

EDUCATION UPDATE

EDUCATION NEWS TODAY FOR A BETTER WORLD TOMORROW



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FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

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EDITORIAL

VOUCHERS, THE INCOMPLETE SOLUTION

By ADAM SUGERMAN

Solutions to perceived problems at our nation's public schools evoke "The World Turned Upside Down," the march the British band played as Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown. Rather than tackle the real issues — teacher shortages, uncompetitive salaries, lack of cohesion in teacher training, super-sized teacher-to-student ratios, and most importantly, changing our school-age students' preference from entertaining over training — society prefers Mickey Mouse fixes to real cost-effective long-term solutions. Indeed subsidizing private- and religious-school education with vouchers will inject much needed competition into our lowest-performing standardized test-givers. However, schools that pass this testing game do not and will not always provide the quality of education our world needs. Schools need to make sure that each student has learned the 3Rs well, and provide support for those students who need the extra help. Schools must not graduate students who cannot read, write, and perform to established academic standards. It is their job to identify these students and to offer them help. For high-school students who have not acquired the basic skills, it is their responsibility to seek the help they need to catch up to their peers. As taxpayers, we must overcome our hebetude and make sure that our education system has the funding necessary to do its job. We need to ensure that our money is not mis-spent. Furthermore, we might need to increase taxes to funnel more money into education, to show administrators, teachers, and students that we are serious about supporting them. Education is our society's great equalizer. We must not capitulate in our goal to providing a quality education to all, despite the tempting allure of vouchers.#

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Thank you for your story about the students from metro NY who competed in the "Entrepreneurial Expo" sponsored last month by The Goldman Sachs Foundation. The writing was good, the facts were straight, and the exposure for this program in your newspaper will have New York educators take notice so that more bright students from underserved neighborhoods can receive scholarships for their participation in Center for Talented Youth (Johns Hopkins University) summer program and related school-year events.

Chuck Beckman, Director, Communications
Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins, MD

COMMENTARY

The Mayor Is Our Last, Best Hope

By STUART DUNN

If politics is the art of the possible, Mayor Bloomberg has proven himself to be a consummate politician. He played off the need of the UFT leadership to conclude a contract granting teachers significant salary increases to gain their support in Albany for a bill restructuring the governance of New York City's public schools which gives him virtually complete control of the schools. While it would seem that both sides got what they wanted, in fact, the big winner was the mayor.

It is true that the mayor did not get the union contract he wanted. He had to give away larger salary increases than he desired, which will be difficult to fund. He did not get the work assignment changes or the merit provisions he wanted. The UFT contract will be all that stands in his way to making the changes he wants and needs. But, little matter. The teacher's contract will only run until May 31, 2003, and, he can afford to wait. In many ways the wait will be beneficial. It will give him time to put a new Chancellor and a new Board of Education in place. It will give him time to revise the management structure of the schools and take on 110 Livingston Street. The union will have little leverage next year, and the mayor will then be able to insist on the changes he wants, even in the face of a strike threat.

Just how much the take-over of the school system will effect the quality of education in NYC is unclear, but it can only help. The mayor has yet to tell us what he plans to do with his new-found power. Now that he has achieved the governance changes he wanted, he must deal with "the vision thing." He will have to show that he can manage as well in the public domain as he did in the private one. Meanwhile, the increased teachers salaries will certainly help in the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers.

Unfortunately, the parents and the students were not represented in the negotiation. While the elimination of the community school boards is, on balance, desirable, parents will lose an important input channel. A new channel of communication will have to be established. I suggest an ombud service, with representatives in each district who have direct access to the district superintendents. I'm sure there will be

To the Editor:

I just wanted to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you about education and in particular District 4. The article was so well written. It truly captured the essence of our "long" and engaging conversation. My kudos to *Education Update*. I commend you on the entire newspaper. Keep up the great work! More like you are needed if public education is to survive.

Evelyn Castro, Superintendent, District 4
New York, NY

many other suggestions. This is something the mayor will have to address.

From the perspective of the taxpayers, the settlement with the union looks ominous. The increases in teacher salaries will cost over \$1 billion a year, and, that is just the start of the problem. The other municipal unions may be expected to increase their demands proportionately. This comes on top of a projected deficit for next year of \$5 billion. How the mayor plans to fund these costs is undefined. To date, he has been reluctant to call for tax increases, but this probably has to do with avoiding this issue during the forthcoming election in which the state legislators and the governor will be seeking reelection. In an apparent trade for not raising the tax issue, the State will pick up much of the cost of the teacher's contract this year. Once we get past November, the deficit will have to be addressed. This will have to include increased municipal taxes and increased state aid to the City's schools.

No matter how you feel about the change in governance, it now behooves us to get behind the mayor and support the changes in the schools he deems necessary to provide a quality education to all of the children. The mayor is our last, best hope to improve our public schools and to resist the demands for vouchers and privatization. #

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CORRECTIONS

In the May 2002 article on the 50th anniversary of the Barnard College education program, the correct identifications for the people in the photograph are: (L-R) Alisa Berger, Laura Rodriguez, and Ron Scapp.

EDUCATION UPDATE

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INSIDE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE: BETTY ROSA

By MARYLENA MANTAS

Classical music echoes through the hallways of IS 101, an intermediate school in Community School District 8 in the Bronx. Visitors can witness group work at its best, with students sitting together engaged in problem solving and discussion. More impressive, however, remains the joyful, uplifting spirit of the school, whose establishment in 1995 was partly due to the district's efforts to celebrate its diversity—District 8, located in the East Bronx, runs along the Bruckner Expressway, extending from the Hunts Point peninsula and the Morrisania area in the south, through the Soundview Classons Point area in the center, and bounded on the north by Pelham Bay and Throggs Neck.

Today, the school is the academic home of students who call themselves “ambassadors” as they are enrolled in IS 101 to represent the elementary school they came from.

“This school binds us as one district,” says Betty Rosa, Superintendent of District 8. “It does not matter what local community you come from. The school is symbolic of our diversity [and it is] a place that belongs to students. They own this school.”

IS 101 is only one of 30 schools located in

District 8, which serves about 24,000 students.

“My first accountability is to the children in my community,” says Rosa, who considers the role of the superintendent as that of the “master teacher.” “My principals are my students and the district is my classroom,” she says.

Her “lesson plans” stem from her own experiences as a teacher and a principal, but most importantly from her own value system. The core elements of these values appear in the form of a quotation written on a blackboard in her

office: “Go to the people, live among them, plan with them. Start with what they know and build on what they have. And, when the current leaders leave, the people will say we have it.”



Betty Rosa

“I serve the people, the children and the community...I am here to provide guidance,” says Rosa, adding that she considers her job “the most humbling experience” and is guided by one of her grandmother’s sayings, “the best kind of person is the one that has humility...no matter what your attainments.”

Although she remains committed to her values and acknowledges that she is “a collection of her own experiences,” Rosa underscored that she embraces the different characteristics of every school and the leadership styles of principals.

“Every school in my district is different,” she says. “[When I visit a school] I always ask myself ‘if I was the principal in this school would I run it this way? [The answer might be no], but that does not mean what that principal is doing is wrong.’”

She will take advantage of any opportunity to model for a principal or teacher and when

observing classrooms, or visiting occasionally she takes over. When hiring new principals she looks for individuals who are strong leaders with competitive spirits that know how to teach children in different ways. The qualifications are similar for new teachers.

“We look for teachers with content knowledge and an ability to reach out to children. We look for teachers who want to enhance the lives of children and teachers with a sensitive side for the struggling child,” says Rosa.

On hot topics, like testing, the superintendent is bold and direct, saying that a child’s life should not be judged by one snapshot. “It’s a sad statement about what real learning is. We kill natural curiosity in children,” she says.

She supports maintaining and enforcing standards for children, as long as the learning process does take place and teaching is not related only to the test.

“We have sterilized some of the stuff related to the joy of learning,” she says, adding that it’s good to create frameworks as long as they are not internalized. “I am a superintendent of children, not of adults.”#

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From Coney Island to Paris to Miami: An Assistant Principal Shares Her Views

By LYNN K. ROBBINS

Ruby K. Payne states in *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, “An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised.” However, he added, the impact an educator can have on a child can modify those rules and change that child’s future, regardless of their socio-economic status. I’ve been around public and private education for 36 years, sometimes in a classroom, sometimes in an office, but always a learner as well as a teacher. I’ve certainly learned from my peers, but more importantly, I’ve learned from the children by listening to who they are, where they come from and what it is that they need.

I’ve taught in Paris at one of the most elite private schools in the world; in Coney Island, a haven for drug pushers and prostitutes; and a similar neighborhood in South Florida. Based on my experience as an educator I will argue the presumption that social ranking is the predominant factor in determining what an individual becomes and the contributions that he/she makes to society. The following are three stories about children that I’ve met. One was from a wealthy background and the other two from poverty. They all needed to be heard.

I met Sylvia in France during my first full-time teaching experience. All of her permanent teeth were pulled when she was 14 because she had a gum infection. Her mother didn’t want to go through the hassle of supporting her daughter through a year’s worth of dental surgery so false teeth became an easier option. She had no self-esteem, and would even joke around by taking out her false teeth and making grotesque faces. Sylvia was last in her class at an elite international private school in just outside of Paris, France. She slept until 11:00 A.M every day and missed most of her classes. The administration couldn’t do much with Sylvia so they let her sleep, took her parents money and moved her from grade to grade. I would wake her up in the morning to go to class. It was a Catholic school and I remember Sister Anne not appreciating my interference because I wasn’t Catholic. She was afraid I might influence her religious beliefs. They had no clue that Sylvia had none. Her parents asked me to escort her to their apartment across the street from Harrods, in London, during

Christmas and Thanksgiving. They weren’t going to be there and the only other option for her was to be alone during those vacations, so I agreed to her parent’s request. We were picked up in a Bentley and had a chauffeur, a butler, plus all expenses paid. I did it for Sylvia. She often talked about what sixteen year olds talk about with their parents or someone they trust. But, mostly, we talked about math. She hated math. We discussed what she could do in life if she didn’t learn math. There wasn’t much. Six months before graduation, all of the seniors were asked to write a valedictorian speech. Sylvia’s was the best. But she was last in her class and the administration refused to use her speech even though they knew it was written with great passion and insight. I talked with Sister Anne and she finally agreed that Sylvia’s speech could be read by the true valedictorian. Following her graduation Sylvia moved back to the New York area with her parents. Although her grades did not support her admission to any college, I was able to convince some friends at a local community college to enroll her in a probationary program. Sylvia went on from there. She now has a doctorate, has published two books and developed her own business.

Tranisha was a 12-year-old girl who lived in Coney Island but rarely came to school. She was retained twice and far too mature for her present grade. Her father was killed one day while trying to save the life of a child who had fallen into a river. Not soon after, her mother became an alcoholic. Every morning before 7:00 a.m. I would set out to find her underneath the Coney Island boardwalk. She would come to school with me now and again, but not often enough. One day I asked what it would take for her to come to school every day. She told me simply that if she could be a cheerleader, she would come to school. I told her that could be arranged. I’ve been an athlete all my life and had little respect for cheerleaders, pom poms and all, but if that was what it would take for her to come to school, I would make it happen. I was an intervention specialist at the time and was part of a restructuring team at a struggling Coney Island elementary school. The principal knew that if I asked for something special for a child, he would see to it that it was done. And so it happened. Tranisha

began coming to school every morning at 7:00 a.m. with some of her friends and created a cheerleading squad, (we had no teams, but that mattered little.) She went to the gym and was supervised by the security guard while I went to my office. There was much to be done at the school and we put in long hours. Tranisha came to school every day for two weeks, worked with her group, went to cafeteria for breakfast and then to class. She was smart, and the teachers knew it. One day she asked me to stay for the morning practice. I agreed. What I observed was remarkable and had no resemblance to cheerleading, as I knew it. She had recruited over twenty of her classmates, mostly girls but some boys as well. She stood in front of her troupe, four lines of children, one head behind the other, standing perfectly straight and silent, with hands at their sides. Then she gave the command to begin. They performed intricate maneuvers in unison including clapping, stomping, tumbling and chanting. I do remember that when she gave the command to halt, one girl said something to the door. Tranisha called her name and pointed to the door. The girl left the gym without a sound. She had violated the rules and she knew it. I called schools in the neighborhood that had teams, secured funding for a bus and we became regulars at many halftime shows. Tranisha became a great leader of her peers. I nominated her for a leadership award presented by Borough President Golden. There were 600 winners but only one was to receive the top award. It was Tranisha. As the award winner, she had to prepare a speech to present in front of the other 600 nominees and their parents at City Hall. Not only did we help her with her speech but we had to dress her as well. There she stood, at the podium, in a donated white satin dress with matching heels. She was brilliant. After the speech Borough President Golden presented her with a plaque and put his arm around her for a photo opportunity. I knew she was a leader and so did she. More importantly, her mother did as well. She was sitting in the audience, for the first time, acknowledging her child’s accomplishments, and she was sober. She, too, had prepared for this occasion.

When John was eight years old he saw his mother and grandmother raped and sodomized at

gunpoint by someone he knew. He became a mute for a year. He was retained for one year and had a list of discipline referrals that made him undesirable to most school administrators. A few years later, a community leader brought him to my attention and asked that I enroll him in the special school in South Florida. I met with his grandmother and then with him. There was something in his eyes. I enrolled him and became his mentor. I was called when things happened with John, when he bullied a child or disrespected a teacher. I do think that he was testing me, and my commitment. I left for New York that summer and gave John four envelopes with my New York address and stamps on them. I received four letters. He received postcards from Montauk and Manhattan. When I returned in August, I opened a bank account for him with the proviso that whatever money he made working as a babysitter or at other odd jobs, he had to put 50 percent of it in the account. The rest he could use for whatever he wanted. The account was opened with \$25. After 4 months he had over \$80. I told him by the time he entered college, he would be able to buy whatever he needed. He never thought about college before and now he does.

These children have reacted to the images and sounds of their different environments and have moved beyond those experiences. With borders collapsing, human dignities being devalued and personal hopelessness growing, we need to look carefully at the impact that educators can have on understanding and nourishing each student’s ability and willingness to learn. As an administrator and a teacher I have learned to listen and then try to engage, inspire and create excitement in the process of learning. The goal is to broaden perspectives and offer greater choices. That is the ultimate role of anyone who has taken on the responsibility of educating our children.#

Lynn K. Robbins is currently an educational administrator in Palm Beach County and has an M. S. in Sports Psychology from Brooklyn College and M.S. in Administration and Supervision from CCNY. She is past Vice President of Phi Delta Kappa, Columbia University, and is currently pursuing her doctorate in Educational Leadership from Florida Atlantic University.#



Who's Minding the Schools?

By JILL LEVY

By the time we go to press, elected officials will have hammered out the details of the NYC school governance legislation. The big questions, however, remain: What impact will this change have on our schools, the children and educational outcomes? How will our roles, responsibilities and professional relationships look in the future?

My career began in 1959 in a red, wood-frame school. My first memory of that forbidding place was on a hot, August day when my husband and I drove by, for the first time, to "scout it out." My mother and her siblings graduated from that school, and I knew that the principal was renowned for her autocratic temperament. But I was unprepared for the terror that gripped me when I saw the dark structure with its dozens of broken windows. A few weeks later, I found myself teaching in one of 14 first-grade classes, managing 38 non-English-speaking children. I used orange crates for bookcases. The school had no library books, and the readers—don't ask. I cherished and relied on my teacher guides, gifts from the central board.

School governance? I knew there was a Board of Education, and that the Board had a president, but what did the Mayor have to do with education? For my colleagues and me, education was simply a matter of day-to-day survival. When the Ocean-Hill Brownsville crisis ended in a decentralized system in 1969, classes remained overcrowded. School facilities continued to crumble. Non-existent supplies cramped lesson plans. And it was to get worse. We were heading towards the 1975 economic crisis, a financial disaster from which

our schools have yet to recover. School governance became a popular refrain. NYC mayors came and went, each one castigating centralized or decentralized systems. While screaming for control of the schools, those mayors starved them of resources. Governors, too, came and went, but still NYC public schools were short-changed year after year. All fingers pointed at the Board of Education as the one major impediment to educational success. Ultimately, community school boards took the fall and in the 1990s, we stripped these elected bodies of most of their power over personnel and policy.

It hasn't mattered. With all the tinkering, the adjustments, the finger-pointing, school buildings still continue to deteriorate. Overcrowding is rampant. The state's list of failing schools continues to grow. We still have so much to do. We must attract and retain certified teachers and supervisors. We used to attract more than 100 candidates for principal and assistant principal positions. Now, we're lucky to attract a dozen. We must do much more to encourage our school professionals to stay in the city system and not take refuge in the suburbs.

With change, extraordinary opportunities arise. But, if conditions in the schools remain unchanged, it is unlikely that changing who's in charge will result in the widespread educational improvements we want to see. If principals cannot allocate resources the way they see fit, if schools do not have a reasonable supervisor-to-staff ratio, if we cannot attract and retain the best teachers and supervisors, our schools will continue to struggle. And in that case, who's in charge of the Board of Education, who sits at the top of the heap, will not matter very much at all.#

Jill Levy is the president of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators (CSA).

Warning Signs of Depression and Suicide



By MATILDA R. CUOMO
& MARGARET I.
CUOMO MAIER, M.D.

The three pillars of support for children are the home, the school and the community.

When one of these supports is inadequate or even missing, the child suffers. The children who are at risk of dropping out of school are designated by their teachers to the Mentoring USA program. We recruit and provide trained volunteer mentors for each child, establishing a one-to-one relationship. The mentor is given training and many resources to help the relationship flourish and become meaningful. The mentor is a positive role model who can direct and counsel the child through many challenging situations in life.

During the bonding of the mentor and the mentee, the mentor is able to assist the child in solving his or her problems. Especially during the teenage years, the children can express their anxieties and fears. In a real sense, it is the mentor who can fill a void in the child's life, listen to the child; realize the need for professional assistance and get the help the child needs. Mentoring USA's concept is to help the child as early as possible, from grades K-12.

During the sensitive adolescent period, children can lose their self-esteem and can become depressed. When the mentor becomes aware of the child's symptoms, which can be serious, the parents are informed. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), up to 2.5 percent of children, and up to 8.3 percent of adolescents in the United States suffer from depression. In more recent decades, the onset of depression has been occurring earlier, and often recurs and continues into adulthood. In fact, once a young person has experienced an episode of major depression, she or he is at risk for yet another episode within the next five years.

At higher risk for depression are children who have an attention or learning disorder or who are under stress, or experience loss, such as the death of a parent. Other risk factors include abuse or neglect and the break-up of a romantic relationship.

Depression in children and adolescents is associated with an increased risk of suicidal behavior. Boys and girls are at equal risk for depressive disorders in childhood, but girls are twice as likely as boys to develop depression during adolescence.

The increase in the rate of adolescent suicide over the past decade has been widely attributed to

changes in the social environment, and in particular, in the diminishing quality and cohesion of the family unit.

What are the symptoms of depression in children and adolescents? Here are several that have been reported by the American Psychiatric Association: inappropriate guilt, or feelings of worthlessness; persistent sad or irritable mood; loss of interest in activities once enjoyed; difficulty sleeping or oversleeping; psychomotor agitation or retardation; loss of energy; significant loss of change in appetite or body weight; difficulty concentrating; thoughts of death or suicide.

Another serious concern is a child who is contemplating suicide. Some of the warning signs of suicide as noted by the NIMH are: anger and rage; missed school or poor performance; difficulty with relationships; drug and/or alcohol abuse; reckless behavior. Herbert Hendin, M.D., author of *Suicide in America*, notes that the parents of suicidal children convey a sense of emotional detachment from the child. It has been suggested that when these children experience academic failure, they also risk the loss of parental love. Other possible causes of depression, as noted by the NIMH, are genetic vulnerability, hospitalization, especially for a chronic illness and rejection of the child by a caretaker. An increased rate of depression is found in children of parents with bipolar disorder.

Alan Lipschitz, M.D., author of *College Student Suicide*, reports that in contrast to the rebellious and aggressive behavior frequently observed in suicidal teenagers in high school, suicidal college students tend to be quiet and withdrawn, and are not usually drug and alcohol abusers. While there are many reasons why college students attempt suicide, hopelessness and the pressure to succeed appear to be key factors. How should parents, caregivers and friends relate to the suicidal young person? Above all, it is important to be a good listener, trustworthy and nonjudgmental. The young person at risk for suicide must believe that she/he is respected and accepted.

Awareness of mental health issues that affect children and adolescents is essential for parents, teachers, and mentors. By providing a caring, attentive, mature adult presence in a young person's life, a mentor can serve as a significant support system for a young person at risk.#

Matilda R. Cuomo is the Founder and Chair of Mentoring USA, Margaret Cuomo Maier is a physician.

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SCHOOLS PROVIDE 'OASIS OF STABILITY' TO HOMELESS CHILDREN

Reauthorization of McKinney-Vento Act Expected to Have Positive Results for Children in Temporary Housing

By MARYLENA MANTAS

Seven months ago, Kerryann Heron, was evicted from her apartment in Brooklyn after her roommate ceased paying her share of the rent. Financially unable to sustain that apartment, Heron, a 27-year-old single mother of two boys, gathered her belongings and went to the Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU) in the Bronx to seek placement in a shelter. A month after her visit to the EAU, Heron, who had been temporarily placed in a shelter, walked through the doors of the Red Cross Respite II located on E. 28th St off 5th Avenue. She was offered a small room—equipped with beds, a table, two chairs, a refrigerator, a microwave and a private bathroom—that she and her two boys have made home.

Her current neighbor, Jennifer Saldana, 23, found herself on the same path after giving birth to her second child, who is asthmatic. She was forced to leave the basement apartment she shared with six other family members—who were evicted a few weeks after Saldana moved—because the poor living conditions posed a hazard to the newborn's health. Last February, she moved into the Red Cross Respite II.

Although both women admit to occasionally feeling or having felt scared, they both appear determined to overcome the odds and provide better homes for their children.

"I can't be scared. I have two children to raise," says Saldana, who hopes to earn her GED and become a nurse's aide. Heron explained that the only thing she fears now is death. "I am a woman of confidence," says Heron, who now works part-time as a nurse's aide and plans to become a licensed nurse practitioner. "Whatever I aim for I get. To be scared is not my thing. I am an advocate for myself."

These families are only two of 92 living at the Red Cross Respite II, a 13-floor facility with over 200 rooms, housed in the Latham Hotel, which became a welfare hotel in the mid 1980s. The Red Cross serves as the parent organization of the Respite, which houses the Emergency Family Center—a Tier II facility designed only for mothers and children—and the Family Respite Center, which provides housing to elderly individuals, AIDS patients and other who need a place to live.

The children of Heron and Saldana number only four of approximately 9,000 children in New York City who live in temporary housing sites. They are also four of 1.35 million children nationwide who experience homelessness annually. The two mothers decided to transfer their two school aged boys, Jimmy and Justin, to schools located close to the Red Cross Respite II, even though they, like all parents who live in temporary housing have the right—as a result of the McKinney Act, which was enacted in 1987 to protect the educational rights of homeless children—to keep their children enrolled in their school of origin. Today 80 percent of homeless children are enrolled in school—a sharp increase from the 1980s when only 50 percent of homeless children went to school. By large, the increase is due to the effect of the McKinney Act, which made recommendations to ensure that states remove barriers that prevented homeless students from attending school.

In NYC Community School Districts provide homeless parents with metro cards to transport their children to their original school. In addition, school buses have been rerouted to accommodate the needs of students, while buses make stops at the various shelters around the City, including the Red Cross Respite II. Still parents often opt to bring their children to school close to their shelter since the commute becomes difficult, as it did in the case of Heron and Saldana, who also had to care for younger children. Thus, these days,



Children living at the Red Cross Respite II play during an end of the school year party.

Jimmy Heron and Justin Saldana board a regular school bus that takes them from the Respite to their new schools.

For children who are homeless transferring to a new school means adjusting to new surroundings and making new friends, while trying to adjust to having no permanent home. According to Camille Huggins, the Assistant Director of Family Programs at the Red Cross Respite II, several students experience academic difficulties, especially when their new school has more rigorous academic standards. Huggins added that the Respite provides tutoring and after school programs to assist students in that situation, while representatives from the Respite meet with parents and schedule meetings between parents, teachers and principals.

Academic challenges further intensify for children living in temporary housing, since they often change schools more than once. According to Lourdes Estrella, Principal of PS 62 in the Bronx where a substantial percentage of the student body live in shelters, some students enroll in PS 62 after having attended several schools. According to Estrella, the children and their parents arrive at the schools frustrated and angry.

"We show parents high respect, so that they can trust us," she said. "We believe that one kind word can have an impact. We've seen evidence of that and it's beautiful."

Educators at PS 62 underscored that schools often have an impact in areas beyond the academic sphere.

"This [homelessness] has changed our schools. The education of the child is extremely important. But, we are no longer just an educational institution. We are a homeless institution, a social and emotional institution," said PS 62 Assistant Principal Lisa Manfredonia, adding that the school often assists parents in locating agencies and that community members help them in everything from housing, to dental care, to attaining prescription glasses.

John Hughes, the principal of PS 48 in the Bronx also characterized the school as a community institution and added that his staff has been instructed to help parents even if their concerns are not directly related to their child's academics. The school provides children with access to a health care facility—established in the school by a community-based organization—counseling and after school programs, while it encourages parents to further their own education through GED programs.

Twenty-nine out of the 32 Community School Districts (CSD) in New York City have shelters. A district coordinator is assigned by the Board of Education (BOE) to every CSD to ensure that children living in temporary housing receive all

the educational services they are entitled to. In addition, an on-site contact is assigned to every shelter and scattersite housing to work with the residents. The on-site contact works with parents as soon as they enter the shelter to enroll the children in school. The on-site contact functions as the liaison between the school and the shelter and the parent and is responsible for helping to resolve any problems that emerge, such as poor attendance.

According to PS 48 Attendance Coordinator Pat Mullins, problems with attendance usually spark a phone call to the on-site contact, a phone call to the parent if they have access to a phone and sometimes a visit to the shelter. Mullins also offers various incentives to encourage children to come to school, including ice cream and cookie parties to those classes with 100 percent attendance.

"Most students have gone through some sort of trauma...yet, some do remarkable work," she said. According to Robert Diaz, director of the BOE Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Programs/Office of Students in Temporary Housing, the BOE receives funding from the New York State Department of Education, which it then distributes to school districts to provide services to members of their student body in temporary housing. The funds are part of the Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention Money, which amounted to \$6 million in the past academic year. The allocations are provided to ensure that students receive various support services, including after school programs, academic enrichment programs, counseling and transportation. Districts can also use funds set-aside as part of the federal Title I program for homeless children, or they can apply for McKinney grants.

"The districts are responsible to ensure that the youngsters' needs are met," said Diaz. "We enhance whatever services the schools have. Since this population has greater needs than the regular population we have to address the issues and enhance the services. We do whatever we can to help these families."

He added, "The system is as effective as possible. We are constantly changing according to the needs. The system is not fool proof. It's constantly changing."

According to Diaz, the BOE liaisons work hard to ensure that "the lines of communication are open between schools and shelters." He believes that school provides homeless children with a sense of "continuity and safety."

Most of the services provided to the homeless student population in NYC will soon extend to students in the approximately 700 school districts in NYS and to others nationwide. Although the recent reauthorization of the McKinney Act, which became effective on July 1, will not impact NYC because most of the provisions put forward have been activated in NYC for quite some time, advocates for the education of children who are homeless are expecting the reauthorization to have an effect on other school districts.

"Homelessness remains one of the greatest unresolved issues facing our nation. In spite of the unprecedented resources devoted to address-

ing this problem, the system of delivering and enhancing services to homeless children must be improved. With the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, we are on a new trajectory that will increase the ability of homeless children and youth to enroll, attend and succeed in school. Among a host of other revisions, the new law expands the definition of who is considered homeless; ensures that homeless children and youth be given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards that all students are expected to meet; spells out the rights of homeless students relative to school selection, segregation, enrollment, dispute resolutions and the provision of transportation; and mandates that every school district designate a homeless liaison to act as an advocate for homeless students and their families," said Gay Wainwright, the New York State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, of the National Center for Homeless Education.

The reauthorization comes at a time when the number of homeless children is growing around the nation.

"Advocates for the homeless says that one of the major reasons for this is the recent economic boom, for some, that provided cash that was used to buy up what was previously unaffordable properties (and that was historically used as rental properties) thereby resulting in a lack of rental/affordable housing. This, coupled with the lack of a living wage, affordable child care, affordable housing, and mass transit, were the major contributors to the increase in the number of homeless nationwide," said Kate Ventura, director of the New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYSTEACHS).

She noted that the number of homeless on Long Island is the highest ever recorded according to the Suffolk County Department of Social Services. In New York City, according to Diaz, the number of scatter sites has increased to 1,700 from 200 last year when the program began.

Ventura and Barbara Duffield, of the National Coalition for the Homeless, cited the lack of awareness as a main challenge in bettering the education system for the homeless. NYSTEACHS has been holding training sessions around the State to make districts aware of the reauthorizations and to assist school districts in taking necessary steps to comply with the legislation.

"If we do not intersect to change the life of these children, they may just repeat the history of their parents or guardians," said Ventura. "We have to change the playing fields of schools. They [the students] will come to school frightened, hungry and tired. The school districts need to address that. We need to look at the American family and see what they need. They need socialization more than before," she added and called for an "increase in the funding of McKinney grants. And, support for the collaboration among state holders on all levels; federal, state and local."

Duffield agreed. "We have our work cut out for us to make sure that the law has been implemented. We want to see the promise of McKinney made reality," she said, adding that for homeless children schools serve as "the oasis of stability at a time of great upheaval."

"The experience of homelessness leaves children with academic and emotional needs that go far beyond the resources of schools to adequately address. We continue to encourage our elected officials and policy makers to take the necessary steps to eradicate homelessness and to improve the lot of society's neediest children," said Wainwright.#



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Special Weekends

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Discover aromatherapy—blend herbs at the Adventure Garden to make soothing sachets, make and taste herbal tea, create an herb field notebook and more. At the Family Garden, smell and taste fresh herbs from the garden,

plant herb seeds, pot up an herb plant, and make a flower flag to take home!

Special Summer Storytelling Series—Every Saturday, June 15-Aug. 31

In the Everett Children's Adventure Garden, master storytellers weave amazing tales about plants and wildlife, insects and animals that keep kids spellbound. Famed performers are listed on the weekly schedule below. Performances take place at 2 pm and 3 pm.

Summer Exhibits

Roger Tory Peterson Institute Photography Exhibit—Through July 28

Explore the beauty of plant and animal interactions through this series of striking nature photographs on loan from the Roger Tory Peterson Institute. Taking inspiration from the photographs, children investigate plants and animals and record their observations in field notebooks.

For more information call (718) 817-8700. The Everett Children's Adventure Garden has been made possible by the leadership generosity of Edith and Henry Everett. #

MENTORING USA HOLDS APPRECIATION RECEPTION



(L-R) Raymond Kelly, Matilda Raffa Cuomo & Richard Pierre

By ARI MCKENNA

This year's Appreciation Reception for Mentoring USA's volunteers and devotees, which took place at the headquarters of the New York City Police Department recently, became a ceremony of gratitude to the very kids that the volunteers are helping. Speakers who stepped up to the microphone extended their praises towards their mentees and spoke warmly of the opportunity that they have been given to work with these kids.

Nate "Tiny" Archibald, NBA Hall of Famer, teacher, and mentor was in attendance to

present the Special Recognition Award to Natalie Lukas, who was the Site Coordinator for JHS104 and spoke about "the joy of watching them [mentors] give love and understanding."

Other awards were presented to the New York City Police Department, Bloomingdale's, The Junior League of the City of New York, and Morgan Stanley for their continued participation in the program. Mentor and Police Officer Richard Pierre addressed the old adage "it takes a village to raise a child" as he accepted the award for the department. He underscored the importance of helping youngsters view cops as members of this village and "come to realize that the NYPD is more than just guns and badges."

Other notable speakers were Matilda Raffa Cuomo, the Founder and Chair of Mentoring USA, Richard P. Motta, the President and CEO of HELP USA, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, and news anchor Soledad O'Brien who is the mentor of three young girls and was the evening's Mistress of Ceremonies. O'Brien mentioned that although mentoring is a giving experience, "Mentors are grateful" for being able to spend time with such bright young kids. Natasha Atkins, a program manager, who was busy recruiting new mentors at the entrance to the large hall, credited her mentee, Jamilla McKae, for allowing her to reconnect with her own inner-child.

Founded in 1995, Mentoring USA, a non-profit organization which pairs adult volunteer mentors with "at risk" kids has expanded to two other continents. The program requests that adult volunteers meet with their children once per week, nine to ten months out of the year. The program hopes that this small weekly block of stability will help to improve kids expectations and nourish their self-esteem. As Richard Pierre aptly puts it, "Our youth must believe that they can and will be successful." #

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New Series: Parents are seeking alternatives to public schools. *Education Update* reports on two in this issue.

New Middle School at Marymount

By SYBIL MAIMIN

Students in the fourth through seventh grades at the Marymount School are moving into bright new quarters in the fall. The independent Catholic girls' school (nursery through 12), now housed in three beautiful adjacent townhouses on Fifth Avenue, has acquired and is renovating a Beaux Arts building on nearby East 82nd Street which will serve Middle School students exclusively.

As explained by headmistress Sister Kathleen Fagan, this is an effort to give youngsters in a sometimes difficult stage of life "a special place where they can shine." The school will be a blend of the old and the new, a self-contained unit with its own program, faculty, dining hall and commons, library, science lab, computer center, and technical facilitator. A special advising system is being established. The students will interface with girls from the upper and lower schools in shared use of the chapel, gym, and assembly as well as in school service programs. The addition of a building, more a reflection of the need for "breathing room" following several years of increased enrollment than of plans for further growth, will be followed by incremental renovations of the original mansions including expansion of dining, library, technology, music, drama, and art facilities.

Though the stately buildings recall another era, the activities within are cutting edge. Don Buckley, director of technology at Marymount, oversees integration and faculty development. The key, he says, "is to get teachers to discover what technology works for them and get them to run with it." The school has grant money to reward teachers who come up with interesting proposals about classroom applica-

tions. Marymount conducts summer technology workshops open to professionals from other institutions. Utilizing online learning, it was the first school in Manhattan to enroll students in a Columbia University course in Java, a computer language. Technology is introduced in kindergarten and, as they advance in grade, pupils do everything from creating fictitious online businesses to making videos of frog dissections.

Marymount is part of a religious order founded in Beziers, France in 1849. It is devoted to education and today has schools in 14 countries. They are not parochial (church or parish affiliated). Marymount, New York is part of a network that includes schools in London, Paris, Rome, and Los Angeles. Representatives of network institutions meet annually and set goals and objectives. Each has an implementation committee. Instilling values is central to the school mission, and each year a particular value, such as the current "Unity Through Diversity," is chosen by the network for special focus. Recognizing changes in the Church and society, the network is presently developing plans to pass the schools on to lay leaders. In New York, only three sisters remain on a faculty of 75. As fewer people choose a religious life and the community work that needs to be done grows, schools that lose clergy must transfer their governance or close down. Marymount New York has been administered by a lay Board of Trustees since 1969, but has continued to be headed by clergy. Headmistress Sister Kathleen welcomes the coming changes noting that, previously clergy were considered an elite class, but now we are all equal in our possibilities of goodness.#

Private or Public Education?

By CHRISTINA PERPIGNANO AND ZAHER KARP

Recently on WNYC radio, Brian Lehrer featured a panel of authors and consultants discussing the choices that a parent must go through when caught between the accessibility of the public school system and the exclusivity of the private schools of New York. The panel consisted of Clara Hemphill, author of *New York City's Best Public High Schools. A Parents' Guide*, Catherine Hausman, author of *The Manhattan Family Guide to Private Schools* and Robin Aronow, psychotherapist and educational consultant.

The panel discussed the many different issues in the debate of private vs. public school. Topics such as financial and social considerations as well as cultural issues were included.

Private schools are unattainable to many families because of their high tuition. However, as the speakers pointed out, scholarships and financial aid are available. One of the callers was concerned with the lack of diversity within the private school system. This was confirmed by the panel. However, they noted that many private schools are making an effort to introduce a multicultural element into the student body.

As the panel pointed out, the disadvantage to families that must rely upon the public school system is that there are few choices within the district, while a private school student has no such constraints. The advantages of private schools is that they have the facilities to concentrate on the student as an individual and "make sure the child is well rounded," according to Aronow.

Ramaz Lower School

By POLA ROSEN, Ed.D.

Established 65 years ago, the Ramaz Lower School is a modern, orthodox Jewish day school that was originally built for the community and has continued with that vision. Head of the school Rabbi Alan Berkowitz explained that "Ramaz represents a standard of excellence in the world of Jewish education. Starting in nursery, we try to provide a quality program that will lead to an outstanding education." The student-teacher ratio is low: about 15 students to a class with a head teacher and assistant teachers.

The curriculum is half-religious and half-secular. Our children are expected to follow the laws and principles of Judaism. The first graders participate in a Hebrew language immersion program. In the second grade, the entire religious component is taught in Hebrew, which is considered the heritage language. French and Spanish are introduced in the middle school. Project Community takes place in the middle school. Once a week students volunteer under the supervision of their teachers.

"Our school has a strong sense of commitment because many of the parents are Ramaz graduates," said Rabbi Berkowitz. The mission of Ramaz is for students to be outstanding citizens of the world and to excel. In recruiting students, parents must share the mission. Students are recruited by an interview process with par-

ents. In the lower school students come from all boroughs. In the upper school, students also come from Connecticut and New Jersey. Most graduates spend a year in Israel studying and exploring roots. Then they enroll in many of



Students at Ramaz Lower School performing with Hebrew letters.

the best universities in the country.

On teacher recruitment, Berkowitz looks for educators who have long-term experience and a commitment to their mission. Most of the teachers have Master's degrees in education. Judaic studies teacher must be fluent in Hebrew. An unusual feature of the school is the day-care center for faculty children.

The atmosphere of the school is nurturing and caring. No wonder then, as Berkowitz noted, "Parents have an enthusiasm about this place; the school has charisma."#

Community service has always been an aspect exclusive to private schools, but recently more and more, public schools are requiring it as well. In public schools, parental control of the curriculum and administration is at a minimum, but at a private school, parents have greater control of the system. The speakers indicated that some public schools lack leadership especially because their principals and administrators are paid poorly.

The panelists agreed that private schools

seem to be the best environment for a young child who needs individual supervision, whereas public schools require the child to have a certain degree of independence and self sufficiency. Parochial schools, on the other hand, seem to be a good balance between the two because the tuition is less than the majority of the private schools.#

Christina Perpignano & Zaher Karp are students in private schools in NYC and interns at Education Update.

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NASA's Education Programs for High School Students

By **FRANK SCALZO, Ph.D.**

NASA's Educational Programs provide support for systemic improvement, teacher preparation/enhancement, curriculum support and dissemination, student support, educational technology and research and development. Some notable NASA student and teacher support programs in the NYC/Metropolitan include the American Museum of Natural History's Planet Earth interactive exhibit, Summer High School Apprentice Research Program (SHARP - provides gifted and talented, ethnic minority students with an opportunity to work with a scientist or engineer on NASA research and development projects), New Jersey Middle School Distance Mentoring project at Stevens Institute of Technology (implemented at five Hudson County schools), the NASA Educational Resource Center at City College of New York, and a number of research projects at colleges throughout New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS), founded in 1961 as a division of the Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) in Greenbelt, MD, is located at 2880 Broadway in

NYC. Current research, under the direction of Dr. James Hansen, emphasizes a broad study of Global Change, which is an interdisciplinary research initiative addressing natural and man-made changes in our environment, which is an interdisciplinary research initiative addressing natural and man-made changes in our environment that occur on various time scales and affect the habitability of our planet.

In 1994 Carolyn Harris and Dr. Hansen founded the Institute on Climate and Planets (ICP), by recruiting talented and underrepresented students and teachers from NYC area high schools and CUNY undergraduates, to participate on summer research teams and work with graduate students and NASA scientists on research projects to improve what is known about Earth's Climate and Global change. ICP faculty fellows formulate and implement Earth Science curriculum materials, which are aligned with national standards and integrated into existing high school and college courses.#

Frank Scalzo, Ph.D. is an Education Specialist at NASA in NYC. He can be reached at 212-678-6038.

"START SOMETHING" & TIGER WOODS FULFILL KIDS' DREAMS

By **TOM KERTES**

"Start Something", an educational program born out of the cooperation between the Tiger Woods Foundation and Target Corporation, encourages kids between the ages of 8 and 17 to identify a specific personal desire or goal and begin taking actual and specific steps toward achieving their dreams.

It all started when Earl Woods, Tiger's father, wrote a book that propounded the theory that all kids carry something special within themselves. "As parents and educators, it is our role and our duty to help kids figure out their goals and then show them how they can achieve them," Earl Woods said.

Woods partnered with Target Corporation, a socially-minded company that spends 5 percent of its taxable income - around \$ 2 million a week - on the community, particularly on children and their education. Thus, in the year 2001, "Start Something" was born.

When Tiger first described to kids the spirit driving the project he said, "I challenge you. I dare you. I challenge you to be a winner in whatever you choose to do, whatever you care about. I challenge you to make a difference in the world, to reach higher and farther than you ever imagined. I challenge you to "Start Something."

"Start Something" offers 10, two-hour sessions that students can attend individually or in a group. The first five sessions help kids think about their dreams and goals in order to come up with an Action Project, which is based on

those ideas. Sessions six and seven are devoted to completing the Action Project. During sessions eight through 10 kids have an opportunity to reflect upon their efforts.

Upon completion of the program, the students can apply for scholarships ranging from \$100 to \$5000, which are used to fund their special interest or hobby. Over the course of the year, over \$300,000 are awarded in scholarships.

"Start Something" aims to build character, to help kids learn to care about others and to teach them right from wrong. Though many of the children's goals and dreams involve buying an instrument or attending music or soccer camp, some has dealt with providing medical support to a village in Africa or traveling to Australia to speak at a conference on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

"We've had a great success so far," said Ann Aronson, director of Community Relations at Target. "Over 77,000 children are participating in the program this year, led by teachers, coaches and a host of other volunteers."

Dr. Richard Gallagher, the noted child psychologist who is the director of the Parenting Institute at the New York University Child Study Center, is a great supporter of the program. "Start Something" is special because it engages kids in the active pursuit of concrete goals," he said. "Other programs may talk about goals in a positive way. But most never challenge kids to actually do something about them."#

DR. JOYCE COPPIN HONORED

BY **ALFRED POSAMENTIER, Ph.D.**

As a part of the celebration on April 3, 2002 in Vienna, Austria to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the very fruitful cooperation program between the Austrian school system, the New York City Board of Education and the City University of New York, the Minister of Education, Elisabeth Gehrler bestowed upon Dr. Joyce Coppin, Supervising Superintendent, New York City Board of Education, the Austrian Cross of Honor for Science and Art (first class). This is one of the highest honors that the Austrian government rewards those who have done extraordinary service to their country. Dr. Coppin has not only been involved with this cooperation since its inception, but has been one of the main promoters of the many activities that have linked the educational systems in the two countries. Thus the gov-

ernment (nominated by the ministry of Education, approved by Parliament, and bestowed by the President) showed its appreciation.

It is often asked how a small country, whose population is about that of New York City, can relate to just a city. The response is that both locales have been havens for immigrants, both are hosts to the United Nations, and both are respective cultural centers. Some of the cooperative ventures are the New York City Virtual Enterprises program, the visiting math and science teachers program, lots of student, class, teacher, and administrator exchanges, and a CCNY masters degree program for English teachers in three cities in Austria.#

Alfred S. Posamentier is the Dean, School of Education, The City College of New York, CUNY



Paige Discusses After-School Programs

By TOM KERTES

(Exclusive to Education Update)

President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" initiative has a quartet of major components: accountability for results; flexibility and local control; expanded parental options and doing what works in the classroom. "And these points apply equally to after-school and summer programs, whether they're provided in or out of the classroom," Secretary of Education Rod Paige said recently at a Satellite Town Meeting.

According to Secretary Paige, after-school and summer programs are extremely important. "The parents of more than 28 million school age children work outside the home and as many as 15 million "latch-key" children return to an empty house on any given afternoon," he said. "All studies have shown that after the schoolbell rings, too many children without adequate supervision may neglect necessary school-work or, worse, fall prey to negative influences. In fact, children are at a greater risk of being involved in crime, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy in the hours after-school – peaking between 3-4 p.m."

"Yet, since, in spite of all this, after-school programs are so inadequately funded, creating local partnerships with corporations, faith-based organizations, and the community is extremely important," said Michael LeFlore, the Director of IMPACT Afterschool Program in Phoenix, Arizona. "Our success in doing that has allowed us to keep our programs in line with state standards and provide a diverse outlook on education that has led to higher grades and greater parent participation."

Variety in quality programming is also of the essence. "In the INTEL Computer Clubhouse, we really try to keep a club atmosphere – it

seems to inspire children," said Roma Avellano, Education Manager on INTEL Corporation. "The computers are organized in clusters, they are not facing the wall. The students learn skills that people use as professionals – so we use the very highest technology available in our music studio and video editing centers. And the students' creativity is further encouraged and enhanced by the presence of adult and older student mentors."

"We did this because we felt that society has developed a technology gap between children of different backgrounds," Avellano added. "And we could not allow this technology gap become first a skills gap, and then an achievement gap."

Carla Sanger, Executive Director of LA'S BEST, one of the nation's most outstanding afterschool programs, spoke of accountability and results. "We must work within articulated high standards," she said. "We have 17,500 kids coming to work with us each and every day. And the outcome measures are sometimes surprising: among others, one that made us feel good was that children have reported greater confidence in going to adults in problem-solving situations after working with us."

LA'S BEST has also shown positive results in reading ability, increase of self-esteem, and pride in learning. According to one of the high school mentors "this is great; when I have children I'll be able to teach them myself about a whole variety of different things."

All participants agreed that the No. 1 key to a quality afterschool or summer program is involvement in the school, talking to teachers, talking to parents, talking to kids. "We have to find out what's real to the children, we must have adult mentors who really, really listen," Sanger said.#

HOW THE CONSTITUTION WORKS FOR STUDENTS

By ARI MCKENNA

In a sparsely furnished courtroom in Manhattan recently, students from IS 89 had the opportunity to mock-try a Supreme Court Case on National Security vs. The First Amendment. Equipped with suits, some robes, a large wooden hammer and some sound knowledge of the Constitution, the students played out the case, which lingers in the shadow of the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center and explores democracy.

IS 89 is only one of approximately 400 schools in the New York area that take part in such activities, due to their collaboration with the Constitution Works (TCW) program. Now in its fourteenth year TCW is a veritable harbinger of conscious and active future citizens who will participate in government.

Here is how The Constitution Works works: The Board of Education offers a supplementary program, which satisfies requirements in social studies and language arts to teachers of civics, social studies, and related subjects. TCW, whose full-time staff includes Thomas Stokes (Executive Director), Rosa Taveras (Program Manager), and Eric Neutoch (Program Associate), holds training workshops for those teachers, brushing them up on their constitutional knowledge, introducing them to methodologies concerning group work, interdependence, and active student participation, and eventually putting them through a role-played court case.

Before they return to the classroom they are given a "unit" to introduce to their respective classes. While some units may be more involved with the Executive or Legislative

branches, most deal with the Judicial branch and are usually recent Supreme Court cases with current implications.

Students start with groundwork introduction on relevant excerpts from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. As the process continues they receive roles and engage specifically with their own "unit." Upon the teacher's request, TCW provides technical support in the form of law students from Fordham University, volunteer attorneys, and TCW staffers who are able to help kids on a more one-on-one basis.

TCW is involved with public, private, Jewish, and Catholic schools as well as some adult education centers. It is privately funded but has recently been seeking public funding with the help of Borough President Virginai Fields.

While working with a bilingual class that TCW services, Taveras noticed an interesting phenomenon: many of the South American students refused to take the side which was in opposition to the government because they were "afraid of punishment." At this point, Taveras explained the first amendment's second clause, involving free speech and free press. Taveras notes that the American students had no such qualms about opposing the state; "they don't see it as going against the government, they see it as 'this is my right.'"

The Constitution Works has reached about 100,000 students, establishing and sending out into the future a "Reserve of Uprights" of sorts, emerging young citizens aware of their own personal-political contexts who will participate in government with acuity, awareness and knowledge.#

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Bloomberg and Soros Announce Plan to Fund After-School Programs

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, joined by George Soros at PS 130 in the Bronx, announced recently that the City and the Open Society Institute (OSI) will devote over \$30 million to support after-school programs during the 2002-2003 school year. Mayor Bloomberg committed to allocating \$10.5 million in the FY 2003 executive budget and OSI will contribute \$20 million. The combined funds will benefit more than 40,000 city students.

"Our goal is to provide first-rate after-school programs to produce high-quality students," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Given the City's fiscal crisis, we need partners like the Open Society Institute to sustain many of the programs our children and families rely on. Today is just the beginning of what I hope will be one of the banner public-private partnerships of my administration."

"Mayor Bloomberg's commitment of \$10.5 million to support after-school programs is especially significant, given the City's fiscal situation," said George Soros. "The fact that he has pledged his support in such hard times affirms the importance of after-school education even more."

The funds will be awarded to The After-School Corporation (TASC), a non-profit group that distributes grants to community organizations to conduct after-school programs in public schools across New York City and state. Together, the



(L-R) George Soros & Mayor Bloomberg

funds will allow TASC to leverage millions of additional dollars from the federal and state governments, the Board of Education, and other private donors. The City's and OSI's contribution will raise \$80 million to support after-school programs this coming school year. In total, the funds ensure a safe, productive environment for more than 40,000 children in 157 schools. In addition, the programs preserved by today's announcement will provide 11 million hours of reading and math instruction, sports, arts, and community service programs this upcoming year.#

Bard HS Early College Moves to Lower East Side

Beginning in September 2002, Bard High School Early College, which opened this year in shared space in Brooklyn, will have a place of its own. The school is moving to 454 East Houston St., currently the site of PS 97, which is closing because of low enrollment and low

scores. Currently, there are 300 students in the High School and enrollment will grow to 500 in September.

Bard High School Early College is a four-year school that serves as an alternative to traditional high schools. The early college program offers a rigorous core curriculum in general education geared toward highly motivated high school-aged students who are academically ready and eager to begin college in the 11th grade. At the end of the four-year program, students will receive an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Bard College. Students will also earn credits that can be applied to any four-year college.

"In its first year the Bard High School Early College has truly delivered on its potential," said Chancellor Harold Levy. "It has become a model for a national program announced earli-

Lexington School for the Deaf Honors Ralph Lauren



Photo Credit: Patrick McMullan

Student performers during the dedication of the center.

The students and board members of The Lexington School/Center for the Deaf recently honored Ralph and Ricky Lauren at a gala event celebrating the opening of the school's new state-of-the-art Ralph and Ricky Lauren Center for the Performing Arts. Comedian Robert Klein emceed the event. The event acknowledged Mr. and Mrs. Lauren's \$2 million dollar gift, which converted the school's auditorium into a performance center with cutting edge technology. A special one time-time performance of "Blue, White, and Red" hosted by Robert Klein featured the Lexington Students. The Ralph and Ricky Lauren Center for the Performing Arts is a unique 427-seat performing arts venue representing the transformation of a 33-year-old school auditorium into a model theatrical space for dramatic, dance, musical and multimedia productions. Founded in 1865, The Lexington School and Center for the Deaf provides exemplary education and service to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, ages pre-kindergarten through age twenty-one.#

SUMMER TRAVEL & EDUCATION: HERITAGE SEMINARS

By RICKI BERKOWITZ

Since the shocking horrors were brought to an end over half a century ago, memories of the Holocaust have become a substantial component of Jewish identity for three generations. Its bearing on the World and Jewish communities can be recognized in the vast amount of literature on the subject, the hundreds of museums worldwide, the tales of survivors and witnesses. Yet despite this wealth of information, there are many who feel that in taking a look for themselves at the world in which such devastating tragedy occurred, a stronger connection to the past is formed. As Marc Blanco, a student at the University of Pennsylvania put it, "After years of reading and learning about the Holocaust, I had my first really personal experience only when I saw these sites for myself." This year, over 400 students participated in Heritage Seminars, a program that travels to Eastern Europe and Israel for a first-hand experience.

The program describes itself as "unique educational experiences that study Jewish ancestral roots, research the sources of Jewish life in Eastern Europe and identify with our heritage. Through extensive visits to the destroyed centers of Jewish culture and Torah scholarship and a course of creative academic study that takes place throughout the seminar, participants strengthen their Jewish identity, awareness, and commitment to the Jewish people and the State

of Israel." They must enjoy a measure of success in their mission, because, as Rachel Fortgang, a senior in Ramaz expressed, she gained a strong insight from a comparable Poland-Israel program. "After visiting the sites of Poland, I felt a greater sense of Jewish identity and the importance of Israel."

Approximately 40 Ramaz seniors (an orthodox Jewish day school on the upper east side) participated in Heritage Seminars to Poland and Israel this May. The first days were spent visiting old Jewish cemeteries, synagogues in Warsaw and Jedwabene, yeshivot, places of higher Jewish learning of traditional texts, and the Schindler factory, attending a Commemorative Ceremony in Treblinka, and learning from witnesses during evening sessions. During that time, participants were able to commemorate and even celebrate the heritage of thriving Jewish communities that once were. Toward the end of the Poland part of the trip, participants confronted the cruel realities in Auschwitz, a concentration camp, where a world now better understood had been destroyed by hatred. Many of the students continued on to Israel for the next four days to tour Zefat, the Golan Heights, and Tiberias. In Israel participants were able to hike, volunteer to help prepare packages for soldiers, and even had a chance to purchase Israeli crafts Jerusalem merchants brought to their hotel.

The goal of trips like the Heritage Seminar is to both educate and inspire, providing participants with a unique opportunity to encounter the rich legacy of pre-Holocaust Jewry and, as witnesses, see the site of the devastation of European Jewry. As Jon Krause, another Ramaz senior explains, "These days, as survivors grow older, it becomes more important to better understand what happened during the Holocaust. Actually being there could really lend greater meaning to our history." #

Ricki Berkowitz, an intern at Education Update, is graduating from Ramaz and entering Brandeis in the fall.

er this year by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which plans to replicate the program with 40 new schools nationwide. I am pleased to see New York City set the pace for continued high school reform and I expect the school to continue to flourish in its new home."

Admission to Bard High School Early College is by application and includes an essay and an interview with the students and the student's parents. All New York City students are eligible to apply.#

Calendar of Events July 2002

Open Houses

Although it is not specifically requested by every school, readers are strongly advised to call schools to confirm dates and times and verify if appointments are needed.

**Community School District 3:
Gifted & Talented Program, (212) 678-2897, Marilyn Carella**
300 West 96th St., NY 10025.
Program is available at 8 different schools in Manhattan.

**Touro College
Cisco & Microsoft Networking Certificates:
(718) 265-6534, ext. 1002**
Information session in Brooklyn;
Thursday, July 11 at 6:30 pm;
1870 Stillwell Avenue (at the corner of 82nd Street), First Floor

**Physical & Occupational Therapy Assistant Programs:
(718) 265-6534, ext. 1003**
Wednesday, July 24 at 6:30 pm;
1870 Stillwell Avenue (at the corner of 82nd Street), First Floor

**Smith School:
(212) 879-6354**
7 East 96th Street (between 5th & Madison Ave.), NYC.
Call for appointment.

**Workshops
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Assembly Programs
Our assembly programs are 45 min.- 1 hr. in length and are designed to accommodate up to 350 students at a time. The initial program fee covers one assembly program. An additional program fee is kept low to encourage to break-up audiences of various ages into smaller groups for a more meaningful, age oriented experience. Create some real summer fun with our Science Sportacular!

All our current workshops and assembly programs can be viewed under Educational Experiences at www.lsc.org. Please call (201) 451-0006 and speak with either John Herrera x218, jherrera@lsc.org, or Jim McGlynn x340, jmcglynn@lsc.org, for further details.

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LANGUAGES

MY EXPERIENCES IN ITALY

By **MOLLY WALLACE**

Suor Paola was a nun, a sports commentator and a teacher. It was the day of my tenth birthday when I started as a student in her fifth grade class. It was my third year in Italy, so my Italian had progressed beyond its starting point of, "Io sono Americana, non parlo Italiano." (I'm American, I don't speak Italian) My next-door neighbor and close friend was half Swiss, half Italian and went to French school. She spoke passable German, and fluent French and Italian. Even though I spoke none of these languages, with her intuitive grasp for communication I learned from her quickly. Fifth grade was going to be a different matter altogether.

The difficulties of writing and reading comprehension were not the only ones I would have to face. The notation they used for math was different: decimal points were represented by commas and commas by points. Long division was done not on the same scheme I had been taught. When we studied America in geography/history the textbook stated that people of color were not allowed on the same buses as white people. This was in 1994. When I argued, the teacher seconded the textbook's claim. Another time a boy was teasing me, so I popped my umbrella near his face. With a smile on her face Suor Paola decided that for punishment I should have to kiss him. The whole class, including the teacher began chanting, "Bacio! Bacio! Bacio!" (Kiss!). They stopped when I started crying. In America this could easily have been turned into a sexual harassment case. I realize in retrospect that in a country where a kiss on the cheek is equivalent to a handshake, this would have been nothing but a symbol of reconciliation.

Though my peers were for the most part helpful and supportive, there were times when they were less than understanding. English lessons were part of the curriculum and generally involved learning how to conjugate the present tense of the verb "to be". For someone who had run out of Roald Dahl books to read, this was frustrating. So I got permission from the English teacher to go to another room and read. Throughout the English lessons, the other students would ask to go to the bathroom. Instead

they would come to the room where I was reading to tell me that they had to study Italian in school, so I should have to study English. Responding that they were not studying Italian at the same level they were studying English was to no avail. I ended up preferring the English lessons to the lectures I got from my classmates. Another area in which I didn't get much support from my classmates was on the soccer field. Italy is soccer crazed – boys play and girls watch, which made me the only girl on the soccer team. When I complained to a boy that he never passed me the ball he told me, "Torna a quel paese!" This expression was Roman slang, and I was not familiar with it. Literally it means, "go back to that country," so that's what I took it to mean. When the coach forced him to apologize he explained that it did not have anything to do with me being American, it was just a generic insult.

Soccer was one place where Suor Paola came in handy. When the school was starting out she wrote off to the Rome soccer team and asked them to donate uniforms. She got no reply so she wrote to the Lazio soccer team, Rome's rival. They sent her everything she requested. From then on she was an avid fan and went to the stadium on Wednesdays and Sundays to watch her team play. It is illegal to transmit full games on TV in Italy so TV spectators have to settle for shows with commentators, various distractions and the clips of live highlights. One such show came across Suor Paola in the stadium one weekend, listened to her cheer, and hired her. She became somewhat of a national celebrity. Compared with a nun sports commentator, a girl on the soccer team was not that weird. Thankfully she came to our games and this contrast was apparent to the other teams as well.

When fifth grade was over I took the national exams to pass elementary school, and did fine. I looked at some Italian middle schools, but could not find anything that would match the intimacy that a small school like the one I went to provided. I ended up going to an international school where the Italians spoke to me in Italian, the English speakers in English, and everyone else in whatever language was most convenient. Now I am at college in New York where one of my two majors is Italian. Studying the language and culture in a classroom is a different experience, and while I am learning new specifics about Italy's history and culture, it all rings true to my experience there.#

Molly Wallace is a student at Barnard College and an intern at Education Update.

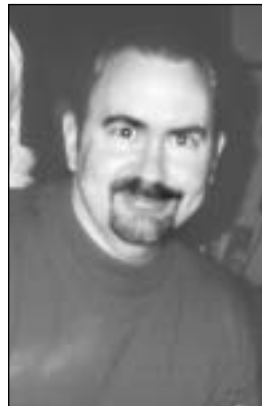
EDUCATION UPDATE

Put it at the TOP of your summer reading!



CAREERS

"Sopranos" Writer Tells His Story



Terry Winter

By **SYBIL MAIMIN**

How's this for a dream job? Become a writer for the hit TV show *The Sopranos*, the highly-acclaimed situation comedy series that takes the unorthodox view that a mob boss is in many ways like you and I, with, for

example, a daughter at Columbia University and a weekly session with a psychiatrist. Terence Winter landed that job after an unlikely path with stabs at many careers and a lot of soul searching.

Born in a blue-collar neighborhood in Brooklyn, the *Sopranos* writer attended William E. Grady Vocational High School where he trained to be an auto mechanic. The atmosphere was decidedly unacademic but he read and wrote stories weekly which caught the attention of English teacher Lannie Gilbert who supported and encouraged him. After graduation he became a partner in a delicatessen owned by friends but left in a year unsure of what path was best for him. Wandering around Greenwich Village, he spotted New York University and, although completely unfamiliar with the culture of college and without academic courses or SATs, he decided to apply. To enhance his chances of admission he chose an obscure major which together with his unusual background gained him entry on the condition he take remedial courses. He attended college full time during the day and worked full time at night, including stints as cab driver, security guard, and, best of all, as night doorman on the Upper East Side for two years which provided opportunities to read and make up for huge gaps in his schooling. While at NYU he discovered journalism and took many courses in that discipline, building confidence in his potential but not imagining a life as a writer. Instead, he chose what seemed like a practical path – law school.

He graduated from St. John's Law School in Queens and accepted a corporate law position. "Miserable" in his job which "did not fit my personality," he began serious soul searching to determine "what is it you want to do when you wake up in the morning?" To counter the restraints of his profession, Winter had done stand-up comedy while lawyering, leading him

to realize he wanted to do sitcom writing.

Moving to Los Angeles for "a fresh start," he took a job as a paralegal that left lots of time to write. His attitude embraced a "single-minded purpose. I was going to make this happen. I never looked at failure as an option." After being rejected twice, he was accepted to Warner Brother's Sitcom Writer's Workshop which takes 15 out of 1500 applicants a year. The ten-week long program that concludes with placement on an existing show provided important breaks. Working on *The Great Defender*, which had a brief, successful run enabled him to establish a reputation. Gaining a reputation and being deemed employable gets you an agent, a difficult yet essential feat in the business. While at *Defender*, he met the writer Frank Renzulli who introduced him to David Chase, head writer and executive producer of *The Sopranos*. Winter is ideally suited to *The Sopranos*, having grown up in a similar milieu. He does some research on criminal law, psychological terminology, and medical facts, but the characters are so alive to him, he "can't stop them from talking."

He is part of a four-person team of writers overseen by Chase who presents them with a broad road map for the season. The four get together for 10-12 hour days hashing out an outline of 30 scenes for each script. One then writes a script from the outline and presents it to the others for further editing and changes. A couple of days before shooting, the script is read aloud, fixed, and read again for further refinement. "Like planning an invasion," the show involves finding locations (95 percent are in New Jersey, the studio is in Queens) and props and hiring actors, stunt people, and wardrobe handlers. During production, the workday is 14-16 hours long. Thirteen episodes are completed in nine months.

The most exciting part of being a writer, says Winter, is "seeing something you created come to life in the mouths of actors you respect" and knowing that "something that starts as a notion in your head makes hundreds or millions of people laugh." His advice to aspiring writers is: read and compare scripts, take writing classes, believe in yourself, and "don't fall into the trap of thinking you can just sit down and write a script. It is a real craft and skill. Lots of work and training go into it." The hardest part of the process and 50 percent of the equation for success is getting an agent (the other half is good writing). Have strong samples, pound the pavement, and work the phones daily. "Keep at it and don't wallow in self-pity. Ultimately, if you write a good, professional script, someone will notice it," he promises.#

Physical Fitness With a Pro

Michael R. Silverstein is not just a trainer. His knowledge of the human body, nutrition, physical education and athletic training culminating in a B.S. from Brooklyn College in 1991, has made him outstanding in the field. He has a successful career as the Assistant Program Director of the Sports Training Institute, the personal training instructor for the World Instruction Training School (2002) and since 1996, is the President of Professional Health and Fitness Management, a Manhattan-based personal training organization. When Silverstein assigns exercises, he always explains what part of the body is being used

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MEDICAL UPDATE



New York City • JULY 2012
FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS

• 12

Talking with Pioneer Dr. Ira Black About Parkinson's Disease

By JOAN BAUM

It's hard to believe that this internationally known clinical neurologist and neuroscientist, at the cutting edge of research, wasn't thinking of medicine when he was in college. Although he was graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, he went on to Columbia University where he got a B.A. in philosophy. Somewhere along the way, however, and certainly by the time he entered Harvard Medical School, he had become "more interested in the organ that philosophizes than in philosophy." And so began the career of one of the most distinguished research scientists in the country. For the past 10 years Dr. Ira Black has been professor and chairman of the Department of Neuroscience and Cell Biology at the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Director of the Joint Graduate Program in Physiology and Neurobiology there and at Rutgers, and is past president of the Society for Neuroscience of North America. A descriptive listing of agency, society, committee, and board affiliations; of publications, including major texts; of patents granted and pending; of peer-journal editorial positions; and of visiting professorships at major universities would con-

sume this entire newspaper. It's said that he may be the most significant researcher working on Parkinson's Disease (P.D.) today. A modest man, with an engaging sense of humor, he stated, "Maybe at one time a single researcher paved the way; our society dotes on heroes," but the truth of the matter is that "scientists work in communities," and medical advances "derive from the work of a large number of people." In fact, Dr. Black is even more ecumenical. He believes that all modes of treating P.D. and all avenues of research should be pursued, regardless of what he, himself, is working on. "We must proceed on all fronts, we must customize for each patient." He has great



Ira Black, M.D.

respect for Parkinson's advocacy groups, such as the Michael J. Fox Foundation. "They have played an immensely important role in supporting research and recruiting scientists," he points out, adding that they are also reliable sources of information for the lay public. It is to those foundations that fearful, newly diagnosed patients might turn, rather than jump too quickly into clinical trials.

Certainly Dr. Black appreciates more than most the desperate hope that often attends media coverage of a procedure that would appear dramatically to retard or temporarily arrest the progress of degenerative and acute neurologic disease. But the reality is that despite promising drugs and surgery, there is at the moment no course of action for Parkinson's

Disease that will stop its slow, erratic and implacable course. In fact, by the time most patients realize they have P.D. they have already suffered 70 – 80% loss of vital brain cells. Is timely diagnosis of any value then? Indeed it is, he replies. Though diagnosis may be difficult, because there is no test, and delayed until symptoms have set in—slowed movements and stamina, halting gait, stiffening of muscles and "mask like" facial expression—the difference between knowing and not knowing is critical for the way one lives. Much can be done.

A first step for those who suspect they may have a neurological problem, Dr. Black advises, would be to see a good old-fashioned neurologist who will do a close hands-on examination. As for the cells that have already suffered damage or died, Dr. Black explains in sympathetic tones that "the brain is fault tolerant," explaining that even where a great preponderance of nerve cells has been damaged or destroyed, it is possible to replace them. This is important information for P.D. patients to hear, especially as the debate continues on the direction of stem cell research. Meanwhile, there is good argument to be made for taking advantage

Continued on page 27

ADD children show undiagnosed vision problems

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- 3) Slow work, poor handwriting (may even be a detailed artist). This can be the result of poor eye-hand coordination.
- 4) Poor word recognition, poor spelling, reverses letters, poor reading comprehension. This is often the result of poor visualization.

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Dr. Ettinger assists student with a processing speed procedure

learning. The 10-week program has resulted in improvements of 4+ years in concentration in some cases. And this is without medication.

"Reading involves more than 20/20 sight. Readers must have a variety of scanning,

focusing and visualization skills" states Dr. Henry Ettinger, director of a local Vision Improvement Program. "Many of my patients have gone from failing or special ed to A's and B's by the 10th week of therapy."

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-Lillian Sanchez-Perez

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Risky Teen Behavior

By RICHARD FRANCES, M.D.

Early detection and treatment of major psychiatric disorders that afflict young people, including addiction, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, attention deficit disorder, and schizophrenia can be the best way to prevent the serious consequences of mental illness, including suicide.

Teenage suicide has doubled in the last 20 years and 70 percent of suicides among young people involve chemical abuse or dependence. Normal youngsters rarely attempt or succeed in suicide, and most suicides are associated with treatable psychiatric conditions including addiction. Parents, teachers and peers need to watch for signs of low self-esteem, hopelessness, social isolation, smoldering anger, crippling sadness and anxiety, use and abuse of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs, impulsivity, poor judgment, and poor communication with family, peers and teachers.

Screening and early treatment for psychiatric problems helps prevent the progression and worsening of conditions that can lead up to disaster. Other important signs include a positive family history of major illnesses, including addiction, depression, bipolar illness, anxiety disorders, and suicide. Watch for signs of these problems in first degree relatives, including siblings. Most of the major psychiatric illnesses begin in the teenage and young adult years, and the earlier they are detected and treated, the better the result. A variety of cognitive behavioral and psychodynamic treatments are available and are most effective when combined with medications in the treatment of these disorders. For young people with substance abuse and additional psychiatric diagnosis, it is crucial to make sure that both diagnoses are well treated and that the individual is substance free while engaged in medication treatment and psychotherapy.

Twelve step, peer led and group, family and network therapy techniques can be very helpful in working with this age group. An especially critical time is the adolescent's first year away from home at college with its often concomitant increase in substance use and decrease in parental presence. One example of a psychiatric illness that has a 15 percent mortality related to suicide is manic depressive disorder which can be effectively treated with lithium and mood stabilizers, and which is frequently associated with alcohol and drug problems. Both problems must be successfully treated to avoid the roller coaster ride of relapse. Well treated individuals with this disorder can go on to productive lives and are often among our most creative and effective people. Undetected or untreated bipolar illness leads to enormous suffering in patients and their families. Some characteristics for evaluating suicide risk include presence of suicidal or homicidal ideation, intent or plans; access to means for suicide and the lethality of those means; presence of command hallucinations, other psychotic symptoms or severe anxiety; presence of alcohol or substance use, history and seriousness of previous attempts and family history of or recent exposure to suicide. Abuse of substances increases impulsivity and worsens judgment which can add fuel to self-destructive impulses.

It is important that schools, parents and the mental health community work closely together to provide better screening, detection and preventative treatment for major psychiatric illnesses. This will lead to reduction of the devastating effects of suicide on family, schools and community. #

Dr. Richard Frances is President and Medical Director of Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, Connecticut.

Depression in Teenagers

By GLENN S. HIRSCH, M.D.

Adolescence and the beginning of adulthood is a developmental phase burdened with stressful events: high school, starting college, pursuing career goals, forming relationships with friends and significant others, coping with changing family roles. These stresses can precipitate life-threatening illnesses and behaviors such as depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, eating disorders and even suicide. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder often have their onset during this time.

During adolescence there is a rapid increase in the number of youngsters who suffer from depressive illness and have suicidal thoughts. Several studies indicate that up to 8.3 percent of adolescents suffer from depression, 20 percent of America's teens have had thoughts about ending their lives and suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults.

The most important risk factor in teenage suicide is having a psychiatric illness. About half of youngsters who kill themselves have a depressive disorder. Other disorders that place teens at high risk include aggression, behavioral disorders and substance abuse.

While twice as many girls attempt suicide as boys, boys are more than ten times as likely to kill themselves. This difference appears to be mainly due to the method used. Girls tend to overdose with pills which is often less lethal than the use of guns which has been implicated in more than sixty percent of teen suicides.

Since depressive disorders are implicated in the majority of teen suicides, an important pathway to preventing suicide is the identification and treatment of mood disorders. Some of the signs that a teen or young adult is suffering from depression include: persistent sadness, irritability or boredom, complaints that nothing is enjoyable or a decrease in interest in activities or peers, sleep or appetite changes, diffi-

culty concentrating and poor school performance. Youngsters with these symptoms should have a diagnostic evaluation with a mental health professional for possible intervention and treatment. The two treatments that show the most promise include antidepressant medication and specialized psychotherapies. They include cognitive behavioral and interpersonal therapy. (For further information about mental illness and its treatment in children and adolescents see www.AboutOurKids.org.)

The National Institute of Mental Health is currently sponsoring a treatment study of teenagers age 12-17 who are suffering from depression. The NYU Child Study Center is one of the sites in NY. For further information call 212-263-8613.

For some teens and young adults outpatient treatment may not be sufficient or the danger of suicidal behavior may be great. For them hospitalization may be necessary. The Young Adult Program at the New York University Child Study Center was established several years ago to help older teens and young adults whose psychiatric condition requires hospitalization. It is an intensive psychiatric inpatient program, which serves the mental health needs of the often-neglected population of 15 to 24 year-olds. Experts from NYU in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, social work and nursing, draw on leading-edge therapeutic techniques and breakthrough pharmacological research in treating patients. Emphasizing rapid assessment and individualized attention, this team of experts strives to restore balance to a young life in turmoil and help the young adult return to active life. For further information about the program call Dr. Naomi Weinschenker at 212-263-5956.#

Glenn S. Hirsch, M.D. is the Deputy Director of the NYU Child Study Center and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry.

Choices: Perspectives of a Patient With Parkinson's Disease

By HARVEY K. FRIEDLAND,
J.D., B.E.E.

It started with a twitch in one of my fingers. It pulsed then quickly abated. For reasons then beyond my comprehension, it started again. This is what I told my physician half a decade ago. She immediately told me "You have Parkinson's disease. I'll make an appointment

with our neurologist, a young physician who went to Harvard Medical School. He'll examine you, perform exclusionary tests, make an official determination and put you on a schedule for medication. Okay?"

It's now four years later. I've been on the usual Parkinson's medications—Elderpryl and L-dopa. I recently entered the advanced stage of Parkinson's, which means that those hours of the day when I become rigid and lethargic are arriving at increasing intervals. During the cherished "on" times, when the medication is working the way it's intended, PD sufferers such as myself feel normal and energetic, but these hours dwindle to mere moments and become more elusive and fleeting as the disease progresses and the body deteriorates. New symptoms have started occurring; I've now found myself plagued with

shuffling, dizziness and intermittent loss of equilibrium.

When I was first diagnosed with PD, I read a tremendous amount about the disease. As I familiarized myself with PD by following cutting-edge research, attending lectures (such as those given by Dr. Jeff Bronstein, Director of Motion Disorders at UCLA) and going to support groups, I found that: there are really only a few options available to the Parkinson's sufferer. A patient can opt to take medication and let the disease take its ineluctable toll on his body, or he can elect to have DBS – Deep Brain Stimulation – a serious surgical procedure that has shown promising results but is still a far cry from a cure. DBS only lessens certain symptoms (such as tremor) and still requires some patients to maintain their regimen of drugs. Also, DBS sometimes requires patients to undergo the procedure more than once.

There is a third choice – a third hope – on the horizon. "Spheramine", a procedure not yet authorized by the FDA (but on the fast-track for approval and granted funds by the National Institute of Health), utilizes cell-coated micro-carriers (CCM) to inject human retinal pigmented epithelial cells into a person's brain so that a patient can begin regenerating the dopamine-producing cells that have been dying since he began suffering from Parkinson's. If and when approved by the FDA, spheramine offers the best hope to patients such as myself, since it is a site-specific, minimally invasive procedure and has the potential of emancipating the PD sufferer from both his symptoms and his dependence on side-effect causing

drugs. The true innovative genius of spheramine, which was pioneered by the brilliant neurologist Dr. Ray Watts of Emory Medical School, is that the replacement cells injected into a patient don't eventually wither and die. They maintain their potency for an extremely long time. What's more, as many as 10,000 patients could be treated by a single batch of retinal cells!

My personal neurologist, the aptly-named Dr. Donna Masterman of UCLA, firmly believes I am making the right choice in pursuing spheramine therapy versus DBS or another form of treatment. Dr. Masterman is expertly familiar with the tribulations of Parkinson's and feels that replacement cell technology is right for my body and stage of the disease. Replacement cell technology bears such unique promise that Michael J. Fox's foundation has donated over four million dollars to its furtherance.

During my intensive research in the last few years, I learned that spheramine is the first product of a company called Titan Pharmaceuticals. Though spheramine has yet to complete the necessary clinical trials to attain FDA approval, it has completed phases I and II of safety and efficacy and all six patients in the clinical trial of spheramine have demonstrated marked improvement. In an April 18, 2002 news release, Alison Roselli, Titan's director of corporate communications, reported on the six individuals in the pilot study, "Patients experienced an average of 48 percent improvement in motor "Universal Parkinson's Disease Research Score" (UPDRS) over all other Parkinson's medications. [They also experienced] an average of 43 percent improvement in

continued on page 30

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ASK DR. MCCUNE



About Children and Depression

By LORRAINE McCUNE,
Ph.D.

Every moment of infant and childhood happiness is precious. As the adults in charge, parents or professionals, we hold the possibility of children's happiness, sadness, or depression in our power. A natural state of healthy well-being comes from a sense that we are safe, that we know our powers and their limits, and we know that a cushion of support, parental, familial, societal, surrounds us, taking up the slack where our own powers are limited. For very young children, their powers are limited indeed, and the sense of an adult at the ready, some one especially for them, is essential to well-being. This is the simple basis of attachment theory. In infancy one or both parents, perhaps other relatives, and in some cases, professional caregivers fulfill this essential role. The seeds of childhood well-being, a general sense of happiness rather than sadness or depression is sown in the early years through the availability of an adult to "attune" to the young child, providing psychologically intimate understanding, as well as nourishment and physical contact.

During the early months, infants of depressed mothers have been found to show much lower frequency of happy facial expressions, and much more frequent sadness or anger than comparison infants whose parents were not depressed. Adults' own mental health is a serious contributor to children's emotional well-being. We may not think that young children can be "depressed" as adults can, and the situation is, of course very different. However, children of any age can experience a diminution of interest, activity and learning due to feelings of sadness and insecurity. Sometimes their depressed state is expressed by excessive quieting, a dangerous situation for pre-school and school age children, whose troubles may go un-

ticed because they are so "good". At the other extreme, childhood depression is transformed into anger and acting out. Children who have experienced abuse are more likely than others to injure themselves accidentally, through diminished attention to the environment, or a lack of sufficient caring for their own well-being. They are more likely to attribute malevolent intentions to peers in ambiguous situations, leading to fighting and bullying. These disruptive behaviors are always symptomatic, so that along with disciplinary strategies, therapeutic attention need also be paid.

Parents and professionals need to monitor the emotional well-being of the children in their care, just as they monitor physical health and progress in learning and development. Within the family, proactive support such as listening to your children with attention as they report the sometimes mundane interests of their world, broadening those interests through book reading, joint television watching, and trips with your child to fun places, especially with the summer months upon us, are all ways of enhancing the sense of well-being and preventing potential mental health problems.

It is also important to assist children with the necessary challenges of their lives. Divorce and loss through death come to mind as circumstances extremely challenging to children. These are also challenges which cast adults into emotional upheaval or deep sadness. It can be difficult in these circumstances to remember the special needs of children who may seem happy-go-lucky through it all. Don't be fooled by bravado. Sometimes children need to hide their sadness even from themselves until it diminishes naturally in intensity, or until an adult reaches out. #

Dr. Lorraine McCune is a professor at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education and serves as advisor to educational toy company, General Creation. She can be reached at www.generalcreation.com in the "Ask Dr. McCune" section.

Keep Your Child's Mind Fresh During the Hot Summer Months

A study conducted a few years ago found that over the summer vacation, children can lose a quarter of their reading and math skills.

Parenting and family author Penny Warner has the educational projects these parents need in *Summer Smarts for Cool Kids: Over 150 Fantastic and Fun Learning Activities to Help Kids Beat the Summer Blahs*. Using materials

found around the house or inexpensive to purchase, Warner outlines activities that will captivate and challenge children of all ages. Ages 3-9: Watch the Marble: A simple but amazing trick; Ages 7-12: Bug Detective: How many critters can you find?; Grass Head: Grow a funny fuzz head; Tales of Super Pet: Turn your pet into a super hero.#

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S SEAT



Building Self Esteem Is Important For All Children

By DR. CAROLE G.
HANKIN WITH
RANDI T. SACHS

By age nine or 10, children begin to take more notice if a classmate looks, acts, or dresses differently. As much as parents and teachers would like to protect all children from being hurt, we need to first teach them why it is wrong to view differences in others as negative, and also to teach them how (and if) to respond, if they are the subject of an attack, either verbal or physical. One way to make an impression is to have the children observe this type of behavior in a controlled setting, and then discuss how they feel about it.

In Syosset, we have a program that brings together high school students to serve as role models for all of our districts' third grade students. "Peer Educators," are high school students selected for this program. They undergo training on interacting with the younger students for the first half of the year, and then visit each of the classes several times in the spring to implement their lessons on "anti-bullying and anti-aggressiveness." One of the most popular methods they have used over the past several years is to put on skits for the children to get their message across. This year, they tried another approach to teaching the children about respecting themselves and one another. The Peer Educators helped the younger children to produce a musical production of their own with a very strong message. The play gave the children very concrete examples on why name-calling is hurtful, but even more importantly, gave them strategies for handling these types of situations should they arise.

The play is meant to teach children to appreciate differences in others and to accept that different

does not mean worse. When one group of children declares another group to be "nerds" the response they receive is quite disappointing. Instead of getting upset, the second group of children simply responds with matter-of-fact answers or attempts to turn the conversation away from criticizing and steer the others toward accepting one another, even making jokes to try to cool down hot tempers.

Not only are the children not devastated by the rejection of the others, but they also demonstrate that they feel good about themselves and that they have their own unique qualities. Song and dance numbers in the production give each student the opportunity to take center stage and to show that there are many different ways to be "cool."

There's something about a production like this that transcends even the message it so bluntly delivers. It requires cooperation, teamwork, and a willingness to take a little risk by appearing on stage. The students all clearly felt good about the job they did, and they received the applause and appreciation of the second and first graders who were the lucky audience members.

Most experts agree that one reason children will bully others is because they lack enough self esteem to feel good about themselves without picking on someone who is smaller or has less defenses. Through these kinds of programs we can reach out to young children and show them that each and every one of them has tremendous self worth for who they are. Teachers report that it works. They have found that there is better harmony in their classes after meeting with the high school students.#

Dr. Hankin is the Superintendent of the Syosset School District in Long Island.

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It is summertime in the city. It is just the time to come up to Logos Bookstore, sit outside in our backyard on sunny, cooler days and evenings, sipping on a beverage of your own choice, and looking over books for your summer reading. On hotter days, you can enjoy our well air-conditioned store browsing for books, cards, music, bibles and other gift items. While

The *Mr. Men* Series
by Roger Hargreaves
(Price, Sloan, Stern, \$2.99 each book)

at the store, take a look at the Mr. Men series that includes such titles as: *Mr. Grumpy*, *Mr. Cheerful*, *Mr. Clever*, *Mr. Clumsy*, *Mr. Busy*, *Mr. Grumble*, *Mr. Perfect* and *Mr. Impossible*. Roger Hargreaves' texts and illustrations are well

suited to convey to children, with great humor, those character traits and the foibles these little men have.

A compelling first novel, just published, is *Twelve* written by Upper East Sider Nick McDonell, seventeen years old at the time and in school. McDonell engages the reader in a chilling world of sophisticated, bored

Manhattan teenagers who must enjoy the ultimate sensation in drugs, weapons or any other pet indulgences to find meaning in their lives. The author's ability to tell a good story keeps the reader's full attention right up to the last page.

Twelve
by Nick McDonell
(Grove Press, \$23)

During the month of July from Monday, July 8 through Wednesday, July 31, 2002, enjoy the Logos Summer Sale of

20% Off All Hardcover Books. Come on over! **Transit:** #4, #5, #6 Lexington Avenue Subway to 86th St., M15 Bus (First & Second Aves.), M86 Bus (86th St.), M79 Bus (79th St.), M31 Bus (York Ave.)

Upcoming Events At Logos

Wednesday, July 3, 2002, 7 P.M., KYTV Reading Group will discuss *The Sea, The Sea* by Iris Murdoch.

Logos Summer Sale: Monday, July 8 through Wednesday, July 31, 2002, All Hardcover Books 20% Off.

Wednesday, August 7, 2002, 7 P.M., KYTV Reading Group will discuss *Howard's End* by E.M Forster.

Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide

By MERRI ROSENBERG

'Behold, I am a dry tree' (Isaiah)

When Kay Redfield Jamison uses this quote from a suicide to explain the degree of hopelessness that the successful execution of this act embodies, it is hard for the reader not to feel just as overwhelmed by those feelings of despair.

Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide
by Kay Redfield Jamison.
Published by Vintage Books, New York: 2000 (432 pages).

As Jamison explains in this thorough, beautifully written and oddly compelling book, suicide is one of those acts that mocks those who survive, whether they are family members, health profes-

sionals, compassionate friends, or simply bewildered bystanders. She writes that we now know almost everything about suicide except the 'why', and to a large extent, this book is her attempt to bring us closer to some comprehension of this tragic mystery. Be careful, though. It's not a book to attempt in one sitting; that would be almost too much to bear.

"Most suicides, although by no means all, can be prevented," says Jamison. "The breach between what we know and do is lethal."

The statistics that Jamison, a professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and an honorary professor of English at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, cites are sobering: 30,000 Americans kill themselves every year; half a million make an attempt that is serious enough to land them in a hospital emergency room. Jamison — herself a sufferer of manic-depression, and a failed suicide — knows her subject all too intimately.

The risk of suicide is especially great among teenagers and young adults. Suicide is the third leading cause of young people, and the second among college students. She writes, "College-age children are at particular risk for mental illness or suicide because first episodes of depressive illness or schizophrenia are most likely to occur at this time."

And according to a 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Study that the author mentions, 20 percent of high school students have seriously considered suicide. Another study, based on New York high school students, suggests that 50 percent of them have thought about killing themselves.

Jamison is particularly stringent in her condemnation of diagnosis and treatment of mentally ill children and adolescents, who are at risk for suicide. One problem is that bipolar disorder and manic-depression are often misdiagnosed as attention deficit disorder. Another is that too many school-based programs aren't effective in their interventions. Jamison believes that some do harm, by presenting students with inaccurate or misleading information.

One program she does like, based on the work of David Shaffer at Columbia, is effective in part because there is no responsibility for teachers or students to assume the role of mental health professionals.

In one of the more disheartening narratives, following the fallen trajectory of a successful Air Force cadet who succumbs to mental illness and ultimately suicide, Jamison writes, "Each way to suicide is its own: intensely private, unknowable and terrible."

To be sure, there are some definite risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of suicide. Having a bipolar disorder, manic depression, schizophrenia, especially when combined with alcohol or drug abuse, clearly contribute to successful suicides. In general, according to Jamison, suicide is more likely to be linked to a psychiatric, rather than a major medical, condition. Still, she cautions, "Psychological pain or stress alone—however great the loss or disappointment, however profound the shame or rejection—is rarely sufficient cause for suicide."

It's hardly coincidence that suicides often appear to run in families. In one of the more provocative chapters, Jamison suggests that perhaps there is an evolutionary, or even biological basis for suicide. She asks, "Is suicide a price to pay for diversity?", wondering whether

Continued on page 29

A MEMOIR OF MICHAEL J. FOX

By JOAN BAUM

Safe to say that if it were not for Michael J. Fox's bold statement before the press in September 1998 and subsequent appearances in Congress and on T.V., Parkinson's Disease (P.D.) would be not so prominent a subject today or at the center of the controversy surrounding stem cell research. (The "J," by the way, was made up to distinguish MJF the actor from another Michael Fox with an Actors Equity card.) Simply put, what MJF did four years ago

Lucky Man: A Memoir
by Michael J. Fox
(Hyperion Books, 260 pp. \$22.95)

was to make it all right for thousands of secret sufferers to acknowledge this degenerative neurological disease. In a way, Fox's announcement was like Betty Rollin's years ago about breast cancer in her book, *First You Cry* — a breakthrough *Lucky Man* is certain to encourage

those who feel victimized by P.D. to convert their fears to action and join the campaign for a way to slow or stop the inevitable course of the disease. Of course, Fox may have had no choice but to go public, since the tabloids were already suggesting that his withdrawal from the phenomenally successful "Spin City" and his slow-down in accepting more movie roles pointed to a serious neurological disease. In fact, by 1998, it had already been seven years that the now 37-year old actor had been keeping his condition secret. That story and much more is the subject of his inspiring memoir.

Lucky Man has the odd distinction of probable appeal to two different audiences:

1) younger fans who will revel in MJF's recounting of how a hell-raising, high school drop out from a working-class Canadian family became a star; and 2) an older audience who will read the book, mainly for the information it provides about diagnosing P.D. and learning perhaps how to accept the inevitable. What links the parts is Fox's repeated moving tribute to his loving and supportive wife, Tracy Pollan and their children, most of whom were born after he learned he had P.D. Even he finds it ironic that the mischievous star of the

TV series *Family Ties* should finally embrace family values. In truth, however, Tracy seems to have served him well before the onset of the disease. This is a well written book and there is no doubt that the voice is his. Although Fox entitles the book *Lucky Man*, it is more than likely that what got him through denial to resignation and acceptance, has less to do with luck than with inner resources: humor, drive, and focus. Luck might also be ascribed to his choice of wife, but in truth his choice—and hers—would seem to reflect innate values and sound intuition. It was Tracy who kept after him to look into why, one hangover morning he can hardly recollect, he could not control a sudden odd twitching in his left pinky.

Lucky Man has much to recommend to that second readership—indeed, perhaps, even to the younger first, since Fox himself came down with the disease at the relatively rare young age of 30. Because of his extraordinary book and efforts, P.D. is now as well known as Alzheimer's and ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), an etiology it partially shares with these other neurological disorders. Fox believes that of the three, P.D. will be "the first domino to fall" in the efforts to prevent, treat, or cure the disease. At the very least, however, this memoir will be instructive to those who live in silent and lonely fear. The title might be misleading — the book has an upbeat tone and comforting message: reassess your life, find your true values, seek and keep love — an exhortation not unlike what has been offered to the victims of 9/11. One cannot be comforted, however, for getting a debilitating illness, but one can find strength and, absent that, perhaps with a bit of luck, others who can help in the struggle to find it. In one of the most touching parts of the book, MJF extends a wise and compassionate invitation to his curious and no doubt frightened young son to be his scout for the twitching hand — to take charge, squeeze it, control it . . . for the moment. This moving scene, of many, no doubt, the author hopes, will move readers to support the efforts to combat P.D.

All proceeds from *Lucky Man* are being donated to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. #

(See *Medical Update* pages 12,13)

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STUDENTS AGAINST SUICIDE

By HOPE GLASSBERG

If the saying "all press is good press" rings true, mental health issues have had quite a successful press run of late. From the popularity of *A Beautiful Mind*, the dramatization of Princeton University professor John Nash's struggle with schizophrenia, to the highly publicized suicide of MIT sophomore Elizabeth Shin (and the ensuing legal battle) mental illness was, very literally, on the brain this year.

In the wake of the media blitz and a real need for better mental health services on college campuses, many student run organizations have sprung up to address this growing epidemic. While these groups differ in their approaches and configurations, they all evoke a common tenor: mental illness must be understood and dealt with proactively.

Sarah Ramer, Harvard '03, is co-chair of a student created and run organization called Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy Group (MHAAG). After two of her floor mates attempted to commit suicide during her freshman year, Ramer says she was confounded by the lack of open dialog about mental illness.

"Two people on my floor out of 24 people tried to kill themselves and there was very little said about it. It seemed like there was very little said in general about mental illnesses. I just in general always thought it would be nice if a group of people came to the freshman study groups and talked about [mental illness]. I thought that's what I want to be involved in, a group by students for students," Ramer said.

Ramer discovered that such an organization had been created in 1997 after a student wrote a piece in the Harvard newspaper *The Crimson* about her experience with mental illness. The piece generated such a positive response that several students, including the author of the piece, decided to form a mental health awareness group, MHAAG. Ramer says the group had "fallen into disrepair" since their graduation but thanks to her and others' efforts has enjoyed a renewed success and presence on Harvard's campus.

MHAAG is one of a number of relatively new groups of this nature. Brown University has a counseling network called BSPAN; at Columbia University, a group called Students Against Silence (SAS) was developed this year to both respond to suicides and lead a proactive "campus climate change," to name a few. But while SAS and MHAAG are student run and broadly focused, a mental health task force formed at MIT this year, claims students, administrators, and faculty to its staff and is more immediate in its aims.

Efrat Shavitz, MIT '02, a student chair on the task force, says the group was designed to undertake what ended up being a Herculean task: evaluating the preexisting mental health apparatus at MIT.

"We surveyed 1000 students and had very particular concerns that mainly fell under the point of accessibility. The support services that are on campus themselves are really good and there are multiple entry points, but the coordination of these points isn't good. We developed recommendations on how [these systems could be coordinated]." The students also wanted evening hours because they have classes on a 9-5 schedule, faster appointment times, and better training for some of the people," Shavitz said.

Shavitz says that she and the other members of the task force took these concerns and prioritized them and developed a list of recommendations, many of which have already been implemented or are being implemented this summer.

Despite their groups' different approaches, Ramer and Shavitz espouse similar beliefs about the state of mental health affairs on college campuses. Both explain that their groups are not designed to simply address suicide or depression.

"Suicide is always at the back of your mind because you know it could come to that," Ramer said. "I try to be very clear about there are other mental illnesses out there: obsessive compulsive disorder, for example. Other men-

tal illnesses can inflict the same pain and damage as depression."

Shavitz says she dislikes the term "suicide prevention" because "you can't necessarily prevent suicide, you can setup all of your support systems in such a way that gives people all the help they could get. Our main objective was to look at the safety net available see how we could maximize it."

Both suggest that the apparent rise in the number of college age students afflicted with mental illness has more to do with the age group and the effectiveness of modern medicine than a fundamental change in the college campus milieu.

"Most students who wouldn't have made it to college before because of their mental illnesses are making it to college now because of medications that control the illness," Ramer said. "A lot of students are entering college with illnesses."

Shavitz also says that she believes the "trend will continue to grow" unless colleges and universities start dealing with mental illness in a frank and open manner.

"In the past, [mentally ill students made up] a relatively small population so colleges did a very good job of brushing the subject under the rug. It was a closed mouth sort of policy," Shavitz said.

Many students find an exclusively administrative approach to mental health issues overly antiseptic and out of touch with real student

needs. Ramer says that even the Harvard administration's most earnest attempts to reach out to students were often met with indifference.

"The provost's office put together this really nice brochure about depression. I was in the mailroom and when people found it, they tossed it in the trash, they didn't care what it had to say or what it was about," Ramer said.

Since her freshman year, Ramer has been a firm believer in the power of the personal testimonial.

"During my freshman year we had some students come and tell us stories about how they knew they were gay. I was struck by how frank they were. If you were struggling with the issue, you could relate to them and feel that it was ok. If you weren't struggling with it, you could see that they looked just like you or me," Ramer said. "We should have the same approach to mental health issues. Students should tell their own stories."

Ramer and Shavitz emphasize that cooperation with administrators is key to the success of any mental health or awareness program. MHAAG has worked closely with Harvard administrators, particularly the office of the provost, and the task force at MIT is comprised of undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and administrators. Shavitz says this cooperation has been integral to task force's ability to objectively analyze the problem at MIT and that mental health cannot be the exclusive province of concerned students.#

Hope Glassberg is a student at Columbia College and an intern at Education Update.

Resources for Parents & Students

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (www.asfp.org/)

National Survivors of Suicide Day – The American foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) will host its annual National Survivors of Suicide Day Teleconference on November 23, 2002 throughout the country. Go to (www.afsp.org/survivor/conference.htm) to read about last year's conference.

AFSP has put together a list of Support Groups throughout the country. Find a group in your area (www.afsp.org/survivor/groups.htm)

AFSP has compiled a bibliography on suicide and surviving.

(www.afsp.org/about/biblio.htm)

General Information for Survivors from AFSP

(www.afsp.org/survivor/information.htm)

Bereavement Information Pack

(www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/gaskell/berav/index.htm) from England's Royal College of Psychiatrists

Crisis Hotlines

1-888-Suicide

Youth Crisis Line 1-800-999-9999

Trevor Project (for gay, lesbian, transsexual, bisexual youths) 1-800-850-8078

National Support for Survivors of suicide – Friends for Survival, Inc. 1-916-392-0664

Suicide Prevention and Screening

Visit the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

(<http://www.safeyouth.org/topics/suicide.htm>) site for information on prevention and intervention programs, publications, research, and statistics on youth suicide.

Education Update received the above information from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). For more information go to www.afsp.org.

Parents Respond to Suicide: The Jed Foundation Tries to Save Lives

By POLA ROSEN, Ed.D.

You have suffered the greatest nightmare of parenthood: you have lost a child to the violent, self-inflicted torture of suicide. Your life will never be the same.

Some parents feel guilt: they should have been more insightful and seen the pain. Others can't go on and feel their lives are destroyed. Some few find that through blazing a path to help other young adults, they are helping to memorialize the child they lost. Donna Satow is one such parent. After her son Jed committed suicide at the University of Arizona in Tucson, she and her husband decided that services to help their son and others was almost nonexistent on many college campuses. They created *Uline.org*, a web site dedicated to college students and their mental health. The plan calls for customizing a website for each college campus which will only be available to the college community via password. It will be anonymous, and will contain a self-screening questionnaire (developed at Duke University), a place to ask questions of mental health professionals, link directly to appointments, have a dialogue and have access to a mental health library (Harvard Medical School). The purpose

is to provide a safety net for students at risk and to reduce the suicide rate in people 18-24. The Jed Foundation, only one year old, has just raised one million dollars and already has customized websites for 60 colleges.

Satow has pulled together a series of experts including lawyers, psychiatrists and college presidents to come up with a blueprint for suicide prevention. The Satows are also developing a Parents Program to assist families of students who may need help currently enrolled in university or those soon to enter.

When asked what parents can do to help their children, Satow responded, "They should ask what safety net your child's college has and the services available, 'just in case.'" Parents should know about mental health services and be alert for warning signs.

Ron Gibori, the fraternity president who was a friend of Jed's now runs the *Uline.org* website. He can be reached at rgibori@yahoo.com.

For more information about the Jed Foundation contact www.jedfoundation.org or www.uline.org or email: emailus@thejedfoundation.org.



Truth (painted by an 18 year-old)

Suicide Prevention On College Campuses

By MOLLY WALLACE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college aged students. In his 2001 book *Noonday Demon*, Andrew Solomon wrote that "Someone in a first depressive episode is particularly likely to attempt suicide." Many experience their first bout of depression in college. As a result, college counseling services and administrations are crucial to preventing suicide.

"When we're talking about suicide among college students, generally we're talking about mental illnesses," says Dr. Laura Smith, Director of Barnard College Counseling Services. Confirming Dr. Smith's comments are Solomon's statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health: 90-95 percent of suicides, especially at the college age, are the result of mental illnesses, the most prevalent being depression. Studies cited in Kay Redfield Jamison's noteworthy book on suicide *Night Falls Fast* (reviewed in this issue), depressives are at approximately twenty times the suicide risk of the general population. Those who have previously attempted suicide are at thirty-eight times the risk: "Contrary to popular myth, those who talk about suicide are the most likely to kill themselves," states Solomon's book. Targeting these populations can cut suicide rates.

Dr. Smith contends that peer support and student groups play an invaluable role in raising awareness, de-stigmatizing the seeking of help and helping others recognize depression in themselves. There is less stigma attached to therapy than there once was, Dr. Smith explains, but still not every

one who needs help seeks it. Some want to prove that they can handle the independence that comes with college without help. Others, especially at highly selective institutions, are used to succeeding on their own and looking for help simply does not occur to them. For those adjusting to college, or who are under academic or other forms of stress it can be difficult to draw a line between what is an appropriate response and what constitute symptoms of depression. In these cases student groups can help by having students being open about their experiences with counseling and referring students to the services they need. Jamison writes of a young man who took his own life, "Drew's family, whose warmth and understanding of him would have been, in a fairer world, more than sufficient to keep him alive, could not compete with a relentless and ruinous disease," explaining that all the kindness and support shown to a suicidal person is not necessarily enough. As Andrew Solomon points out, "Illness of the mind is real illness... and it requires treatment."

So what do college

counseling services do once a patient is in their hands? Both Dr. Smith and Dr. Paul Buckingham, Director of Counseling Services at Brigham Young University (BYU) Hawaii explain that there is no textbook response to how to handle a severely depressed or suicidal patient. Each case must be evaluated on an individual basis. Doctor/patient relationships remain confidential unless the student's safety is at risk. Students at both institutions are encouraged to contact family members, if appropriate, and generally they are willing. If it were necessary and appropriate, family members could be contacted without consent of the patient. If the situation calls for it, students can be hospitalized. Dr. Smith observes that generally students who bring themselves in know they are struggling, and in that sense they are better off than those who are brought in by others. The latter tend to require hospitalization more often.

"Colleges are not equipped to be mental health centers," says Dr. Buckingham justifying the hospitalization of students. At BYU Hawaii suicide is an honor code violation. Consequently, if a student is talking about suicide and refuses treatment he or she can be forced to leave the school in order to get treatment. In such a case acceptance is guaranteed with reapplication provided that the student includes a letter from a mental health professional stating that he or she has been treated successfully. Hospitalization also has the advantage of taking pressure off friends. Dr. Smith emphasizes that although it is important for students to have peer support, friends of depressed patients need to put their own well-being first.

Dr. Smith's statistics show that around 23% of Barnard students use counseling services (numbers went up after September 11th), and Dr. Buckingham's numbers show that at BYU Hawaii 8%-12% of students do. Few of these cases are severe enough to require hospitalization. Both Dr. Buckingham and Dr. Smith say that a large number of people who come in complain of depression. The causes range from academic stress to family problems to romantic problems, and at BYU Hawaii where a large part of the student population is international, adjustment difficulties. Both doctors say treatment for less severe cases of depression vary. In some cases medication is suggested. "We would never put a student on medication, without following through with therapy," says Dr. Smith. In other cases only therapy is used.

The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign has a successful suicide prevention program that follows up every suicidal gesture or attempt with an incident report and four weeks of mandatory assessment. Approximately 1,500 students have gone through this program in seventeen years. None have committed suicide. Considering the high risk that these students were at, this is a remarkable feat.

Another program called Columbia Teen Screen, researched at Columbia University under Director Dr. David Shaffer, has been successful in high schools. The program has four steps: obtaining permission, then completing a questionnaire. If the participant scores positively on the first screening, they are more thoroughly assessed by a computerized diagnostic interview called the Voice-DISC (Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children). The DISC allows for youth to complete the interview independently and eliminates the cost of having trained interviewers. Those who are identified by the Voice-DISC as meeting criteria for a disorder are evaluated by a mental health professional. The clinician may then recommend further evaluation and/or treatment to the child and the child's parents after discussing the results. The advantage of this program is that it catches young people before they attempt suicide thereby helping to predict or prevent depression later in life. Dr. Ted Greenberg, a coordinator of the program says, "it should be used in colleges".

A Wilderness Camp Helps Heal



Girls enjoying the wilderness experience

By POLA ROSEN, Ed.D.

By the time Jacqueline Danforth, a Dalton student, was fifteen years old, she was into drugs, gangs, and alcohol. It was time for drastic action. Her mother, Barbara Walters, researched different options and Jackie entered the Rocky Mountain Academy, a 3-year degree-granting (high school diploma) wilderness school in Idaho. After 3 and 1/2 years, Jackie graduated with much more than a high school degree. "It was a place where people cared, where people understood and were honest." Although not agreeing with certain techniques used such as sleep deprivation, the program helped her and others achieve self-esteem and feel good about themselves. Jackie did not return to her home in New York, a place she had not had much happiness. Instead, she lived with older students from the school in Oregon, then Washington state, finally enrolling in a marine biology program at the University of Maine. Feeling uncomfortable and isolated at the age of thirty, in a college community of 18 year-olds, she soon decided to opt for establishing her own wilderness camp for troubled teenage girls, ages 13-17. New Horizons Wilderness Camp, completing its first year, "is an unlocked, nurturing and caring environment," says Danforth. Her husband, a registered Maine guide, is a vital part of the program. Along with hiking, canoeing, camping and cooking in summer and snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing and cabin life in winter, the girls get "fresh air, time and peace and the freedom to be yourself for 8 weeks." Danforth's message is "It's you and me; I really want to help you!"

There are 4-5 staff per group of 7 girls, and two therapists to supervise. Group discussions are interwoven throughout the day and may last 1-3 hours depending on the needs of the girls. Danforth feels that computers make kids socially inept. "Kids, especially women, need companionship."

On a typical day, girls wake at 7 am, wash up, cut and gather wood, cook meals with the staff over a fire, and then do journal writing. They are only allowed to receive letters from home, not

phone calls. Danforth explained, phoning can lead to shouting and disruption. The girls then pack up, canoe to the next site and have lunch. After a group session, they set up camp, have dinner and do more journal writing. Reading comes next. Books on hand are, for example, *Reviving Ophelia*.

The girls work on different values each week. Truth (what is the truth about you?), friendship, forgiveness, transition, acceptance. Each phase deals with them, their families and peers.

Horizons provides excellent food and all clothing. Currently there are 55 girls who are tracked for four years after they leave the program.

Who benefits from this program? Girls who are depressed, mildly self-abusive, have poor body image or are bipolar (who are stabilized on medication). "Borderline personality disorders are tough" said Danforth. "They take a lot of attention, and are disruptive to the point of hurting the others because they want all the attention."

For suicidal girls we make a contract. She agrees to come and talk to us before she does anything. The contract gives her a measure of control. There are also contracts for self-mutilation and running away. Said Danforth, "We set boundaries; that leads to a set of values and self-respect."

To the question, what role do you play in the camp, Danforth answered, "A big sister." She talks to the girls about her own experiences, about adoptive issues and is a resource person who has "been there, done that." Her vision for the future is to run a school that will be separate from the wilderness program. "It will be a three year program with individual and group therapy. There will be no home visits; the girls will go on expeditions in the first year and gradually taper therapy and include more home visits by the third year. There will be high quality academics and non-competitive sports like yoga, ballet and martial arts."

The high points of Danforth's life are the "hugs and embraces whenever a girl leaves and says how wonderful we are and that she wants to come back and work for us."#

Programs like the University of Illinois' and Columbia Teen Screen's only exist in a few communities. In 1997 Senate resolution #84 that declared suicide a national problem, passed unanimously. In 1998 a similar resolution (House Resolution #212) passed unanimously in the House of Representatives. The Surgeon General has also made suicide one of his priorities. All these are signs that help is on the way. Part of the senate resolution states, "the Senate acknowledges that no single sui-

cide prevention program or effort will be appropriate for all populations or communities," pointing out how important it is for every community to take its own initiative. Organizations such as the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the American Association of Suicidology have already been established to provide such initiatives with the necessary resources, and to encourage networking.#

Molly Wallace is a student at Barnard College and an intern at Education Update



SPECIAL ED STUDENT BENEFITS FROM INCLUSION

By MIKE COHEN

Alex's eyes were darting side to side looking for a student on the other team to challenge with a fast throw. Then with an explosive forward arm motion, Alex let loose a dart of a toss that was headed right to a girl on the other team. With lightening quick reflexes, she quickly raised her hands and caught the spongy ball, firmly in her hand. "Yea," screamed the jubilant girl. "Ohh," said Alex, his smile still beaming brightly. A teammate quickly tapped Alex on the shoulder, and in this cooperative brand of dodge ball, where no one sits out, Alex never had to leave the game he was having so much fun playing.

For Alex, age 10, this was more than just the ordinary gym class. As a student at The Jewish Guild for the Blind's Guild School, Alex was participating in his first mainstream physical education class at Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School.

"It's an opportunity for him to participate with other kids that are close to his level of athletic ability," says Debbie Workman, Alex's teacher for the past two years. "The way he performs on a basketball court allows him to have social interactions with typically developing kids."

Alex, who has vision and hearing impairments, has a talent and love for sports. The ultra fast and agile Alex, can shoot a basketball, throw a football, and hit a baseball despite his apparent disabilities. Thus, taking a physical education class with kids close to his sports ability, plays to his strengths and speaks to the principles behind the inclusion of students with special education needs into regular education (The Regular Education Initiative).

The Regular Education Initiative (REI) began to gather momentum in 1975 when congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. In 1990 a reauthorization of this law, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), brought focused attention to where children with disabilities should be educated. Today, even with the legislative mandate the question remains: Should students' with special learning needs be taught in regular education?

"I think it's great," says Mark Alter, Steinhart School of Education professor at NYU when asked about Alex attending gym



Alex prepares for his gym class at Columbia Grammar with his teacher Mike Cohen

Photo Courtesy of the Jewish Guild for the Blind School.

class at Columbia Grammar. "We live in an integrated culture and no one should be denied access to and participation in any environment because of a physical barrier, a disability, or a label."

At Columbia Grammar, Alex's first physical education experience was, indeed, great—and, not just for him. The children at Columbia Grammar quickly accepted Alex into their class and supported him during the group's activities. As we often see, kids can become overly competitive, so to accept Alex into their class required the other children to adapt their way of playing.

"Our kids learned a lot about themselves," says the physical education teacher Jeanne Levin. "They saw how well they were able to interact with Alex and the game took on a more significant meaning."

Alex also did his part. "He adjusted very well," says Levin. "He seemed so comfortable. He watched me and followed directions closely. He was respectful of my lesson."

In fact, Alex proved to Levin and to me that all kids are basically the same. While receiving the pre-game instruc-

tions, Alex was no more fidgety than any of the other students in the class. "He was excited like the rest of the kids," says Ms. Levin. "He was basically looking at me and saying 'let's play teacher,' no more talking." His classmates for the day were no different.

While this experience was a new one for Alex and the Columbia Grammar third graders, they played together like "old" friends. Their differences seemed to disappear as they played. The students from Columbia Grammar were impressed with Alex's ability and attitude, and Alex was made to feel like a member of the class. Guild School principal, Dr. Carole Gothelf, couldn't hold back her enthusiasm; "We are strengthened by the fact that once again, our kids can make it in the mainstream."#

Mike Cohen is the Adaptive Physical Education teacher at the Jewish Guild for the Blind, Guild School.

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INCLUSION PROGRAM AT FRANCIS LEWIS HS

By DAVE CODDINGTON

Our Inclusion Program at Francis Lewis High School in Queens has been an ever-changing work in progress. We began the program in September of 1997 without any prior plan. One day before school started, I was assigned as the Methods and Resource Teacher, which was the title given to the Special Education Teacher in charge of adapting and modifying the curriculum in an inclusion program. I believe the title is now just plain Special Education Teacher.

Word went out to the Committees on Special Education that a new high school inclusion program was canvassing for students with emotional disabilities who might be appropriate to return to a mainstream high school setting. These students would be on the same level as their General Ed. peers as far as testing and other requirements. We started with three young men, two eighteen year olds and one sixteen-year-old. The Principal of Francis Lewis High School, where we were "guests," had no prior knowledge of inclusion and was not too thrilled by our start up student population because of their age and prior anti-social behaviors. She was, however, diplomatically supportive and has become more than a friend to inclusion over the past five years.

Just before Thanksgiving in 1997, the two older students got into a serious fight in the cafeteria and they were reassigned to another program. About the same time, our third student, who was an undeclared graffiti artist, was caught creating a masterpiece in a stairwell. The artist was also removed from the school and was placed in Home Instruction for lack of a better placement. I became his tutor in Global History, Spanish and English after school everyday for the remainder of the school year. Over the years, I kept in touch with the artist on Home Instruction. He did well with the one-on-one educational support that I gave him. He passed my classes and was placed in a vocational program, which he dropped out of; but last I heard, he did finally receive his GED. Success from failure!

Our program now includes students with varied disabilities. We try to start students in our program at age 14, the same as their high school freshman peers. First, we set up an interview to determine if the student and family are accepting of this style of education. Since we offer both a full academic program and a truncated vocational/academic program for students, students and parents can choose which program will best meet their needs.

At the beginning of each term (and there are two terms a year), I meet with each student's subject teachers. We set up goals and any rubrics that might be needed in each class for grading my included student's work. This is a mammoth challenge: I meet with 30 or more teachers each term. Fortunately, it has become easier with repeat teachers. As teachers become more accepting of the inclusion process they sometimes seek me out when a student's work needs adaptations. That's a very good sign and it means they are buying into the process and there is hope for the future. Newly graduated teachers with some background in inclusive

education tend to accept my students a lot better than the "Chalk and Talk" old timers. The new teachers are usually more comfortable with collaboration and team teaching techniques, and they are more accepting of the Paraprofessional's role in the classroom.

It took five years to finally program my inclusion students into General Education classes without too many problems. The computer system did not recognize my students as being enrolled in the high school since they were already enrolled in an off-site Special Education school. We were "guests" in the school without I.D. numbers and without official class designations, which resulted in my students not being able to go to class. In other words, there were serious obstacles to overcome in setting up official class schedules. A designated code called "Shared Instruction" was finally created last September and this solved the dilemma of including our students. I had ten students and the high school had three thousand five hundred students. I found out that I had to wait for my turn to program my students and adjust their schedules, just like any other grade advisor, which added another role to my job. As a grade advisor I had to learn the requirements for graduation, find out the schedule of standardized testing, learn programming codes for classes offered, and a host of other concepts foreign to a Special Educator.

Many times, my biggest obstacles were overcome by just good public relations. If you can "shmooze" people it will take you a lot less time to create a good working program. At the high school level collaboration with the General Education teachers is done on a "catch me when you can", basis and "if I have time, we'll talk about your student." I make it a point to "catch" teachers during their preps or lunch hours to discuss student work and progress. I joined the high school Executive Board and the School Safety Plan Committee with the intention of presenting myself as less of a "guest" and more of a member of the high school faculty. I learned what the issues were in the school and attending the meetings gave me the opportunity to advocate for my students.

Inclusion is still considered a Special Education project or program and not a shared responsibility of the educational community as a whole. Economics plays a big factor in the division of responsibility but that's a whole new ball of wax to investigate. I believe this will change as more students with disabilities find their rightful place among the mainstream population. It is easier to include students when they are younger and it is easier for the general population to accept them. I have seen a positive change in my school over the past five years. Three of my students participate in the high school chorus; peer tutorials are up this year, socializing with peers in classes has increased, and a general feeling of acceptance from teachers and students is taking hold.

When everyone accepts the fact that we all learn in different ways and at different speeds, then that will be the day when my job will no longer be necessary. #

Dave Coddington is a teacher at Francis Lewis High School.

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Literary Riddles

By CHRIS ROWAN

"In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plains to the mountains." Name the Nobel winning author and the title of the work.

Answers to this month's riddle:

A Farewell to Arms (1929) by Ernest Hemingway. It was set during World War I in Italy and Switzerland.



Music in Berlin

Few cities can compete with this city's musical quality and variety.

By IRVING SPITZ

With three active functioning opera companies, in addition to several symphony orchestras, including the venerable Berlin Philharmonic, Berlin's rich choice of musical offerings can easily overwhelm the casual visitor. I had this fortunate experience some weeks ago during a visit to Berlin, when I enjoyed some of these rewarding offerings.

At the Deutsche Opera, a revival of Wagner's *Tannhauser* with the American John Fredric West in the title role was particularly enjoyable. Singing with assurance and dignity, West gave a magnificent portrayal of the role. Venus was sung by Nadja Michael and Elizabeth by Eva Johansson, both gave very commendable performances. At the very outset, Johansson tended to strain with her fortissimo passages, but she rapidly settled into the role. The other principals, including Markus Bruck as Wolfram and Stephen Milling as the Landgraf, were up to the demand of their roles. The production by Gotz Friedrich and the staging and costumes by Rolf Glittenberg were modern and tasteful, the scenes in the Venusburg being particularly effective. Conductor Marc Albrecht showed his skill at supporting his singers while allowing the orchestra to express itself to the maximum.

The revival of Handel's operatic masterpieces continues. The Komische Opera staged his opera *Tamerlano* composed in 3 weeks in 1724. Although a brutal leader, Tamerlano (Timur) is portrayed by Handel with dignity and charisma. Indeed, his personality is sufficiently winning to jeopardize the love between Asteria, daughter of Bejazet and the Greek Prince Andronico. Tamerlano holds captive Bejazet, the Turkish emir whose country he has conquered. Asteria begs Tamerlano to release her father. This he will do if Asteria agrees to marry him, even though he is engaged to the princess Irene. This demanding opera requires two countertenors. The Komische Opera certainly delivered the goods and provided two outstanding artists, Axel Kohler in the role of Tamerlano and the Australian, Graham Pushee as Andronico. Both were superb and kept the audience in thrall. These artists both had the remarkable ability to move from a forceful middle register to high notes whilst maintaining full tone. The rest of the cast was also exemplary. Peter Bronder as the sultan Bajazet brought the required mixture of a regal presence and pathos to the role. His final aria before his suicide was one of the highlights of the evening. Produced by David Alden with staging by Charles Edwards, this was a handsome production. Michael Hofstetter's conducting was vigorous and produced committed playing from the orchestra, while allowing the singers ample freedom of phrasing and expression.

While the Staatsoper were on an official tour of Japan, their house hosted a performance of Haydn's comic opera *Il Mondo della Luna*, in a joint production from the Innsbruck Festival. This opera, based on Goldoni's witty farce, is a forerunner of Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. In the plot, the astronomer, Ecclitico and his accomplices, Ernesto and Cecco persuade a simpleton, the old man Buonofede, to take a trip to the moon. The aim is to hoodwink the old man into allowing Ecclitico to marry his daughter, Clarice, and Cecco to marry the second daughter, Flaminia. In the end, Buonofede gets deservedly duped for his stupidity. This far-fetched plot requires much imagination and ingenuity to stage effectively. Karoline Gruber's stage direction went for overkill. In place of Haydn's nymphs and shepherds, the scene on the moon was replete with transves-

titles in fanciful costumes. Rene Jacobs, the Belgian conductor who has made baroque operas his speciality managed to coax the maximum out of the Akademie fur alte Musik Berlin, but there were nevertheless some rough passages. All principal singers acquitted themselves admirably, particularly noteworthy being Kobie van Rensburg as the astronomer Ecclitico and the bass Enzo Capuano as the old father, Buonofede.

Finally, I attended a performance of the Berlin Philharmonic under their director, Claudio Abbado. Abbado certainly pulled out all the stops with a masterful performance of two minor works by two great composers. Beethoven's *Fantasia for Piano, Choir and Orchestra* consists of an introduction for piano solo, several variations for piano and orchestra and a short choral conclusion. This was a fore-runner of the composer's ninth symphony. Mendelssohn's second symphony with three instrumental movements, followed by a multi-sectional finale with chorus and soloists, is openly modeled on Beethoven's ninth. Mendelssohn's symphony, known as the Lobgesang or Song of Praise, was composed to honor the 400 anniversary of Guttenberg's invention of printing. Although the work has not been without its defenders, few other nineteenth century symphonies have provoked such criticism. In this performance, Maurizio Pollini put his expected masterful stamp on the Beethoven, and together with Claudio Abbado, this proved to be a magisterial and unforgettable partnership. Sopranos Karita Mattila and Lioba Braun and tenor Peter Seiffert all gave

Shakespeare Program at LI Elementary School

Since the 1999-2000 school year The Shubert Elementary School has been engaged in an innovative after school theatre program. Under the leadership of founder Joseph A. DeLeo, *The Shubert Shakespearean Players* have developed an outstanding dramatic ensemble. Focusing exclusively on the works of William Shakespeare, students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the world's most important playwright. To reach the readiness to perform, students are guided towards an understanding of the universal commonality of human feelings and emotions inherent in Shakespeare's works.

With Board of Education approval in 1999,

The Shubert Shakespearean took its first steps as a fledgling after school drama club. Shakespeare's popular play, *Romeo and Juliet*, became director DeLeo's initial attempt at staging a serious drama along with co-director Kimberley Wood and set designer Jeff Smith. Set in Verona, New Jersey in the Disco 70s, this production became an instant success with students, teachers and parents alike. Shubert's PTA honored each one of its young stars with a mini *Tony Award*. A generous grant from The Baldwin Foundation for education will allow The National Shakespearean Company to take residency at the Shubert Elementary School in the upcoming 2002-2003 school year.#

credible and vocally impressive performances in both works, although the highest accolades must go to Karita Mattila.

Abbado's tenure with the Berlin Philharmonic is drawing to a close. Under his guidance the orchestra's brilliance has remained untarnished. It is possible that they even play with more warmth and passion than ever. Abbado's predecessor, Herbert von Karajan, refused to have women players in the orchestra. Today he would turn in his grave: I counted 12 female instrumentalists.#

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Finding a homeschool curriculum that matches the needs of you and your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions a homeschool family makes.

It isn't easy. There's a great deal of good information about homeschooling available from friends, neighbors, relatives, other homeschoolers, and the Internet. However, knowing what to look for will help you find a program that is right for your family and child.

A homeschooling program is a lot like a pair of shoes: It has to fit well to be comfortable and effective day after day. If you start off with a good program, you can tailor it with confidence.

Careful evaluation is critical to success, say experts.

"You want appropriate, academically challenging lessons that inspire your child to do his best," says Jean C. Halle, president of Calvert School Education Services, based in Baltimore, Md. The company is the homeschooling provider arm of Calvert School, which in 1906 started to offer its private school curriculum to families who wanted to teach at home. Today, Calvert enrolls 17,000 students each year in its pre-kindergarten through eighth grade programs.

Calvert School receives thousands of calls each year from families investigating whether the school's complete classical curriculum is right for them.

"We put a lot of time into helping families select what's right for them, based on the students' competencies," says Halle. "Sometimes a student is placed ahead or below his age-grade level. In math, for example, he may be placed at a different level than the balance of his studies."

"It's critical that the curriculum be well-suited to that child's needs in order for him or her to be successful."

Parents should explore four main components of a provider's offerings when choosing a homeschool curriculum.

PLACEMENT

The first step in a child's academic experience should be appropriate placement in a grade. The ideal placement assessment takes into account how your child arrived at answers in order to evaluate both concept knowledge as well as his ability to apply those skills. Because they offer details about a child's writing mechanics, vocabulary and spelling levels, sentence structure, content, and organization skills, evaluations of writing samples are important.

CURRICULUM

A good curriculum will draw material from a variety of sources, incorporate opportunities for practice to improve written and oral communication, and help your child to learn, analyze, and interpret information, not simply memorize facts. An integrated curriculum allows the student to write about all subjects, to think mathematically about subjects other than math, to compare and contrast geographical statistics to history facts, and to review and obtain valuable reinforcement of concepts taught.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Lesson manuals should provide good detail, including lessons that introduce topics, explain concepts, coordinate subjects with each other, and suggest added practice and



"You want appropriate, academically challenging lessons that inspire your child to do his best."

— Jean C. Halle, President of Calvert School Education Services

enrichment. At the appropriate age, the manual should be directed to the student, and the role of the home teacher should turn to more of an advisory role. If the provider offers answer keys for all daily work, parents can confirm their child's performance.

Educational professionals, who can offer strategies for teaching children with all learning styles, should be available by phone, fax, or email, to answer any questions you may have and offer suggestions for accelerated or remedial work.

TESTING

Knowing if your child is learning is important. A good program will include tests, which evaluate both content mastery and skill development. The availability of tests with answer keys can be helpful. If you have difficulty evaluating your child's composition and other subjective work, you should look for a provider that offers testing support in these areas.

Another key to success is evaluating the provider's materials. "Take time to review sample lessons, if offered by the provider, to be sure that the curriculum delivers as promised," says Halle.

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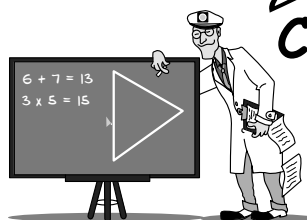
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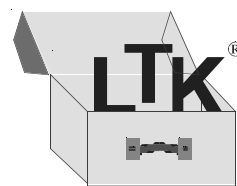
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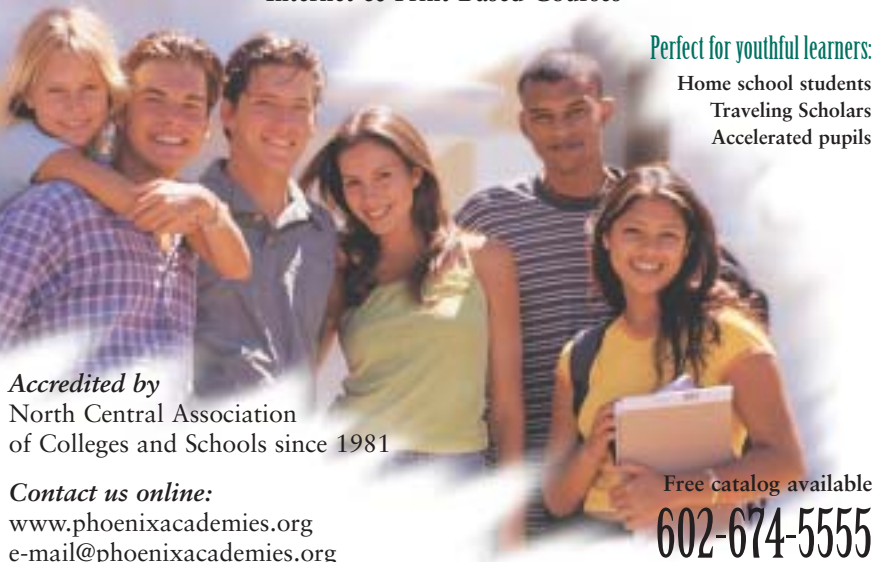


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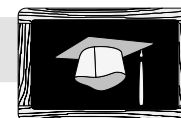


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EDUCATION DEAN JERROLD ROSS HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

By JOAN BAUM, PH.D.

If music be not only the food of love, as Duke Orsino proclaims in *Twelfth Night*, but also the sustenance of culture and civilization, as Dr. Jerrold Ross believes, then we must all “play on.” To Dr. Ross, who has a Ph.D. in Music Education from NYU and is Dean of the School of Education at St. John’s University, educational improvement is music to his ears. How do the arts fit in? “Music is the most abstract of the arts,” requiring a high development of thinking,” he says. It commands attention for content and “is not dependent on what someone else says.” In fact, the dean is supportive of all the arts and concerned that education, already “badly hurt” by a diminution of support from the Annenberg Foundation, may be cut to the detriment of the arts. Next year, when the new budget kicks in, category allocations per capita will be obvious. The arts are central to the education program at St. John’s, he points out, “a complete turnaround” from years ago. Every undergraduate now is given instruction in performance, and in select courses gets to interact with faculty from the Lincoln Center Institute.

Of course, as dean of the School of Education at St. John’s, a post he has held for seven years, not to mention as a member of the board of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, a nation-wide higher education group, Dr. Ross has wide vision and interests. Senior among education school deans, he heads a group committed to the idea that higher education, public and private, must be involved in serving the schools of the city. Soon after he conceived of such an association, he met with

Deputy Mayor Dennis Wolcott and found strong support. “Everyone wanted to jump in,” and so a first and private meeting was held on July 2, which will be followed in the near future by one open to the public. “Every university dean of education is on board,” not to mention CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. The days of political competition seem to be over, Dean Ross suggests. There is united feeling that higher education must have “more voice” in helping the city’s schools. Certainly, Dr. Ross will be playing a major role in recommending policies and procedures, as will St. John’s.

The St. John’s program already boasts impressive figures, including an undergraduate retention rate of 80-90 percent. Even before students are graduated, Dean Ross points out, they are offered jobs “sight unseen,” such is the program’s reputation. Surprisingly, it is a large program – 2500 students on three campuses – Queens, Staten Island and Oakdale, LI. The dean has no problem meeting the needs of affiliated districts – 14 in Brooklyn and 24 and 27 in Queens. He does, however, concede that many St. John’s graduates wind up in less challenging schools, a problem that will be addressed, he hopes, by the Teaching Fellows program. In this area, too, St. John’s can take pride. Of 44 Teaching Fellows this year, the

dean points to an almost 100 percent retention rate and a designation by the state as a “model” program. He is particularly pleased with this achievement, given the fact that private universities receive only 50 percent of their funding from government and so must subsidize the rest, a “real problem” for some private institutions. Next year the number of Teaching Fellows at St. John’s will be 70.

What is it that St. John’s seems to do particularly well? The dean, modest, direct, reflective, quietly suggests that the answer lies in “close collaboration” between the university and the district principals, an association that focuses on mentoring at both the university level and the receiving schools. St. John’s teachers work on research projects in the schools, not from a distance. They bring back to the classroom “reality,” such as the challenges facing those who are teaching in a borough that has been called the “epicenter of immigration in the United States.” St. John’s has a 132-year-old “mission to invest in new populations,” especially where others have been slow to do so. St. John’s, the dean adds, is also a “caring” university, where education majors are more than social security numbers or application test scores. “Economically poor”



Jerrold Ross

is not automatically equated with academically and socially disadvantaged, though for sure there are reasons to make such connections. Instead, St. John’s accepts education majors who, despite various hardships, manifest a curiosity for learning and a commitment to teaching. No fall-back majors need apply.

Are there overall education goals the dean would like to see realized some day? Yes. Nation-wide standardization in certification, though he knows, of course, that state and local politics are likely to override common cause. He looks to a time when the most experienced teachers go into the neediest schools; when there are more principals; when principals are given “more authority”; and when principals are better educated about how to deal with local communities, parents, the media, and social agencies. He is pleased that the New York State Regents mandated professional development (175 hours of continuing education after 5 years of certification) and points to courses in the St. John’s curriculum that respond to the need for the social education of principals.

Dr. Jerrold Ross, who in 1965 was the youngest college president in the nation (New York College of Music); who when he was Director of Town Hall was described by *The New York Times* as a “Man Full of Ideas”; who was the country’s first government-funded director of a research center for the arts in education – feels hopeful that as the newly formed organization of university deans of education proceeds with its work the city’s schools are going to benefit. As they say in music, let the pace and mood be allegro.#



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ROBERT LEE COLVIN MOVES TO HECHINGER INSTITUTE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

Robert Lee Colvin an award-winning education writer of the *Los Angeles Times* will become the new deputy director of the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University this summer. The Institute organizes and sponsors seminars for journalists, top policy makers and researchers on timely issues in education. The seminars are tailored to the interests of different groups of journalists, including editorial writers who cover education, education editors, reporters who specialize in higher education issues and reporters new to the beat.

Colvin, 48, said the new position provides him with a unique opportunity to represent

journalism as well as education. "I want to leverage what I've learned in my many years on the beat to benefit other reporters in their coverage of education," Colvin said. "At the same time, I'll continue to be a working journalist." Colvin said in addition to his work with the institute, he intends to remain active as a writer on education topics.

The Hechinger Institute is named in memory of Fred M. Hechinger, who was a reporter and editor at *The New York Times*, specializing in the coverage of education. It is supported by grants from many foundations including the Carnegie Corporation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Broad Foundation and the New York Times Company Foundation.#

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS

Bank Street Conference at Museum of Natural History

By DEBORAH YOUNG

Education's place and potential in a democracy is an assumption that needs frequent revisiting, agreed speakers Deborah Meier, Dr. Carl Glickman and conference moderator Richard Rothstein, during an exchange of ideas at a recent Bank Street College conference held at the American Museum of Natural History. Public education still has a long way to dissolve entrenched inequity, said Meier, a learning theorist and founder/principal of Central Park East Secondary School whose books include *The Power of their Ideas* and *Will Standards Save Public Education?*

"The concept of elitism cannot be democratized," she said. "The culture of the ruling class is a closed system, complete with its own language, and other mechanisms to keep others from joining." School should be where students get the tools to question the system they live in, she added.

"What kind of power and education do I need so I can get my education without thinking that they rule me?" she urged educators in the audience to help their young charges consider. "Empowering students to think this way starts by honoring their different backgrounds and experience in the context of the classroom," Meier stated. But conference moderator and *New York Times* educational columnist Richard Rothstein wondered if the pedagogy of empowerment makes for a stronger democracy than a teaching approach which might "for example, force students to memorize the Federalist Papers."

"We preach to the choir so we don't feel as if


we need any evidence to prove us right or wrong," he said, urging for more long term studies of different educational methodology. Progressive educators labor under the default assumption that if you give students an education which encourages their input, they will automatically agree it's the best way to learn, said Dr. Carl Glickman, the Endowed Chair in School Improvement at Southwest Texas State University, who has authored a dozen books on such topics as school leadership and the moral imperative of education.

"But this kind of education helps them make up their own minds," he said. "The DNA of a democracy is where citizens use education to help each other."

All students must first feel respected before learning to make their own decisions and then ultimately taking the next step to help others, concurred conference participant Briana Nurse – a fourth-grade teacher at 15th Avenue School in Newark.

But foremost in her mind are the everyday, nitty gritty details of teaching in a school where 100 percent of the students fall below the federal poverty guidelines, she said, before heading to a workshop to develop strategies for teaching about the community – one of many afternoon sessions offered around the theme "Social Studies: Where We Are in 2002."

"My students are trying to make it through the present," she said. "For the first time last week during a lesson about neighborhoods, one of them broke down and cried to me because he was scared just walking to school. Those are the stories we hear."#



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ELIZABETH ROHATYN BRINGS TECHNOLOGY TO SCHOOLS

By TOM KERTES

Eight years ago, in response to a growing concern that students in affluent schools had greater access to technology than those in less affluent neighborhoods, Elizabeth Rohatyn, along with a group of former teachers, founded Teaching Matters, a nonprofit organization devoted to promoting excellence in teaching and learning through the use of technology in the classroom.

"I did not want the technology gap to become a skills gap and then a more or less permanent achievement gap," she said. "The idea first occurred to me when my husband Felix and I were participating in the 'I Have a Dream Foundation' founded by Eugene Lang. I wanted to go beyond that. I wanted to touch children's lives, to be hands-on. I felt that it was no longer enough to make charitable donations, no matter how generous they might be."

Of course, there have been a number of other organizations devoted to the same cause, but Teaching Matters' low-keyed yet persistent approach makes a difference. "First of all, we don't go into schools telling them what they should do," Rohatyn said. "We go into schools and ask them 'What do you need? How can we help you?' We assess the school, its needs, and the teachers' level of computer use. And then we go to work."

Teaching Matters believes that the best way

to prepare children for success in the Information Age is to prepare the educators. "The fact is, that some teachers are hungry for the help," Rohatyn said. "Others are not, but are willing to learn. And still others are not at all willing but are eventually kind of dragged along into the 21st century in spite of themselves."



Elizabeth Rohatyn

Teaching Matters holds extensive workshops to help teachers understand how technology works, and how they can best use that technology in the classroom to help their students. "The difference is that we stay with the teachers following our workshops," Rohatyn said. "We go into the

school, we follow up, we do complete re-training if necessary. We understand quite profoundly how difficult the absorption of all this new information can be, especially after a full workday."

Teaching Matters constantly works on updating and customizing its materials to respond to particular needs. "To be optimally effective, we must be flexible," said Rohatyn. "So we always adjust our model." There is also an online learning component, with a prominent teacher from Arizona providing up-close guidance.

To date, Teaching Matters has provided professional development training for teachers and principals in over 500 public schools in New York City and around the country. In spite of its imaginative platform, dare-to-be different

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approach, and notable success, some changes appear to be inevitable in the near future.

"I'm concerned about the upcoming budget cuts in education," Rohatyn said. "I want to get out of the discretionary budget for schools, which are always the first to go. I intend to

move more into the funded area, acquire grants, build partnerships, perhaps even form a consortium with similar organizations. I fell that there's room for all of our ideas. And what we do is just too important; this may be the only way for us to survive and thrive."#

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Laraine Mirabile, an educator at Public School 5 in Staten Island, used programming pertaining to Afghanistan and the September 11th tragedy on CNN and Nickelodeon to motivate students to write letters to the rescue workers at Ground Zero. A New York City Firefighter, Mark Solari, received the letters and began working with Mirabile to coordinate a school wide project to benefit the children of the Staten Island victims of this disaster. Students gathered teddy bears and wrote letters

of support for the children. Members of the PS 56 PTA, firefighters and police officers distributed the teddy bears.

"Time Warner Cable was proud to nominate Mirabile for a Gilbert Community Service Award for her exemplary use of Cable in the Classroom," stated Harriet Novet, Vice President, Public Affairs, Time Warner Cable of New York City. "Not only is Cable in the Classroom a vital teaching tool, she used this resource to inspire her students to make a difference in their community."

Each year, an independent panel of judges representing the Governor's Office, the New York State Assembly and Senate, and New York State Conference of Mayors selects the Gilbert Award winners. For more information, visit www.cabletvny.com #

SPORTS

Building Fields, Building Character

By TOM KERTES

The crumbling athletic fields of New York City Public High Schools haven't had public funding in 25 years.

Shocking, isn't it? And this is only made more shocking by the fact that New York City has the highest percentage of students *not* participating in physical activity; that the City has the highest percentage of child obesity and other health problems of any major American city; and that it has the highest percentage of school absenteeism, while athletics has always been known to serve as the great equalizer when it comes to school attendance.

Based on the principle of "better late than never", three powerful New York personalities—New Jersey Giants owner Bob Tisch, urban planner Richard Kahan, and community activist Tony Kaiser—have decided to respond to this sorry situation. The result was the formation of Take the Field, a private-public partnership aimed at fixing public athletic fields.

"The pilot program, established two years ago, was a three-to-one challenge," said Executive Director Mary Musca. "Take the Field was going to raise \$4 million if the City provided \$12 million." The program was such a sizzling success—seven horribly damaged fields have already been fixed up—that, a year ago, then-Mayor Giuliani said in his State of the City address: "I'll make sure any field they want to fix will have funding."

Twenty-one fields are slated to be completed by the end of the summer, including the ancient

athletic facility at Brooklyn's South Shore High School. "It hasn't been as much as touched since 1970," Principal Steven Berger said. "It is a mess." Remarkably, in spite of the horrible conditions, South Shore has been fielding outstanding, sometimes even nationally ranked, football and track teams for years.

In fact, it was the great track team that caught the attention of John Whitehead, the former chairman of Goldman Sachs. An enormous track and field fan all his life, Whitehead decided to team up with Take the Field to give a leg up to South Shore by putting up a significant portion of the cost of the \$4.5 million project personally.

"High school athletics are a very important part of a young person's development," he said. "Among other things, it keeps them away from temptations that are all over the city."

The building of the new athletic complex, which shall bear Whitehead's name, has been a tremendous boon to the school and its 2,600 students. "They're ecstatic," Berger said. "We have a great deal of athletic prowess at the school—and now we'll have the facilities to match that."

Whitehead had nothing but praise for the efforts of Take the Field. "There are important lessons to be learned through playing sports, in leadership, discipline and character," he said. "I hope this organization merely scratches the surface right now. There's so much more to be done."#



South Shore HS Field

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Night Falls Fast

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manic-depressives, for example, benefit society by conserving resources when they are depressed, and contributing disproportionately to a culture's academic and creative endeavors during the manic cycles.

Ultimately, however, Jamison concludes that "suicide usually requires multiple 'hits'—a biological pre-disposition, a major psychiatric illness, and an acute life stress—but only some of these 'hits' are amenable to change."

And perhaps that is the ultimate value, and lesson, of this book: that those left behind, struggling to understand the unfathomable and find a peace that eluded the one who left, cannot carry the burden of responsibility forever. Ultimately, suggests Jamison, the suicide made his or her choice.#

Of Historical Note

On February 24, 2002 *The New York Times* (front page) reported that lexicographers were now going to include 9/11 in future editions of the American dictionary. Naturally this would be entered under N. It struck me that the Europeans must have long since included "9/11" in their dictionaries, since for them this also refers to a significant date in history.

Using the European style for writing dates, 9/11 refers to November 9th. On that day quite a bit happened in history:

On Nov. 9, 1918 Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated thereby ending WWI;

On Nov. 9, 1923 Hitler staged a takeover march in Munich;

On Nov. 9, 1938, Reichs kristallnacht—that resulted in the destruction of Jewish property in Germany and Austria;

On Nov. 9, 1940, Germany invaded Norway and Denmark; and

On Nov. 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell to open up the east bloc.

And don't we always ask "Where were you when the lights (on the East Coast) went out" on November 9, 1965!

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Alfred S. Posamentier,
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School Reform: Putting Our Kids First

By MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

For years, New York City's public school system has been floundering. And the heart of the problem is the lack of clear direction and accountability at the top. The current structure for running the school system promotes diffused, confused and overlapping layers of authority. It creates clouds of uncertainty just where clarity of purpose is desperately needed.

Mayors Koch, Dinkins, Giuliani and I have all agreed that this structure for running the schools does not work, and we have fought to change it. The Mayor should have sole control over the appointment of the Schools Chancellor, and the Chancellor should report directly to the Mayor. That establishes democratic accountability—and if democracy can be trusted to safeguard our social services, police forces and other essential services, why wouldn't it work to protect our most precious resource, our children?

Now, thanks to the leadership of Gov. Pataki, State Senate Majority Leader Bruno, and Assembly Speaker Silver we stand on the verge

of a new era in running our school system. The details of a new blueprint for running our public schools are still being decided. But, I promise you this: the end result will be a system for running the schools that puts kids, and parents, first.

We're going to build on what works in our schools. And a common denominator among all of our city's most successful schools is strong parental involvement. We're going to make sure that our schools are safe and orderly. We're going to make first-rate education the reason why the city's 80,000 schoolteachers come to work. And we're going to overhaul the current crazy-quilt system of building, maintaining and managing school buildings.

"The buck stops here." That's the sign that Pres. Truman used to keep on his desk. It was a reminder to everyone about who had the ultimate responsibility for success or failure in running the country. For too long it's been too easy to pass the buck for our failing schools. Not anymore; from now on, the education buck will stop here, at the Mayor's desk. #



A New Era for City Schools

By ASSEMBLYMAN STEVEN SANDERS

The new school governance law, which Speaker Silver and I spearheaded in negotiations with the Mayor and his top aides, will dramatically restructure the way the school system operates, and I believe it will prove to be a huge victory for the children and the future for our school system.

As Chairman of the Education Committee, I worked intensively to negotiate the deal with the Bloomberg administration to make the new law possible. We won a tremendous—and very important victory—by requiring in law that the Mayor, who will now have central but not total control of the schools by way of appointing the Chancellor and naming a majority of members to a newly configured Board of Education (BOE) will be legally bound to sustain, if not increase, the City's appropriation for the Board of Education from one year to the next.

Also, I applaud the Mayor for dropping his insistence that he be granted absolute control of the schools and that there no longer be any form of central board. What we have achieved, in a sense, is the best of both worlds: accountability plus continued public debate with parental input. It was never acceptable to the Assembly majority that the Mayor—any Mayor—should be given absolute autonomy over education policy with no vigorous public debate. This legislation ensures that decisions will be made openly and in a manner that includes the public and the voices of parents and the community.

Under provisions of the legislation, the Mayor will have sole power to appoint the Schools Chancellor, who will head a 13-member BOE, as well as sole power to appoint seven other members of the board. The remaining board members, appointed by the borough presidents, must be parents of children currently in public school in New York City.

This is unprecedented. Never before were there any qualifications at all for any members of the BOE, but now at least five—all of the appointees of the borough presidents—must be parents, ensuring that the parents' voice will be represented in each and every policy decision made by the Board.

District superintendents will be appointed by the Chancellor. The board will no longer have a role in day-to-day management decisions but will approve the school system's budget, capital spending plan and citywide educational policies and standards. The Mayor will also have sole control of the School Construction

Authority.

The plan will eliminate the city's 32 community school boards on June 30, 2003, and the Legislature will hold public hearings in each borough in the fall to get the input of parents and communities to ensure their involvement and participation in the development of a new governance system at the community level. That process is expected to lead to further legislation creating some form of local or borough-wide entities that will effectively replace the school boards. The school governance plan also stipulates that the City may not reduce its contribution to the education budget from one year to the next, except if City revenues decline, which has happened only once in the past 25 years. Even then, if the revenue to NYC from all sources combined drops—excluding State and federal aid—any year-to-year budget reduction of City funding for the Board of Education would have to be proportional to that drop. So a one percent drop in City revenue could be followed by no more than a one percent cut in City funding for public schools.

No Mayor will ever again be able to balance the City's books on the backs of our schoolchildren or respond to a dramatic rise in State aid to education by actually cutting the City's contribution. The Assembly Majority has long been dedicated to ensuring that every child in our state receives a quality education, and we recognize that achieving this goal requires resources as well as partnerships with educators, parents and other community members. We have been successful in our efforts to create a new structure for New York City school governance that incorporates these principles.

Finally, because history has shown that it is essential that we have a chance to review results of sweeping governance changes, the new law "sunssets" after seven years, when we'll have the option to renew it or make adjustments. We'll see what will have worked with Mayoral accountability and what may need to be improved.

With the governance debate over and a new contract in place between the City and the teachers, it's time to put the focus back on the classroom. All in all, I am confident that what we've achieved will—over time—make a difference there, where it really counts. #

Assemblyman Sanders is Chairman of the Education Committee. You can contact him at sanders@assembly.state.ny.us or by mail to 201 East 16th Street, New York, NY 10003.

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Choices

Continued from page 13

total UPDRS score. Improvements were noted in quality of life and activities of daily living. Half the patients also demonstrated a reduction of dyskinesia [involuntary movement]."

As one for whom the very act of walking has become an extreme trial akin to traversing a

balance-beam, I read the news release with great hope and optimism. I discussed Titan's spheramine with Dr. Masterman and believe the therapy procedure offers me the best hope of living a high quality life. I'm bolstered in this belief by the confidence of the drug company Schering AG, which is pleased with spheramine's initial trial results and looks forward to further testing in the near future. #



Resource & Reference Guide

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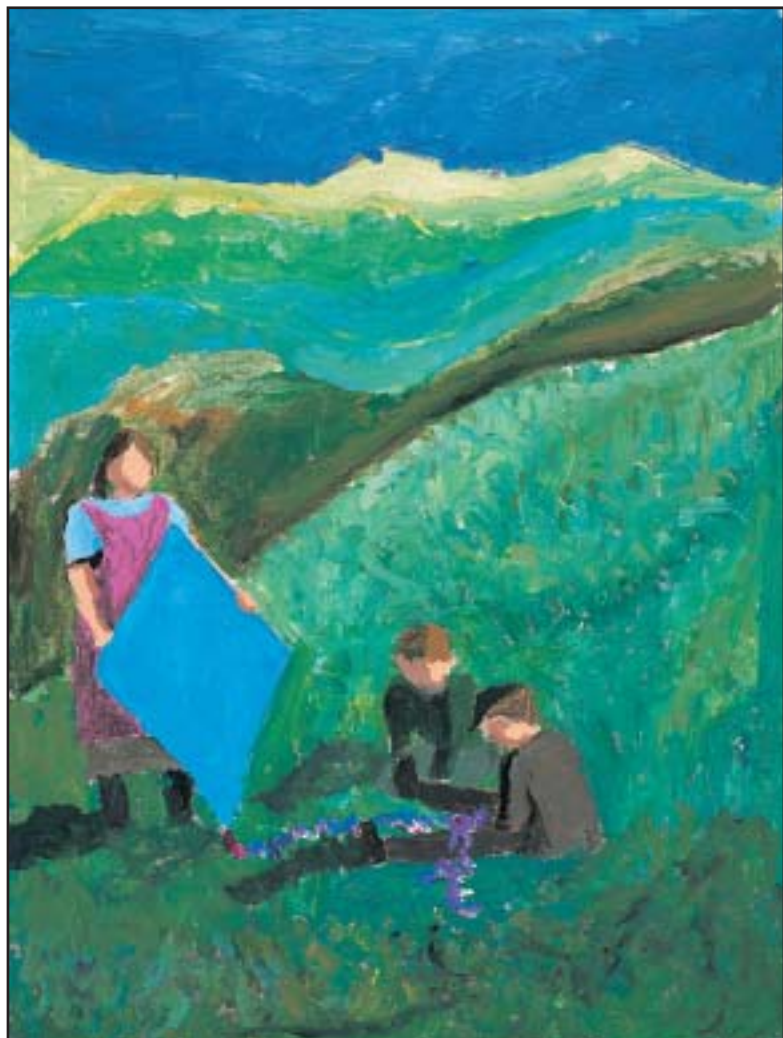


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