



Highlights of Community School District 5 Harlem Schools

Special points of Interest:

- PS 161 Family Math Game Night
- PS 129 and March of Dimes—Wonderwalk
- District 5 Parent Workshop January 21, 2014
- YES Scholars
- CFES Program at PS 197
- PS 125 and Columbia Secondary School “Meet and Greet”
- PS 161 Debate Team

Superintendent’s Message

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

- Willa A. Foster

This month we learned of the death of an international hero—Nelson Mandela, the first black President of South Africa. President Mandela’s legacy taught us the true meaning of patience, perseverance and hope. His belief that “education is the most powerful tool to change the world” reminds us that on a daily basis we must continue to ensure that our students are provided with demanding curricula so that they are equipped with the tools needed for college and career.

For the past four years we had overwhelming support from schools, parents and community alike in creating a newsletter that highlights the accomplishments of our students.



Community Superintendent
Gale Reeves

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For this coming year we hope to continue the success of our newsletter and ask that you continue to submit and share your school highlights with us. We continue to work to transform the lives of our students through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative and welcoming schools. We hope to enlighten and engage our students through creative and progressive programs so that they will become productive and industrious global citizens. In this issue we focus on some of the innovative initiatives evident in some of our schools.

Please also join me in welcoming all new staff to the District Five community, including the following new principals: *Melitina Hernandez* (PS/MS 123), *Patricia Balbuena* (PS 133), *Kavita Pereira* (PS 175), *Mahaliel Bethea* (MS 148), *Francesca Pisa* (MS 514) and *Erin Gehant* (HS 157).

I look forward to receiving your responses and feedback. My best wishes for a Happy Holiday and a prosperous New Year.

Gale



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Hip Hip Hooray
Family Math Game Night



Our bi-annual “Family Math Game Night,” was a huge success!! On December 4, 2013 the PS/MS 161 family of parents, students and teachers came together to support, learn, and enjoy how math games can strengthen the home/school connection as well as develop the knowledge and understanding of how playing math games can increase students’ fluencies in basic math number sense.

We had a great number of parents and children in attendance. Together we played math games for all levels from grades 2 – 8, had grand discussions, and great fun all in the name of math! It was a wonderful experience to see the level of joy and engagement among the faces of our parents playing math games with their children.

Before they left, parents received words of encouragement and suggestions on how to set up math game time at home as well as with take-home math game packets. We ended our event with a “Multiplication Bingo” competition and two parents walked away with grand prizes. Everyone left with a winning spirit and feelings of success!

This was our best Family Math Game Night yet! Looking forward to an even grander one in the Spring. Big shout outs to “Our Parents” and especially “Our Student Jr. Math Coaches.”
Educationally Yours,

The PS/MS 161 Math Coaches: *Linda Sherrod and Lorena Garces*



YES (Young Eisner Scholars) Program

Fourteen years ago Eric Eisner began working with a handful of 7th-graders in a windowless school building in Lennox, a “rough-as-it-gets” forgotten corner of Los Angeles, determined to provide a level playing field for their success. After careful observation, the strategy to overcome the obstacles that undermine these promising students became apparent. YES developed a curriculum called Literate Thinking - an appreciation of the critical role that disciplined language plays in the saving and retrieving of thoughts. The curriculum promotes the language processing skills necessary to clarify, store, and retrieve observations with greater efficiency. Literate Thinking, combined with summer internship opportunities, SAT preparation, college counseling and supplemental college tuition/life expenses form the core of the YES program and has made it possible for 96% of YES Scholars to graduate from the finest colleges across the country, from Stanford and UCLA to Harvard, Yale, and Columbia. In addition to these core services, YES also provides assistance with prescription eyewear, transportation, medical expenses, and housing along with many other services.

Following YES’ selection by the *Wall Street Journal* as the "Innovator of the Year in Education", Columbia University invited YES to bring the program to talented scholars attending public school in Harlem. In the spring semester of 2013, YES began meeting with the most promising middle school students in District 5 with the goal of preparing students for college graduation and beyond. To achieve this, YES holds weekly sessions with students in their schools and curates a Saturday program at Columbia University in which graduate students teach classes in medical biology, literature, and finance.

YES currently works with a cohort of 40 students ranging from 6th to 9th grade attending the following schools: *Columbia Secondary School (M.S.362)*, *Thurgood Marshall Academy (M.S. / H.S. 670)*, *Frederick Douglass Academy (M.S. / H.S. 499)*, *Don Pedro Albizu (P.S. /M.S.161)*, *Arthur Tappan (P.S. / M.S. 46)*, *Mahalia Jackson (P.S. /M.S. 123)*, *John H. Finley (P.S. / M.S. 129)*

District 5 Parent Workshop Series 2013-14

Response to Intervention (RtI) Presentation for Parents,

January 21, 2014, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
PS 125—6th Floor
425 West 123 Street
Technology Center



This presentation provides a comprehensive introduction to RtI from a parent perspective, including definition and purpose, regulations and guidelines, various ways that RtI is implemented in schools including systems and structures, use of assessments and high quality instruction, and what this means for your child.

Target Audience: Parents

Presenter: Dr. Esther Klein Friedman, Senior Director of Literacy and Academic Intervention Services, Office of Academic Policy, New York City Department of Education



PS 129M and the March of Dimes, Walking Hand and Hand for the WonderWalk!

On Friday, November 1, 2013, Pre-K to fourth grade students at PS/MS/129M participated in the school's second annual March of Dimes Wonder Walk! The WonderWalk is a fundraising and community service event for preschool and elementary school students.

The WonderWalk allows students to partake in fundraising and community service for babies with birth defects, while learning about the mission of the March of Dimes and the value of helping others, through service learning projects designed for each grade level by the March of Dimes. The service-learning projects helped in giving the students a better understanding of what the walk was all about and just why it was important to raise awareness, as well as funds for research.

Some students had some serious questions for their teachers, while others were just glad to participate and get a second chance to wear their costumes. Some of the costumes were pretty awesome and everyone had a great time, but the most wonderful thing about the WonderWalk was that the students raised \$300.60!

Thanks you to all students and teachers who participated in the walk, and a special thank you to those students, who went the extra mile! We are looking forward to doing it bigger and better with each coming year, as we continue to work with the March of Dimes to raise awareness of babies with birth defects, and raise funds for research.

College For Every Student (CFES) Program at PS 197

CFES student leaders from PS 197 in NYC took matters into their own hands this Thanksgiving when they decided to organize a school-wide assembly.

These elementary students wanted to share with their school, parents, and community the impact that the CFES practice of Leadership Through Service has had on their college aspirations.



Titled "Kids Serving Kids," the assembly showcased the Scholars' Leadership Through Service projects – how they materialized, how they were executed, and the satisfaction they felt afterwards.

"Our students already understand that we expect them to help others," remarked Joan Weisberger, CFES School Liaison at PS 197. "This assembly allowed them to see the connection their efforts have on the community and to also make sure that our youngest students start thinking about their roles as CFES Scholars."

The assembly featured a PowerPoint presentation on the value of service. It contrasted the challenges faced by children worldwide and how PS 197 Scholars can make a difference when they lead by example. While older students shared their Leadership Through Service projects from the last 12 months, younger CFES Scholars performed songs about social justice. The program ended with a challenge for each class to develop ideas and programs for "Kids Serving Kids."

"CFES provides valuable services for our students. Developing their moral compass is important and our CFES Leadership Through Service efforts are a key part of the development of that," stated Principal Natasha Spann.

P.S. 125 and Columbia Secondary School “Meet and Greet”

On Monday, November 18th, 2013, The Ralph Bunche Elementary School (PS 125) and Columbia Secondary School (M362) came together for a *Meet & Greet*. Although the two schools have coexisted in the same building for seven years, the staffs from both schools have been passing one another in the hallways without knowing each others’ names or positions. The *Meet & Greet* allowed the school staffs to come together informally to get to know each other over a wonderful potluck meal. The afternoon began with ice-breaking activities from Nazirah Shabazz and Diana Soehl.

The *Meet & Greet* was organized by Donna M. Conwell, from the Ralph Bunche School, and Marisol Manríquez-Weiner, from Columbia Secondary School. They feel that “*a bridge has been built*” between the two schools, which has led to a level of comfort amongst building neighbors. The event was attended by the Superintendent of District 5, Ms. Gale Reeves, and her staff, and the principals from both schools, Mr. Reginald Higgins, of The Ralph Bunche School and Miriam Nightengale, of Columbia Secondary School. A special shout out to the parent coordinators from both schools, Griselda Hernández from PS 125 and Andi Velásquez from M362. Lenice Nelson, Assistant Principal of Columbia Secondary, and Arthur Puritz, Dean of Columbia Secondary, were also present. Teachers and the support staff from both schools were in attendance, together with members of the custodial and kitchen teams.

Donna and Marisol were very pleased with the outcome of this event. They are hoping to have another *Meet & Greet* in the future.



PS/MS 161's Debate Program

For 50 students in 5th-8th grade, our interscholastic Debate program provides a special opportunity for enrichment where students receive intensive training in public speaking and argumentation. Through studying evidence, preparing cases, and developing rhetorical skills, students engage in rigorous, common core aligned work with an exciting, interactive framework.



Now in its third year, the 161 Debate Program has grown to new heights. This fall we became the first middle school in Harlem to become members of the NYC Urban Debate League. Our students participate in monthly competitions alongside teams from all over the city, including private schools and schools with nationally ranked debate programs. PS/MS 161 is proud to have the distinct honor of hosting the 1st Annual Harlem Speech and Debate Tournament this February, which will welcome hundreds of the city's best Middle School debaters to PS/MS 161 for a day of competitive speaking.

Special congratulations to the following students for earning speaker awards at an Urban Debate League Event already this year: 8th graders: *Mohamed Conde, Ammy Ovando and Moamer Sherhan*; 7th graders: *Allan Rivas, Katherine Rosas, Luis Benitez*; 6th grader: *Elianni Perez*



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