nervous and unsure of what to expect. This is true from preschool right up through college. Sometimes we find a friend on the first day of kindergarten. As we get older, however, we begin to meet a more diverse group of people, and we gravitate toward those with whom we share a special connection. Today, thanks to e-mail and social networking/communications tools like Facebook and Skype, it is easier than ever to maintain our long-term friendships or to reconnect with old friends with whom we've lost touch over the years.



It is important that we nurture our children's friendships and play an active role in facilitating them. Many children have trouble making friends, but we can help them. If you feel that your children may be having a difficult time, encourage them to join a school club or take part in extracurricular activities, or arrange a meeting with a friend's kids who may go to a different school. This may introduce them to a whole new group of friends they may never have found on their own. Friends with different interests provide a great opportunity to learn from each other.

Friendship is not an essential part of a curriculum like reading, writing and arithmetic are, but its importance is immeasurable. Education helps us to navigate through life, and friendship. When we are young, we learn from our friends how to socialize and interact. As we get older, friends help us through difficult times and add extra enjoyment to the good ones. Some of them are in our lives very briefly, and some last for decades. Teach your kids to value their friends and, most importantly, teach them to be good friends themselves. #



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COLLEGE PRESIDENTS SERIES

Alan Kadish, M.D., Touro President and CEO

By LISA K. WINKLER

Little did Alan Kadish know that he'd see his future mentor at his own medical school graduation party. Kadish, barely two months into his new job as president and chief executive officer of Touro College and Touro University, praised the late Rabbi Dr. Bernard Lander, founder of Touro, and shared his aspirations for the multi-campus education empire in an interview with *Education Update*.

A cardiologist, Kadish comes to Touro from Northwestern, where he served on the faculty and as an administrator for 19 years. Though a native New Yorker, Kadish said he hasn't had much time to see the city since arriving at Touro. Serving more than 17,500 students studying at 29 locations, mostly in New York but also in California, Florida, Nevada, Moscow, Jerusalem, Berlin and Paris, Touro offers undergraduate and graduate professional degree programs in a variety of disciplines. One of its core missions is to perpetuate Jewish tradition and continuity throughout the world. Though Lander's death in February at age 94 leaves a gap in the leadership, Kadish, who said he's finding the new job "a huge challenge, but very rewarding," stressed the importance of continuing the school's commitment to serving the underprivileged, including securing funding for more scholarships and increasing its endowment. Kadish sees huge opportunities in what he calls the "cross fertilization" through interdisciplinary programs, citing a research project involving engineers and scientists to develop a new cardiac catheter and the development of more online and video courses.

Launched in 1971 by Lander as a college for Orthodox men in mid-Manhattan, Touro's original mission was to provide Jewish students with secular educations that didn't compromise their religious studies and obligations. Lander, a son of Polish immigrants, soon expanded the college to offer diverse programs to people of all backgrounds, attracting students with its relatively low tuition and its locations in urban areas. Touro added a women's division in 1974, established the School for Lifelong Education, a non-traditional contract-learning-based program, in 1989, and the Institute for Professional Studies in 1999. Graduate programs in law, education, pharma-



cology, allied health and osteopathic medicine are among its most popular. Touro also operates yeshivas and Jewish high schools. Its partnership with New York Medical College, anticipated to be finalized by summer, will offer an allopathic medical degree, which, along with Touro's osteopathic medical schools, Kadish hopes will help alleviate the primary-care-physician shortage he predicts will occur when current health care legislation becomes law.

For Kadish, board certified in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease and cardiac electrophysiology, running Touro leaves no time for clinical work, although he still engages in his research at Northwestern once a week. "I'm immersed in Touro; I can't do the kind of medicine I do as a hobby," he said. He hopes to increase Touro's participation in research, noting that funding and regulation remain the largest hurdles.

Kadish relocated to Teaneck, N.J., where he lives with his wife and teenage child. Three older children are in college. To unwind, he plays bridge, mountain bikes, and reads novels by Ian McEwan — noting his favorite is *Saturday*, a story about a British neurosurgeon — and nonfiction by Simon Winchester.

In his brief tenure, Kadish said he's been "impressed by the talented and dedicated staff and hopes to meet more students as time goes on." #



Dr. Robert 'Buzz' Paaswell, The City College of New York

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

"Any place that doesn't look like City College isn't right by me," says Dr. Robert E. Paaswell with a smile. And he's been around many places — as a visiting scholar and consultant all over the world, throughout the country and, of course, at The City College of New York, a campus he knows well. Twenty years ago "Buzz" Paaswell came to City College as a Distinguished Professor of Civil Engineering in the Grove School of Engineering. For the last six months, however, he has been serving as interim president of the college, bringing to the position extensive knowledge about public sector management and special expertise as a renowned authority on transportation issues, particularly as these affect and are affected by large urban areas.

Though he began academic life as a "traditional engineer" at SUNY Buffalo, working in geo technology, Dr. Paaswell became fascinated by transportation operations, management and planning. By the time he left Buffalo for the University of Illinois and then the Chicago Transit Authority, he had made a significant mark on the field as a researcher and innovative administrator, garnering numerous awards in recognition of work reflecting his training and interests in interdisciplinary study. This combination — of area specialty and broader informing knowledge — is essential, he says, for a college graduate today. He has a Ph.D. in civil engineering from Rutgers, an M.S. in applied mechanics, and a B.A. in liberal arts from Columbia.

Dr. Paaswell has a sustaining passion for cities, New York in particular, and for public education (his children and grandchildren attended public schools, as did he), and much of his concern about transportation systems is related to his desire to keep an accessible Manhattan the world center of culture and education. Of course, he sees City College as central in these efforts. "Whenever someone in the city has a transportation problem, they come to us," he says with delight. He has confidence that despite recently announced budget cuts, the college will continue to be front and center in helping to solve many science- and technology-related problems, especially in response to CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein's declaration that the next years constitute the university's "decade of science." Enrollments are up at City College, the president notes, capital plans are underway and the college closed out the spring term with two firsts: a day-long symposium, "Frontiers in Physics," featuring prominent scientists (including Nobelists) from leading U.S. and European universities, which was held at the college in April, and, in early May, the college's Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture was the site of an unprecedented all-day conference, "Sustainable Transit: Developing an Action Agenda," presented by the University Transportation Research Center in collaboration with the CUNY Institute for Urban Systems, the M.T.A. and the Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute.

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Outstanding Principals Initiated as Cahn Fellows at Teachers College



(L-R) Chuck Cahn, President Susan Fuhrman, and Krista Dunbar

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Again and again, we hear from researchers and from teachers that an effective and supportive principal is the key to a high-performing school. Seizing on this truth, in 2003 Chuck Cahn, C.E.O. of Cahn Medical Technologies, and Jane Cahn established a unique program to recognize and further strengthen outstanding principals and ensure the development of equally capable successors.

In a recent celebratory ceremony at Teachers College, Columbia University, The Cahn Fellows

Program for Distinguished New York City Principals, under expert program director Krista Dunbar, welcomed the 2010 cohort, 23 new fellows who, while continuing to work in their own schools, will participate in and share in a series of leadership development activities over the course of a year. The new fellows become part of a growing tradition begun in 2003 that now includes 151 Cahn alumni and reaches and affects 200,000 school children in all five boroughs. Krista Dunbar, director of the program, explained

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The Cahn Fellows Program

for Distinguished New York City Principals at
Teachers College, Columbia University wishes to
celebrate the 2010 cohort of exemplary leaders...

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Roshone Ault-Lee, *MS 296*
Melessa Avery, *PS 273*
William Bassell, *Long Island City High School*
Linda Beal-Benigno, *PS 312*
Jaynemie Capetanakis, *PS 69*
Monique Darrisaw, *Academy of Urban Planning*
Kathleen Elvin, *Williamsburg Preparatory School*
William Fiorelli, *PS R037*
Ann Gordon-Chang, *PS 85*
Marc Harris, *PS 04*
Liset Isaac, *PS 192*
Brett Kimmel, *Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School*
Rafaela Landin, *PS 08*
Giselle McGee, *PS 58*
Rosemarie Nicoletti, *PS 197*
Kathleen Peknic, *PS 18*
Yvrose Pierre, *PS 753 K*
Myrna Rodriguez, *PS 206*
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Alicja Winnicki, *PS 34*
Erica Zigelman, *MS 322*

To find out more about the program
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more years of experience, visit
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East Meets West: Hong Kong Executes Bold Education Reform

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

Stating that “we have become a culture of reform,” Hong Kong’s Permanent Secretary for Education, Mr. Raymond Wong, discussed Hong Kong’s bold New Academic Structure, which has been widely touted as the beginning of a new era of education for this cosmopolitan city, a global financial center that is known for its blend of Chinese and Western cultures. The system is more aligned with major systems of the world, including the American model of academic instruction. Students will pursue three years of junior high school (junior secondary), three years of high school (senior secondary) and four years of university study. This will facilitate smoother articulation to further studies abroad and easier international

student exchange. Secondary-school students will be required to learn four core subjects — Chinese, mathematics, English, and liberal studies — while choosing two to three electives that include sciences, history, geography, and foreign languages.

Infused throughout the secondary-school curriculum is a greater focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills as opposed to rote learning drills. “We have changed the way students learn,” explained Mr. Wong when *Education Update* interviewed him and his Education Bureau colleagues in the graciously appointed Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office situated in a high-ceilinged brownstone in Midtown Manhattan. “We need to meet the challenge of the 21st century. We live in a more

globalized world. Knowledge changes fast. We want to produce students with a more broad-based knowledge of the world around them.” He added that the workforce must be significantly strengthened because “employers want graduates to have better problem-solving, communication, and critical-thinking skills.”

Following senior secondary school, students will sit for one single public examination (scaled back from two, requiring “less time on test preparation”) in order to obtain their Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, a prerequisite for university acceptance. But they will also have a qualitative student assessment that will encompass the breadth of their achievement, including such factors as art appreciation, community service or work-related experiences.

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Mr. Raymond Wong, Secretary for Education, Hong Kong

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Dr. Richard Kogan: The Influence of Music & Medicine

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Although William Congreve's 1697 line, "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast," is often rendered as "to soothe a savage beast," either version would probably be O.K. with Dr. Richard Kogan, since this Harvard-educated psychiatrist is also a first-class pianist. Indeed, it is the interaction of music and medicine that especially intrigues Dr. Kogan these days. He believes that doctors who love music and musicians who appreciate the psychological conditions that often inform musical composition would enrich their own lives as well as the lives of their respective constituencies, if doctors and musicians knew more about each other's world.

But which is Dr. Kogan really: doctor or pianist? He laughs, the question is directed at him a lot. Once, when he was in medical school, someone came up to him and asked when he had decided to quit music! There's no doubt in Dr. Kogan's mind: music and medicine enhance one another. Doctors who play an instrument or listen to music regularly are likely to demonstrate a greater humanity toward their patients — an important widening of concern at a time when medical schools continue to concentrate on specialist training. But even for musicians Dr. Kogan would advocate broad exposure to their own discipline. He himself, he notes modestly, studied both cello and piano, an experience that made him sensitive to how a percussive instrument, in trying to simulate the vibrato of a stringed instrument, for example, might result in a more nuanced, more intimate, performance. To demonstrate, and perhaps, also, to allay any suspicion that he would ever quit either music or medicine, the good doctor moves to a piano (*Education Update* is interviewing Dr. Kogan at Juilliard) and starts to play ... Chopin's "Fantasie-Impromptu." A minute later he is discussing Oliver Sachs and the neurological bases of music's power to reach cognitively impaired individuals and have healing influence.

Dr. Kogan is a man with a multi-purposed, multi-dimensional mission: He would promote a closer connection between music and medicine at pre-professional and professional levels. He would advocate a broad-based liberal arts education for both medical and music majors. He would persuade youngsters who play a musical instrument but whose talent has been assessed as less than promising to stick with it (alas, he points out, recent studies show that two-thirds of kids introduced to a musical instrument no longer play after two years). He would urge that all music, not just classical, be included in curricula, as has been the case at Juilliard under the presidential leadership of Joseph Polisi. Dr. Kogan chuckles, recalling Duke Ellington's famous remark that there is good music and bad music and "I like them both." Dr. Kogan attended the pre-college program at Juilliard from the age of 6 to 18, but opted to go to Harvard instead of to a conservatory. Yes, medicine is highly specialized and everyone's on information overload, but that's no reason to abandon the historical "vision" of linking up with other disciplines. Prospective doctors need to be reminded that they will soon be dealing not in statistics or procedures, but people. The divisions between the sciences and humanities is artificial, a



construct of the 20th century.

Despite a busy schedule of private psychiatric practice and serving as co-director of the Weill Cornell Medical College Human Sexuality Program, Dr. Kogan recently took on the co-chairmanship of the Weill Cornell Music/Medicine Initiative, where he hopes to put his mission points into practice. An award-winning pianist, Dr. Kogan also manages, somehow, to give approximately 30 to 40 concerts a year, to rave reviews, including recent praise from Yo-Yo Ma. He has also begun a DVD series, "Richard Kogan: Music and the Mind" (the first, on Robert Schumann, is already out), and he continues to be a regular on the talk show and conference lecture circuits (Bernstein as teacher is a hero model). Studying Schumann, says Dr. Kogan, has given him, as a psychiatrist and a musician, a "better insight" into why Schumann "had to compose, had to create."

But how can his goals be taken up by schools already faced with and facing more cutbacks in the arts? Dr. Kogan doesn't miss a beat: the psychological value of music in schools is that it helps establish a sense of community. How unfortunate that so many young people today listen to music only with headphones, isolated within themselves.

Every school can have at least a chorus. Every medical school could have a chamber group. And there is no doubt, as researchers know, that early acquaintance with playing an instrument improves cognitive ability all around. It is also true, as neurologists well know, that older folk have a better chance of warding off diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia if they are involved with music — not to mention the example of Beethoven, whose greatest works were composed when he was totally deaf — a prime illustration of "resilience." Music is medicine. #

A Harmony of Music and Marriage: Abigail Lumsden & Les Horan



By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Performers and music teachers Les Horan and Abigail Lumsden not only finish each other's sentences, they knowingly and lovingly take each other's "measure" and riff on intuitions. That's "measure" as in musical measure, a bar of music that one of them starts — on the piano, violin, viola or drum, or just sings — and the other moves into, improvising, playing with the beat, changing the mode, maybe going from classical, to jazz, to blues, to Latin, to rock, to gospel, to Broadway pop, even a bit of hip hop. They're Upper West Side New Yorkers — urban, informal, community-minded and passionate about music and about culture in all its diversity.

Their home is their studio, a comfortable, high-ceilinged warren of rooms on West End Avenue equipped with a grand piano, keyboard, percussion, upright, recording equipment and knick-knacks everywhere that speak of their separate lives, now conjoined, never to be put asunder. And to think it all began in a laundry room of the spacious apartment building they share as man and wife and musicians. We started to talk, I asked if I could try his piano, says Abby. And two hours later, Les adds, we knew this would be it. A marriage of true minds, as Shakespeare might say, that admits not impediments, but innovation. Indeed, one of the marvels of the Horan-Lumsden relationship is how each cherishes individual style while yielding to, and learning from, the other. This unusual partnership is, they think, what makes them effective educators. What they allow each other, they invite from their students.

Both trained in conservatories but early on pursued different career paths. Les, with advanced degrees in music, psychology and education, has been teaching, composing, playing, arranging and writing about music in the metropolitan area for over three decades. (He is also working on a memoir, tentatively titled *I'm Not Jewish! Yes You Are* about his surprise as a youngster, brought to this country by his family fleeing Nazi Czechoslovakia, to discover his origin.) Describing himself as musically looser than Abby ("she's more serious" he laughs), he credits her with sharpening his technique. She works more on the "technical stuff," he says, while she argues for his wider arsenal of songs and ease at improv. At times they refer one of their own students to the other for a lesson — to Abby for a session on fingering exercises, perhaps,

or to Les for self-expression in blues.

Though a U.S. citizen, Abby studied and lived for a while in Holland, concentrating increasingly on conducting and voice coaching. Back in the states a few years ago, she cut down slightly on the number of choruses she was conducting and arranging pieces for because of an increasing dedication to Heart's Journeys, now into its 11th year, an ever-expanding, ever-shifting multimedia "show with a story line" that usually includes dance and visuals. Staged at various venues around the city, including Symphony Space, she speaks of "Heart's Journeys" as "therapeutic." She was thrilled when an audience member at a health facility once came up to her saying, "You've warmed my soul."

Nowhere is their goal of community and communion more apparent than in the responses they get from students challenged with physical or mental difficulties, such as the autistic boy, now 14, with whom both Les and Abby have been working "moment to moment, exactly at his pace — showing him the songs he loves best." After five years, they report, he's finally learned to practice on his own and "as is very proud of it." Abby also has two autistic men in her Peace of Heart choir, ages 20 and 24, who love the "warm social atmosphere" of the group, and their deepening connection with it has made their respective parents "ecstatic."

Their mantra is "At Your Own Pace — In Your Own Way," and they subscribe to it for all their students who range in age from 3-and-a-half to 80. Students come to them largely by word of mouth and from viewing their videos on YouTube. There, at least a dozen musical performances can be seen, including Abby doing what she calls her "vocalanctics." One joyous video features Les bopping with a Japanese classical pianist, another shows Abby with bongos.

What do they think they do that makes the difference as music teachers? As Les says, they create lessons around individuals, but also go with the musical flow. On request, they thread their way into the main piano room to demonstrate, he at the 88s, she taking out a violin. They do a bit of Bach and then "Happy Birthday." "Let's do it in E-flat," Abby suggests, "with a little bit of D and F," and they do, their enthusiasm instinctively prompting a visitor from *Education Update* to join in, harmonizing. #

Hong Kong

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"We want the future generation to have more broad-based knowledge, to know about their community and things happening around them," Mr. Wong added. The composite student learning profile will play an important role in their application for university entrance: "It's more balanced," summed up Mr. Wong.

As Hong Kong gears up for these sweeping educational changes, the role of the university, or tertiary institution, will have a significant role to play in student development. Currently there are nine publicly funded tertiary institutions and

two private universities, with close to 70 percent of students studying toward a two- or four-year college degree. "If we want to expand tertiary education, the private sector will have a greater role to play in the future," Mr. Wong explained, noting that the Education Bureau will incentivize growth by making land available at a nominal value, by providing startup institutional loans, and by providing loans and grants to the students attending these colleges. Hong Kong is also hoping to attract more international students to study at its universities, having already doubled the quota of non-local students at public universities from 10 to 20 percent since 2008. "Having a more internationalized composition in our uni-

versities helps our own students," pointed out Mr. Wong. "It makes us a more multicultural community." Because instruction within Hong Kong universities is conducted in English and the faculty is already fully internationalized, Mr. Wong believes that Hong Kong is poised to become a more attractive option for international students.

Shrewdly realizing that good teaching is the bedrock of an excellent educational system, Hong Kong is providing scholarships for English majors to enter the profession of teaching. "English is important to us. We want to attract more teachers with strong English skills," said Mr. Wong. Student teachers teaching English are required to spend one semester overseas in

language immersion programs, and there will be a renewed focus on recruiting the strongest students as student teachers (already, teachers come from the top 20 percent of the student body).

Where Hong Kong's sweeping educational reforms will take its motivated student body is still unknown, but one thing is for certain: literacy scores have skyrocketed since the program was conceptualized just a decade ago, and there is a strong financial commitment on the part of the Hong Kong government. "My education budget accounts for one-quarter of the entire budget," noted Mr. Wong. "We want to be a regional education hub, and we attach enormous importance to human resources," he added with conviction. #



IN LAS VEGAS, SUPERINTENDANT WALT RULFFES MAKES A DIFFERENCE ONE DAY AT A TIME

By MARISA SUESCUN

The first thing that struck me about Superintendent Walt Rulffes was his genial, unhurried manner. I met him in his office for an interview wedged between a press conference and Board meeting. Dressed in a shirt and tie underneath a crewneck sweater, Rulffes greeted me with a warm smile and long handshake; in answering questions, his pace was equally deliberate. For a man in charge of the fifth-largest school district in the country, on the precipice of major state budget negotiations that would determine if and how many teachers he would need to lay off, Rulffes seemed remarkably calm.

"I'm not high strung," he said matter-of-factly. "Some superintendents are." Not that Rulffes takes his responsibilities lightly; rather, he feels this quality of composure is necessary to help him grapple with the very weighty issues he faces daily.

As head of Clark County School District, Rulffes is responsible for educating some 310,000 students in Las Vegas and its suburbs. Rulffes is a self-described "non-traditional superintendent"; though he earned his doctorate in education, he has a business background and never taught in a public school.

Rulffes applies a business-oriented approach to reforming schools: "You have to measure results. If you don't, you're not going to improve." The bottom-line measure of his district, in Rulffes' view, reveals a big problem. "We're at about a 65 percent graduation rate, which is shameful." The national measure for C.C.S.D.'s graduation rate is lower still, 47 percent.

Still, the graduation rate has increased 5 percent in the four years since Rulffes took over, and his initiatives and fiscal management have garnered national attention; at the time of the interview, Rulffes was one of five finalists for National Superintendent of the Year. (The award ultimately went to Maryland Superintendent Elizabeth Molina Morgan.) But Rulffes isn't quick to sing his own praises; he's more interested in the sound, methodical pursuit of making better schools.

Education Update: Who are your mentors?

WR: My strongest mentor was a food service director who mentored me when I was in college. I saw signs of leadership in how she motivated people. I saw how leadership is mostly good common sense and judgment and fairness. I think those are traits that I saw that I was able to apply to the superintendency.

EU: What makes you a successful superintendent?

WR: I don't get discouraged. Half of the job of being superintendent is the courage to want to do it. Someone mentioned to me the other day, "It must be tough to be you." And I thought, "Why?!" I guess they thought with the magnitude of issues that face virtually every student, the job of a superintendent is insatiable. So you have to sort out your priorities.

EU: What are your priorities?

WR: To increase the number and quality of high school graduates. That's been my mantra. We have increased — not nearly as much as we want. And I offer no excuses. I think we're letting too many kids get away.

EU: What big initiatives has C.C.S.D. implemented under your leadership?

WR: We've been opening new schools with concepts of reform. Instead of large comprehensive high schools, we break them into career academies on different campuses. These are "choice schools," and you have to meet criteria to get in. Students get a comprehensive college preparatory education, and also pick a career track. These schools have our highest graduation rates, lowest discipline rates, best attendance. And a waiting list of thousands. So I thought, why not offer that to more students?

EU: How many new schools have you

opened?

WR: We've opened 7,000 seats in new schools. The proof is in the pudding. Talk to any student [in these schools]: they're there because they want to be, and they're engaged. It's a simple concept: we give students a choice of where they want to be, and they make the gains.

EU: How does C.C.S.D. measure how well its schools are doing?

WR: We developed a report to provide a holistic measure of how we're doing. We call it the "Quality Assurance Framework." I wish we'd just called it the School Performance Report. [Laughs]. It has a quantitative measure to be met by each school — including graduation rate, student performance, and improvement.

EU: Are there consequences for the schools attached to the measurements?

WR: There will be. Also, our "empowerment schools" are given more authority and independence, but have a higher expectation for accountability, because we think they best know how to serve the population in their area. We started with four and they were very successful. We've expanded to 17, and we're adding 11 more.

EU: What are the accountability measures for empowerment schools?

WR: We're one of the few districts that gives schools performance pay if they meet the criteria on the Quality Assurance Framework. It's not just academics and grades; it includes parent satisfaction, attendance, and other factors that influence performance.

EU: Some of C.C.S.D.'s initiatives — empowerment, smaller schools, performance pay — sound similar to initiatives in the N.Y.C. D.O.E.

WR: They're similar. We looked at New York, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, Seattle, and Edmonton, Canada. We developed a hybrid model.

EU: With the budget crises, what's the biggest challenge you've faced?

WR: Sustainability of student programs, with declining resources. It's difficult to ratchet down because you always impact something important to somebody. We've gone from relentless growth of students to flat this year. It points to the probability of layoffs. (Since the interview, Rulffes announced he anticipates laying off hundreds of teachers and administrators to close a \$125 million budget deficit.)

EU: What other challenges are particular to C.C.S.D.?

WR: We need more ELL support: we have 80,000 students with language deficiency issues. We have poverty: we went from 37 percent a couple years ago to 46 percent now of students getting free or reduced lunch. Our class sizes are too big. We also have a very high migration pattern (students transferring from one school to another within the district). We have schools where a classroom may turn over 100 percent.

EU: When was a time you felt "unsuccessful" in your job?

WR: The darkest day of my professional life was when we did a test throughout the district of all algebra students two years ago. It wasn't good. 95 percent of the students got a D or F.

EU: How did you respond?

WR: We've put great emphasis on improving students' math skills, elementary through high school. We've been shifting to a common curriculum across the district, particularly in math. As the U.S. Department of Education moves towards common standards, that's coming anyway. And frankly, with students moving from school to school, I think we need more consistency with our curriculum.

EU: How has that fared?

WR: The quality of our staff has been reflected in their ability to rebound. We haven't made gains nearly to where we want them to be, but the momentum has shifted.



Dr. Walt Rulffes keeps a level head in managing the country's fifth largest school district

EU: Using the Quality Assurance Review standards, what "grade" would you give your performance as Superintendent? [1.) Emerging/Developing, 2.) Approaching Standards, 3.) Meeting Standards, or 4.) Exceeding Standards]

WR: Meeting Standards, Minus? No — Approaching Standards, Plus. [Laughs.] Because it shows we are moving up. I guess being nominated as one of the Superintendents of the Year is something, but it doesn't fit into the four categories. #

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For the past eight years, EDUCATION UPDATE and Dr. Pola Rosen have been recognizing the contributions of outstanding teachers and administrators in the public schools of New York City. EDUCATION UPDATE also awards medals to Distinguished Leaders in Education who have been seminal influences in improving the lives of children as well as establishing a paradigm for others around the nation. The awards breakfast is held at the Harvard Club each year.

This year we are proud to recognize Chancellor Joel Klein, Chancellor Michelle Rhee and Ann Tisch. Medals will be presented by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

MICHELLE RHEE

CHANCELLOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In June 12, 2007, Mayor Adrian Fenty appointed Chancellor Michelle Rhee to lead the District of Columbia Public Schools, a school district serving more than 47,000 students in 123 schools.

Chancellor Rhee's commitment to excellence in education began in a Baltimore classroom in 1992 as a Teach For America teacher. At Harlem Park Community School, she learned the lesson that informs her work every day: a city's teachers are the most powerful driving force behind student achievement in a school.

Chancellor Rhee founded The New Teacher Project (T.N.T.P.) in 1997, a leading organization in understanding and developing innovative solutions to the challenges of new teacher hiring. As chief executive officer and president, Ms. Rhee partnered with school districts, state education agencies, nonprofit organizations and unions to transform the way schools and other organizations recruit, select and train highly qualified teachers in difficult-to-staff schools.

Her work with T.N.T.P. implemented widespread reform in teacher hiring practices, improving teacher hiring in Atlanta, Baltimore,



Chicago, Miami, New York, Oakland and Philadelphia. T.N.T.P. placed 23,000 new, high-quality teachers in these schools across the country.

Chancellor Rhee holds a bachelor's degree in government from Cornell University and a master's degree in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. #

JOEL I. KLEIN

CHANCELLOR, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Joel I. Klein is the chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. As chancellor, Mr. Klein oversees a system of 1,631 schools with 1.1 million students, 136,000 employees, and a \$21 billion operating budget. He launched Children First in 2002, a comprehensive reform strategy that has brought coherence and capacity to the system and resulted in significant increases in student performance. In the next phase of Children First, Mr. Klein will build on this progress by cultivating teacher talent, expanding school choices so that students attend schools that best meet their individual needs, and innovating to ensure students are prepared for rigorous, real-world opportunities in the 21st century. Formerly chairman and C.E.O. of Bertelsmann, Inc, a media company, Mr. Klein served as Assistant U.S. Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice until September 2000 and was Deputy White House Counsel to President Clinton from 1993 to 1995. Mr. Klein entered the Clinton administration after 20 years of public and private legal work



in Washington, D.C. He attended New York City's public schools and graduated from William Cullen Bryant High School. He received his B.A. from Columbia University, where he graduated magna cum laude/Phi Beta Kappa in 1967, and earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1971, again graduating magna cum laude. #

PRESENTED BY

MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

MAYOR, NEW YORK CITY

Michael R. Bloomberg is the 108th mayor of the City of New York. Elected to office in 2001, in his first term, Mayor Bloomberg cut crime 20 percent; created jobs by supporting small businesses; unleashed a building boom of affordable housing; expanded parks and worked to revitalize the waterfront; implemented ambitious public health strategies, including the successful ban on smoking in restaurants and bars; expanded support for community arts organizations; and improved the efficiency of government. In addition, fulfilling a campaign promise, he won control of New York's schools from the broken Board of Education, and began turning around the nation's largest school district by injecting standards into the classroom and holding schools accountable for success. As a result, graduation rates have increased more than 20 percent, and reading and math scores have both risen to record levels.

In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg was re-elected by a diverse coalition of support that stretched across the political spectrum. In the first half of his second term, while balancing the budget and driving unemployment to a record low, Mayor Bloomberg took on a number of new challenges. He launched an innovative program to combat poverty that encourages work and makes work pay. He began a far-reaching campaign to fight global warming and give New York City the cleanest air of any major U.S. city. And he co-founded a bipartisan coalition 15 mayors — which has grown to more than 350 mayors — to keep illegal guns out of the



hands of criminals and off city streets.

When the current financial crisis hit and the national economy entered a serious recession, the Mayor launched a Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan to bring the City through the downturn as quickly as possible. The Plan is focused on creating jobs for New Yorkers today, implementing a vision for growing the City's economy over the long-term, and building affordable, attractive neighborhoods across all five boroughs.

Michael Bloomberg began a small startup company called Bloomberg LP in 1981. Today, Bloomberg LP has over 275,000 subscribers to its financial news and information service. Headquartered in New York City, the company has more than 10,000 employees in 150 cities. #

ANN TISCH

FOUNDER, YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Ann is the founder and president of the Young Women's Leadership Network, which started with the groundbreaking network of five all-girls' public schools in New York City and Philadelphia, The Young Women's Leadership Schools. The flagship school in East Harlem has a nine-year track record of 100 percent graduation and college acceptance rates and is the model for single-sex public education around the world. Shortly after she opened the flagship East Harlem School, Ann created a college guidance program called CollegeBound Initiative, which places specially trained, full-time college counselors in coed and single-sex public schools and boasts amazing results — 94 percent college acceptance rates.

Prior to founding the Young Women's Leadership Network, Ann had a 19-year career in broadcast journalism, first at WIBW-TV in Topeka, Kansas, and then to WCOO-TV in Minneapolis, later joining NBC Network News as a national correspondent. At NBC, Ann worked on several magazine shows, covering political, medical and human-interest stories. She also served as a substitute anchor on the "Today Show" and "NBC at Sunrise." As a national correspondent, Ann developed a strong interest in educational issues. After covering dozens of education stories for the network, as well as reading and studying data on single sex-education, she conceived the idea of an all-girls' public school. In 1996, with the help of the Center for Educational Innovation and the unanimous approval of the New



York City Board of Education, Ann turned her idea into a reality and opened The Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem.

Ann was educated at Washington University in St. Louis, where she graduated summa cum laude with a degree in psychology and sociology. She currently serves as a Trustee of Washington University. She also serves on the Dean's Council of The New York University Tisch School for the Arts and is a Trustee of the Center for Educational Innovation. Ann also consults with many school districts and parent groups across the country about creating schools similar to The Young Women's Leadership Schools. Ann is married to Andrew Tisch, and they have two daughters. #

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NYC Department of Education

Michelle Rhee

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Ann Tisch

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MUSEUMS AS EDUCATORS

**PRESIDENT ELLEN FUTTER:
AT THE HELM OF THE AMERICAN
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.



She's smart, articulate, impassioned, focused, forceful and utterly dedicated to the mission of the American Museum of Natural History (A.M.N.H.), of which she has been president for the last 17 years. Before that, Ellen V. Futter made her mark at the age of 32 when she became the president of Barnard College, where she served for 13 years. Her various positions, affiliations and honors constitute a stunning record of accomplishment. A Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude graduate of Barnard College and a graduate of Columbia Law School, she served as chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and as a board member of the Legal Aid Society and the American Association of Higher Education. She is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Administering a world-famous municipal science center, founded as a museum but also chartered as an educational institution, is not the same as being president of a major American college. Barnard students, Futter points out, are "a known set," among the best and the brightest in the nation, and they tend to stay put for four years. By contrast, those who come to A.M.N.H. — approximately four million visitors a year — are "an unknown quantity," and, it may be assumed, a much more diverse group: different ages, levels of education, interests and cultural backgrounds, whose frequency of visiting varies widely.

Still, both A.M.N.H. and Barnard are aca-

demically oriented nonprofit institutions, Futter adds, dedicated to public service in the form of education. In regard to the museum, the need to educate the public about science and inspire a new generation of researchers has never been greater. The country "is in a crisis in science education" and must do more to remain competitive. She is delighted to elaborate on how the museum is meeting the challenge by focusing on major issues — genomics, brain research, the environment, among them — without "dumbing down." She is joined in this discussion by Anne Canty, the vice president for communications and marketing, and Lisa Gugenheim, the senior vice president for education, strategic planning and institutional advancement.

It is the goal of the museum not just to provide scientific truths honestly but to do so in ways that will prove "inspirational." Visits to A.M.N.H.

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THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN



Panelists Address School Food



Kevin Concannon, undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services

By JUDITH AQUINO

Greater efforts are needed to offer free breakfasts in classrooms, confirmed guest speakers at the School Food Matters panel discussion recently hosted by the Center for New York City Affairs at The New School in Manhattan. Kevin Concannon, undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services in the United States Department of Agriculture, and Eric Goldstein, chief executive officer for the New York City Department of Education's Office of Nutrition and Transportation, were among the panelists. Also present were Jan Poppendieck, a professor of sociology at Hunter College, Jonathan Stein, general counsel for Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, and Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center.

Moderated by Fred Mogul, a healthcare and medicine reporter for radio station WNYC, the panelists addressed the issue of obesity among elementary school children, the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, and ways to provide free or subsidized meals to more students. "It is phenomenally successful," said Goldstein in regards to classroom breakfasts. "You see more alert students and fewer trips to the nurse. We think the benefits are enormous, but we have to figure out how to do this best and meet the needs of our principals and our schools."

Breakfast in the Classroom was introduced as a pilot program to New York City schools in January 2008. The free breakfast consists of juice, milk, cereal, fruit and an additional bread



(L-R) Panelists Jim Weill, Jan Poppendieck, Eric Goldstein and Jonathan Stein

or dairy item. Every student is eligible for the breakfast, and currently 22 percent of the over 1,600 public schools in New York City participate in the program.

Despite the benefits of providing classroom breakfasts, schools face numerous challenges in implementing them, Goldstein noted. "You have real-life issues. In a city with 1,600 schools, facilities are different, and you need the unions' support." There is also the stigma of receiving free or subsidized meals, which the panelists acknowledged as a major reason many students do not participate in the program.

Convincing legislators to mandate school breakfasts would overcome some of these problems, said Poppendieck. "One of the advantages to mandating school breakfasts nationwide is it would take it out of certain culture wars ... that have had the effect of stigmatizing families for participating in the program," she said.

"We can't turn everything into a mandate because the cost implications are huge," responded Concannon, who noted that the \$1 billion allotted to schools through the expected reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act would help pay for higher-quality foods and other improvements. Through bonuses and other incentives, the USDA hopes to convince states to do a better job upgrading their schools' kitchens, training food preparers and providing nutritional school meals, he added.

For more information about the Breakfast in the Classroom campaign, visit the D.O.E.'s Web site at <http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns>. #

President Paaswell

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graduates should be basically literate in science and technology, and college should prepare students "not for their first job, but with the tools for navigating through a career." This enhanced mission means "rethinking the curriculum" and hiring "modern scholars" who understand the importance of addressing the physical and social sciences together. Although transportation as a professional field draws essentially on science and technology, it should also attract students in business, economics, pre-law, architecture, and, yes, the humanities, the source of future communication and marketing professionals and language experts. Majors in all these disciplines should also be interacting in the design of "new technology" for transit systems — for instance,

"our cell phones are our computers" — to ensure that "real-time operating information" for subways, buses and light rail will be not only efficient but easy to use.

Though research grants to the college have increased, strengthening giving initiatives, the president does note that budget cuts may necessitate tuition increases, perhaps with differentials for different professional schools and departments. He expects, however, no diminution in excellence. "Everything I do or touch I want to be quality," he says, articulating a goal that includes for him not just programs but personnel. He believes that in his brief tenure at the helm of The City College of The City University of New York he has helped contribute toward encouraging faculty to be more "engaged" with each other's disciplines and to feel "recharged" about working with a more responsive administration. #

Cahn Fellows

continued from page 14

the selection committee looks for experienced principals with proven student achievement and a desire to contribute positively to New York City schools. Rather than focus on what is not working, the program finds successes and builds upon them. The training includes a two-week Summer Leadership Institute at Teachers College and at Gettysburg, Pa., the Fall Summit weekend retreat, study sessions at Teachers College, and the annual Leadership Conference in June. At the ceremony, each fellow received a terracotta pot with the tree logo filled with items symbolic of nurturing and growth and their impending intellectual and professional journey. Included was the book, *The Killer Angels*, a classic work on the Civil War, to prepare participants for their trip to the storied battleground at Gettysburg, where it is expected they will feel the weight, responsibility, and opportunities inherent in leadership.

Defying a culture where principals and their schools compete and remain isolated from each other, collaboration and sharing successful practices is integral to the Cahn Fellows Program. Principals will identify a challenge in their schools and, working with their colleagues during the course of the year, devise a solution. To support the next generation of school leaders with their skills and experience and sustain the program, fellows will mentor an aspiring principal (Ally) in their schools.

Chuck Cahn is justifiably pleased with the impact of fellows who, he explains, now reach 20 percent of New York City students. Beaming, he says, "These are terrific people who make a difference. If we can help a little bit and recognize what they do, we should be proud." Joining him at the ceremony was his daughter, Amanda, a Teach for America alumna and now a student at the Columbia Graduate School of Business. Amanda explains that during her teaching experience, "seeing how real and tragic the

achievement gap is — a huge problem that has to be fixed — absolutely changed my life." She believes management and leadership are answers. Business school is giving her necessary tools as she learns strategy, management, and how to look at and solve problems. She lauds "a fantastic course," The Education Leadership Lab, where experts from the field speak and collaborate with students on projects. With determination and fire in her eyes, this next generation in an education-minded family gives hope for the future.

The 2010 cohort includes principals with varied backgrounds and experience. Several were founding principals of schools and others were former Cahn Allies. They work in elementary, middle, and high schools and have achieved successes with low-functioning as well as gifted students. As an example, a new Cahn Fellow, David J. Vazquez, principal of the Urban Assembly Bronx School for Writers and Artists (grades 6 through 9), is also a member of New Leaders for New Schools and is a principal facilitator with New School Institute and Leadership Academy. He is proud of the "unique full complement of visual arts and a rigorous literacy program" in his school that "prepares every student to succeed in college." He looks forward to the "intense collegiality" in the Cahn Fellows Program, which will "push me even harder." Randi Herman, First Vice President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, happily exclaimed, "I am proud that our principals, with all the challenges they face, still believe in the essence of school leadership."

Speaking to the new fellows, Joshua Thomases, Deputy Chief Schools Officer for Academics, New York City Department of Education, emphasized the importance of teacher accountability and "taking ownership of your work." When parents and teachers are invested, better results are seen. "Leadership," he said to the principals, "is critical to getting people involved and accountable. The goal is not a great school system, but a system of great schools." #

COUNTY CUTS CHILD CARE AID TO WORKING FAMILIES



By RICH MONETTI

In operation since 1971, Mt. Kisco Child Care Center provides families a safe, secure and progressive learning environment. Additionally, reflecting the socioeconomic makeup of their Northern Westchester locale also encompasses its mission. With a large Latino immigrant population and affluence ranging from low to high, remaining viable requires innovative means of generating revenue, effective fundraising, and access to public funds. Unfortunately, with budget cuts now coming from the county, Mt. Kisco and other facilities in the area now face uncertainty in delivering child care for our communities.

As of April 1st, the Westchester County Child Care Scholarship Program was halted, and new

Title XX subsidies were frozen. In addition, child care fees for families receiving subsidies were raised from 10 percent of gross income to 20. So, to start, a \$20,000 a year salary will raise a family's monthly fee from \$166 to \$333. "Some parents can't even afford another \$25, never mind doubling it," says Dawn Meyerski, the center's director of education. That puts the center in the position of making up the difference.

Unfortunately, this doesn't only leave the center in the lurch in terms of low-income families. Putting aside the 80 families (out of 160) who are full-fee payers and the 35 that qualify for aid, 45 families in the \$45,000 to \$100,000 range receive assistance through the center's private scholarship efforts. Nonetheless, the center plans to uphold its long-standing commitment to the

community. "We will never let a child leave here because of a parent's ability to pay," Ms. Meyerski says.

On the other hand, mirroring its diverse community does generate support that the center would otherwise lose. In other words, board members and volunteers who lend expertise in fields such as business, law and fundraising would be less inclined to step up as they have for the past 40 years.

Of course that also applies to the financial generosity needed to keep the center at break even. But maintaining the population diversity is important to families whether they pay the full rate or not. "It's one of the things that draws people to us," says Ms. Meyerski, because they want their children to be exposed to children who have both more and less than they do, she added.

As for the cultural component, Dotti Jordan, executive director of the center, defers on the idea that children under 5 think in those terms, but she can report an impact on the parents. "I think parents establish connections across a divide that they might not normally make," she says.

As the kids get older and participate in the after-school program, they start to notice race and ethnicity more, but a strong foundation allows the differences to emerge in a positive way. Relationships are formed, and after they leave, they'll still be friends, says Ms. Jordan.

For Ms. Meyerski, the adoptive mother of a Latino child, her son T.J.'s participation in the after-school program several years ago was highly agreeable. Living in nearby Yorktown Heights, which is a predominantly homogeneous suburban community, T.J. got a glimpse at kids that looked like him and were also succeeding in school and sports, she said.

Niceties such as these aside, the cuts in aid may balance out the burdens in the legislature, but the real bill will come due down the road. "There isn't a person as far as I know that doesn't want to work and contribute to society," says Ms. Jordan. So not capitalizing on that natural sentiment, the county will see families forced into the role child care centers now provide and place a larger tab on the rest of us when working is taken away as an option, she concludes. #

Aspiring Engineers Compete in FIRST Robotics Regional Competition

By GIOVANNY PINTO

Mascots in kooky outfits amped up the crowd, hundreds of fans cheered, and students waited nervously and eagerly on the sidelines as it was almost their turn to hit the playing field. Months of anticipation and practice boiled down to one moment.

After the dust settled and the ball was tossed across the field, only one team was left standing.

Was this the gridiron of a suburban high school football game? No. This was a recent meeting of New York City high school students at the Jacob Javits Center for the FIRST Robotics Regional Competition, an all out robot sporting event.

“Life seems meaningless without robots,” said Nelly Reyes, 19, from Queens. Reyes has been part of the George Westinghouse Pirates F.R.C. team for three years. She previously graduated from the school and now attends Brooklyn College, but she comes back to help mentor the newer students on the team. As the team met for the allotted six weeks to build the robot, she was constantly there to remind them of the safety aspect. Prompting them to wear goggles and be careful with powerful tools. “The hardest part is knowing that you are going to fail in some areas regardless of all your work,” Reyes added.

The event was broken into two leagues: the FIRST Robotics Competition, F.R.C., and the FIRST Tech Challenge, F.T.C. The two leagues have different rules, standards and sizes of robots. In any FIRST robot league, the robots do not fight each other; instead, they square off to win the most points. In the F.R.C., where larger-sized robots costing upwards of \$20,000 compete, the goal is to collect and score life-size soccer balls into a goal.

FIRST, an acronym for “For Inspiration and



Stadium-sized action at the F.R.C. League



The Harry S. Truman Hybrids on their way to the playing field

Recognition of Science and Technology,” is a nonprofit organization devoted, as its name suggests, to helping young people discover and develop a passion for science, engineering, technology and math. All FIRST programs are organized around two principles: (1) Engaging kids in the hands-on, minds-on process of technological innovation; and (2) Bringing communities together in celebration of students working in science and technology.

Students involved in FIRST are more likely to attend college, major in science and technology, volunteer in their community, and go on to internships. They also are eligible to receive special scholarships from certain colleges.

The event at the Javits center was the 10th anniversary celebration of the New York City chapter of FIRST, complete with a college fair and career expo. Damien Garcia was there on behalf of the University of Rochester’s office of admissions. He was there to inform students and parents of the \$10,000 scholarship available to all kids involved with FIRST, an advantage that he once benefited from as an alumnus of FIRST. “University of Rochester believes in exposing careers in technology,” he noted with emphasis.

For Jose Castillo, 69, an F.T.C. coach from Westchester County via Puerto Rico, FIRST is a way to give back as a minority professional. He coaches the Harry S. Truman Hybrids, one of only two F.T.C. teams from the Bronx. Last year they won a slew of awards and even went on to the nationals in Atlanta. “I could be playing golf on my Saturdays, but instead I want to help these kids. These are smart kids. Last year they went to Atlanta, and others have gone on to college with scholarships,” Castillo remarked. #

Ellen Futter

continued from page 21

should be — and are — joyful and memorable experiences, not obligatory one-day classroom trips. A.M.N.H. staff works closely with public school teachers so that students are prepped beforehand and are led to engage in meaningful follow-through activities. One “hugely successful” project, the Sackler Educational Laboratory in the Spitzer Hall of Human Origins — Futter refers to it as the “coolest lab extant” — involves taking saliva samples from students who are studying genomics and, a few days later, sending them a digital sequencing of their own D.N.A.

Among recent larger accomplishments at the museum, of course, is the dazzling Rose Center for Earth and Space, which includes the Hayden Planetarium, the transparent architectural design of which supports the A.M.N.H. mission “to debrick science.” Change has also been dramatic in areas the public doesn’t readily get to see but should know about. Though some dioramas remain as they were decades ago, new exhibits draw on new findings, many the result of expeditions all over the globe. The museum also boasts “unique” archival collections, a “vast” natural-history library that attracts research scientists who come to A.M.N.H. to pursue on-site work. For classroom visits by school children, the emphasis is on “topicality” and on disseminating the latest research in a timely and attractive manner. Bi-weekly science bulletins, delivered to classrooms or computers, focus on a particular researcher who is actually doing science, either in a lab or in the field. Although A.M.N.H. exhibitions travel to over 100 venues in the country and to over 20 sites abroad, it is the museum’s digital initiatives that have been proving particularly captivating. “The Known Universe,” for example, is the number one science video on YouTube, while “Dinosaurs” continues to be a major iPhone app. “Videos are the textbooks of today.”

The opening of the fully accredited Richard Gilder Graduate School, the first

such Ph.D.-granting program at an American museum, has only added to the museum’s luster. Approximately 90 post docs take courses at the museum, along with teachers and teachers in training who can receive credit from academic institutions with whom A.M.N.H. is partnering. The seven-week Seminars in Science course on a timely topic will explore, for example, not just content knowledge but effective presentation of that knowledge by way of videos, readings, online blogger comments and seminar leader feedback. Other educational initiatives include the now six-year collaborative Urban Advantage project that brings together the museum, other institutions, and one-third of the city’s middle schools. President Futter is pleased to note that data indicate better results for Urban Advantage youngsters on 8th-grade science exams over those not participating in the project.

“We live in an interdisciplinary world,” she says, one in which successful institutions will be the ones that work across various disciplines in various media and inspire as well as instruct. “Race to the End of the Earth,” opening on May 29, will present the story of the contest between a team of Norwegian and a team of British explorers to be the first to reach the South Pole. And this is also the year that the Rose Center for Earth and Space will celebrate its 10th anniversary with special programming throughout the year and a day-long event on October 10.

The term “expanding universe” is not only a part of the lexicon of astronomers, it is also part of the dialogue at the American Museum of Natural History. #

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UFT PRESIDENT

A True Reform Agenda

By MICHAEL MULGREW

Diane Ravitch is one of the nation's most respected writers on education policy and history. A former assistant secretary of education in Washington (in a Republican administration), she was an early proponent of increased accountability, charter schools, and other "market" reforms.

But Prof. Ravitch, who has followed these issues closely in recent years, has not liked what these policies have produced. In fact, she has changed her mind, and her new book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*, is a ringing indictment of many current education "reforms." It should be required reading for single-minded proponents of test prep, charter schools and school closings, including their cheerleaders on the editorial pages of New York City's tabloids.

Charter schools:

Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein have made the expansion of charter schools a key element of their education agenda, with the mayor stating that one of his goals is to expand charter schools to the point where they take in as much as 10 percent of the city's school kids. The mayor and other charter proponents maintain that charters do a better job of educating kids than do public schools, producing higher average test scores. Here's what Prof. Ravitch has to say in a recent column in *The Wall Street Journal* about her findings in researching her new book:

"The higher graduation rates posted by charters often reflect the fact that they are able to "counsel out" the lowest-performing students; many charters have very high attrition rates (in some, 50 percent to 60 percent of those who start fall away). Those who survive do well, but this is not a model for public education, which must educate all children."

Closing Schools:

On both a local and national level, school authorities are focusing on closing schools in trouble rather than fixing them. The U.F.T., joined by the N.A.A.C.P., recently sued the Department of Education to try to prevent it from closing 19 schools that the department has tried to shutter, based on shaky or indefinite criteria. Here's Prof. Ravitch's analysis of this phenomenon, nationwide:

"The current emphasis on accountability has created a punitive atmosphere in the schools. The

Obama administration seems to think that schools will improve if we fire teachers and close schools. They do not recognize that schools are often the anchor of their communities, representing values, traditions and ideals that have persevered across decades. They also fail to recognize that the best predictor of low academic performance is poverty, not bad teachers."

Testing:

Chancellor Klein has often discussed how critical he regards the collection of data and the importance of constant testing to determine students' progress. He also trumpeted dramatic student gains on state tests as proof of the soundness of this approach, although the gains of New York City students on national tests has been much more modest than those recorded on the state tests. Many teachers have complained that the focus on preparation for state tests has taken too much time away from real instruction on what kids need to know. Prof. Ravitch has some strong words about this issue also:

"In short, accountability turned into a nightmare for American schools, producing graduates who were drilled regularly on the basic skills but were often ignorant about almost everything else. Colleges continued to complain about the poor preparation of entering students, who not only had meager knowledge of the world but still required remediation in basic skills."

Real School Reform:

The public debate on modern education has been dominated recently by charter cheerleaders and "get-tough" proponents of closing schools and relentless testing. Too often they have combined exaggerated claims of success of their "reform" tactics with a denunciation of their opponents as defenders of a failed status quo.

Let's hope that Prof. Ravitch's unimpeachable reputation for honesty, her rigorous scholarship and her unmatched sense of history should now be helping these people rethink their positions. Meanwhile, as a teacher and union leader, I heartily endorse another of her observations:

"What we need is not a marketplace, but a coherent curriculum that prepares all students. And our government should commit to providing a good school in every neighborhood in the nation, just as we strive to provide a good fire company in every community." #

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

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Professor Pedro Noguera Addresses Challenges Facing Minority Males

By YURIDIA PEÑA

"Public Education remains the bedrock of democracy in this country," said Dr. Pedro Noguera recently at an education forum spearheaded by the New York City Department of Education's Division of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Noguera's presentation, "What About the Boys? Providing Academic Support to African-American and Latino Males," addressed the issues facing young males of color and their effect academically and socially. "In every category that we associate with failure, males of color, black and Latino males, are over-represented, from who gets suspended and expelled, to who is in special education, to who is dropping out. And in every category we associate with success — honors, gifted, AP courses — underrepresented," said Dr. Noguera.

Dr. Noguera is a professor of sociology in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Development. His most recent book, *The Trouble With Black Boys: Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education*, was released last year. Dr. Noguera is an urban sociologist who has extensively studied the norms of the African-American community. The forum took place at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem.

Dr. Noguera believes that the rising incarceration rate among the African-American and Latino populations is not accidental. He says structural factors, such as the labor and housing markets, contribute to this dilemma. His presentation highlighted three crucial factors: culture, structure and agency.

He criticized African-American communities for promoting stereotypes by encouraging boys to only aspire to a career in sports or the recording industry as a rapper. He says there is not enough emphasis on academic careers such as education, medicine and law. This leads Dr. Noguera to believe America has a culture that does not value education for poor kids, and he suggested that educators challenge these ideas in their schools and focus on values rather than the culture of the streets.

Principals agreed with Dr. Noguera's presentation on the importance of changing the school's culture so students can become positive and intellectual beings. "Some get on board later than others, but you get them. As long as they get good energy from the adults around them and they get a sense that the adults really care, kids are going to want to be around that energy," said Principal Doral Bastian of M.S. 328 in the Bronx.

"Sometimes its accessing the resources outside of the school based upon the needs of the kids within the school to make sure you can help change that culture," added Principal Alex Fralin, who is currently on sabbatical. As principal of I.S. 68 in Brooklyn, Mr. Fralin was able to offer students and parents mental-health services through a partnership he developed with a community mental health clinic.

Dr. Noguera said strong relationships between teachers and students form through enrichment programs. For example, Dr. Noguera said one team of students from Brooklyn won sixth place at a recent robotics competition. Their teacher was proud of the work his students did, and the students told Dr. Noguera they aspire to become engineers because of their experience in the robotics program. "We need to create activities that give our kids a chance to dream, to aspire, to imagine new possibilities," said Dr. Noguera. #

REACTIONS TO
PROFESSOR
PEDRO NOGUERA

By GIOVANNY PINTO

Professor Pedro Noguera, famed professor at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University, recently gave a talk on confronting the educational crisis facing adolescent boys of color. The event took place at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a research unit of The New York Public Library. After the talk, a lively discussion took place, featuring some of the city's top educators and policymakers.

Verone Kennedy, Middle School Coordinator for the New York City Department of Education, noted that the most powerful thing he heard from Professor Noguera was, "it's not about why we serve, but how we serve," adding that we have to come together and change.

Charlene Sinckler, a teacher from the High School for International Business and Finance in Washington Heights, suggested that in order to serve children better educators need to be more in tune to the abilities of the children they are teaching. She recalled one child who thought he was slow but made to graduation with her help.

Dr. Howard Dodson, director of the Schomburg Center, agreed with the essence of Noguera's speech. He thought the idea of getting the right teachers who love to teach and getting rid of the rest was incredible. Mr. Dodson also made note of a program the Schomburg Center used to hold in conjunction with NY-Life for 11- to 17-year-olds from all over the city. Held every Saturday, it was guided by the principles that Noguera spoke of: teaching the kids about their history and culture and helping them to become better students. Some students from the program got full scholarships to Syracuse University. Sadly the program ran out of money.

Sabrina Hope King, chief academic officer in the Office of Curriculum and Professional Development of the Department of Education, who introduced Noguera to the packed auditorium, said that, as always, the professor's speech was provocative, insightful, and motivational.

Darnell Hannon from Queens, a tutor from the Learn to Earn program of Harlem Children's Zone, was in attendance with some of the students he mentors. His observation was that Professor Noguera was proposing a stereotype, one of high-achieving minority kids being branded nerdy or white. While not all kids are influenced by this perception, he has witnessed the negative impact such labels can have. "I have seen students hide their intelligence amongst their peers," Hannon said. "I had one girl who didn't want anyone to know she was a good writer. I later explained to her there's nothing wrong with that." #

Dr. Christine Cea & Peter Cea Win Award

Dr. Christine Cea and Peter Cea were honored at Manhattan's Ritz-Carlton hotel, where more than 150 supporters and volunteers celebrated the Staten Island Mental Health Society's (SIMHS) 2010 Anniversary Ball. Among the guests were Dr. Kenneth Popler, SIMHS president and CEO and Assemblyman Michael J. Cusick. The award was given for their strong support of and involvement in services for children with special needs and their families. Proceeds from the gala will benefit the agency's four St. George-based programs: Teen Center, Project for Academic Student Success, Family Support and Family Resources that will be relocated to its new Children's Center at 444 St. Mark's Place when it opens early next year. Dr. Cea is a member of the New York State Board of Regents. #



Dr. Christine Cea & Peter Cea

Anne Heyman: Creator of A Place Of Peace, A Place to Heal

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

When Hilary Rodham Clinton appropriated a reputedly old African proverb for the title of her 1996 book, *It Takes a Village*, she could not, of course, have known about the village for orphans that Anne Heyman would create a few years later in Rwanda in response to the 1994 genocide in that country. Informing ideas about local communities as resources for those in need link Clinton's vision and Heyman's, but what Heyman did was — and is — extraordinary, as concept, execution and development. And the Rwandan village is only in its second year of operation!

A University of Pennsylvania graduate and a trained lawyer with a degree from The George Washington University Law School, Heyman worked in the office of the Manhattan D.A. for a couple of years, but the fact that she was born in and spent the first 15 years of her life in South Africa came to influence her new philanthropic direction. She was deeply moved on hearing about the orphans of the Rwandan genocide — 1.2 million refugee children identified by Paul Rusesabagina, who spoke at a dinner meeting she was attending one night. Rusesabagina had been an assistant hotel manager in Rwanda during the war and helped save over 1,200 lives. His story became the subject of the award-winning 2004 movie, *Hotel Rwanda*. Motivated by the twin Judaic philosophies of tikkun halev — healing the heart — and tikkun olam — healing the world — Heyman started to think about what she could do.

As she quickly realized, it takes more than an ethical prompt to create, fund, organize and sustain a village. But there was a model that could help point the way: And thus was born the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village (A.S.Y.V.) in Rwanda, modeled on kibbutz-like youth villages in Israel ("agahozo" means a place where tears are dried). Contacts at various Jewish philanthropic organizations were soon underway. A former director of Dorot (the word translates as "the decline of the generations"), a Manhattan nonprofit social-service organization providing a wide range of services for seniors, and an active participant in the "Moral Voices" project at Tufts University, she acted on her sense of the need for tikkun, and drew on various experts to realize A.S.Y.V. as a truly African enterprise. The rest, as they say, is history, some of which can be seen online in a number of remarkable videos.

The project so far has succeeded beyond her "wildest dreams," says Heyman, and she is particularly proud of the way both tikkuns are being realized — children helping and healing themselves by helping and healing others. Heyman was just back from Rwanda when *Education Update* caught up with her. She had gone to find out how the village was doing with its various programs, particularly the school and clinic. She was amazed, she says, to see children (ages 15 to 18) who could not speak English a year-and-a-half ago, teaching English in primary school to both students and teachers! And she was over-



(L-R) Ambassador Eugene-Richard Gasana & Anne Heyman

whelmed ("unbelievable"!) when she saw what 16- and 17-year olds had volunteered to do at the clinic. An important house, but filthy and totally unhygienic, it became the target for an immediate cleanup by the kids (later dubbed "little angels") who took on everything, including washing the mosquito nets.

It is her hope, says Heyman, that A.S.Y.V. itself will become a model for other such places in developing countries continually ravaged by war and natural disasters and that it will serve not only orphans but "orphans of circumstance," like so many original settlers in Palestine. Of course, Africa is not Israel. A difference between the kibbutz and A.S.Y.V. is the presence in the Rwandan village of a "house mother," a figure torn from the children's lives but who reappears as a warm and welcoming surrogate in the form of widows from the war. Other differences have to do with geography and economy. Rwanda is a farming country made up of numerous districts. Nonetheless, in addition to agricultural training, A.S.Y.V. children also receive training in computers as well as in skills related to cognitive development. Only 125 children a year can be admitted (they will stay for four years), which means careful consideration of who among the vulnerable can benefit most (approximately 60 percent of the cohort is female). Another criterion ensures that children are selected from every region in the country so that they can become educated ambassadors everywhere when they return.

A mother herself, her own children add themselves to the list of those in the village who make up all her children. It is her hope, she adds, that this Judaic concept will soon evolve into an "interfaith engagement." #

Democracy Prep: Charter School



By ADAM BLOCH

When Seth Andrew first laid eyes on 207 West 133rd Street in Harlem, he saw a derelict old church. With some imagination, though, he also envisioned the seed of a vibrant, new school community. Several years later, his hope has become a reality. That falling-down church is now Democracy Prep Charter School, a crisp, well-lit hive of bustling energy and learning.

Now in its fourth year and operating out of two locations in Harlem, Democracy Prep has received an A for the last two years on its Progress Report from the New York City Department of Education. It also achieved a 96 percent attendance rate last school year and, in its Learning Environment Survey, placed above the 90th percentile in the four key categories: academic expectations, communication, engagement, and safety and respect.

Oh yeah, and the school achieves all this with almost no private funding, relying nearly entirely on the \$12,000 per pupil it receives from the city, an amount lower than what traditional public schools get. "Charter schools are underfunded compared to traditional schools, but even with fewer funds they are getting better results," Andrew said during a recent interview with *Education Update* in Democracy Prep's small but vibrant library, where students were flitting in and out of the room. "The research on New York City charter schools is overwhelmingly clear. I'm the first to admit that not all charter schools are good. There are definitely some bad or mediocre ones. But in New York City, charter schools are doing overwhelmingly better than other public schools."

Andrew speaks with the curious passion and assurance of a zealot, but one who has considered all the alternatives and knows he can achieve something revolutionary. He saw a run-down church and planned a thriving school. Now he sees a public school system that just cannot turn things around and envisions a network of charter schools providing alternatives and revitalizing educational communities.

Another Democracy Prep middle school will open in Harlem next year, expanding the incoming class of 6th-graders to 180. Andrew is also helping create a Democracy Prep offshoot in Providence, R.I. The high school will also continue to expand as the inaugural class enters 10th grade.

How does Democracy Prep do it? Andrew can speak voluminously on every detail of school life, but he identified five factors — "five pillars" — that he said are common to most successful charter schools.

The first is time. The Democracy Prep school day runs from 7:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. There is after-school tutoring until 6:30 p.m., along with Saturday sessions, summer programs and a weeklong orientation for new students. But just as important is efficiency in every moment of school life.

"When you see a transition, the kids move from class A to class B in two-and-a-half minutes," Andrew explained. "There's no time wasted. At the beginning of the year, we teach kids how to pass out papers. We expect them to be able to pass out a stack of papers to the class in 15 seconds. We get a stopwatch and make a game of it. The average time this takes in most public schools is between one and two minutes. If we save only a minute each time we pass out a paper, pass out papers 25 times a day for 200 school days, then we just saved 5,000 minutes by teaching kids how to pass out papers efficiently." #

Second is a "joyous school culture." For Andrew, this includes "joy and warmth and silliness, stickers and funny socks, so that kids enjoy coming here every day. Neither kids or adults could do what we do here if they weren't enjoying themselves every day."

The fun is paired with academic rigor, the third factor. Every kid is expected to take algebra in the 8th grade, read 40 books per year, and take eight Regents exams, among other tasks. The ultimate goal is for them to attend and graduate college. As such, Democracy Prep takes students on trips to visit colleges. The 9th-graders have already seen 30 different campuses. "We give them rigorous work that expects the best from them, and when they need support, which they often do, we provide that support," Andrew said.

In order to ensure adherence to such plans, data collection is the fourth "pillar." There are metrics for everything from academic progress to school cleanliness so that any divergence from expectations can quickly be addressed. Pupils are tested formally every six weeks in every subject, and teachers design their own quizzes or exams for week-to-week assessment. Before leaving any class, students must complete some problem or task that demonstrates mastery of that day's lesson. By the late afternoon, teachers know which kids need help. They can also document and analyze trends over time in order to fix problems before they become too big.

The final and most important factor is "hiring, supporting, training and compensating great teachers," said Andrew. "Hiring amazing staff people is the most important element in our success." In order to achieve this, Democracy Prep pays a salary that is 10 percent above the Department of Education average for an equivalent position and also makes a bonus of up to an additional 10 percent available. Of the nine blocks in a daily schedule, teachers only have to be in class for five of them. The rest they can dedicate to tutoring, grading, and reviewing or preparing lessons.

All these are elements in many charter schools, though. What sets Democracy Prep apart is that it operates almost entirely on public dollars without significant private fundraising, serves a high population of special-education students, and emphasizes an intense civics program, for which the school is named.

About 25 percent of the student population is special-needs, but this doesn't lead to any lowered expectations. Like their classmates, they too are expected to attend college. This isn't accomplished easily, but it means Democracy Prep dedicates the resources necessary to get them up to grade level, even if it means intensive tutoring sessions. "We give them extra support and extra time to work on the skills they need," Andrew said.

The school's commitment to civic engagement reveals itself in many ways. Every student takes a mandatory debate class, and Democracy Prep has been active in the community, with get-out-the-vote campaigns for instance. Most importantly, students have testified before the City Council, the State Assembly and the State Senate in support of charter schools and removing the cap limit on them. "We want to prepare kids to be active citizens in their democracy, which means understanding how to make change in society," Andrew said.

Charter schools remain small in number in New York City, but they tend to spark a lot of news and discussion. Results like the ones Democracy Prep are achieving are the main reason. #



WOMEN EXPLORERS AND SCIENTISTS FETED



Honorees at the gala

By SYBIL MAIMIN

It was truly a wonderful evening of contrasts as WINGS Worldquest honored several remarkable women explorers and scientists whose work takes them to the most remote and often inhospitable places on earth. Their admirers and supporters showcased a different, and also awesome, world as they feted the honorees in the hippest and most iconic of New York settings: a huge, luxurious penthouse in Tribeca overlooking the dense, cacophonous, glittering city. The evening's global mood was enhanced by the Kora, Bala, and Mbira Trio playing music from Gambia and South Africa on instruments native to those countries. Silent and live auctions offered trips to exotic spots abroad as well as items made by craftspeople in faraway places. Auctioned books, photos and artwork captured the beauty and mystery of many locales. Even decorated ostrich eggshells were up for bids. Some guests wore beautiful garments representative of diverse societies they had visited. A robed monk, introduced by the opening speaker, actress Uma Thurman, intoned a Buddhist blessing. This enthusiastic gathering in Tribeca was the eighth annual WINGS Women of Discovery Awards Program.

WINGS WorldQuest, founded in 2003 by Milbry C. Polk, a fellow of the Explorers Club and Royal Geographic Society, and the late Leila Hadley Luce, daughter of Henry Luce of *Life* and *Time* magazines fame, recognizes and supports "visionary women who are advancing scientific inquiry and environmental conservation." It shows that women can be explorers, researchers and scientists — that they can make a difference. It provides role models for the young (and old) with real-life stories of adventure, courage and tenacity. A global Fellows Program facilitates collaborations, brainstorming, and sharing with policy makers. Since WINGS's inception, it has recognized over 60 women. In her remarks, Thurman reiterated the message. "How do young females go forth to fearlessly study nature? Women who have found their own path set an example for future generations."

Honoree Kate Harris, an earth scientist, conservationist and glaciologist, explores remote places by bicycle, including most of the 2,485-mile length of the Silk Road in China, reflecting her lifelong "rage for wandering." In her travels she has become "more and more intrigued and infuriated by boundaries. They define and perpetuate inequalities." She is convinced that "science and conservation can be used to perpetuate peace" and sees, as an example, Siachen Glacier on the boundary between India and Pakistan. Now essentially a huge, useless garbage dump, it could be conserved, protected and transformed into a Peace Park, lessening tensions in the region.

Honoree Susan Dudley, an evolutionary ecologist, studies plant kinship groups. In groundbreaking research, she has shown that plants are capable of making animal-like decisions, such as distinguishing between relatives and strangers. She maintains that plants sense and respond to environment, light, and chemicals. She is studying the implications of her findings.

The Sea Award designee was not in Tribeca. Alexandra Morton, ocean conservationist, spoke



Actress Uma Thurman

via video from a boat in British Columbia, where she is working with locals to bring back wild salmon and other marine life that is being destroyed by fish farms. She said, "We are nature's immune response. This planet contains wondrous life. We are part of that. This is about us, our survival."

Documentary photographers and filmmaker-partners Carol Beckwith and Angela Fisher met in Africa, where they discovered, "We really were kindred spirits. They shared a love of the culture of Africa ... and a dream to create a visual record of ceremonies and rituals." Over 35 years, they traveled 270,000 miles in 40 countries, developed relationships and built trust, and made a half-million slides. Over 40 percent of the ceremonies they photographed have since disappeared, making their work an invaluable resource for historians. Looking elegant in Tribeca as they spoke enthusiastically of their unique experiences on another continent, Beckwith and Fisher explained, "Africa taught us to appreciate the differences in peoples and, at the same time, celebrate the similarities."

WINGS co-founder and executive director Milbry Polk observed, "Most people have no idea of the contributions of women explorers and scientists. Some of the most exciting women in the city are here tonight. They make important discoveries that ensure that not only we, but other species will continue to inhabit this mysterious universe." Her organization is determined to "give the small push that will give them momentum," as well as promote general interest in the sciences. Emphasizing the need to "help parents and teachers overcome the profound sense of defeat seen in young people," WINGS reaches out to schools with the incredible stories of women explorers and scientists. In five years it has touched 25,000 students with the message that "they can." #

A MEETING OF GREAT MINDS TO CHANGE EDUCATION



(L-R) Ellen Dempsey, President and CEO, Teachers Network, Dr. David Steiner, NYS Commissioner of Education & Dr. Charlotte Frank, Sr. VP, McGraw-Hill Companies

By GIOVANNY PINTO

Teachers Network, a nonprofit organization for teachers by teachers dedicated to improving student learning in public schools, recently held a conference at Hunter College, titled "What will it take to make sure every child has an effective teacher?"

Hunter President Jennifer Raab underscored that it really is the teacher in front of the room that inspires the next generation of leaders and thinkers in our city and state.

Dr. Charlotte Frank, senior vice president of research and development at the McGraw-Hill Companies, a life trustee for Teachers Network, noted that President Raab has expanded the opportunities to prepare better teachers in her college. Frank described how research has shown that the most important factor in a student's life is the teacher. "What we need are effective teachers in every classroom," she emphasized.

Ellen Dempsey, president and C.E.O. of Teachers Network, presented a startling fact to the crowd: "Fifty percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years." Over the course of her career she has found that networking has helped those teachers remain in their careers longer. A DVD, narrated by actress Cynthia Nixon, presented teachers sharing their experiences.

Ken Futernick, one of the presenters, showed that the media paid greater attention to rubber rooms wasting money for schools instead of the greater loss of funds due to teacher attrition. It costs the city almost 336 million to rehire and retrain new teachers over a 10-year period. He

also presented data showing that 40 percent of math teachers in high-poverty schools in this county are teaching subjects outside of their field.

Eric Nadelstern, chief schools officer of the New York City Department of Education, gave some suggestions to create better schools. Failing schools don't succeed, small schools do. Interdisciplinary, cross-cultural teams of teachers are most effective.

A major topic discussed at the conference was technology; Frank emphasized its importance. One of the teachers on the panel said that after her initial reluctance to use technology, she now has adopted an online grade book and allows her students to text her their homework questions on her cell phone.

During a Q. and A. session,

many interesting ideas from education enthusiasts, as well as startling revelations from actual teachers, were presented to the panel. Dr. Pola Rosen, publisher of *Education Update*, proposed a revolutionary new idea where teachers earning advanced degrees at or above the master's level would receive credit to visit and observe veteran teachers. John Snyder from Bank Street College said it was a great idea that he would work toward, but systems of accreditation in the state have gotten in the way before.

Two teachers shared negative experiences. A teacher from George Westinghouse wanted to know why Twitter was recently blocked from school computers; he had been using it as an educational tool. Another teacher clamored, to roaring applause, that she should not have to teach in a school that leaks every time it rains. Nadelstern promised to take action.

The keynote speaker, David Steiner, the New York State Commissioner of Education and former dean of the Hunter College School of Education, noted the importance of shaping a narrative focusing on the theories, texts, beauty and research that educators plan to pass on to the next generation. Research shows that nothing has greater impact on all curriculum areas than reading, he averred. He asked, "What is our vision to make an educated person? What do we want to convey about our culture? Why can't master's students mentor our students?"

"We are at the beginning of a great voyage and we have an enormous challenge ahead of us," he concluded. #

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Kenneth Olden Heads Up New CUNY School of Public Health, Hunter College

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

When CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein set about creating the new School of Public Health to be sited at Hunter College, he and his colleagues knew they needed to bring in an A-list dean to get the school off on the right foot. Enter Dr. Kenneth Olden, renowned scientific leader, cancer researcher, and former director of N.I.H.'s National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program, whose appointment as founding and acting dean in 2008 was a premonition of good things to come for the first public school of public health in New York City.

"This appointment was one of the most exciting things that can happen to someone at this stage in my career," reflected the 71-year-old Olden, who grew up in rural Tennessee and was the first in his family of seven to attend college. Ultimately earning a Ph.D. in cell biology and biochemistry at Temple University, Olden cut his teeth on cancer research ("we unequivocally prevented the spread of cancer in a mouse model"), creating an impressive and widely published body of research on how to prevent cancer cell metastasis. Olden subsequently became the first African-American to be tenured at N.I.H.; his 14-year directorship of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program was distinguished by a unique ability to bring together diverse interested parties — government, industry, academia and the lay public — in public-health discourse while providing an impetus for major advancements in both clinical practice and public health policy. "I always made my decisions based on science, not politics," he concluded firmly.

As founding dean of the School of Public Health, Dr. Olden has relished the opportunity to work with "issues that are near and dear to my heart," namely the interaction of genetics, the environment and human behavior in human disease. "Genetics loads the gun, but the environment pulls the trigger," he explained, noting, "Americans don't value prevention a lot." The new public health school, which will be accredited shortly upon graduation of its first doctoral student, will enable faculty and students to delve into factors affecting the well-being of urban populations while developing innovative approaches to solving urban public health prob-



lems. "For many years we focused on diseases of the 20th century," said Olden. "But in the 21st century we must look at chronic diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's Disease. The cost associated with treating chronic diseases is why we're having the health care debate." And of course the demographics are changing in America: "We're becoming an older population. We need to promote healthy aging," he asserted, adding that New York City is a wonderful place for older people because they tend to stay connected.

In his new position, Dr. Olden is bringing together faculty from four CUNY colleges who have an expertise in the public-health arena: Brooklyn, Hunter, and Lehman colleges and the CUNY Graduate Center, which (along with Hunter) has housed the Doctor of Public Health programs. The collaborative effort is not without its difficulties, but Dr. Olden, described as "the driving force behind many of the advances in the field of environmental health" in a commemorative journal of essays that was published upon his retirement from the National Institute of Environmental Health Science, is up to the challenge. "People like my parents were not highly regarded in the world because they lacked an education. I made a decision early on that I was going to be somebody and would never forget these people. I wanted to be a spokesperson for them. I wanted people to say, 'Ken Olden was here,'" he reflected somberly. Indeed, there is little doubt that Ken Olden — scientist, leader, innovator, and humanitarian — was here, and that the public-health community has benefited enormously from his remarkable presence. #

Hunter President Jennifer Raab Honored by League of Women Voters



CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein



President Jennifer Raab & President Russell Hotzler, N.Y.C. College of Tech.

Laura Altschuler, co-chair of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York, greeted the overflowing room of guests who gathered recently to honor Jennifer Raab, president of Hunter College, for her effective advocacy of higher education and her enduring impact on life in New York City. The league, which recently celebrated its 90th birthday, underscored the dazzling record of achievement of President Raab, from grassroots activism to corporate work to public service. The league gave Raab the 2010 Woman of Distinction Award. The comparison to icon Eleanor Roosevelt is apt: Roosevelt was also a league member and was devoted to public affairs. Raab just opened Roosevelt House, owned by Hunter College, as a center for student study, faculty research and public programming.

Robin Bahr, one of the league's five co-chairs, presented the award to Raab. In her speech, Raab praised the leadership of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, "a wonderful leader, a wonderful man, and a wonderful boss. Thank you for your support and for the phenomenal resurgence of the City University of New York. You have accomplished one of the great turnarounds in education, and we are all indebted to you."

"Like the league," she continued, "Hunter is dedicated to equal opportunity, equal rights and a more open, tolerant and democratic society.



President Jennifer Raab & Robin Bahr, Co-chair, League of Women Voters

Ever since its founding in 1870, Hunter has been a gateway to the American dream for the sons and daughters of working people and immigrants. Many are the first in their families to attend college, and most juggle their studies with child-rearing, commuting and full-time jobs. Our mission is to give these strivers a top-quality education."

Raab concluded with a stirring final thought. "With the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt in the room, I thank all of you for this recognition. #

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

Nobel-Winner Economist Elinor Ostrom Discusses Her Life & Work

By EMILY SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

Turning conventional wisdom on its head is nothing new for Elinor Ostrom, the winner of the 2009 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, whose groundbreaking research in the area of "common pool resources" — shared natural resources where one person's use subtracts from another person's use, such as forests, fisheries, grazing lands and oil fields — has dramatically changed how optimal resource management takes place. "Earlier economic theories, such as those of Garrett Hardin, predicted that individuals would go free-wheeling and overharvest, or overfish, and destroy resources they needed to survive," explained Dr. Ostrom in a recent telephone interview with *Education Update*. "People believed that normal humans were helpless, and you had to have officials come in and tell you what to do."

"But in a large number of our studies, we showed that people had developed indigenous institutions to manage their natural resources

quite well," she concluded forcefully.

Ostrom's fieldwork on how real-world communities have effectively managed their resources has spanned continents: insightful studies on fishery management in Canada, land use in Africa, irrigation-systems use in western Nepal, and — near and dear to her heart — groundwater management in California, where she was born and raised. *Governing the Commons*, Ostrom's seminal 1990 book, became a significant voice in the great debate over common pool resources, highlighting eight design principles that are found in groups that organize and govern their behavior successfully. Although conventional solutions had been presented in the form of centralized governmental regulation or privatization of resources, Ostrom pointed out a viable third option: cooperative institutions that are organized and governed by the resource users themselves, who commit to following a set of rules with built-in incentives for responsible, sustainable use and punishments for infractions. "People now



contrast Hardin's work with my work," Ostrom concluded. "I'm not just a lone voice anymore."

In the classroom, Dr. Ostrom practices what she preaches. She is a faculty member of both Indiana University and Arizona State University. At Indiana, she is the Arthur F. Bentley professor and co-director of its Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, which she founded in 1973 with her husband, Vincent. "I have my students work as a team," she explained. "They write me a confidential note on the contributions of their teammates. It can influence my grade. It definitely changes their behavior. If they are free-loading, it will be observed and reported," she

added with a chuckle.

Dr. Ostrom's unparalleled success — she is the first woman to receive the Nobel in economic science — is a reflection of both her widely recognized intelligence and her awe-inspiring work ethic. As a Depression-era child growing up in Southern California, she was painfully shy and had a stutter, overcoming both through participation on her debate team. Her parents, who had not been able to attend college, enrolled her in Beverly Hills High School. Even though she felt different because she bought her clothes at Goodwill, she "was in an environment where everyone went to college," ultimately motivating her to receive her B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from U.C.L.A. And her passion for sustainability started at home: "My mother taught gardening during World War II, and we had a victory garden. We were pretty close to self-sufficient in my home," she said.

With her newfound celebrity status as a Nobel-winner ("I was asleep when they called me at 6:30 a.m. I screamed when I heard the news," she related), Ostrom's biggest challenge now is fitting in the "tsunami of requests" for public appearances. Her latest book, *Working Together: Collective Action, the Commons, and Multiple Methods in Practice*, is hot off the press, and she is desperately trying to carve out more time to begin yet another scientific tome. It's not a bad problem to have, she'd admit: at the height of her career, Elinor Ostrom is clearly bound for more pioneering work in years to come. #

EDUCATION UPDATE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY:

PRINCIPAL: DR. ALTHEA TYSON TEACHER: COURTNEY FENNER



ROBERT KENNEDY SCHOOL P.S. 169

PRINCIPAL: SUSAN FINN TEACHER: SIOBHIAN McNULTY



Students from both schools learn the art of layout at the offices of Education Update

Our Exclusive Press Conference with Chancellor Joel Klein



By CORRINE CIVIL

Chancellor Joel I. Klein is an official with many duties as the head of all New York City schools. With such a high title, Chancellor Klein's daily jobs are extensive. Some include making decisions for the school systems, hearing out the students, parents and employees. It is not only TYWLS Mr. Klein is concerned about. He has the issues of over 1,500 public schools on his shoulders and his job is to fix them.

In 2002, Mr. Klein got a call from Mayor Bloomberg for the job offering as the Chancellor. Surprisingly, Mr. Klein did not expect to receive the call of acceptance after being interviewed. Who knew such a success could come as a surprise?

Today, Mr. Klein is dealing with budget cuts that cut off benefits for New York City students

such as the after school programs and material we have here at TYWLS and plenty other schools. One of wishes is to fund programs to better the education of New York City children.

As for the school lunch, which so many find unappetizing, Mr. Klein is working with a company that produces our school lunch. The company tries a lot to make the food desirable but Mr. Klein has to keep nutrition in mind. It would not be great to have an unhealthy student body!

Chancellor Klein loves his job to see the wonderful results that fit our school systems so well. One of his priorities is the students and what is the best for us. Although all do not agree with his decisions, you can see they work out for the better. Just look at the joyful people in our TYWLS family everyday!

Life of a Teen on Dialysis

By MORGHAN JOI PASTRANA, NAOMI WHITE, AND SHIYING FENG

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

needle in the same arm. This takes about three hours. Lifting things using that specific arm is even more difficult than lifting in general.

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

Making A Difference

By KATHERINE CASTELAN

Many of us grow up to be a doctor, a writer, or maybe even a lawyer, and others grow up to be the opposite. Nine girls in seventh grade were recently chosen to go to a program founded by Education Update to learn about being a journalist. Their first assignment was to interview Courtney Fenner.

Courtney Elisabeth Fenner is a teacher at The Young Women's Leadership School, Courtney teaches writing and she has been teaching at TYWLS for a year.

Courtney went to graduate school at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is a non-fiction writer and likes to hang out and go to the park. Some of her favorite authors are Alice Walker, Carol Shields and Toni Cade Bambara. While she is teaching, she wants her students to understand the subject she is teaching and what she is talking about.

Before she worked at TYWLS, she was a teacher at Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic Excellence. She points out to her students the difference between having an education and not having one. One of her students at Bushwick, named Karla, was one of her best students. She always had a book with her, and studied very hard. But she started dating a senior, and soon she told Courtney she was pregnant. She stopped showing up to school and Courtney never heard anything from her. One day, when Courtney was at the train station, she saw Karla, and she was really excited, but this would be the last time she would see her. Courtney always will remember the book Karla carried inside her bag.

Courtney says, "We can make a difference, even when a situation seems really depressing or hopeless," which shows that people always have another chance to make things better.

What a TYWLS Teacher!

By MORGHAN JOI PASTRANA

At The Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem, Courtney E. Fenner works as a 6th grade humanities and 7th grade reading and English teacher. Ms. Fenner has been working at TYWLS for 2 years and says she enjoys it.

Ms. Fenner grew up and went to school in Virginia. For graduate school she went to Virginia Commonwealth University and got her master's in creative writing and English. Ms. Fenner originally came to New York with a program called New York Teaching Fellows. This is when she started teaching. Ms. Fenner first taught at Middle Caliget church with a group of 4-5 people. Through her teaching sessions she intro-

duced and taught different forms of writing. For example, she taught nonfiction, mowers, poems and songs.

As a TYWLS teacher she has agreed that there are some high points and challenges of her job. For example, a challenge is her different forms of finding out why to teach. One high point is knowing that her students still learn and know what she is teaching. This is a high point because in many situations she feels as if it seems that her students don't pay attention to anything she says, but that may be a way to learn. It seems that Ms. Fenner really enjoys teaching so the new question becomes why not be a teacher yourself, and feel the life of how many people live it!

EDUCATION UPDATE'S MIDDLE SCHOOL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

How Textbooks Get to the Classroom: A Visit to McGraw-Hill Headquarters



Dr. Kevin Colleary presents material in an animated way to the students while Tom Stanton looks on.



The students in The Young Women's Leadership School are mesmerized by the presentation.

By ADAM SUGERMAN

The journalism students of The Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem recently had the opportunity to learn how their textbooks and other education materials get to their classrooms during a field trip to the McGraw-Hill offices in Midtown Manhattan. Dr. Kevin Colleary, national marketing manager, Reading & Language Arts, mesmerized the students as he presented characteristics — many of them esoteric — of the textbook industry, welding English language arts, geography, history and economics into accessible form for the general public to understand.

Starting off by connecting the word “adopt” with “adoption,” the students learned about a powerful force behind major decisions on textbook creation for the U.S. school market: the roles of adoption states and open territories. The U.S. textbook market is not one market; rather it consists of 50 markets, one in each state. During the interactive presentation, the students asked many excellent questions, such as, “Does my friend in New Jersey, who is in the same grade that I am in, use the same materials that I use?” Students learned that each state board of education determines its state's curriculum,

and to a certain extent, books are customized to each state's standards. The class' teacher, Ms. Courtney Fenner, remarked that her colleagues at the school emphasize the New York state standards, and the students instantly made the connection. Besides standards, other influences on what goes into education materials are based on alignment to state assessments, demographics in our population to address our nation's diversity (e.g., ethnicity, inclusion in regards to people with disabilities), and other state-specific issues.

The class then had the privilege to be the first students to see a new music program product in development: Interactive Listening Maps. Richard Kaller, vice president and editorial director, explained how this whiteboard product was created and gave a demonstration. Mr. Kaller showed his passion for music as he conducted a short 10-minute class with excerpts from the music and graphics embedded in a kindergarten and a fifth-grade piece. The students remembered music classes from their earlier grades and came away impressed by the product's applicability to their own lives. They also learned that the publisher not only purchases existing music and art, but also hires musicians and artists to produce original works.



Richard Kaller discusses a new music product.

Tom Stanton, director of communications, closed the presentation by taking additional questions from the students and providing background information about the presentation team. Students' reactions from the field trip can be

found on our Web site at [#">http://www.education-update.com. #](http://www.education-update.com)

Adam Sugerman is co-publisher of *Education Update* and publisher of his own imprint, *Palmiche Press*.

Robert Kennedy School Students Praise the Program

Dear Dr. Rosen,

Thank you for taking us to all those wonderful trips. My favorite was the Animal Medical Center. Thank you most of all for teaching us about how to become a news reporter and writing articles. You picked the right class. Thank you for everything.

Romeo

Thank you very much Dr. Rosen. You are a very nice person. You taught us how to write an article. My favorite part of the Journalism Initiative was the Animal Medical Center. I enjoyed it because I saw a lot of injured cats and dogs get help.

Marquis

Thank you for publishing my articles in your paper. Thanks to *Education Update* for giving

me the chance to interview people. Thank you for giving me ideas on what to write about, helping me out with the mistakes in my drafts and inspiring me. I also appreciate the trips you invited me to.

Felipe Pau

Thank you for making our dream come true. You did a lot of stuff for me. I will never forget you. May God bless you forever.

Ronate Anderson

Thanks for teaching us about the newspaper, reporting, interviewing, writing articles. I learned a lot about all of that. We all love you and like you.

Isaiah

My experience with *Education Update* was

like being the editor of AM-New York or another major newspaper. When I opened that newspaper and saw my face, I felt famous. My class and I love being in the newspaper.

Thank you for choosing our school to participate in the Journalism Initiative. I appreciate you teaching us about newspapers, reporting, interviewing, and writing articles.

Timothy Millan

Thank you for helping us learn how to interview someone. Thank you for helping us learn to be a reporter and helping us make crossword puzzles. I am really grateful for everything that you did for us.

Brandon DeJesus

My favorite trip was Hunter College because

that's where we learned how to make a crossword puzzle. Thank you for teaching me how to write an article. I learned how to put a newspaper together. It's very interesting and cool!

Tiffany

I want to thank you for giving us a chance to do all the things we have done, like meet the chancellor. Thank you for teaching us about newspapers, interviewing and writing articles.

Catia

I want to thank you for everything you've done, like teach us how to interview people and write articles. You taught me all about newspapers, reporting, crossword puzzles, and how to use Photoshop. I will try my best to do articles for *Education Update* for you!

Morgan Roman

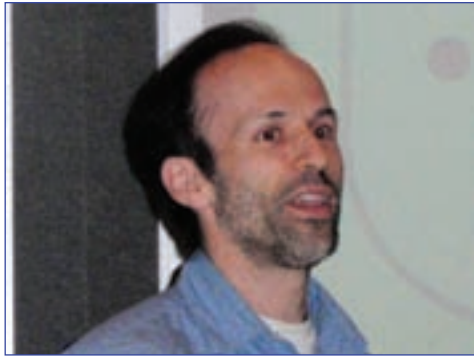
Students Inspired During National Lab Day at Rockefeller University

BY GIOVANNY PINTO

Students from the Renaissance High School of Musical Theater and Technology in the Bronx recently descended on The Rockefeller University's East Side campus for an all day science lesson. The visit was part of National Lab Day, a nationwide initiative to bring students and educators together with local scientists for discovery based science experiences.

The students packed into an auditorium and were introduced to the rich history of the Rockefeller family by Bernice B. Rumala, a community engagement specialist. Ms. Rumala got the students energized by telling them about her past, growing up in the rough neighborhoods of Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. "Regardless of where you are from you can be whatever you want," Ms. Rumala offered the students as encouragement. "And if they tell you otherwise, brush them off," she added, a remark which was met with wild applause.

She was followed by a research presentation on bacteria and antibodies by Dr. Ray Schuch, a research assistant professor, and a science demonstration by Ted Scovell, director of science outreach. Mr. Scovell presented many engaging experiments to the students, among them presenting balloons to the crowd. Soon, balloons were



Ted Scovell, director of science outreach

flying everywhere representing particles moving at high temperature. "Is science cool?" Mr. Scovell asked. "Yes!" was the overwhelming enthusiastic response from the crowd. Putting an air-filled balloon in dry ice produced a deflated balloon quickly, much to the amazement of the students.

Next, a panel of student scientists representing all genders, cultures, and placements in science careers spoke to students about what they do. They encouraged the high-schoolers to look into science careers because at the graduate level many students like them receive full financial aid as well as fellowships in the science field.



Students toss around balloons to simulate particles moving at different temperatures

The students and teachers then broke up into pairs with the student scientists for a tour of The Rockefeller University. Students who were paired up with Rudy Bullani, a Ph.D. student, got to see the labs where he works with birds. They saw where he operates on the birds, chambers where he records bird sounds, and they even got to hold test tubes containing bird embryos, which one student compared to "the size of chewed-up gum."

The day was capped off by a mix-and-mingle lunch of pizza provided by the university. There the students learned how to get involved with the Science Outreach Program, held in the summer for



Bernice B. Rumala, Community engagement specialist

two weeks, in which students can be placed in labs of their interest.

The trip came about through the efforts of the high school's science teacher, Linda Ewool. When she heard about National Lab Day she drafted a proposal to several science universities in New York City about working with her students. The Rockefeller University responded.

"I got a better understanding of Rudy's profession," said Adam Edwards, 16, one of the few freshmen chosen to attend because of his high science grades. "This is influential in my life. Maybe I'll want to do this all because of what he showed me." #

Ruby Dee and Claremont Prep Celebrate Langston Hughes



(R-L) Ruby Dee and the event-organizer/Claremont Prep choral director, Meena Jahi, exude passion during a duet of the works of Langston Hughes.

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Legendary actress Ruby Dee, accompanied by a trio of star jazz and blues musicians, ignited the stage at Claremont Preparatory School in Manhattan's financial district in a memorable assembly program to commemorate National Poetry Month.

The moving tribute, "Celebrating Langston Hughes," was backed by dramatic lighting and a large screen with text that followed the program. Dee, together with selected students and staff, recalled key moments of Hughes' life and read from a generous selection of his poems. The effect was magical as Dee, slight in stature but big in talent and passion, recreated Hughes' journey through history and spoke his sometimes agonizing and sometimes hopeful words. Foot tapping, fingers snapping, voice modulating, body expressively moving, Dee, now 86 years old and lovely as ever, shared with her young audience the amazing range of her talent and spirit.

The Hughes they learned about was born in 1902 and always identified strongly with the African-American experience. From his signature poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (in his first book, *The Weary Blues*, 1926), sparked by his initial sight of the Mississippi River where his people were "sold down river," to poems like "The White One," "Song After Lynching," "Jim Crow Car," and "Freedom," Hughes expressed the pathos of his people. Although he traveled around the world, Hughes regarded Harlem as home and, in the 1920s, helped shape the Harlem

Renaissance. His poems contain the rhythms of blues and jazz, the dialect of African-American speech, and the sights and sounds of Harlem. He is sometimes remembered for his line "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? ... or does it explode?" the genesis for the title of the well-received 1959 play, "A Raisin in the Sun." Hughes died in 1967. His home, at 20 East 127th Street, is landmarked, and 127th Street is called Langston Hughes Place. "Celebrating Langston Hughes" was written and directed by Claremont Prep's music teacher, Meena Jahi.

In addition to being a Grammy Award-winning musician, an Academy Award-nominated actress, and a National Medal of Arts- and Kennedy Center Honors-recipient, Ruby Dee is rightly described as a "person of history." She and her late husband, Ossie Davis, were deeply involved in the civil rights struggle and were personal friends of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X (Davis delivered the eulogy at Malcolm X's funeral).

At a luncheon in Claremont's handsome wood-paneled conference room, Dee told 16 specially invited students about growing up on the front lines of the Movement. "I don't remember not fighting for something," she explained. "It's like I came out of the womb and got on a picket line." She credits Hughes with inspiring her to write the poem "Calling All Women," in which she pleads with women of all classes and backgrounds to unite and fight for basic rights. Dee also described

Could RTI Get Us to the Top Faster Than Race to the Top?

By SUSAN CRAWFORD

Among the goals of the Obama administration's Race to the Top contest, as well as of education reformers on the left and the right and of local school districts and parents everywhere, is to have a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom. And who wouldn't want that? But as any teacher at any level of experience or expertise can tell you, it is very difficult for teachers to fulfill their missions with students who cannot read adequately.

This is not just a concern in the early grades. Our school system is filled with students who were never given the help they needed early on, and so continue to struggle all the way up through high school — if they make it that far. How big is the problem? In the 1990s the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development convened a panel to look into what should be done for struggling readers. The panel issued its report in 2000. Among its findings were that nearly four out of ten children still struggle with reading at fourth grade, and half of those — a full 20 percent of the population — are dyslexic. The panel also issued guidelines for appropriate interventions, and these became, in part, the basis for the Response to Intervention, or R.T.I., protocol. The idea is to provide increased levels of help to readers who need it until each student is successfully reading.

Unfortunately, R.T.I. stops short of its mission. Schools select programs for struggling readers, but if students are not "getting it," it is often considered the student's failing rather than that of the program being implemented. So we still have the problem of "retaining" students, or of students being "counseled out" to other schools, rather

than continuing up the ladder of interventions that the reading panel recommended.

When students have reading disabilities from dyslexia or auditory processing disorders, they need intensive, one-on-one work for a period of generally one to three months. The more compressed and intensive the intervention, the faster it works, since it is literally opening up neural pathways in the student's brain that are needed for better reading skills. This compares with the long-standing tradition of sending such students to after-school tutors, often twice a week over the course of years, where the focus has historically been more on learning how to accommodate and compensate for the reading impairment rather than on correcting it. Students who are not "natural" readers will never necessarily have the facility with reading and comprehension that "natural" readers might, but appropriate interventions can certainly help most of them navigate their schoolwork with little more than a need for extended time on tests.

To ensure that the maximum levels of reading interventions are available to struggling readers who need them, school systems should include those listed on the International Dyslexia Association's Matrix of Multisensory Structured Language Programs. These are the types of programs that the reading panel recommended. If we implement them nationwide, ensuring that every struggling reader at every grade and every income level has access to the right kind of help, we stand a much better chance of winning any races to the top. #

Susan Crawford is the director of the Right to Read Project.

a "totally different time" to the students, when black people could not get jobs, bank loans, or hotel rooms. There were also fewer distractions, she said. She did not watch television or go to the movies while growing up. Dee saw her time with the Claremont students as "helping me put my life in perspective and helping me understand where the world is heading." She went on to say, "[I see] humanity growing and moving to reach its astonishing full potential, the magic of ourselves. Reach out and your arm grows and your spirit grows."

Claremont headmaster Irwin Shlachter explained that the Langston Hughes program reflects a core mission of the school: teaching and promoting diversity. He believes the school's

location in the heart of the financial district makes it especially aware of the need to prepare students for a global society. The first independent non-sectarian school below Canal Street, it opened in 2005 with 54 students. Following a master plan to grow to a Nursery-through-12 school, it now has 515 students and will graduate its first class of seniors in 2013. Located in the grand Bank of America International Building, originally built in 1929 but has been renovated to accommodate a school, it retains some original highlights, such as the grand ballroom with its massive columns and historic murals (now the auditorium) and the former bank vault with its forbidding safe door (now the café). Space in the nearby Cunard Building is being refitted to accommodate the upper grades. #

Supreme Court Must Not Minimize K-12 Nondiscrimination Policies

By FRANCISCO M. NEGRÓN JR.

Most of us think that nondiscrimination policies are a good thing. After all, nondiscrimination policies help us ensure that our students and employees are treated fairly. They declare our commitment to equality, safe learning environments, and participatory processes. They let everyone know that our schools will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of certain intrinsic characteristics, including race, national origin, gender and religion.

But what if a nondiscrimination policy, the very one that was meant to prevent the ills of discrimination, actually does the opposite? Such was the argument of the Christian Legal Society at the University of California Hastings College of the Law in an oral argument before the Supreme Court. The debate centers on whether the Christian Legal Society statement of faith (a loyalty oath of sorts) and its policy of preventing gays from voting or holding office in the organization are inconsistent with the organization's fundamental Christian beliefs. Because the policy violated the university's nondiscrimination policy, Hastings withheld official recognition of the organization as a student group.

The Christian Legal Society claimed the policy was unconstitutional because if students who do not subscribe to the core beliefs of the organization could actively participate in it, then they could change the very nature of the organization. That, they claim, violates students' constitutional rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression.

Not all chief justices appeared convinced that a nondiscrimination policy that applies across the board to all organizations violates any constitutional precepts. Newly appointed Chief Justice Sonia Sotomayor, for instance, asked whether it was all right for a group "to exclude all black people, all women, all handicapped persons, [or] whatever other form of discrimination a group wants to practice, ... [and whether] a school has to accept that group and recognize it, give it funds and otherwise lend it space."

No, said the Christian Legal Society, because that sort of discrimination is based on a person's status as opposed to a person's beliefs. But retiring Chief Justice John Paul Stevens appeared to see little distinction between the two. "What if," he asked, "the belief is that African-Americans are inferior?" The Christian Legal Society argued that the university still would be required to recognize the organization. Chief Justice Antonin Scalia appeared to suggest that such an organization would fall prey to its own infirm purpose, saying, "You can have a student organization, I suppose, of that type. It wouldn't include many people."

But while Chief Justice Scalia may see a nondiscrimination policy as needless here, because hate groups at public universities are likely to wither on the vine, that luxury is not an option for



K-12, where schools are charged with safeguarding the safety of their students in loco parentis. How, for instance, does a public school teach youngsters about equality, civics and democratic values and at the same time sponsor a student

group that promotes racial hatred?

Most would argue that these concepts are so diametrically opposed (and potentially disruptive) that they cannot be reconciled. It is easy to see how an officially sanctioned hate group in high school imperils student safety. These are some of the policy implications the National School Boards Association urged the court to consider in its amicus brief in support of Hastings.

In the K-12 extracurricular setting, nondiscrimination policies are useful tools with salutary effects that support essential academic goals. Because schools use extracurricular and after-school programs to augment the academic lessons with professional and life skills like leadership and civics, it makes sense for public schools to require their extracurricular organizations to be open to all students, just like the classroom. Many, if not all, states mandate that school boards adopt nondiscrimination policies.

In addition, federal laws such as the Equal Access Act require schools to open their doors to a variety of outside groups if the schools sponsor non-curricular clubs and organizations. Because untangling this web of competing constitutional interests places an enormous, untenable burden on schools, the National School Boards Association urged the court to preserve a school's application of its non-discriminatory policy in an all-comers approach. In other words, the best way to ensure extracurricular opportunities for students while keeping them safe is to continue to allow schools to require all student organizations to comply with a nondiscriminatory policy applied equally, across the board, to all groups.

The all-comers approach achieves what the courts have long held: that the constitutional rights of students must be balanced with the special characteristics of the school setting. And, the interests of all students are best protected when schools are free to implement nondiscriminatory policies in a fair and neutral manner.

In the words of Chief Justice Sotomayor, "This sounds like a debate over whether the policy, as the school believes it should be implemented, is not a good one. But isn't that their choice? Don't we give deference to an educational institution in terms of the choices it makes about affecting its purposes? And the purpose here is we don't want our students to discriminate."

Hear, hear!

Francisco M. Negrón Jr. is the general counsel for the National School Boards Association.

Pres. Donna Shalala Honored at NYU College Of Nursing

By SYBIL MAIMIN

In New York City to deliver the keynote at the N.Y.U. College of Nursing commencement where she accepted the Helen Manzer Award "for her exemplary leadership for the health of the nation," the much-honored University of Miami president, Dr. Donna Shalala, spoke with *Education Update*. Commenting on the recently passed health care reform bill (Shalala was U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services from 1993 to 2001), she noted approvingly that the new law will generate more roles for nurses and nurse practitioners to accommodate the coming increased emphasis on primary, chronic, and palliative care. Steeped in the subject, she teaches a course on the U.S. health care system at the university. Suicide, a growing phenomenon among high school and college students, receives her attention. "We train lots of people to notice symptoms," she explains, "but the best source of information is friends." A counseling center at the university evaluates suicidal students to determine if they require long-term care. U.M., a private research university with over 15,000 students, boasts one of the top medical schools in the nation, the Miller School of Medicine.

Under Shalala, "world-class people have been recruited for medical research." With her "disciplined strategy to improve quality," U.M. has improved its image and risen dramatically in *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. Created under her watch, an accelerated interdisciplinary science curriculum, "Prism," attracts very bright students.

Shalala has also had great success as a fundraiser during her nine years at the university, raising the incredible sum of \$1.4 billion from 131,000 donors in "Momentum: The Campaign for the University of Miami." She attributes her success to patience and willingness to listen. "Do your homework," she advises. "You have to know a lot about the donor and his financial situation" before broaching the topic of giving. Learn about the donor's interests and connections to the university. For example, the Miller School of Medicine got its name from a donor who gave \$100 million for commemorative naming rights. Another donor may have a personal story of poverty and access to higher education through scholarships. She may want to give back by endowing gifts for current needy students. In addition, be grateful for all gifts, advised this wise fundraiser. "You never know when a \$10,000 donor will turn into a \$10 mil-



lion donor."

Born in Cleveland to Lebanese immigrant parents, this dynamo scholar, teacher and administrator attended public school and received a B.A. from Western College for Women. Attending a women's college "definitely made a difference," she reports. "It gave me an academic perspective and focus." Following a two-year stint in the Peace Corps in Iran, she received a Ph.D. from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Entering higher education, she taught at CUNY's Baruch College and Columbia University's Teachers College before assuming leadership roles as president of Hunter College (1980-87) and then chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where, as the first woman to head a Big Ten university (1987-93), she raised over \$400 million. The longest running H.H.S. secretary, she served in the cabinet the full eight years of Bill Clinton's administration before coming to U.M. in 2001.

Shalala has been awarded over three dozen honorary degrees as well as other awards, including the National Public Service Award (1992), *Glamour* magazine's Woman of the Year (1994); she was also named one of America's Best Leaders by *U.S. News and World Report* and the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government (2005). In 2008, President George W. Bush presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the nation.

In Shalala, this year's 455 graduates of the N.Y.U. School of Nursing certainly have an inspiring role model. And Shalala's mentors, the late Alan K. Campbell, dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and the late Lawrence A. Cremin, historian and president of Columbia's Teachers College, nurtured a student of whom they would be proud. #

Artist Meera Thompson

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

How should Meera Thompson first present herself — as "artist-teacher" or as "teacher-artist"? An impossible choice, since both have been life-long passions and interconnected professional pursuits.

Though Ms. Thompson started her teaching career with young children, she eventually concentrated on the upper levels when she taught art at the Hewitt School and the Chapin School and then, as head of the art department, at the Buckley School. In the last few years she has been an adjunct faculty member at New York University and Queensborough Community College in their divisions of continuing and professional studies, where she teaches representational drawing.

During this same time she has continued to evolve as a painter. In a series of "New

Paintings" that go on exhibit at the end of this month, she shows how she has become more abstract in the last two years. In "A Sense of Place" (2008) a specific image was often the prompt. In "New Paintings," beautifully composed swaths of color (gouache, ink, watercolor) tease the eye over textured handmade paper, suggesting dream landscapes that may owe more to memory than to immediate experience. She chuckles: once, when she was doing representational work, a viewer came up to her and said, "I recognize that, it's Bermuda, where I went on my honeymoon." Not so, but



who's to quarrel with an admirer who buys your work? Still, Ms. Thompson hopes that the main connection the viewer made was emotional, that she had an intuition of the painting as an expression of the "human spirit" of the artist and of her own human spirit, in responding to it.

The range of Ms. Thompson's interests and experience is impressive. She has taught the very young and older adults, students from private school and public college graduates looking to new careers through art. What has linked them all is Ms. Thompson's deep belief in the value of drawing. The disparity between what she does — teaching figuration in the classroom and on site at museums, and what she does in her studio as a gestural abstractionist — only reinforces her sense that art, regardless of subject matter, style or medium must primarily engage the imagination.

Of course she knows the differences between the ways children and adults approach art. Kids have easier access to their creative imaginations and a greater willingness to experiment. Adults tend to be more focused and selective, as well as more guarded about their emotional responses, but they also understand how drawing has helped them "see differently," think differently. These are valuable acquisitions for older students, especially those who come from other countries

where it would have been impossible to elect to take a sketching course without having to matriculate: where they would not have had a chance to remake themselves studying art.

In effect, Ms. Thompson did just that — remake herself — turning from being a figurative artist and a representational watercolorist painting landscapes in Maine to an abstractionist. A Vassar graduate with an M.F.A. from Boston University, Ms. Thompson credits "great mentors" at both institutions, where she came to value the importance of drawing. It is at the heart of what she teaches and beneath the surface of her glowing canvases. No one coming through one of her courses would ever say what that apocryphal 3-year-old viewing a Jackson Pollock is reported to have cried out: "I can do that." Children are natural modernists, but what's behind the making of an acclaimed abstract artist — or prospective graphic designer or animator or architect — is drawing. Let the budget threats come, but let those who know better reassert the value of art to observation, thinking and humanity.

Meera Thompson, "New Paintings" will be on exhibit at Atlantic Gallery from May 25 to June 19. The gallery is at 135 West 29th Street, Suite 601. Hours are from noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. #

THE DEAN'S COLUMN

The Unusual Number Nine

By DR. ALFRED POSAMENTIER



It is the obligation of every elementary school teacher to motivate and enrich students about the wonders of mathematics. This can be done with some history and some off-the-beaten-path topics as we offer here.

Students will be fascinated to learn that the first occurrence in Western Europe of the Hindu-Arabic numerals we use today was in 1202 in the book, *Liber Abaci*, by Leonardo of Pisa (otherwise known as Fibonacci). This merchant traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and in the first chapter states that

"These are the nine figures of the Indians 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. With these nine figures, and with the symbol, 0, which in Arabic is called zephirum, any number can be written, as will be demonstrated below".

With this book the use of these numerals was first publicized in Europe. Before that the Roman numerals were used. They were, clearly, much more cumbersome. Take a moment to have students ponder how they would do their calculations if all they had at their disposal were the Roman numerals.

Fibonacci, fascinated by the arithmetic calculations used in the Islamic world, first introduced the system of casting out nines as a check for arithmetic in this book. Even today it still comes in useful. However, the nice thing about it is that it again demonstrates a hidden magic in ordinary arithmetic.

Before we discuss this arithmetic-checking procedure, we will consider how the remainder of a division by 9 compares to removing nines from the digit sum of the number. Let us find the remainder when 8,768 is divided by 9. The quotient is 974 with a remainder of 2.

This remainder can also be obtained by "casting out nines" from the digit sum of the number 8,768: $8+7+6+8 = 29$, again casting out nines: $2+9 = 11$, and again: $1+1 = 2$, which was the remainder from before.

Consider the product $734 \cdot 879 = 645,186$. We can check this by division, but that would be somewhat lengthy. We can see if this could be correct by "casting out nines." Take each factor

and the product and add the digits, and then add the digits if the sum is not already a single digit number. Continue this until a single digit number is reached

For 734: $7+3+4 = 14$; then $1+4 = 5$

For 879: $8+7+9 = 24$; then $2+4 = 6$

For 645,186: $6+4+5+1+8+6 = 30$

Since $5 \cdot 6 = 30$, which yields 3 (casting out nines: $3+0=3$), is the same as for the product, the answer could be correct.

For practice, have students do another casting-out-nines "check" for the following multiplication: $56,589 \cdot 983,678 = 55,665,354,342$

For 56,589: $5+6+5+8+9 = 33$; $3+3 = 6$
For 983,678: $9+8+3+6+7+8 = 41$; $4+1 = 5$
For 55,665,354,342: $5+5+6+6+5+3+5+4+3+4+2 = 48$; $4+8 = 12$; $1+2 = 3$

To check for possibly having the correct product: $6 \cdot 5 = 30$ or $3+0 = 3$, which matches the 3 resulting from the product digits.

The same scheme can be used to check the likelihood of a correct sum or quotient, simply by taking the sum (or quotient) and casting out nines, taking the sum (or quotient) of these "remainders" and comparing it with the remainder of the sum (or quotient). They should be equal if the answer is to be correct.

The number nine has another unusual feature, which enables us to use a surprising multiplication algorithm. Although it is somewhat complicated, it is nevertheless fascinating to see it work and perhaps try to determine why this happens. This procedure is intended for multiplying a

number of two digits or more by 9.

It is best to discuss the procedure with your students in context: Have them consider multiplying 76,354 by 9. (See Chart I Below)

Although it is a bit cumbersome, especially when compared to the calculator, this algorithm provides some insights into number theory. But above all it's cute! #

Dr. Alfred Posamentier is distinguished lecturer at NY City College of Tech, professor emeritus of mathematics education and former dean of the school of education at City College of New York, author of over 45 Mathematics books, including: *Mathematical Amazements and Surprises* (Prometheus, 2009) *Math*

Wonders to Inspire Teachers and Students (ASCD, 2003), and *The Fabulous Fibonacci Numbers* (Prometheus, 2007), and member of the New York State Mathematics Standards Committee.

* "Casting out nines" means taking bundles of nine away from the sum, or subtracting a specific number of nines from this sum.

CHART I

Step 1	Subtract the units digit of the multiplicand from 10	$10 - 4 = 6$
Step 2	Subtract each of the remaining digits (beginning with the tens digit) from 9 and add this result to the previous digit in the multiplicand (For any two digit sums carry the tens digit to the next sum.)	$9 - 5 = 4$, $4 + 4 = 8$ $9 - 3 = 6$, $6 + 5 = 11$, 1 $9 - 6 = 3$, $3 + 3 = 6$, $6 + 1 = 7$ $9 - 7 = 2$, $2 + 6 = 8$
Step 3	Subtract 1 from the left-most digit of the multiplicand	$7 - 1 = 6$
Step 4	List the results in reverse order to get the desired product.	687,186

DR. DAVID S. HILL: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TEACHER-TRAINING AND TEACHING

By RICH MONETTI

In 2004, as the new dean of education, health and human services at SUNY Plattsburgh, Dr. David S. Hill was looking for ways to implement meaningful change at his institution. His exploration found that there was not a strong enough connection to the public school system. Almost six years later, he continues to move Plattsburgh closer in line with the New York state educational system, while keeping a fluent dialogue remains the objective.

Coming over from Keene State College in New Hampshire, where he was the dean of the professional and graduate studies, Dr. Hill was still familiar with an animosity that first emerged about 15 years ago between the New York public school system and SUNY. "The SUNY system used to provide teachers who took our students as student-teachers a free course," he says. That support was partially withdrawn, as only a quarter of the cost was covered by SUNY.

Additionally, colleges and universities have long forced student-teachers on schools without accountability. "The risk involved was that the student-teacher might not be effective, in which case a whole semester's work with children was lost," he said.

In response, Plattsburgh began implementing what they call "a community service approach." Making sure they are giving something back, he says, "We won't put a student in a classroom unless we know that the teacher is prepared to have that student do something that contributes to the class."

At the same time, Plattsburgh faculty doesn't just hand off a student teacher and walk away. Each time a faculty member has a group of students in a school, he says, the faculty member must be present. "It's really labor intensive," he says, but the in-depth involvement acts to reenergize Plattsburgh faculty. In turn, by interacting with teachers and principals, professors gain insight into what's going on in today's schools, he adds.

Rebuilding the bridge slowly, that scenario played directly into what Dr. Hill identified early on as a key challenge faced by his program. In looking at getting professors up to speed, he realized, "We needed to become more aware of what was going on in the public schools."

He began sitting in on public-school class-

rooms. Having left behind teaching special education in the early 1970s, he says, "I knew that it was important for me to see what was expected of the special-education teacher under the new laws in order for me to effectively prepare our teachers."

Additionally, curriculum demands have greatly increased, and No Child Left Behind legislation has, he says, made teachers accountable in ways he never dreamed of when he began his career. As a result, Dr. Hill, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Allegheny College and a master's degree and a doctorate in special education from Temple University, pushed Plattsburgh into a complete reinvention.

"We used common readings," he says, in order to collaboratively amass a new course of action. Linda Darling Hammond's *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* and Peter Senge's *Schools that Learn* were the main guidelines. Designing the Plattsburgh program around best practices, he says, "We instituted and adapted aspects of both those books in our redesigned program."

Looking outward for Plattsburgh education graduates, the prospects are mixed. With more and more children being identified out of the standardized education model, he says, there's always a special education market. Additionally, in trying to comply with all the paperwork and regulations, high teacher burnout occurs, leaving ample openings for graduates.

A couple of months out, most can expect a job, but the outlook is different for elementary education majors. Plattsburgh's most popular major, he says, "There are five times as many certified childhood education teachers as there are positions in New York."

On average, it can take three or four years to land a job. Otherwise, he says, if out-of-state is an option, Plattsburgh grads are heavily recruited in Maryland, South Carolina and North Carolina.

Plattsburgh makes sure elementary education majors understand the value of their studies. "We point out that the skill set developed in the major is transferable to other kinds of jobs, so you don't have to be a teacher just because you graduated with a teaching degree," he says.

As for grads coming out with non-education

COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND

News & Views

• It took a little over six hours, 18 innings, and 40 total runs, but the men's baseball team took home their 14th CUNYAC Postseason Championship title, knocking off the No. 4 seed and defending-champion Baruch College Bearcats in a twinbill played at M.C.U. Ballpark in Brooklyn.

• **C.S.I. Voted One of the Best Companies to Work for on S.I.**

The results are in and the College of Staten Island has been voted one of the best companies to work for on Staten Island among companies with more than 100 employees. The voting was sponsored by the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation (S.I.E.D.C.), and presented by S.I.E.D.C. Ambassadors. Other winners in the 100+ employees category were Con Edison and Eden II.

• **Kids Come to Campus**

The College of Staten Island hosted another fun and eventful Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day last week, as college faculty and staff brought their little ones to campus. The children were welcomed with refreshments in Building 2A and had the chance to have a C.S.I. ID taken. After that, they went to Building 1A where they enjoyed some lectures from Professors Calvin Holder, Shaibal Mitra, Francisco Soto and Donna Scimeca in the Conversation Cafe, where they learned about life in the Caribbean, the birds of Staten Island, the Spanish language, and U.S. historic figures.

• **C.S.I. Student Selected for Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship**

For the third consecutive year, a C.S.I. student has been accepted into the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship. Irvin Ibarquen is a sophomore

member of The Verrazano School, majoring in Business Marketing. Although only a sophomore, Irvin has already participated in three internships: with the publisher Simon & Schuster's marketing department, the marketing department for the S.I.N.Y. non-profit organization, and the executive director's office of Northfield Bank.

• **Brazile Keynotes Student Leadership Conference**

The 2010 Student Leadership Conference, entitled "Inspiring Civility" at the College of Staten Island recently treated students from C.S.I. and other schools to a day-long program of speakers and workshops to hone both leadership and interpersonal skills in an increasingly fragmented political landscape.

• **Peace Club Event Celebrates, Promotes Activism**

C.S.I. students, including members of the Peace Club and N.Y.P.I.R.G., and friends came together recently to celebrate the activism of the past and promote future action. The event featured various speakers, including Vietnam veteran Bill Johnson and political science professor Harry Cason. "We're trying to bring back an antiwar atmosphere, and trying to get people to think," said Tara Jeanne, president of the Peace Club. Jeanne is a senior at C.S.I. majoring in Education.

• **SEEK Students Learn First-Hand About Politics in Albany**

A group of students, staff and administrators from the College of Staten Island recently attended the 2010 Legislative Conference Weekend in Albany, sponsored by the New York Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, Inc. The students were joined by C.S.I. President Tomás Morales, as well as representatives from the SEEK Program, the C.S.I. Office of Recruitment and Admissions, and the STEP Program. #

majors, he sees no reason to downplay their public education. "I encourage our students to emphasize that SUNY Plattsburgh has a strong academic reputation in the SUNY system," he says emphasizing fields such as biology, journalism, communications and the professional fields — nursing, social work and speech therapy.

Either way, the data doesn't say as much as the initial step into the front door. "It's about connections and first impressions, no matter where you went to college," he says.

Of course, getting past the reception desk takes an entirely different set of legwork. "What you do is exploration activities," he says. Rather than just dropping resumes into Monster.com, decide what you are looking for in a company, what

kind of work you want to do and the kind of people you want to work with. Then identify the companies that meet your needs, see if you can get a look at their operation, and let them know, he says, that you want to work for them, and you can be an asset.

The same goes for future teachers, but Dr. Hill sees no reason that the department should stay put as he resumes his career next fall as a professor of special education for Plattsburgh. Admitting that he's better at creating something than maintaining it, he says, "I hope we've set up enough of a culture of continuous improvement that we can collect data and make improvements so in five years it doesn't look like today's program, but something better." #

Janet Alperstein: Leading the Way in International Education

By JOAN BAUM, Ph.D.

Women can indeed empower other women, especially if role models run in the family. For Dr. Janet F. Alperstein, director of academic affairs at the Rothberg International School of Hebrew University of Jerusalem, that means following nature and nurture. Her mother, Sara, is retired from a career in childhood education, and her grandmother, Ruth Suberski Goldenheim, at the age of 96 and a half, has the distinction of being Barnard College's oldest alum and was chosen to lead the procession for the installation of Barnard's new president, Debra Spar. A graduate of Barnard (class of '92), with a major in economics, Dr. Alperstein earned a master's in higher education and then, at Columbia University, a Ph.D. in sociology.

Though 94 years separate Ruth Goldenheim from Dr. Alperstein's adopted 2-year-old son, Max, there has already developed a "special connection" between them. Dr. Alperstein notes that recently, when she led a group of academic advisors on a tour of Jerusalem, she brought along young Max when the group visited the Wall in the old Jewish Quarter, and shortly after that he was exclaiming "Maxie at the Wall." For Ruth Goldenheim, these words from her Guatemalan-born great-grandson could not, one imagines, have been sweeter. Fluent in Spanish, an ardent Zionist and a world traveler — she was in Spain during their Civil War — and a woman who always had a passionate interest in cultural fare (a "foodie," her granddaughter proudly points



(L-R) Dr. Janet F. Alperstein & Sara Alperstein

out, "long before the word was popular"), Ruth Goldenheim must surely have warmed to Max's expressed fondness for Israeli pizza. Of course, he will have to wait a bit for another on-site tasting experience since Dr. Alperstein basically pursues her work on behalf of Hebrew University in Jerusalem at the Rothberg School office at 1 Battery Park Plaza.

Named for philanthropist Samuel Rothberg (d. 2007), a lifelong supporter of Israel and the founder of Hebrew University's overseas program, the Rothberg International School, a

division of the university in Jerusalem, is part of a consortium of five Israeli universities. "An international arena, a magnet," as its Web site declares, it attracts students from over 70 countries around the world who study in English. It also offers seven M.A. degree programs — and in an environment that is safe and secure, Dr. Alperstein pointedly remarks. Regardless how long students stay at Rothberg — a summer, a semester, a year — she feels they gain a wider "perspective" on Israel and a more fully nuanced appreciation of complexities that sometimes escape or go unreported by the media — the fact, for example, that Arabic can be studied there. Students consistently report that their experience at Rothberg has been "the most exciting time of their life." Until you live somewhere, Dr. Alperstein says, "you really don't know a place." And what better place to want to know than Jerusalem, the confluence of three of the world's major religions.

Though at the helm as director of Rothberg for only three and a half years, Dr. Alperstein,

who previously was dean for the study abroad program at Barnard, has already made a mark on programs affecting the school's 2,200 students, half of whom are American. In particular, she has introduced online enhancements that put Rothberg right on Google's front pages and connect the school with Facebook. Programmatic changes include collaboration with Harvard on Spring in Jerusalem, which has just begun. Other initiatives involve a joint program with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, of special importance to dance majors, who before this had few study abroad options. As for Rothberg's M.A. graduates in general, they typically go on to Ph.D. programs in Israel or the Diaspora and tend to work for nonprofits and NGOs.

According to a FAQ on its Web site, it costs approximately \$22,000 to study at Rothberg for a year (costs include tuition, room, and living expenses, including food and local travel expenses). For details, readers should check out the Web site or call (212) 607-8520. #

CHOICE WORDS

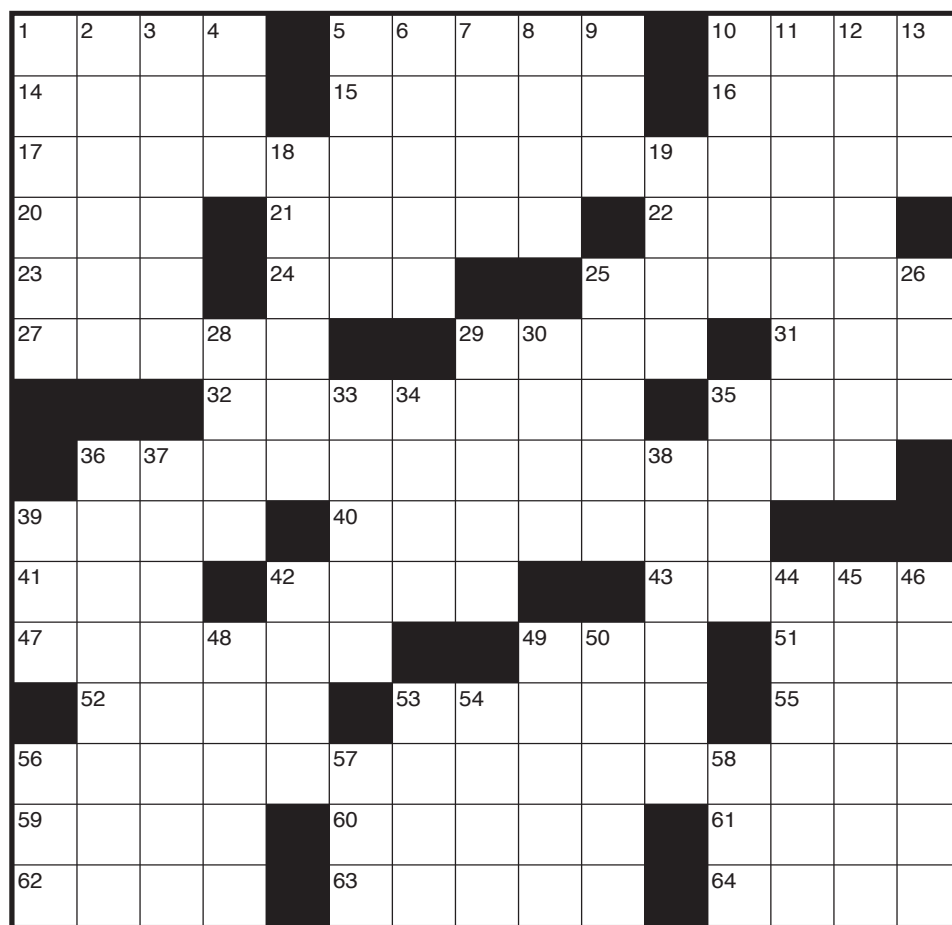
By David J. Kahn (Kibbe3@aol.com)

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

ACROSS

- 1 Sparklers
- 5 Moon follower
- 10 Garbage hauler
- 14 Lone Star State sch.
- 15 They may be deserted
- 16 Mr. Peanut's prop
- 17 Local grocers, maybe
- 20 Hanging at a lobster dinner?
- 21 Gladden
- 22 Follow the game?
- 23 Grand ___ Opry
- 24 With 25-Across, Tony winner for "Sweeney Todd"
- 25 See 24-Across
- 27 Belgrade natives
- 29 Cross words
- 31 Bismarck's predecessor?
- 32 Oven pan
- 35 All there

- 36 Comic couple of '50s movies
- 39 ___ Horn
- 40 Track for harness horses
- 41 Dadaist Jean
- 42 Schmo
- 43 Back in?
- 47 Molnar play that inspired the musical "Carousel"
- 49 Statute
- 51 Insurgent, briefly
- 52 Hawaii's state bird
- 53 See 56-Down
- 55 Not waste
- 56 Wishes heard in May ... or June
- 59 Cartoon canine
- 60 For the birds?
- 61 Eyeball
- 62 Freshman, probably
- 63 They're for the birds
- 64 Dandelion, say



DOWN

- 1 Okra stews
- 2 Ballet headliner
- 3 Dues payer
- 4 Mud bath locale
- 5 Act like a crab?
- 6 Channel for politics
- 7 Oceans
- 8 Nickname for Jose
- 9 Slow start?
- 10 Scrub
- 11 Big cruise line
- 12 Perfectly matching
- 13 Director Craven
- 18 Wrestling hold
- 19 "How about ___?!"
- 25 Hall of Famer Rod
- 26 Arles article
- 28 Highlands sight
- 29 Stockpile
- 30 Short dog, for short
- 33 Relevant, in legalese
- 34 Box
- 35 Lid trouble
- 36 Rich soak for a roast
- 37 Americanism, symbolically
- 38 Kind of sauce
- 39 ___ Poly
- 42 "Friends" spinoff
- 44 Plod
- 45 Used car deal, e.g.
- 46 Minded
- 48 Permanently
- 49 Have ___ with (talk to)
- 50 Oscar winners Joel and Ethan
- 53 Island explorer's discovery
- 54 Elevator pioneer
- 56 With 53-Across, chocolaty drink
- 57 Typical football game spectator
- 58 Scatter

FOR PUZZLE ANSWERS

GO TO

www.EducationUpdate.com/puzzle

REVIEW OF *To Teach: The Journey Of A Teacher*

TO TEACH: THE JOURNEY OF A TEACHER

By William Ayers

Published by Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York and London. May 2010: 190 pp

By MERRI ROSENBERG

William Ayers is more than the controversial school reform activist and education professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago who became a lightning rod during President Barack Obama's election campaign in 2008.

What this challenging, compelling volume (it's the third edition of a text originally published in 1993) reveals is the spirit and soul of a teacher who refuses to give in to mind-numbing bureaucracy, who views his role as maintaining faith with both his students and his own core values.

As Ayers writes, "Teaching is powered by a common faith: When I look out at my students, I assume the full humanity of each. I see hopes and dreams, aspirations and needs, experiences and intentions that must somehow be accounted for and valued. I encounter citizens not consumers, unruly sparks of meaning-making energy and not a mess of deficits. This is the evidence of things not seen, the starting point for teachers in our democratic society."

Ayers recognizes that teaching, and teachers, are all too often underpaid, undervalued and dismissed — or worse, blamed — for whatever seems to go wrong in society. "Teachers are desperately

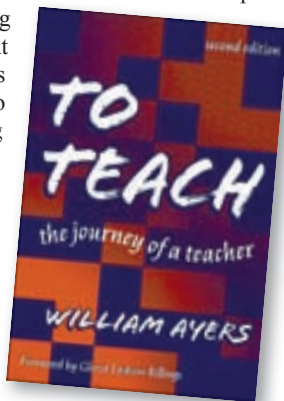
needed who will approach the work with passion and commitment, with a focus on the lives of their students and the crying needs of a world out of balance. Teaching is the necessary calling of our age," he asserts.

Such missionary zeal would no doubt ignite similar enthusiasm in young teachers who need to justify their career choice to parents or professors.

There's no shortage of passion, or strong opinions, in this text. Mandates, assessments, labeling children, restrictive curriculum — it's not surprising that Ayers chafes and rails against these impositions. As a champion of what he calls a "democratic classroom" that embraces and understands the "whole child," some of his ideas may simply seem unrealistic to those working in the field. For example, his comment, that "For all children, it is better to have a caring, self-aware teacher who is haphazard when it comes to record-keeping than a detailed and particular record-keeper who is careless about kids," probably wouldn't help job prospects or security for a young teacher.

In his quest to create truly democratic classrooms (Ayers invites his students to help design the space, and uses the same desk that they do) that are "laboratories for discovery and surprise," Ayers wants teachers to question everything.

What's unquestionable is Ayers' unwavering, passionate dedication to his students. New teachers could do much worse than to emulate him in that regard, no matter what approach they take in their classrooms. #



Logos Bookstore's Recommendations



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Spring has arrived. Now is the time many of us feel energetic to pursue multiple projects and activities, maybe even reinvigorate our commitment to our new year's resolutions.

Turner Publishing, in its Trade Paper Press imprint, has published several topical titles dealing with projects and life situations that people may be pursuing or encountering in their daily experience. These titles are *35 Things Your Teen Won't Tell You, So I Will* by Ellen Pober Rittberg, (a book signing was held recently at the store), *41 Things To Know About Autism* by Chantal Sicile-Kira, *5 Things To Know for Successful and Lasting Weight Loss* by Fran DiVecchio, *99 Things to Save Money in Your Household Budget* by Mary Hance (a.k.a. Ms. Cheap), *51 Things You Should Know Before Getting Engaged* by Michael Batshaw, and *21 Things To Create a Better Life* by Todd Bottorff. All of these books are practical and most helpful and informative about the topics they cover. At \$9.99 each, these books are great bargains for the information provided.

May and June are months of celebrations: Mother's Day, Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, Graduation and Father's Day. There are books, greeting cards and gift items appropriate for these occasions at Logos Bookstore.

As the weather gets warmer Logos is able to hold more of its regular meetings outside on the patio. Kill Your TV Reading Group's April and May meetings were held there. The Wednesday, June 2, 2010 meeting will cover *The Woman In White* by Wilkie Collins, and the July 7, 2010 meeting will cover *Our Man In Havana* by Graham Greene. It is hoped the weather will be good enough to have these meetings outside on the patio as well.

Please do look at the list below for all Logos' activities and come in and shop!

Upcoming Events at Logos Bookstore

Mon., May 10, 2010, 7 p.m.: The Sacred Texts Group, led by Richard Curtis, will continue its

35 Things Your Teen Won't Tell You, So I Will

by Ellen Pober Rittberg
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

41 Things To Know About Autism

by Chantal Sicile-Kira
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

5 Things To Know for Successful and Lasting Weight Loss

by Fran DiVecchio
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

99 Things to Save Money in Your Household Budget

by Mary Hance (a.k.a. Ms. Cheap)
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

51 Things You Should Know Before Getting Engaged

by Michael Batshaw
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

21 Things to Create a Better Life

by Todd Bottorff
(\$9.99, Trade Paper, Turner Publishing)

discussion of the Gospel Of John and the Talmud. Tuesday, May 18, 2010, 7 p.m.: Sit-n-Knit will meet.

Wednesday, June 2, 2010, 7 p.m.: Kill Your TV Reading Group will discuss *The Woman In White* by Wilkie Collins.

Wednesday, July 7, 2010, 7 p.m.: Kill Your TV Reading Group will discuss *Our Man In Havana* by Graham Greene.

Every Monday at 11 a.m. is Story Time, led by Lily.

Transit: 4.5.6 Subways to Lexington Ave. and 86th St., M86 Bus (86th St.), M79 Bus (79th St.), M31 Bus (York Ave.), M15 Bus (1st and 2nd Aves.)

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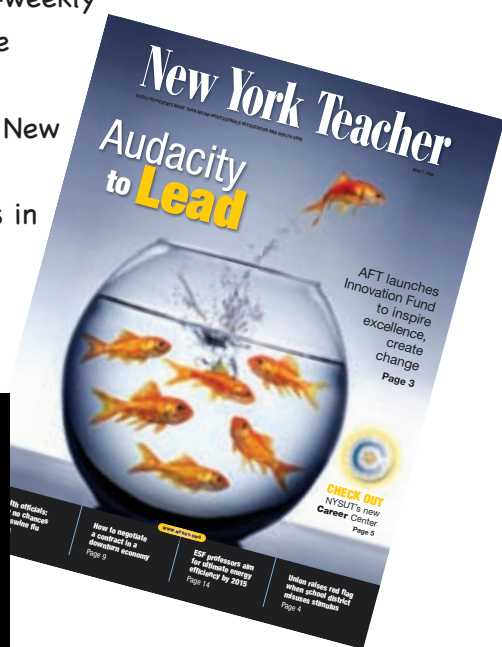
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MUSEUMS AS EDUCATORS

MONKEY SHINES AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM

By JAN AARON

Curious George, the monumental mischief-maker, made his literary entrance in 1941. Today this book is a beloved classic of children's literature, and in its 71st printing. With his creators, he shares top billing in a new show, "Curious George Saves the Day: The Art of Margret and H.A. Rey," at the Jewish Museum.

Like the wonderful shows the museum mounted for author-illustrators William Steig and Maurice Sendak, this exhibit has multigenerational appeal. Little children will be delighted when they see that the imaginative entrance to the show looks like the Paris in the first Curious George book. Midway through, they can enjoy a cushioned reading nook with an array of Rey books. At the preview I attended, a little girl with her adult companions already was plopped down enjoying them.

Older children and adults will be captivated by more than 80 final watercolors and drawings from books about Curious George. They also will discover some of his predecessors: a penguin named Whiteback and a giraffe called Raffy. In fact, George's first appearance was as a bit player in a book titled *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys*, when he was named Fifi.

The exhibit also features extensive biographical information on the Reys. Most compelling is their journey that brought them to America in 1940, a heartbeat away from the Nazi occupation

of Paris. Both Reys were German Jews. Their original names were Hans Augusto Reyersbach and Margarete Waldstein. Hans was a self-taught artist, but Margret had studied at the famed Bauhaus School. The couple married in Rio de Janeiro, where Hans' father had business interests. Curious George was born from sketches Hans made on trips into the rain forest. (Peculiarly, George was never endowed with a monkey essential: a tail.)

With Hans in charge of drawings and Margret doing the text, the couple turned out seven books while living Paris, from 1936 to 1940. Fleeing Paris on bicycles, they escaped being detained at a border crossing. When their luggage revealed they were transporting children's art, they were waved through. Their journey ended in New York, where Houghton Mifflin published the first Curious George book.

The first book, with its Paris setting, calls to mind Babar, the star of a show at the Morgan Library a while back. Like Babar in 1931, George came straight from jungle to sophisticated life in Paris and had a lot of adjusting to do. They both had protectors: Babar had the Old Lady, and George had the man with the yellow hat.

There the similarities cease: Babar dressed in fashionable clothes and learned to drive a car. He also returned to the jungle, where he became king. George never grows up; he is eternally a mischievous child. He romps around, sets off a fire

alarm, peeks into a pot of spaghetti, does tricks on his bicycle, and climbs a tree in a natural history museum. But no matter what mess he gets into, he is rescued by the man with the yellow hat.

Amazingly, the books do not mirror the dark

times in which they were written, nor do they reflect the personal reasons the Reys had to flee as Jews.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue, at 92nd Street, and the exhibit will run until August 1. #



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