

Season's Greetings

Volume 4 Issue 1

December 2012

NYCDOE

Highlights of Community School District 5 Harlem Schools

Superintendent's Message

Special points of Interest:

- Pinckney Players Treats CS 154 Students to Jamaica
- CS 154 Apple Tasting Party
- Board of Trustees Annual Award Reception
- Safety and Anti Bullying Conference
- Frederick Douglass Academy Students Annual Trip to Japan

"Teachers who inspire realize there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how we use them."

- Anonymous

This time of year brings with it holiday celebrations and opportunities for reflection. As I engage in personal reflection, I am gratified to be working in District 5 – a district with such dedicated professionals who are truly devoted to the success of each and every one of our students. Your caring support and encouragement is apparent and is making a positive difference for each student whose life you touch on a daily basis.

Especially given the outpouring of assistance surrounding Super Storm Sandy, it is clear to see that teachers and administrators in District 5 are working together to take collaboration to a higher level within our professional learning communities. The work of our teachers and support staff is much more than just a job - it is important work that has a profound impact on every child's life and on their families. Although challenging at times, teachers and administrators are overcoming obstacles and are focusing on outcomes for student learning. By utilizing structures and systems for productive collaboration, talking about their practice in a systematic way relative to student learning, and fostering a culture that is conducive to learning, our community is growing more cohesive.

The holidays also offer the perfect opportunity to extend a message of appreciation to all members of our community - for the unwavering support of the important work you do on behalf of our students. District 5's commitment to student learning, combined with the support of our community, provides a strong foundation for our students' continued success.

As we move through this holiday season and forward this school year, may we continue to engage in reflective dialogue, continuous inquiry, and true collaboration. May we also put forth every effort to be passionate providers of service to those who need our help the most – our students.

Happy Holidays!
Gale



Community Superintendent Gale Reeves

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A TRIP TO JAMAICA – ONLY A FEW BLOCKS AWAY!

On Tuesday, December 04, 2012, fourth and fifth grade students from CS 154 were treated to a vacation in Jamaica! That's right...a vacation they experienced through the sights and sounds of the Pickney Players and its Artistic Director, Malika Lee Whitney as they presented a performance called, "Remembering Ring Ding." Through the art of storytelling, the Pickney Players captured the imaginations of the audience and allowed us to gain awareness about the diverse culture of Jamaica.

"Remembering Ring Ding" is a performance that honors renowned Jamaican folklorist, author, poet, dramatist, and television host, Louise Bennett-Coverley. The performance draws inspiration from the popular television program she hosted, which captured the hearts and minds of children and families throughout the Caribbean and elsewhere (some compare the show to American shows like Romper Room and Sesame Street). It was amazing to see how immensely both the students and teachers enjoyed the show. One teacher who was born in Jamaica stated that she felt as if she was reliving her childhood! The music was infectious and everyone - young and old - enjoyed jumping out of their seats to clap, dance and have a good time!

The performance was held at the Harlem Stage theater (135th Street & Convent Avenue), and was a treat for CS 154 students by the Significant Elders of Harlem (who funded the tickets). This extraordinary group of seniors have grown up or lived in the Village of Harlem for most of their lives and they volunteer their time as a part of the Apollo Oral History Program to provide unique learning opportunities for our students - by sharing their experiences about life in Harlem in the past and its connection to the present. The Oral History Project integrates the history of Harlem, Black culture and the Apollo Theater into the school's existing curriculum. It also provides our fourth and fifth grade students with the opportunity to learn how to conduct oral history interviews and use the collected information as content to create theatrical skits.

The performance of "Remembering Ring Ding" was a wonderful introduction into theater for our students in preparation of the creation of their own theatrical skits. Learning about the life of "Miss Lou" (as she was affectionately called), provided our students with the opportunity to see how oral storytelling can come to life through a presentation. CS 154 teachers and students agree that it was a wonderful vacation to Jamaica!



CS 154 Annual Apple Tasting Party

First Graders at CS 154 had their annual Fall Apple Tasting Party recently in the school library.

Students listened to a non-fiction book about apples and apple orchards, tasted five varieties of fresh New York State apples, and voted to determine the class favorites.

Teachers incorporated the activity into math lessons back in the classroom. Mutsu and Honey Crisp apples were the overwhelming favorites.



***The Board of Trustees of The Interchurch Center
Honors Its Community Partners***

On December 12th, the Interchurch Center held an annual awards reception honoring the following community partners:

Community School District 5

Inclusive of parents and staff, collaborate to ensure high academic standards are set so that our students achieve excellence both academically and socially in order to be productive and industrious members in our global society.

Community Works

Non profit arts and education organization founded in 1990 with the mission to bridge schools and communi-

ties , enrich educational curricula and celebrate neighborhood cultures and histories.

Corbin Hill Road Farms

Network of rural farms and urban communities in New York. Our Mission is to partner with small-scale farmers to deliver fresh, local produce to Harlem and the Bronx.

Harlem Arts Alliance

Not for profit arts service organization committed to nurturing the artistic growth and the development and the development of artists and arts organizations based in Harlem and its surrounding communities.

Levon Smith, President of Presidents' Council, George Young, CSA Representative, and Peggy Benjamin, DC 37 Representative, attended the reception with the Superintendent Reeves. Kudos to District 5 and keep up the good work.



***Safe Child, Successful School
District 5 Anti Bullying and Safety Conference***

The District Leadership Team hosted a Safety Conference on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at PS/MS 46. Various workshops were held with the main focus on bullying and cyber bullying. Our thanks to all participants, presenters, volunteers and the PS/MS 46 community. Breakfast was co-sponsored by the UFT and CSA.

- ◆ *Safety & Youth Development*
- ◆ *Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)*
- ◆ *Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)*
- ◆ *Cyber bullying: A New Challenge Facing Our Students*
- ◆ *Progressive Discipline and the Updated Discipline Code*

The PS 46 band performed beautifully as people were registering for workshops and having breakfast. Dr. Jerome Adams was the keynote speaker and the PS 46 chorus performed after the keynote address. These are the following topics of workshops:

- ◆ *Gang Awareness*
- ◆ *Violence Prevention*
- ◆ *Healthy Relationships*
- ◆ *Self Esteem and Body Image*
- ◆ *Stand Up & Lead: Bullying Solutions*
- ◆ *Developing Your Child's Inner Winner*

Over 300 people attended and the feedback was very positive. Each person received a gift bag and raffle prizes were distributed.



Frederick Douglass Academy - Japan July 23 - 30, 2012



The Frederick Douglass Academy's annual trip to Japan, sponsored by a major Japanese bank and airline, was conducted in July this year. Seven high schools boys, Ahmed Ali, Thomas Brown, Ramsey DeJesus, Kamal Hauter, Maakheru Panton, Stephaun Ward, and Andre Wright and four chaperones, Joseph Gates, Koji Ichida, Mas Ichida, and Russell Wasden took a comfortable 14 hour flight on Japan Air Lines and landed in Tokyo on July 24.

In Tokyo, we visited many temples and shrines, including Meiji Jingu, Sensoji, Yasukuni Jinja, Joganji, and some smaller neighborhood ones along our travels. We spent entire mornings at two museums, the Tokyo Edo Museum and the Yasukuni War Museum. Both were fascinating to our group as they got to take a peek at Japanese history through the eyes of the Japanese, as opposed to a Western view as they are accustomed. The temples and

shrines of Japan are not just religious places of worship, they serve as a vital part of the Japanese lifestyle and culture.

We walked Shinjuku, Tokyo's main neighborhood, at night and Shibuya during the day. In Shibuya we visited and talked about Hachko, a beautiful statue of a dog who represents loyalty and everlasting love. We went into many stores and spent the most time in Tokyu Hands, an arts and crafts department store, where the students bought Japanese pens and stationery. We also climbed the Tokyo Tower, walked Ginza, and visited the Imperial Palace grounds, Nakamise in Asakusa, Takeshita-dori, Aoyama-dori and Omotesando in Harajuku. In Harajuku, a neighborhood where teens go to shop, we watched costumed kids parading in their outlandish clothes. We also went to Kiddy Land, the largest toy store in Japan, possibly the world. Shinjuku at night puts Times Square to shame, with huge lights and streets crowded with people

At a temple named Joganji, the Buddhist monks taught us how to meditate and practice Zen meditation. Although we were asked to sit quietly for twenty minutes and clear our thoughts, many of us even struggled to sit up straight. We all, however, eventually ignored our painful knees and lower backs and sat silently and listened to our breathing. We also watched a tea ceremony demonstration by masters at Joganji. Although Americans usually associate martial arts with fighting, tea ceremony, or chado, is considered a martial art in Japan and takes decades to become a master. Each one of the boys had a chance to make their own tea and serve it in the proper "chado" way.

We also had a meeting with our sponsor, Mr. Minoura, in his conference room which was on the top floor of one of the tallest buildings in Japan. Not only did his floor to ceiling windows give us a beautiful view of Tokyo, walking on his white carpet felt like marshmallows. It was absolutely fascinating for the boys to meet the second person in charge of one of the largest banks in the world. Mr. Minoura exuded importance and power but was extremely down to earth and told us stories of his visit to FDA about 8 years ago. We introduced ourselves in Japanese and he answered many questions we had about international banking, Tokyo, the financial world, and much, much more.

On our last day, we went to Kamakura, the countryside where there are many temples and shrines. We visited and walked inside the largest Buddha in the world and also washed our money at Zeniarai Benzaiten, where legend has it that if you place your money in one of their baskets and pour their water over it, your money will return two-fold or more.



Frederick Douglass Academy - Japan July 23 - 30, 2012

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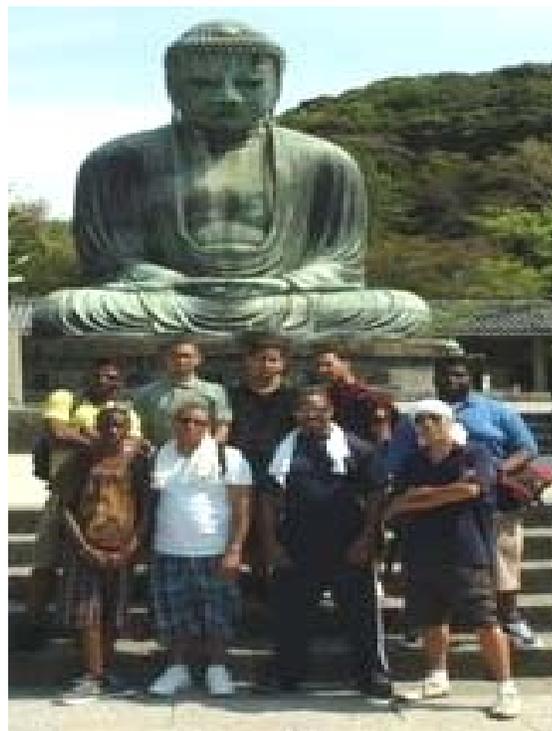
One boy, Ahmed, was extremely skeptical but I insisted that one could be faithful to Islam and also be Buddhist. He reluctantly washed his remaining yen and the following morning found a 10,000 yen (about \$120) on the floor of the station!

One central theme of this year's trip was eating excellent food. The wagyu beef at one yakiniku restaurant in Nakano Sakaue was tastier than any beef the participating principal had ever had in NYC. As a self-proclaimed "beef connoisseur", Principal Gates has eaten at Peter Luger, Sparks Steak House, Michael Jordan Steak House, and Smith and Wollenski's but said the beef at "Matsuriya" was by far the most delicious he claimed he had ever eaten. Even some of the students admitted the beef at this restaurant was better than their mother's cooking.

Another restaurant that was a top choice was "Sembikiya", a fruit parlor where we had fruit sandwiches, spaghetti, and curry rice. Again, the Principal was astounded by the quality of the beef, which he said tasted even better than Matsuriya. He loved it so much that he bought some pre-cooked curry packets to bring home to his family.

We also ate at "Nangokushuka", a top rated, four star Chinese restaurant in Harajuku where we dined in a private room. The students devoured all the dishes and couldn't believe how different the food was from Chinese food in NYC. Even simple places like "Pepper Lunch", "Jonathon's", and "Denny's" were a success with the students. We ate sushi for one lunch and I was happy everyone tried it.

Every night before bed, we sat as a group in the Kaikan (hotel) lobby area and wrote in our journals.



After that, we went around in a circle and talked about the day, particularly our favorite parts, what we learned, new Japanese phrases, and differences between Tokyo and NYC.

Not only does this help the students with questions they may have, it helps me with ideas for a better trip next year.

Overall, the students were fascinated with Japan, particularly the politeness and cleanliness of the people. Like every year, the students all want to return to Japan to study or work one day.

During this trip, our students not only learn about Japan and Japanese people, they learn a little about themselves also. They learn that they can be comfortable in a world outside their own, and that this world offers so much and that it is all attainable. The students come back to NYC as different people, as world citizens with a hunger to learn more about other cultures and societies. It was an amazing experience not only for the boys but for our participating principal also.