

# PASSAGES POST

## *Principal's Message*

Provided by Yvette Baxter-Sweet

### *Where Are We Going?*

We began this school year with a focus on building rigor into our lesson planning and delivery of instruction. Next, we began to look closely at student outcomes, with a focus on identifying next steps that we need to take to support improvement of student outcomes. What came out of this analysis was an awareness that we need to address the curriculum that we are teaching, and provide support to our instructional staff to support the process of finding entry points for our student population, where 58% are students with special needs.

This task may seem daunting, but it's not. What we have to be is methodical about our approach. In a sense, we can use a K-W-H approach. What do we know? We know that we serve a transient population. We know that 58% of our population are students with special needs. We know that many of our students have gaps in their education. We know that many of our students struggle with learning on all fronts. What do we want to learn? We want to learn how to support struggling students in our classrooms. We want to learn how to teach strategies that students will use continuously to support themselves as learners. We want to build lifelong learners. The last question in the approach is how. How do we do this? We have are continuing to align curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. We have updated our STAR testing systems to yield information that will help support diagnostic academic interventions for our most struggling students in reading and math. Next, we must support our instructional staff and provide them with skills and strategies to build their instructional tool kit for teaching pre/during/post reading strategies, critical thinking skills for mathematical and scientific inquiry, and lesson planning strategies that target struggling students.

This now brings us to where are we going? Over the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, virtually everyone will be involved in professional development to support the K-W-H approach outlined. Not only will staff be sent to professional development, but time will be cut out for reflective practice. What that means in a nut shell: I expect you to implement strategies that you are learning in you day to day lesson execution. Then when we come together as departments, the goal is to reflect on those practices, closely examine what worked, what didn't, what did you change to help the strategy fit with our population. What we sometimes forget as teachers, is that we are also students. Teaching is a living breathing profession. We don't necessarily throw the baby out with the bathwater, but we let some of the water out, and add some new water. This way the baby can continue to be cleaned with fresh water. Strategies that we used possibly 10 or 15 years ago, need to be updated and reflective of the type of learner that exists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, we are moving to becoming a learning community. Over the next 8 weeks, staff will be attending professional development workshops. I ask that we be accommodating to each other. There will be many coverages; just remember your colleague is out learning something that will help our students become better learners. Also remember your turn will be coming up soon. Please leave lesson plans for your colleagues to use in your absence. We will be trying to get subs for this process as well. All Assistant Principals have been provided schedules for professional development days and who is attending. Please check your email on a daily basis for updates, and note that we use DOE email addresses. If yours is not active please contact the DOE Help Desk at 718 935 5100 and they will assist you.

I look forward to sharing this experience with everyone. This is a very exciting time for Passages Academy.

## Belmont Highlights

Provided by Patrick Dorfer

On Friday, February 26th, Belmont continued with our tradition of honoring culturally diverse backgrounds and the accomplishments of African-Americans. Belmont was transformed into the famous Sylvia's restaurants to honor the concept of "Soul Food", a proud concept to honor culinary achievements, which were culturally important during the demeaning terms of slavery and the civil rights movement. Each house was assigned to make their own Kool Aid and Macaroni and Cheese, and a panel of judges rated each product respectively. Our teachers were on hand as well to educate our children on the proud accomplishments African-Americans have made to our society as a whole. It was a great event for all!



## Bronx Hope Highlights

Provided by Allison Trevaskis and Frank Rockford

On January 4th, 2016, Bronx Hope held a business plan presentation event where students selected a business and developed different components for it, such as selecting a name, the type of business it would be, describing the product or service they would be selling, developing a marketing scheme, and developing sales strategies. The young spirited six from the 162nd house presented their business plans to three teachers and received feedback based off of a rubric.

These inspired young ladies had been working diligently since September using their creativity, decision-making and public speaking skills to successfully complete their customized business plans and presentations. When the students expressed how they felt about the event, one student said "It felt like a real experience; like we were on the show, Shark Tank." All the students agreed with her. Mr. Rockford was surprised and said, "This is the best group of students I've ever worked with at Passages Academy. Their enthusiasm and spirits were amazing."

After the presentation, our judges (Ms. Walsh, Mr. Calamia, and Mr. Stahl) provided wonderful feedback to the students; we thank them for their participation. Also, special thanks to Ms. Peck and the staff of 162nd for their support, as well as to Mr. Blake and Mrs. Trevaskis for their assistance.

### Drum Roll Please!

Bronx Hope would like to acknowledge and celebrate the academic achievements of 5 students who attained Honor Roll status for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period of the 2015-16 School Year. To achieve this recognition, students had to pass every course in their schedule with a minimum grade of 85. The students honored at this time are:

\*Jhon P. Marolla 92.62

\*Raliek M. WP 92

\*Ashley D. 162<sup>nd</sup> 91.57

\*Travis W. WP 88

\*Tyreke B. 86.15

## Staten Island Highlights

Provided by Adrienne Pritchett-Dames

On February 25th, 2016, Children's Village and Passages Academy celebrated their 2nd Annual Black History Program. This year we reached out to the community to take part in our production:

- Karyn's Little Angels Dance Company performed an African and Modern Dance.
- Rev. Agnes and Ms. Christal Waymar from St. Philip coordinated a Praise Dance for our young ladies.
- Ms. Jeanine Lopardo-Wright has recently joined Children's Village and Passages Academy as Modern Dance teacher. Ms. Wright coordinated a dance inspired by Nina Simone's Four Women.
- Children's Village, Passages Academy's faculty and family collaborated and performed with students.
- Many family members came out to see our young ladies shine!!!!



During our production, we reminisced on the struggle of Black ancestry which begun in Africa and transformed to America. Through our journey in time were reminded of how our ancestors strived to overcome inhumane torment for being Black. You see, they endured such great pain to ensure that the next generation of Black offspring will have the privilege of a better and promising tomorrow. Our audiences were asked to buckle their seat belts and hold on tight as they traveled in time.....

Following the Black History Production, everyone enjoyed a delicious home cooked Southern dinner, catered by faculty and Luck's Kitchen Catering Services.

## Passages Academy Library News

Provided by Allison Trevaskis

### Programming News

On Wednesday, January 20th, students of the 162nd NSP house traveled to The Museum of Modern Art for an incredible day of viewing Modern Era Art. Upon arrival, the students were invited to their classroom art studio where they met with our museum educator, Shellyne Rodriguez. The group was guided by Shellyne through the museum on a private, before public hours tour. Students viewed artworks created after WWII and discussed the stylistic changes artists' took on in the Modern Era in response to the many tragedies during the war. Specifically, we learned about medium of Printmaking and the techniques artists used to create volume, shape, texture and juxtaposition of figures to convey their ideas .



Before heading back to the classroom we viewed several other famous works such as Pablo Picasso's "Girl Before A Mirror" painted in 1932; featuring Marie Therese Walter, a repeat model for the artist. Upon conclusion of the tour, the students became the artists. The students were introduced to printmaking tools and techniques and able to work for two hours creating prints. Ms. Trevaskis, Bronx Hope Librarian, chaperoned the trip with assistance from house staff, Ms. Peck and Mr. Johnson.

### Brief Program Highlights

\*Horizon Librarian, Claudio Leon organized a successful private evening tour of MoMA's galleries for Passages educators. Eight staff members from three sites met with Museum Educator, Shellyne Rodriguez for a lovely evening at the museum. \*Planning for the library renovation at Belmont has begun. \*The Unbound Read-a-thon continues through the month of February at Horizon, Bronx Hope, Belmont and Crossroads. Organized by the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings (CEEAS) the Read-a-thon encourages all students to find joy in reading and not just for educational purposes; promoting the program with the slogan, "Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are." More about the Read-a-thon including leaderboard can be found here-<http://ceeasorg.wix.com/unbound2016> \*Belmont's Leake and Watts house hosted a pre-theater visit from New Victory teaching artists on February 9th and went on a field trip to the New Victory theater on February 10th to see Untapped!-- an Australian troupe of tap dancers and musicians including beatboxer Genesis. \*The majority of groups at Belmont participated in some enjoyable origami-folding during the origami library program conducted during the week of February 9th. Paper hearts and cups gave way to more advanced challenges and dozens of students looking through the library's "how-to" section.

## Upcoming Events

**March 15th:** Parent Teacher Conference 12:50pm-3:17pm

**March 16th:** Parent Teacher Conference 4:30pm-7:30pm

**March 25th:** Good Friday – Schools Closed

**April 25th-April 29th:** Spring Recess – Schools Closed

### Upcoming Library Programs:

**March 1st and 3rd:** ASTEP at Crossroads

**March 16:** trip to see *Fly* at the New Victory Theater for Lutheran group at Belmont

**March 29th:** Author and Artists Series: Paul Griffin and Gayle Forman at Crossroads



*"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)

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

*"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."*

-Albert Einstein