Sunnyside Community Services’ College Readiness Program at Queens Technical High School and The Beacon at P.S. 343 prepares high school students and recent graduates, ages 14-21, for the college admissions process. Our free program is designed to allow participants to receive a well-rounded understanding of the system of higher education in order to make the appropriate academic choices that will benefit them in the future. Through SAT classes, college/university admissions and financial aid workshops, college trips, college essay and application building sessions, reading & writing seminars, creative writing seminars, and individual advisement, students become well-versed on college admissions criteria, build their skills for standardized examinations, improve their writing, locate various scholarship opportunities, and complete necessary applications for college admissions and financial aid.
Program Overview

SAT Preparation Classes:
The hub of the College Readiness Program, SAT preparation classes help prepare approximately 300 high school students yearly for the SAT, a primary exam in the college admissions process for bachelor degree programs. Classes are offered one to two days a week to adequately prepare students for the Evidence Based Reading & Writing and Language, and Mathematics sections of the new SAT, helping them to improve their scores. Instructors use various SAT preparation materials in the classes including College Board, Kaplan, Barron’s and Princeton Review workbooks.

College Advisement:
Individual college advisement sessions are available for high school students seeking guidance with regard to the college admissions and financial aid processes. Students are able to identify colleges they will apply to in the near future, learn about admissions criteria at CUNY, SUNY, and private colleges/ universities, work on their college applications and personal statements, identify scholarships, and complete financial aid forms (FAFSA, CSS Profiles, TAP Applications, and financial verification attachments). Pupils are also encouraged to participate in college admissions and financial aid workshops throughout their tenure in the program. These workshops and application building sessions occur weekly during the fall, leading up to college application deadlines.

Freshman Readiness Workshop:
The Freshman Readiness Workshop is offered at the end of the year to help graduating seniors in the transition from high school to college. This five-hour session focuses upon scenarios students will encounter upon entering college. With assistance provided by CRP staff and CRP alumni, participants develop strategies and viable solutions to academic, economic, and social situations that could impact their performance in college. At the close of the session, participants receive Freshman Survival Kits.

Reading/Writing Seminars
The Reading and Writing Seminars are designed to emulate a college freshman-level course. Each class is a roundtable discussion in which participants are encouraged to explore and debate topics related to the two novels they are required to read. During the summer, students learn to express themselves in a literary fashion. Through close reading of the texts, they come to appreciate the importance of language and literary forms. After completion of reading assignments, a comprehensive paper relating to both novels is assigned. Special emphasis is placed on the revision process; students turn in multiple drafts of their essays, receiving feedback from their teacher and classmates. By engaging in these workshops, students learn to line edit and peer critique with consideration for the architecture of a written piece.

CRP Summer College Intensive:
The six-week summer college intensive is primarily designed for rising juniors and rising seniors who want to increase their chances of being admitted to strong colleges and universities. Participants are engaged in the following activities:

- Learning about various criteria colleges require students to fulfill before entering a college/university in admissions workshops.

b. Weekly SAT classes building their verbal and math skills for the examination.

c. College essay building and application sessions.
d. Working on drafts of their personal statements and supplemental essays for college applications.
e. Identifying colleges/universities they will apply to in the near future, assessing various schools' academic ratings, programs/majors offered, size, student to faculty ratio, cost, scholarships and financial support offered and other valuable factors informing their application process.
f. Visiting different public and private colleges and universities on campus tours and participating in admissions information sessions at these institutions. Past colleges/universities visited include: Columbia, Barnard, Sarah Lawrence, New York University, Union, Vassar, Skidmore, Manhattanville, Bard, Fordham, Smith, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, Harvard, Boston College, Boston University, Boston College, MIT, Eugene Lang, Queens College, and Brooklyn College.

- Becoming familiar with various forms of financial aid and appropriate methods of applying for state and federal aid for higher education in financial aid workshops.

- Reading two novels and participating in college freshman seminar styled sessions, developing critical analytical skills while discussing the themes of the books. Writing a five-page paper and giving a creative group presentation connected to these literary works.
College Readiness Program Successes

Since spring 2003, the College Readiness Program has worked with nearly 6,000 high school students from Queens in preparation for the college admissions and financial aid process. Over 75% of our participants receive free or reduced lunch.

Over 90% of senior class participants were accepted to and attend a college or university within six months of their graduation.

Nearly 80% of our seniors are the first in their households to attend college. 77% of CRP participants are from immigrant households.

The average range of SAT score improvement is 100-180 points. Over the past three years, individual student improvement on the SATs has been as high as 520 points.

Over 25 CRP students have received St. Lawrence University’s Presidential Diversity Scholarships valued between $60,000 and $125,000.

Since 2005, over 120 CRP seniors have been accepted to honors programs at Columbia, Williams, Amherst, Skidmore, Syracuse, Northeastern, Emerson, Marist, University of Connecticut, New York University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Boston University, Carnegie Mellon, Trinity, Allegheny, University of New Haven, Hobart and William Smith, Hofstra, St. Joseph’s, Temple, St. John’s, Adelphi, Villanova, Scranton, U. Maryland College Park, and Long Island University.

Over 40 CRP nominees have been awarded full tuition Posse Foundation scholarships valued at $150,000-$200,000. CRP Posse alumni presently attend/ have attended Babson, Brandeis, Wheaton, Franklin and Marshall, Middlebury, DePauw, Lafayette, University of Southern California, Colby, and Dickinson.

Since 2005, nearly 80 CRP seniors were accepted to CUNY’s Macaulay Honors Programs and other prestigious honors programs at Baruch, City, Queens, Hunter, Lehman, Brooklyn, and York Colleges.

Since 2005, 50 CRP seniors have been accepted to SUNY Honors Programs at Stony Brook, University at Buffalo, Buffalo State, and Binghamton.

In the last twelve program years, CRP seniors have been offered over $120 million dollars in university and private merit-based scholarships.

CRP students visit Seton Hall University’s campus in the fall.
College Readiness Program alumni take on the world!

John Hussain studied Geophysics at Wesleyan University and CCNY. Currently, he is a research scientist at NYC Department of Environmental Protection.

Arleen Agua-sivivas studied Sociology at Harvard University. Recently, she shared an Emmy win with the team from All In with Chris Hayes on NBC News.

ShrIma pandey studied Anthropology at Franklin and Marshall College. She just made her writing debut in the Newtown Literary Journal, a Queens based literary magazine.

Pooja Shah graduated from Boston College with a double major in English and Philosophy and a minor in Chemistry. Three years ago, she completed her law degree at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. Currently, she practices securities litigation at a law firm in New York City.

Kazi Sumon studied Pre-Med at Macaulay Honors College at Lehman. He just earned his M.D. from The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Course Options

SAT Course at Queens Technical High School (free)*

Course includes SAT Classes, SAT Mock Exams, College Advisement, College Workshops and Special College Programs. Meets in fall and spring.

Creative Non-Fiction Workshops at Queens Technical High School*

12-week course includes college essay building workshops in partnership with QT’s English Department. Meets in fall and spring.

*Course for Queens Technical High School juniors and seniors only.

SAT Course at The Beacon at P.S. 343 (free)

Course includes SAT Classes, SAT Mock Exams, College Advisement, College Workshops and Special College Programs. Seats are limited. Meets in fall and spring.

College Advisement (free)

Student and parents can receive comprehensive college advisement, college application building assistance, college essay building assistance, prospective college tutelage and financial aid application assistance. Offered year-round.

Summer College Intensive (free)

Course includes SAT Classes, SAT Mock Exams, Reading & Writing Seminars, College Advisement, College Trips, College Workshops, College Roundtables, and Special College Programs. Seats are limited.

Sarah Lawrence Creative Writing Seminars (free)

10-week course includes creative writing seminars taught by graduate students from Sarah Lawrence College’s Community Writers Program. Seats are limited. Meets in fall and spring.