

# PASSAGES POST

## *Principal's Message*

Provided by Yvette Baxter-Sweet

Greetings to the Passages Academy community. Wednesday was Administrative Professional Day. I had the pleasure of meeting with all of my Administrative Professionals and sharing lunch with them. You may ask yourself who are our administrative professionals? They are the professionals that keep the gears moving in our large machine that we call Passages Academy. Pupil accounting, payroll, SEP, transitions, supplies, tech support and more; they keep everything flowing and functioning, which allows everyone else to focus on our students and instruction. I am most grateful for their hard work and conscientious efforts. If you haven't said thank you today to one of our administrative professionals, please do. Make sure our staff knows that we appreciate their dedication to a job well done.

Our payroll secretary, Ms. Gemma Sutton, was recognized and acknowledged this week by Chancellor Farina at her first annual Administrative Professional's Day at Tweed. Ms. Sutton was nominated because she is an outstanding payroll secretary with the patience and disposition of an angel.



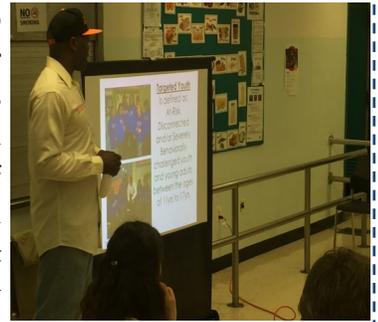
## Facts, Thoughts, and/or Questions for the Week

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in his life, as by the obstacles which he has overcome." – Booker T. Washington

## Belmont Highlights

Provided by Patrick Dorfer

On Friday, April 17th, Belmont hosted the community outreach group GRAAFIC, who made a presentation to the teachers, staff, counselors and related service providers of our youth. GRAAFIC specifically targets the behavior modification of our toughest students by targeting the needs that cause our youth to join gangs. The program is run by Dr. Kai Smith, who, along with his associates, target "difficult kids in the difficult life." Each of Dr. Smith's associates, as well as himself, have had various encounters with the law and have served prison sentences. The important thing, they say, is that there is always light at the end of the tunnel. "I want the kids that have failed at school, have had difficulty with authority and who statistics say will be a product of the system," Dr. Smith said.



"We will come in your schools, target specific behaviors that are consistent on the path to gang involvement, be a support system, and we will all see real-life changes going forward." The important takeaway from the program was the need for school-based support in our students lives. Each of our students has something in their personality and experiences that can be tied into, and it is up to us to continue to put in the effort to serve them appropriately.

Our after-school programs are in full-swing! Students have both academic and athletic choices including art, credit recovery, athletic competitions, Manhattan Theater Club and Carnegie Hall. This past March, our students performed for the first time ever at Carnegie Hall thanks to the efforts of ACS and DOE liaisons and program supervision by Ms. Caliendo and Ms. Agarwal. Ms. Stewart will be supervising the Manhattan Theater Club program as our students aim to hone their dance skills. Ms. Rosenthal, Mr. Lyons, Ms. Thomas will be supervising various programs as well.

## Boys Town Highlights

Provided by Rachel Matthews

**Lincoln Center Poet-Linc Workshop:** Jose Olivarez of Lincoln Center Education just completed a five week workshop with five of Boys Town's burgeoning poets. They read and discussed poetry and then wrote, edited and shared their own poems. On Wednesday, March 25, he came with a sound mixer and recorded all the students reciting their poems. These poems will ultimately be collected in an anthology which Lincoln Center will publish.



**Bells Project:** During the middle school testing week at Boys Town, Art teacher, Ms. Salmeron, and ELA teacher, Ms. Matthews, planned and executed a project that incorporated poetry and art. In ELA, the high school classes read *The Bells* by Edgar Allen Poe and discussed the way the tone of the poem changed with each section and each type of bell that was described. Subsequently, in Art, Ms. Salmeron presented a power point on the way color can express feelings and tone. Then the students created bells out of plastic cups and decorated them with colored tissue paper to reflect various tones. The students enjoyed this cross-curricular project, which connected tone as reflected in poetry with tone as reflected in color.

**Volunteers of America:** For the second year in a row, Ms. Wanda Best-DeVeaux, a community resource developer from Volunteers of America, completed her workshop about healthy relationships with the high school students at Boys Town. During 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> period on Tuesdays, Ms. Wanda, as the students call her, sparked a lot of conversation about decision-making, the futures and the criminal justice system. On her last day, she brought in cake for the students and gave every student a certificate for completing the workshop.

## Bronx Hope Highlights

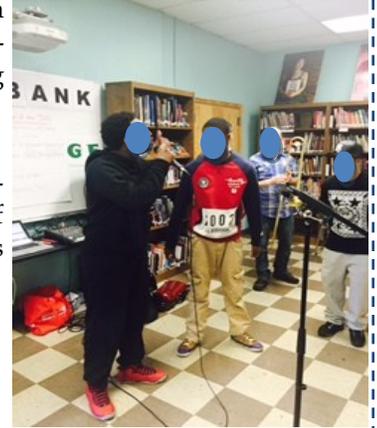
Provided by Matthew Donohue

**Carnegie Hall Music Afterschool Program Explosion....My Life Matters!** On Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, Bronx Hope was celebrating more than St. Patrick's Day....we also kicked off our Carnegie Hall Music Afterschool Program. There were student representations from each NSP house during the kickoff!

Students were provided an overview of the program, discussed expectations, and had the opportunity to meet our musical mentors and afterschool facilitators; the amazing lyricist Intikana, Slavic Soul Party, and Coordinate Vaughan.

Our theme for this round will be a much needed spin off to our Black History Month showcase and Town hall Meeting in February that focused on the theme: My Life Matters. The first week concluded with students sharing written work and staff participating in the jam session.

We are excited about the program and look forward to creatively and musically celebrating and advocating why OUR LIFE MATTERS! A special thank you to Bronx Hope Staff Ms. Martin, Mr. Price, Mr. Harrison, and Ms. Woods for ensuring that the kick off was full of life! We hope to see you at our concert on May 5<sup>th</sup>!



## Brooklyn Pride Highlights

Provided by Julia Weber

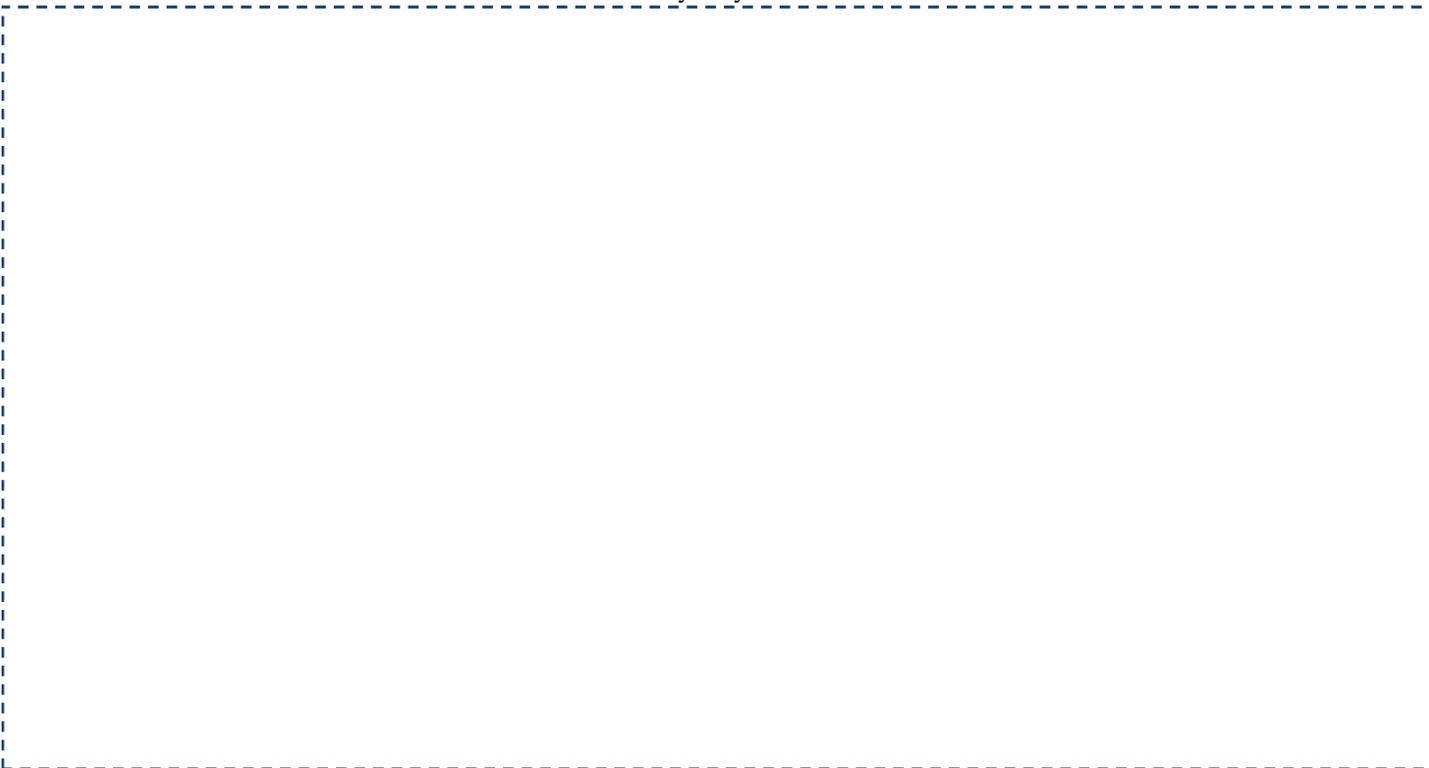
Our Lions are working on their social-emotional growth, which our teachers and social worker have been tirelessly working on infusing into the academic curricula. In ELA, Ms. Weber and Mr. Morgan have been focusing on expanding students' emotional vocabulary and awareness. First, we discussed the reason for having a varied vocabulary; then we discussed some studies that proved greater emotional vocabulary correlated with greater emotional understanding and control. Students created posters, each featuring one commonly used "feelings word," "good" for example. The students used magazine images, markers, and stickers to surround the word with synonyms and images that reflect the meaning of the central emotion. Ms. Weber used this project as a springboard for a poetry-specific project, in which students chose from a selection of poems and made posters. These poetry posters focused on the emotions elicited by each poem and the specific words that create them. Some students took on the challenge of a new poem, while others used their notes as support as they re-read a classwork poem in a new light. The students were diligent in both projects, and beamed proudly as they point the laminated posters out to their YDCs.

In Global History, Ms. Diggins and Ms. Kramer have been upping the ante for Holocaust education at Pride. At the close of the traditional Holocaust unit, Mr. Taylor came to speak to our classes, putting a real human identity on history. Mr. Taylor described his life in Europe during the Holocaust, his detention, his escape, his family's wins and losses, and our students took it all in. Alex Valentine, a cinematographer in the beginning stages of making a documentary about Mr. Taylor's experiences, came along as an interviewer, as did Mr. Taylor's son. They showed photos and documents from Mr. Taylor's life. Teachers came in on their prep, and agency staff from all 3 houses sat in to engage in this rare event. They were gushing about the experience for days. We can't thank Ms. Kramer enough for bringing this wonderful opportunity to Pride.



## Crossroads Highlights

Provided by Crystal Waiters



## Horizon Highlights

Provided by Zulma Ortiz and Shelley Leibusor

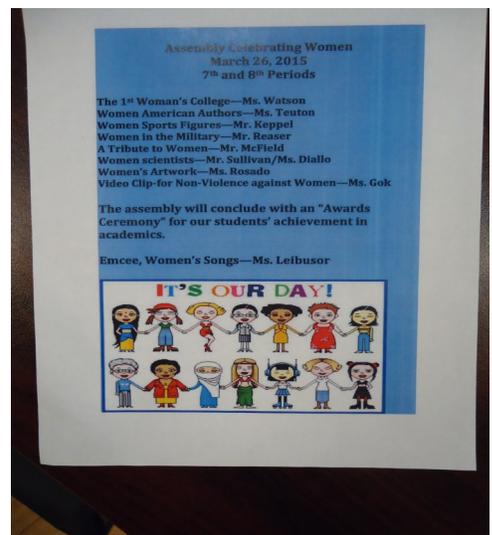
**MOMA comes to Horizon:** Students at Horizon’s create ink stamping with Mr. Leon and our guest artist from the Museum of Modern Art.

**Poet’s Notebook:** Horizon poets create Poet’s Notebooks for inspiration for their poetry journals. They will use this in preparation of their poems. Students will share their poems with a school wide Poetry Café on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Women’s Assembly:** On March 26th, Horizon held their Women’s Day Assembly. The events were as follows.

**7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> periods (1:04-3:00)—Women’s Assembly**

- Introduction and history of Women’s Day.....Ms. Leibusor (Emcee)
- Biography-Ellen Ochoa.....Tatayana
- First Women’s College.....Ms. Watson and students
- Advice to Women.....Tatayana G (FC1)
- Women Sports Figures.....Mr. Keppel and Tatayana
- Biography-Harriet Tubman.....Tatayana (FC1)
- Women in Science.....Mr. Sullivan/Ms. Diallo
- Biography-Oprah Winfrey.....Mr. Caldwell (FC1)
- Biography-Michelle Obama.....Jayleen (FC2)
- Non-Violence Against Women.....Ms. Gok
- Awards Presentation.....Ms. Leibusor/Ms. Teuton



## Staten Island Highlights

Provided by Beatriz Banuelos

What better way to kick off Spring Break than by practicing our dance moves! On Thursday, April 2nd, hip-hop dance instructor Raymond "Spex" Abbiw joined the students, teachers and Children's Village staff to do just that.

Spex's has appeared in music videos with such artists as Mariah Carey, Joe, Lauryn Hill, Wyclef Jean and has also toured internationally in Japan and France. He is currently part owner with founder Brian "Footwork" Green and Ullier Maier of the House Dance Conference, a monthly event providing a platform for entertainment, dance and education.

A long time friend of our counselor, Ms. Pritchett-Dames, Mr. Abbiw kicked off the dance party by providing a brief history of hip-hop. To get the students comfortable, he played a few songs and danced. Then, he began to teach the participants the routine. By first modeling the steps, then observing the practice, Spex knew whether he should model the steps once again or move on. Little by little, he added new steps until there was enough choreography to practice it from the top. By the end of the session, the participants were dancing, laughing and creating memories together.



## Passages Academy Library News

Provided by Regan Schwartz

**Programming News:** This week, students at Crossroads and Horizon created blackout poetry in their school libraries! Using markers and some creative destruction, they turned pages of text into poetry. Discussions of word choice, nuance, figurative language, and copyright abounded. In other news, all students at our Belmont site read poems about home and identity in the library and received personal gift copies of *Words Within the Walls* from the WritersCorps San Francisco.

### Upcoming Programs:

- April 28th: ASTEP at Crossroads
- April 28th: Blackout Poetry at Belmont
- April 30th: Poem in Your Pocket Day at Belmont
- Free Comic Book day is coming in May!

**The Fourth Annual UnConference for School Libraries Serving Incarcerated and Detained Youth:** On Friday, April 24th, in Belmont's library, Passages Academy Libraries will host an UnConference for professionals who work to bring excellent library services to youth in detention.

## Upcoming Events

**April 14-16:** NYS Middle School ELA Exams

**April 22-24:** NYS Middle School Math Exams

**May 25:** Memorial Day – Schools Closed

**June 4:** Chancellor’s Conference Day

**June 16-25:** Regents Exams

**June 26:** Last Day of School!



*“I am what I am today  
because of the choices  
I made yesterday.”*

*Stephen Covey*

## Important Links

Passages Academy Public Website: [www.PassagesAcademy.org](http://www.PassagesAcademy.org)

Passages Academy Staff Website: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/>

Passages Academy Handbook: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/documents>

Passages Academy Library Website: [www.passagesacademylibraries.org](http://www.passagesacademylibraries.org)

Passages Academy Library Blog: [www.whatsgoodinthelibrary.blogspot.com](http://www.whatsgoodinthelibrary.blogspot.com)

Chancellors Regulations: <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/ChancellorsRegulations/default.htm>

ELA & Math Middle School Testing: <http://engageny.org/content/just-released-2013-test-guides-for-ela-mathematics>

Online Textbook Codes: <https://sites.google.com/a/passagesonline.com/staff/textbook-online-access-code>

ACS Online Policy Library: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/home/policy\\_library.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/home/policy_library.shtml)

Our mission is to provide each student with the academic, social and emotional skills they need to be successful in life.