

**NYCDOE - Community School District 5**

*Highlights of Community School District 5 Harlem Schools*



**Special points of Interest:**

***Season's Greetings District Five Community!***

- *United Nations comes to Choir Academy of Harlem*
- *Columbia Secondary School Students Creates Online Magazine—Fresh!*
- *Frederick Douglass Academy Students go to Ireland*
- *PS/MS 161 Hosts Over 100 Volunteers—Organized by New York Cares*
- *PS 129 Students visits the Greater Harlem Nursing Home—A Caring Commitment*

The lights, the sounds, the joy of carols, the feeling of nostalgia permeates the season. What an honor has been bestowed upon me as your Superintendent to wish you Happy Holidays.

As you celebrate with your families please take the opportunity to express thanks and appreciation for one another. We are a wonderful community — A Village here in Harlem!

As we celebrate, let us be cognizant of those less fortunate, many who may be spending their first Christmas without a loved one. My heartfelt wish for you is to reflect on the moments you've shared in laughter and joy.

A special thank you to the partici-

pants at this year's Read Out Loud! Approximately 500 children and parents attended Read Out Loud! a family literacy festival on December 4, 2010 at the Mary McCloud Bethune School (P.S. 92). Special thanks to the principal and staff for hosting our annual literacy festival. Our deepest gratitude to the board, Executive Director and staff of Morningside Area Alliance (MAA). They continue to collaborate with us and support our schools in innumerable ways. The partnership with MAA is one that is truly valued.

Every child that attended Read Out Loud! met children's authors and received a signed book and also participated in theatre



*Community Superintendent Gale Reeves*

workshops, poetry slams, creative writings and watched puppet shows and theatre performances. Children also chose new books to take home.

The literacy festival was very successful and I look forward to next year's literacy celebration.

**Inside this issue:**

***PS/MS 161 Hosts Over One Hundred Volunteers - Organized by NY Cares***

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On Saturday Oct. 23 Don Pedro Albizu Campos was pleased to host over one hundred volunteers organized by NY Cares.

Folks from IBM, KPMG, Centerline Real Estate and Pure Vida, congregated at the school for a day of caring and efforts. What a gorgeous opportunity for the school community and the private sector of NY to get to know one another.

Over 30 volunteers refinished a gorgeous mural in our center common area. Bulbs were planted

and weeding was done in our planters outside the school entrance and the beautification of the over 15 flower boxes were completed through a replanting for a spring blossoming to come.

Over fifty volunteers descended on our computer labs and as book runners brought boxes of unlevelled volumes back and forth from our learning lounge, over 4,000 titles were leveled and categorized to go into our classroom libraries to further enhance reader enjoyment as influenced by the Reader and

Writing Project of Teachers College. Additional painters created welcoming murals on the outside of our student washrooms.

Finally the parent room walls got a fresh coat of paint to brighten up the great efforts that occur there. PS/MS 161 strives to create partnerships and collaboration that empower and nurtures our community. We are fortunate to have the support of many and their generosity as realized by their time and donated materials toward the betterment of our school.

## *Fresh! - Youth Voices on Food & Sustainability — Columbia Secondary School*

**Fresh!** is a collaborative project created by Columbia Secondary School's Food & Sustainability June Term class in June 2010. During this month-long exploration of sustainable growing and eating, thirty-two seventh grade students took a journalist's eye to their learning. Inspired by a visit to the Rodale Institute and *Organic Gardening* magazine offices in Pennsylvania, students took a stab at creating their own "youth" version of an *Organic Gardening*-style magazine.

Sustainability requires a balancing of relationships, a grasp of collaboration that functions as a most efficient system. In a natural ecosystem, an instinctive set of gives and takes creates an unspoken harmony, where strength is measured not in domination, but in collaboration. We humans, accustomed to control, thirst for answers to a planetary crisis we've created, yet we seldom look to existing models of sustainable living that surround us in all too often overlooked non-human spheres of life. If ecosystems function sustainably in the natural world, perhaps our human systems should take a cue from those tried and true balances and try out similar systems in our own living.

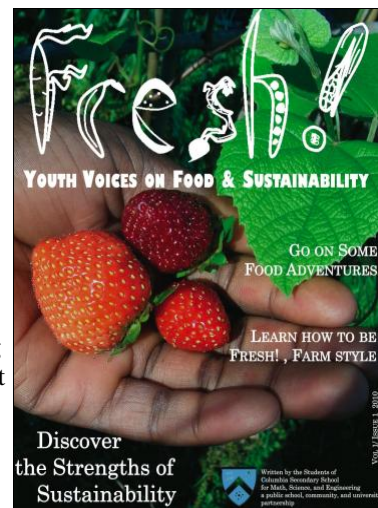
This Food and Sustainability Course, part of Columbia Secondary School's June Term Program, became an experiment in teaching about sustainable systems. How, we teachers often ask, can we best facilitate our students' learning? In Columbia Secondary School's June Term program, that answer becomes quickly apparent. Designed on the theory that *experience* fuels deep learning, the CSS June Term answers this question as it brings students to camp in watersheds, kayak up the Hudson River, work on a farm, and experience flora and fauna from our urban city setting to the Puerto Rican rain forest. We cannot learn to live sustainably and know the benefits of a balanced system unless we live it and breathe it and know it for ourselves.

So, in June 2010, we embarked with thirty-two seventh graders with exactly this goal: to live and learn sustainability. A trip to the Rodale Institute and *Organic Gardening* editing offices in Pennsylvania proved the theory that a natural, organic model of living reaps endless spirals of mutual benefits. Students got a first-hand introduction to sustainable growing and living, and saw how the publishing of *Organic Gardening* magazine conveys

these approaches to readers across the country.

Then, during a week-long stay at Hawthorne Valley Farm, an organic, biodynamic farm in upstate New York, our students became part of the synergy that helps the many facets of an organic farm run as a single organism. As our students worked alongside farmers in early morning animal feedings, cow herding expeditions, egg collecting, stall mucking, and food preparation, they learned first-hand about the food we eat and the delicate balance necessary to protect the land used to raise that food. Back in the city, students eagerly shopped at New York City's Farmer Markets and tallied up the miles traveled by grocery store food as they prepared healthy class lunches and found ways to bring their farm learning to play in city life. They explored urban community gardens and began to think of ways to employ these strategies in the school community. Anxious to engage in the roles of the *Organic Gardening* team, our students' creation of **Fresh!** took on a structure far different than a traditional individual student project, and instead found a form akin to the sustainable systems they had experienced. Students assumed roles as art directors, advertising specialists, editors, photographers, and designers – and the project became a true team effort, with each student's input building towards the team's larger cohesive whole.

What unfolds on the pages to follow are aptly matched, I believe, to the title selected by our class. Indeed, these opinions, reviews, and articles are *Fresh!* in every sense of the word. They are a real answer to satisfying "green" trends. They are visions of successful sustainable relationships between humans and other living organisms. They are testament to the sense of wonder that comes with experiencing nature and truth through the eyes of youth. They are the future.



## *A Caring Commitment by Kids to Our Community - PS 129*

On Monday, October 26, 2010, in honor of "Kids Care Week", students from PS/MS 129 visited the Greater Harlem Nursing Home.

Working with seniors, tutoring, volunteering and/or providing support in the arts, sports or being an advocate for social issues are a few of the initiatives of "Finley's Helping Hands" (as the students are lovingly called.) These

initiatives nurture their spirit of community, service and pride. The belief in fostering a sense of responsibility and reciprocity in their community has already become a characteristic of these students. One student stated, "We are trying to work hard and make a difference in our community!"

Finley's Helping Hands students gave elders of the Greater Harlem Nursing

Home greeting cards. They also read some cards and had meaningful conversations with the seniors about their lives, families and education. The seniors expressed their happiness and gratitude for the cards and the visit with hugs and smiles. It was clear to see the connection of "caring and sharing" which was felt by both the students and the elders. The students and the residents of the Harlem Nursing Home are already looking forward to the next visit.



## *The United Nations Comes To Choir Academy of Harlem*



In October an assembly held at the Choir Academy of Harlem was taken to a whole other level: diplomatic and international. Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information from the United Nations visited the school to give a presentation on the United Nations as part of the United Nations' educational initiative, "UN4U".

Several strong aspects of Mr. Akasaka's presentation included the history of the UN, its membership and overall organization. However the real education came when Mr. Akasaka enlightened a captivated audience of 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders

on the real work of the UN: to keep the peace throughout the world, to develop friendly relations between nations, to assist others to settle their differences by peaceful means, to eradicate extreme poverty/hunger, to achieve universal primary education, and to promote gender equality and empower women (this one got a lot of cheers from our audience.)

After the assembly, at a special brunch hosted by Dr. Parris (principal) and Ms. Gale Reeves (Community Superintendent District-5), the Choir school newspaper staff (*The Madison Avenue Voice*) had an opportunity to interview Mr. Akasaka on his distinguished career before his assignment at the UN. Before he became Under Secretary, Mr. Akasaka served as Japan's Ambassador to the UN, a bureau member for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and Deputy Secretary General of Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development.

Before departing on his continued mission to visit other high schools in Manhattan, Mr. Akasaka wanted to send a special message to Choir students and students all over the

world. He stated, "Young people will be leaders of the world in the future... two issues you need to be aware of as they are critical to your future are how to reduce poverty and how to insure that people will not be discriminated or hated upon. We deeply urge young people to get involved in the current state of mind of the world and understand that health is a big issue". Borrowing the words from a former Secretary (General Eary, 1950), Mr. Akasaka added, "The UN is not the place where we bring people to paradise, but is the organization which will save people from hell!"



The faculty and students would like to thank Mr. Akasaka for their support of the Choir Academy learning community.

## *Frederick Douglass Academy Students Goes To Ireland*

A very fortunate group of 10 students from The Frederick Douglass Academy (FDA) had the opportunity to attend the Albert Schweitzer Leadership Conference in Dublin Ireland for an exciting week of meeting students from all over the world.

Mr. Ajibola, Assistant Principal, supervised Joelyn Brown, Jenika Farrell, Jonathan Flores, Randy Garcia, Tanya Haynes, Anthony Mc Kenzie, Jasmine Mark, Xavier Marrero, Rosemary Rodriguez, and Chevonne Sewer. Dr. Lynn Holden from Mentoring in Medicine was a guest speaker at the conference. Mr. Maurice Buckley, President of the Irish Chamber sponsored the trip. The FDA students will again this year hold a local conference in May at FDA.



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*"Leadership We Can Count On"*



We're on the Web!  
<http://csd5.nycdoe.org>

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Council Meeting Dates:

January 13, 2011  
February 10, 2011  
March 10, 2011  
April 14, 2011  
May 12, 2011  
June 16, 2011

Mission Statement

The Mission of Community District 5 Education Council is to provide a safe, positive, welcoming environment designed to motivate, educate and advocate, for its community of parents, guardians, grandparents, foster care and or extended relatives caring for student/s within District Five.

*Greetings from Community District 5  
Education Council*

**Season Greetings**

*It's Christmas Time*

Put your problems on probation  
Run your troubles off the track,  
Throw your worries out the window  
Get the monkeys off your back.  
Silence all your inner critics  
With your conscience make amends,  
And allow yourself some happiness  
It's Christmas time again!  
Call a truce with those who bother you  
Let all the fighting cease,  
Give your differences a breather  
And declare a time of peace,  
Don't let angry feelings taint  
The precious time you have to spend,  
And allow yourself some happiness  
It's Christmas time again!  
Like some cool refreshing water  
Or a gentle summer breeze,  
Like a fresh bouquet of flowers  
Or the smell of autumn leaves,  
It's a banquet for the spirit  
Filled with family, food and friends,  
So allow yourself some happiness  
It's Christmas time again!

by *Bob Lazzar-Atwood.*



Kids are all dressed up.  
We are sharing  
And making promises.  
Now is a good day.  
Zap! goes the match  
And another candle glows.  
All is well for we are together.

Happy faces  
All the family is here.  
Now is the time to light the candle.  
Uncle Carl is humming  
Kisses and hugs, and good food  
All is right!  
Hearts are glad!

Cheery greetings,  
Holiday ribbons,  
Real mistletoe,  
Ice and snow.  
Santa is coming  
Trumpets sounding.  
Merry days  
Almost here.  
Shouts of joy!

*Excerpted from "Let's Read"*