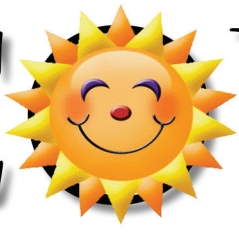


# THE COURIER



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WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10605

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*The longest running middle school newspaper in the United States!*

## Thomas Grimes: Think Before You Click



By Nikolas O'Hanlon

On Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, Thomas Grimes, a 20 year veteran and retired detective of the NYCPD, came to our school. Mr. Grimes was a first responder to the attacks at the the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. He has spoken on Internet Awareness and Drug Awareness at over two hundred schools in seven states.

Mr. Grimes came to teach us about how to be safe and responsible on the internet and social media sites or apps, such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and AskFm.

Mr. Grimes talked about the consequences of not using the internet safely. One of his quotes is "Think before you click." He said that online predators "groom" their victims, which means they are kind to the victim to earn their trust. Then, they have a chance to seri-

ously harm the victim. He also talked about identity theft. He discussed the consequences of cyber bullying such as going to jail, getting arrested, and the impact on the victim. Sometimes, victims would kill themselves. Two famous stories of cyber bullying are the Amanda Todd and the Megan Meier Stories. Amanda Todd hanged herself due to cyber blackmailing. She was blackmailed through pictures. Megan Meier also hanged herself due to cyberbullying. She met a boy on the internet and in the end he said the world would be a better place without her. The boy turned out to be the mother of Megan's best friend, and she did this because Megan had a fight with her friend. Mr. Grimes talked about why it is important not to be a victim. The speech was sad, but important at the same time. Hopefully Highlands students will "think before they click."

## Joe Biden's Son Passes Away

By Bethsie Brice

Beau Biden, son of Joe Biden died at the age of 46 on Sunday May 30, 2015. He died Bethesda, MD due to brain cancer. Beau Biden has suffered from health problems since 2010. When Beau Biden was two he survived a car crash with a truck crashing into the car the family was riding in. His mother and sister were killed. He and his younger brother Hunter Biden survived with

major injuries. In 2013, Beau Biden received a lot of treatment for his cancer at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Biden won his first election for attorney general in 2006 by 13,000 votes. When he was re-elected in 2010, Beau Biden increased his winning boundary to 149,000 votes. Beau Biden planned on running for governor of Delaware in 2016.

## Highlands Welcomes Artist Michael Albert



By Aine Nicholson

In late May to early June, artist Michael Albert visited Highlands for four days to work with the 135 7<sup>th</sup> graders who take art this semester on a collage map of our city White Plains. Before the collage started, Mr. Albert talked to the entire 7<sup>th</sup> grade about his work as an artist. He discussed his early work and how he mainly focuses on collages now. The collage was made out of letters from cardboard packages that were collected through donations from students and staff. Students got to pick a street or landmark name and get letters from the cardboard packages. Then, the students worked individually with Mr. Albert to place the letters onto the map geographically correctly. After the students finished that, they would make a personal collage of a quote from a person or a song lyric. They would follow the same pro-

cess as with the map, except they get to add their own personal touch to it and add their personality. Mr. Albert feels that this style of art is a great way to use the things that most people have in their recycling bins. He spoke about how one student brought in a collage that he worked on with his parents and grandparents, saying that this type of project is a way to bring together multiple generations on a creative endeavor! In explaining the White Plains collage, Mr. Albert stated "we are trying to see simplicity in the complicated", because the idea of the collage is both complicated, yet simple at the same time. He is happy to see the students working together on finding letters and sharing resources to produce their own unique and beautiful collages. The White Plains map collage will be hung in the main hall of the building soon, and will certainly beautify the school!

**See page 16 for a picture of the finished product!**

# Is MERS the Next Ebola? Massive Earthquake Hits Nepal

By Finn O'Callaghan

MERS- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. This disease is actually very recent to humankind. First started in Saudi Arabia in 2012, the virus has spread across the globe to different countries-including the United States. When someone comes into contact with the virus, they usually have coughs, fevers, and shortness of breath. Sounds like a normal cold, right? Well, of all the people infected, most die.

Now, this disease is nowhere close to the death rate of major diseases, such as Ebola. But it is still a problem to many, mostly in the Middle East. Ebola has killed thousands. MERS has only killed around 282 people. You'd think that's not enough to wipe out our species. And you're probably right about that. But the thing about MERS is that, like I said, it's new to us. We haven't seen anything it's made of yet. If it gets out of control, it might end up being a big threat.

MERS spreads, and is already spreading to different places fast. We've only known of its existence for three years, and there have been cases of it in 25 countries. That means it's already entered about 13% of the world's

countries. And on June 1st, 2015, two people died of it in South Korea.

These are the first death reports of MERS in the country. South Korea has been slow to contain MERS, making it obvious why two people have died of it. The first was a 58-year-old woman who had traveled to the Middle East and gotten it there. The second was a 71-year-old man.

This shows how fast this disease is spreading. In the last month, South Korea has had 17 cases, but these are the first deaths. This disease is very serious, but not very contagious. Even though the chance of getting MERS is low, people are worried sick about the thought of it getting to them. 680 people who have come into contact with infected patients have been sentenced to isolation. They didn't even have the disease, but people were so worried that it would spread that the 680 people will live out years without any human interaction just because they touched someone's arm. Whether you know about it or not, isolation is one of the worst things to do to a human since we are a social species. Isolation cases usually lead to insanity. MERS may be new, but it's out there now.

## Riots Erupt in Baltimore After Man Dies in Police Custody

By Danny DeGenaro

On Sunday, April 12, 25-year-old Freddie Gray suffered a major injury to his spine while being transported by six Baltimore police officers. Officers Brian W. Rice, Garrett E. Miller and Edward M. Nero gave chase after Mr. Rice made eye contact with Mr. Gray, who then began to run. Mr. Gray surrendered near 1700 Presbury Street, where he was handcuffed. Mr. Gray requested an inhaler and indicated he could not breathe, yet the officers did nothing. Mr. Gray had a knife on him, however it was a perfectly legal pocketknife and it was unopened. State of Maryland Attorney Marilyn J. Mosby stated that the arrest was illegal. Mr. Gray was then placed in a van where he was jolted around. This brought about the injury to his spine. Officer Caesar R. Goodson Jr. drove the van whilst being inattentive to Mr. Gray. The van stopped on Baker Street and Mr. Gray was put into leg shackles. He was then put back into the van on his stomach. Mr. Goodson then stopped near the corner of Mosher Street and Fremont Avenue, where he checked on Mr. Gray, yet denied him any medical assistance. Mr. Goodson then requested to have officers meet him at the corner of Dolphin Street and Druid Hill Avenue. There, Officer William Porter checked on Mr. Gray. Mr. Gray indicated that he needed medical attention twice, yet Mr. Porter ignored him. Finally, Sgt. Alicia White checked on Mr. Gray on North Avenue, where he was found unresponsive. Ms. White was advised that he needed medical attention, yet she did nothing. Mr. Gray was then taken to the Western District po-

lice station, where he was given medical attention. Mr. Gray was deemed to be in cardiac arrest and severely injured as well. He was brought to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma where he was operated on. He did, however, die a week later. Ms. Mosby is trying the officers on various counts of homicide and for illegal arrest.

This event sparked protests and even rioting in Baltimore. Protests began peacefully, but by the sixth night of the protests, April 23, two people were taken into police custody. The majority of protestors did remain peaceful, yet on April 25, some police cars were damaged and protestors threw rocks and debris at officers, leaving six of them injured. Thirty-four protestors were arrested that day. On April 27, High school students planning a riot were stopped early by police and National Guard forces, but these protestors did throw bricks and bottles at the officers. Baltimore's government imposed a 10:00 p.m. curfew on all citizens to prevent more violence. After 10:00 p.m., rioters remained and threw bricks, bottles, and even smoke bombs. The police then began to use items similar to pepper spray. The curfew did seem to work as the number of arrested people went down to ten that night. After the riots, everyone came together to clean up their streets. By May 3, the curfew was lifted. By May 4, the Maryland National Guard left Baltimore. Forty-six people were arrested after the curfew on May 2, but the rally that day was peaceful. Related protests and protests to support the Baltimore protests occurred across the country, but the rioting is now over and life will hopefully return to normal.

By Lucas Konarski

This year, on April 25th, an earthquake of a magnitude of 7.8 hit Nepal, a small country to the north of India. Following this massive earthquake, shock waves came and went in the weeks after, with some other smaller, yet devastating quakes, some reaching a magnitude of 6.7 or even higher. Approximately 8,000 people died in Nepal, along with several thousand other injuries. And nearby countries like India or China also suffered some damage and a few deaths as well. Even those who did not die or get hurt dur-

ing this tragedy are still suffering due to the destruction of public places and residents alike. Some entire villages were smashed to the ground leaving hundreds of thousands of people with nowhere to call home. Even though many research helicopters has been sent to some locations many people are still missing. About 8,000 schools were also destroyed, with most being reopened by the end of May. However, the schools are still in need of funding. Most families that suffered are still working hard to rebuild their lives and find a place where they can live.

## Hunger in Africa and Around the World

By Bethsie Brice

Approximately 925 million people across the world are living in poverty. Already 923 million people worldwide are undernourished. More than 70 percent of Africa's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for food and livelihood. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 218 million people live in extreme poverty. In Eastern and Southern Africa, there has one of the world's highest amounts of poor people. People's growth can be stunted under these circumstances because they don't receive the essential nutrients during pregnancy and/or the first five years or life. This condition can cause people to be shorter and thinner. 67 percent of the adult population in Ethiopia suffered from stunted growth as children. There are many ways people are helping to end poverty from Africa. Eliminating the factors that lead to

stunted growth in Ethiopia is a necessary step for its growth and transformation. People are building clean water sources for the people in Africa. With access to clean water, people are now able to build homes, grow food, and not have to work as hard to find water. Some people say that educating women can help end poverty in Africa. Healthy, educated girls with equal access to opportunities can grow into strong, smart women are more capable of taking leadership roles in their countries. In May 2013, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced giving \$1 billion in support for countries around Lake Victoria with a special emphasis on women, who are among the most vulnerable groups in the region. As part of that pledge, the Bank approved \$107 million for Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, to address gender-based violence.

## Volcanic Eruption Forces Evacuation

By Shannon Rogers

Chile's Calbuco volcano has not erupted in over 40 years; that was until April 22. After that, two more eruptions occurred on April 23 and April 30. During this time, more than 2,500 people were evacuated within a 20 mile radius of the volcano. This inactive volcano had scared some people, as many went out to purchase food and water in the event that they would be unable to leave their homes. Airplane flights around the area were cancelled

due to the thick smoke and ash in the air. There was also a report of lava found in Chapo Lake which is next to the volcano. As people returned to their houses after the government decided it was safe, they were warned of acid rain and lahars, which is a mixture of rain and ash that can cause deadly mud-like avalanches. The government reported that as of May 5, tourism is steady and normal for the area and many people are continuing their daily lives despite the scare of the volcanic eruption!

# An Eye for an Eye, a Death for a Death

Capital punishment, if you're unfamiliar with the term, is the practice of executing someone who committed a serious crime. It seems fair, until you think about the effects this practice has.

It would seem adequate to execute someone for murder, but it really isn't. As an example, let's assume we have three people, who we'll call X, Y, and Z. X murders Y and Z gets the blame. Z is convicted and sentenced to death. Now, an innocent person is dead and the real killer is totally off the hook. Even if Z confesses to the murder, that still doesn't mean he/she actually did it. Often, people confess in order to lessen their punishment. In short, it is impossible to be completely sure that the person on trial is guilty. There is always a chance, though it is sometimes very small, that you are putting an innocent person to death.

Even if you don't care about morals, there are economic reasons not to use this penalty. A death penalty case can cost up to a million dollars more than one that does not seek the death penalty. It is, when accounting for all costs, far cheaper to keep an inmate in jail for life than it is to execute them.

One reason the death penalty was put in place was to scare others. However, scientific studies show that the death penalty does not deter people from crime. The average murder rate

in death penalty states in 2011 was 4.89 percent, while the average murder rate in non-death penalty states was 4.13 percent. When looking at previous years as well, crime rates are always higher on average for states with the death penalty. This is evidence of a correlation between crime going up and having the death penalty. Allowing the death penalty to exist may actually increase the crime rate. This means that it does not deter people from crime at all. Rather, it seems to encourage it. (From [deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://deathpenaltyinfo.org))

Economic discrimination unfairly assists in getting people the death penalty. Most people who are sentenced to death are represented by public defenders, meaning they are poor. There is also evidence of racial discrimination in application of the death penalty. In 1982, 42 percent of death row inmates were African-Americans, while only 12 percent of the U.S. population was African-American. (From [american-magazine.org](http://american-magazine.org))

There is also the problem of media exposure. People enjoy hearing about death penalty cases and it can even encourage people to commit crimes, as stated above. Much of this is because exposure to the media can drive someone's ego and spur them to commit crimes. It also encourages people to favor the death penalty more so when

they hear about it.

When murderers like Charles Manson come up, many people think the death penalty is deserved. This may be due to fear or anger. However, applying the death penalty, when deeply thought about, does not really punish someone. The offender hasn't learned his lesson. People who are psychopaths or who really want to kill someone will not learn a lesson. In contrast, keeping someone in prison is a punishment. If you don't know this already, prison is a very dangerous place. Being confined to dreaded conditions could actually teach criminals why they shouldn't do what they did. Again, taking the case of a psychopath, those diagnosed with insanity should not even be subject to punishment. People with severe mental disorders may be unable to control their actions or restrain themselves, and should be given psychiatric aid. In serious cases of insanity, they should be put in mental hospitals.

Finally, people believe that the death penalty is good because it's in the Bible that the world's first murderer was executed by God. There are multiple things wrong with this. In fact, this is the worst possible argument for the death penalty. The first is that the Bible, like all holy books, can be interpreted multiple ways. Some interpret

this event in the Bible as a metaphor. Some who take it literally do not think that an execution took place. Either way, the Bible is a religious testament. This means that it does not apply to American government no matter what, as there is not only freedom of religion in America, but there is also a separation of church and state here. Further, everything written in all holy books and religious testaments is irrelevant to American government because laws are made on the fact that we are a diverse society with various beliefs. I'm not so sure we should include this in the school paper - it could possibly offend some people.

In conclusion, there is really no point to the death penalty. It is not helpful in deterring people from crime, nor is it successful in punishing an offender. It is a discriminatory practice, often times, and there is no way to prevent the media from exposing every detail of the cases. It is always possible that an innocent person is executed in these cases and economically, a death penalty case costs far more than one aiming for a prison sentence, even when adding the cost of keeping the inmate alive in prison. The eighth amendment to the U.S. Constitution clearly states that cruel and unusual punishment may not be inflicted. At this point, the death penalty seems to fall under that.



## THE COURIER

White Plains Middle School

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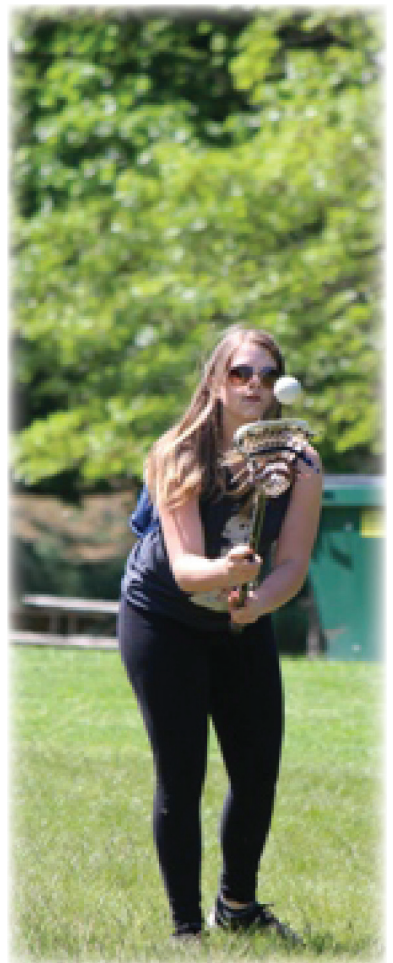
Rachel Miller

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# Eighth Grade



# ade Picnic



# Eighth Grade Trips

By Nikolas O'Hanlon

On May 14 and 15 the eighth grade went to Washington D.C. We saw lots of interesting places and monuments. These included the Holocaust Museum, the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Roosevelt Memorial, the Capitol Building, the Arlington Cemetery, the Smithsonian Museum, and the White House. The eighth grade stayed at the Crystal City Hilton, a very nice hotel. The eighth grade

ate lunch both days at two different food courts. My favorite part was the Air and Space Museum because of the exhibits. My favorite exhibit was the model of the aircraft carrier. We were chaperoned by some of our fantastic teachers. The eighth grade had fun on the Washington D.C. trip and learned a lot about the U.S.



# Washington D.C.

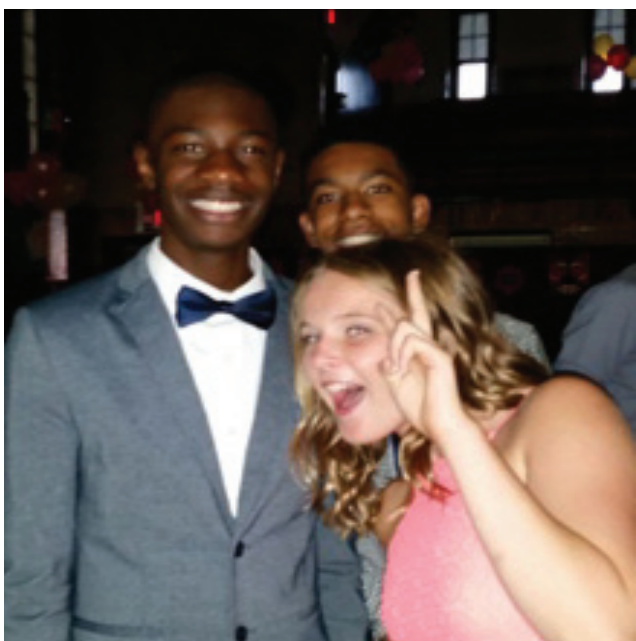


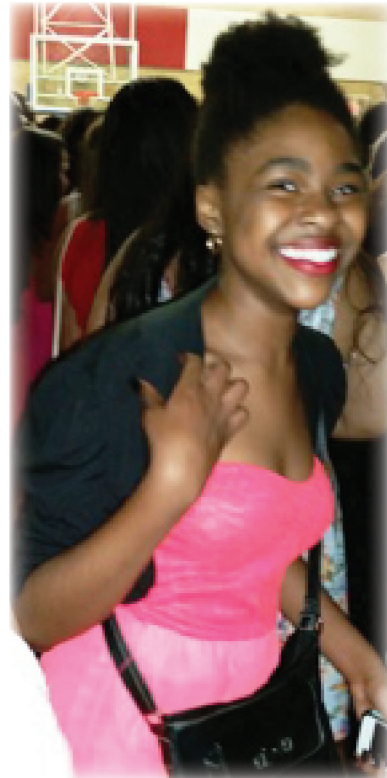
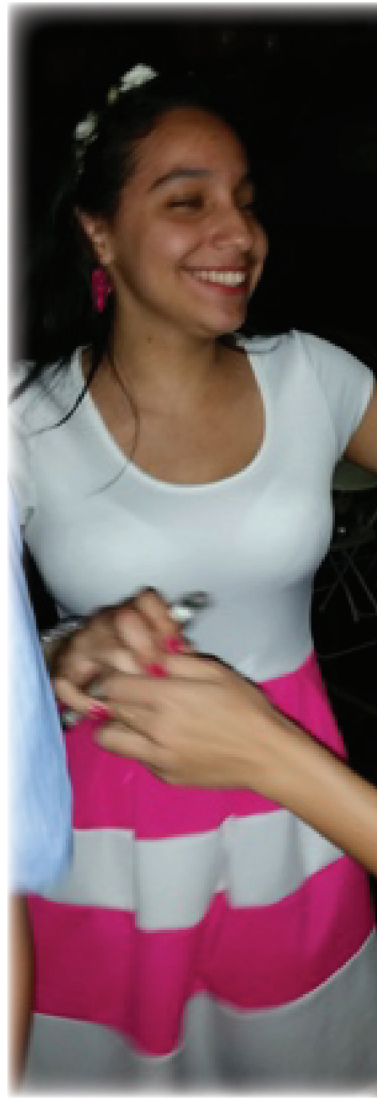
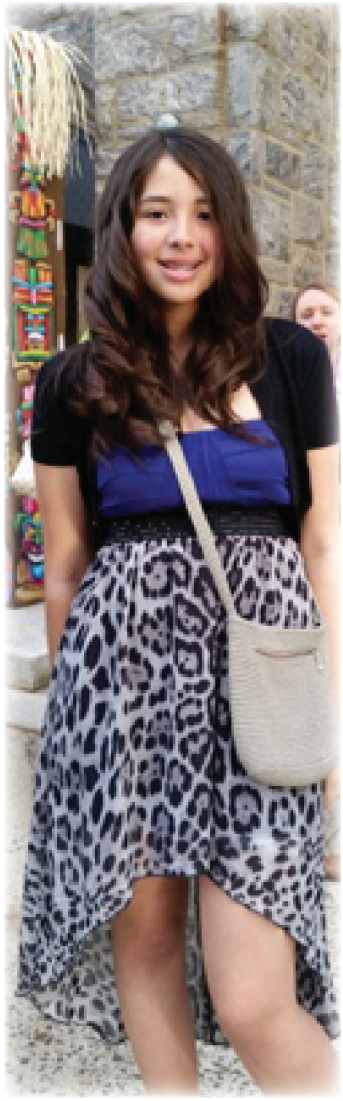
# Eighth Grade Dance:

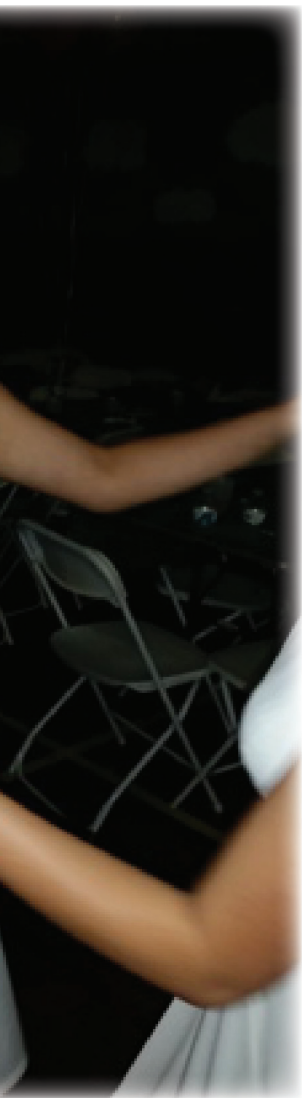


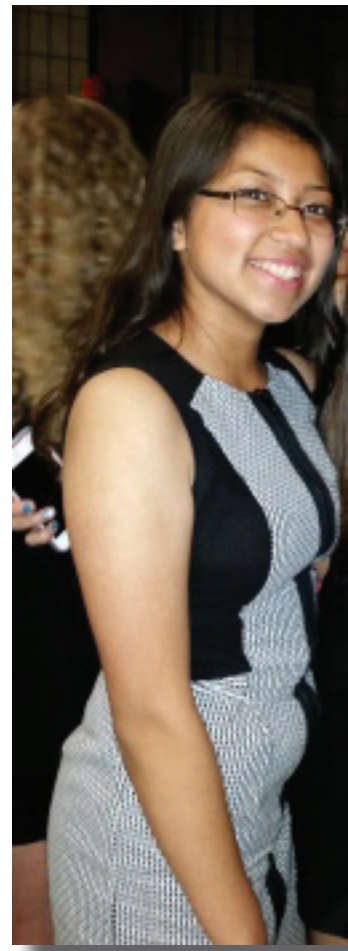
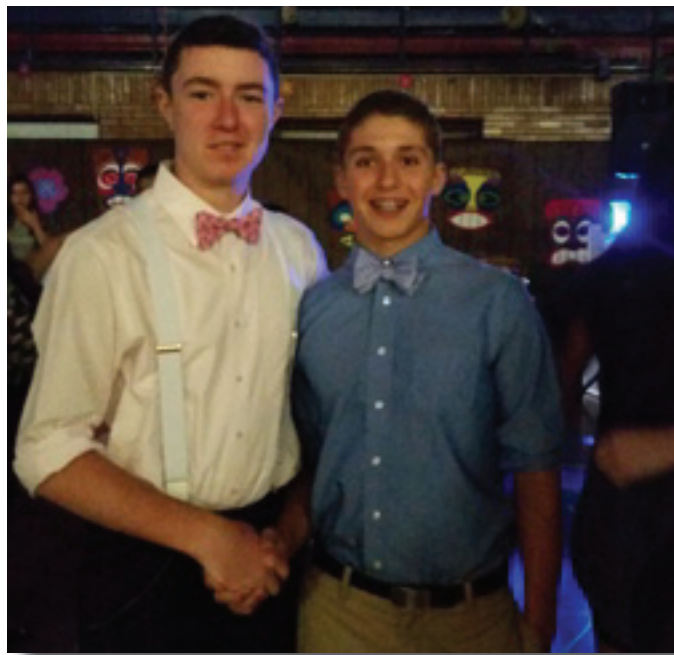


# A Night in Paradise











# Retiree Spotlight: Ms. Medina



By Lily A. Wray

*Tell us about your background/education. Where did you go to high school or college?*

I went to Menrow High School in the Bronx, Lachlan College in the Bronx, Bank Street College, Pace University, and Manhattan College for a degree in special education.

*How long have you been in education?*

31 years total, and 20 years in White Plains.

*Please tell us about your role or roles in the district.*

Well, I've been a House Administrator for the high school, an assistant principal at the high school, and an assistant principal here at Highlands.

*Why did you get into this field?*

I love working with kids with special needs. I originally wanted to be a librarian because I love reading, but my girlfriends told me "no no you should be a teacher", so I decided to become a teacher.

*What was your career before you started working in White Plains?*

Believe or not I started teaching in the Bronx. Before that I worked in publishing because I love to write.

*Did you always want to do this job?*

Yes. I love my job. I don't regret a single day of it.

*What would you be doing if you weren't doing this job?*

Thank you for your service to our school! Best of luck in your retirement!

I really don't know. I really do love this job but I would have to say a librarian because I love reading.

*What is one of your favorite memories of your time here in White Plains?*

I have so many; this will sound crazy but, coming to work and seeing the students and staff every morning. I really look forward to coming to the school and being around everyone.

*What will you miss about working here?*

All of the students definitely. I love you all, even when you're misbehaving! You're all so funny. And I'll also miss all the teachers who really care about the students' well-being.

*What are your plans for retirement?*

I plan to spend a lot of time with my children and grandchildren, that's a priority. To read lots of books. I want to read dozens and dozens and dozens of books. Also I would love to teach adults how to read. I truly believe in the power of literacy. And to travel, everyone always likes to travel.

*What message would you like to share with students and staff as you prepare to retire?*

Just to never give up no matter what, no matter what happens, no matter how defeated you feel, just never give up and follow your dreams.

*Is there anything else you would like to share?*

It's really hard to say good-bye to the people I love, and the things I love to do.

# Teacher Spotlight: Mrs. Tuck



By Genesis Roseau

*Tell us about your education. Where did you go to college and/or high school?*

I went to Tennessee State University in Nashville Tennessee and Texas Southern University to the Thurgood Marshall School of law to earn my law degree.

*What job did you have before you became a teacher?*

I served in the United States Navy as a military lawyer.

*Why did you become a teacher?*

I come a family of educators... My mother, grandmother, and two of my aunts.

*What do you like most about teaching?*

I like learning things from my students because they bring their culture and knowledge.

*What advice do you have for your students?*

What message would you like your students

*to remember?*

"Never stop learning, never stop wanting to know more."

*What do you like to do in your free time?*

I like to read, travel, and cook.

*If you weren't a teacher, what would you be doing in your life instead?*

I would be practicing law.

*What is your favorite topic to teach in your subject area?*

I love to teach The Constitution.

*Who is your favorite historical figure, and why?*

It would have to be Thurgood Marshall, a brilliant legal mind who broke down barriers of segregation.

*Who is your hero, and why?*

Soujourner Truth is my hero because she was not afraid to speak out and change things around her.

**Join The Courier next year! We need writers, photographers, and editors! All students are welcome to join!**

# Reviews!

## Tomorrowland: World of the Future

By Nikolas O'Hanlon

"Tomorrowland" is an exciting, futuristic Sci-Fi movie. It stars Britt Robertson as Casey Newton, the protagonist of the film, George Clooney as Frank Walker, a scientist who was exiled from Tomorrowland, Hugh Laurie as Governor Nix, the leader of Tomorrowland, Tim McGraw as Eddie Newton, a NASA scientist and father to Casey and Nate Newton, Raffey Cassidy as Athena, the good android, and Kathryn Hahn Keegan-Michael Key as Ursula and Hugo, two bad androids. "Tomorrowland" has made \$74.4 million in the box office as of May 26, 2015 and had a \$190 million budget. The screenplay was heavily influenced by Walt Disney's optimistic philosophy of innovation and utopia and the setting is based on Walt Disney's "Tomorrowland" in Disney World.

The plot is that Casey Newton "finds" a pin with the letter "T" emblazoned on it at a police station. When she touches the pin, she gets a brief

preview of a place called Tomorrowland and Casey thinks that Tomorrowland is real. Casey and her brother, Nate go online and find a memorabilia shop that may have the same pin because the pin Casey found ran out of battery. When Casey goes to the memorabilia shop, she meets the shop owners, Hugo and Ursula. She shows them the pin and they ask her where she got it and if she saw a girl. Then Athena bursts in and fights Ursula and Hugo. Casey finds out that Hugo and Ursula are androids. Then Athena helps Casey escape the store before Hugo and Ursula self-destruct. Then she finds Frank Walker (a scientist) and he tells her how to get to Tomorrowland. Then, "Secret Service" androids show up and try to kill Casey. They chase after Casey. From here there is a very exciting finale.

It was an excellent movie. My favorite attribute of Tomorrowland was the special effects. I suggest that people who like sci-fi and tech watch this movie.

## Doctor Who: We Can't Keep Our Silence

By Danny DeGenaro, Isabelle Levine, and Finn O'Callaghan

Doctor Who is a Sci-Fi TV show produced by the BBC (British Broadcasting Company). The show first aired on November 23, 1963. The show was originally not very popular and it was predicted that the show would not last very long. However, it was not cancelled until 1989. In 2005, the series was revived by the BBC and they introduced a more modern world to the show. This included new visual and auditory effects, and new actors. By 2005, the show's storyline was up to the ninth regeneration of the doctor. When the doctor's body is in a situation that would ordinarily kill someone, he regenerates. His physical body is changed, but his mind and memories are preserved. However, if he is lethally attacked during the beginning of the regeneration, he can die.

The story of Doctor Who begins with two planets. The first planet, Gallifrey, was home to a race called the

Time Lords. The second planet, Skaro, was the home of the Daleks, a race of aliens that look harmless but are incredibly dangerous. The Doctor was a Time Lord soldier in a war between the two races, called the Last Great Time War. To end the war and disruption, he blew up both planets. He then has adventures around the universe with various human companions, trying to save people to balance out the negative things he did.

The Doctor travels in a Time Lord ship called the TARDIS, which stands for Time And Relative Dimensions In Space. On the outside, it is disguised as a Police Call Box from the 1960's, but is infinite on the inside. Some villains from Doctor Who include the Daleks, the Cybermen, the Silence (hence the name of the title), and the Weeping Angels.

Doctor Who is a great show with clever plots and interesting characters. We recommend it for anyone of any age, even if you don't like Sci-Fi.

## Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2

By Nikolas O'Hanlon

Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 is a hilarious comedy movie. It features Kevin James, who stars as everybody's favorite mall security officer, Paul Blart, a kind of stupid and overwhelmed man from Orange County, California. The movie costars Raini Rodriguez (his daughter), Eduardo Verásegui (head of security at the hotel where Blart stays), Daniella Alonso (manager of the hotel where Blart stays), and Neal McDonough (the bad guy). The movie was written by Nick Bakay, and Kevin James and directed by Andy Fickman. The movie earned \$78 million and was released on April 17.

The plot unfolds when Paul Blart is called to Los Angeles for an important meeting, which is to discuss advances in security technology. It takes place at a fancy hotel. There a hilarious scene occurs when Blart thinks the manager is hitting on him, but she's already dat-

ing the head of security and it takes a while to sort out who likes who. Meanwhile, Blart finds out that Maya, his daughter, has interest in the hotel's valet, so he (who?) starts spying on her. However, he is a terrible spy, and so she finds him out. Meanwhile Vincent (the bad guy, I would assume?) and his crew are planning to steal the art work from the hotel and replace the real art with replicas and sell the real art at an auction. Maya and the valet then decide to go to a party at the hotel, where Maya stumbles upon Vincent and his gang. Vincent and his gang chase after Maya and Maya locks herself in a bathroom and calls Paul Blart. What follows is a hilarious chase and ending.

My favorite part was when a police horse kicks Blart and he gets knocked into the side of his car (he wasn't seriously hurt.) I recommend this movie to people who like comedy. Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2 was very well made and thought out.

## Avengers: Age of Ultron

By Nikolas O'Hanlon

Avengers: Age of Ultron is a fast paced, action packed and epic movie. It stars the avengers: Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr), Black Widow (Scarlet Johansson), Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), Thor (Chris Hemmingsworth), and Captain America (Chris Evans), with a special visit from Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson). The movie was a huge hit worldwide and made 1 billion dollars in 24 days. It was the second of the Avengers movies and judging by this success, they will have another Avengers movie in the next few years.

The movie starts with a big fight between the Avengers and HYDRA (a modern version of the Nazis). The Avengers are fighting for "Loki's scepter", a god-like weapon. Meanwhile Tony Stark (Iron Man) is flying around the HYDRA castle to find the power

source of the shield generator protecting the castle. Iron Man discovers a secret room in the castle and finds out that HYDRA is experimenting with robotics. The Avengers retrieve the scepter and they find out that Loki's scepter is connected to an artificial intelligence program. Tony Stark was supposed to dismantle the program. But, he doesn't and he accidentally creates Ultron, a program that was supposed to be a peacekeeping program, that malfunctions. Eventually Ultron finds the robots created by HYDRA and intends to destroy the world. The Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver are experiments created by HYDRA and at first they were with Ultron but then they join the avengers. At the end there's a huge war between the Avengers and Ultron and his robot army.

I thought the movie was powerful, and enjoyable. I highly recommend this movie to people who like action.

Summer fun Activities List: Are you not going on vacation and want to have a fun summer? Well don't worry! This is a list of fun activities you could do for your staycation.

- Make popsicles out of blue Gatorade and lemonade.
- Make a homemade ride out of the things in your garage.
- Make a lemonade stand.
- Volunteer at your local animal shelter.
- Find an interesting hobby.
- Do yoga classes.
- Do a team sport.
- Do some reading. (Remember - summer reading is required!)

- Go for a walk.
- Go for a hike.
- Chow down on fries while watching "Star Wars" (my personal favorite).
- Go to the beach.
- Go to Play land.
- Go to Coney Island.
- Create a fun game.
- Create machines.
- Relax.
- Go to the spa and enjoy yourself #manipedis!



Image: Summer reading 2013 clipart Pixgood.com

GREAT BOOKS FOR SUMMER READING!!!!!!

This summer students entering 8<sup>th</sup> Grade will be required to read Gathering Blue (the second book in The Giver quartet) by Lois Lowry.

Students entering 9<sup>th</sup> Grade are required to read The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore. (<http://theotherwesmoore.com>)

For more information on these books and other suggested reading books see the Highlands welcome page or the Summer Reading Tab on the Highlands Library page. <http://itglibraries.libguides.com/wphlibrary/SummerReading>

Both books are available at the White Plains Public Library and wherever books are sold.

# The Billboard Music Awards

By Isabelle Levine

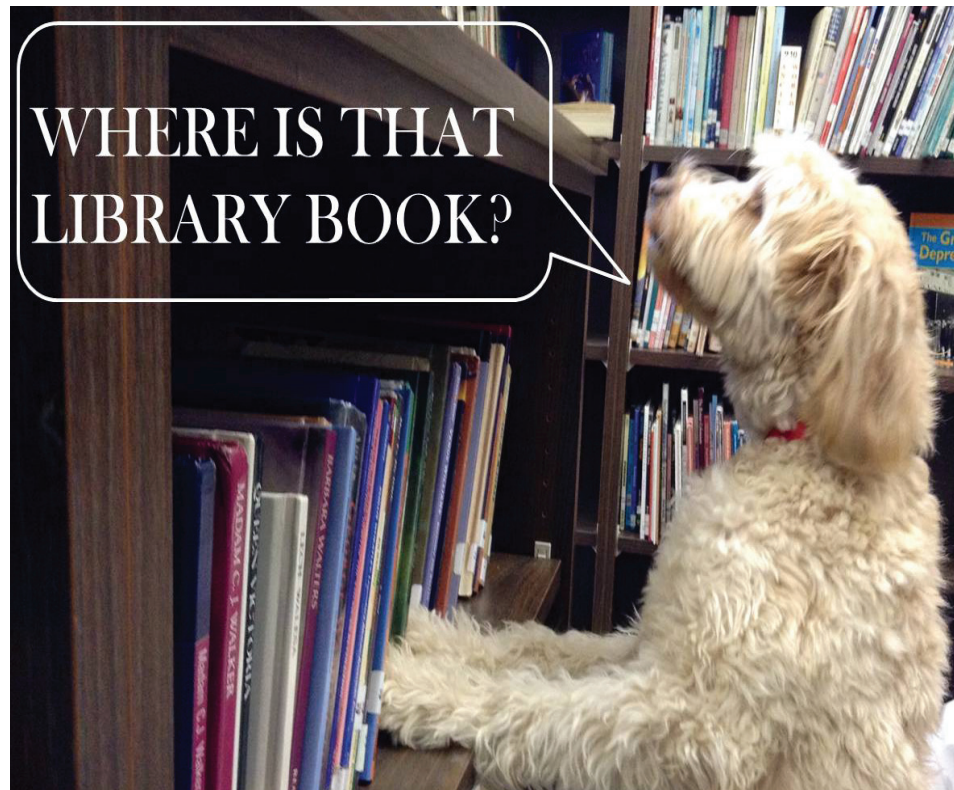
The Billboard Music Awards happened on May 17th. There were many exciting and humorous moments. Some highlights were Taylor Swift's debut of the Bad Blood music video, One Direction thanking their former bandmate Zayn Malik, and a Paul Walker tribute. There were many awards given out that night, so we shortened the list. Below are listed the winners and performers from the show.

Award Winners

- Top Artist- Taylor Swift
- Top Country Artist- Florida Georgia Line
- Billboard Chart Achievement Award- Taylor Swift
- Top Touring Artist- One Direction
- Top Female Artist- Taylor Swift
- Top Radio Song- John Legend, "All of Me"
- Top Male Artist- Sam Smith
- Top Rap Song- Iggy Azalea feat. Charli XCX, "Fancy"
- Top Billboard 200 Album- Taylor Swift, "1989"
- Top Duo/Group- One Direction
- Top New Artist- Sam Smith
- Top Billboard 200 Artist- Taylor Swift
- Top Hot 100 Artist- Taylor Swift
- Top Radio Songs Artist- Sam Smith
- Top Social Artist- Justin Bieber
- Top Rap Artist- Iggy Azalea
- Top Rock Artist- Hozier

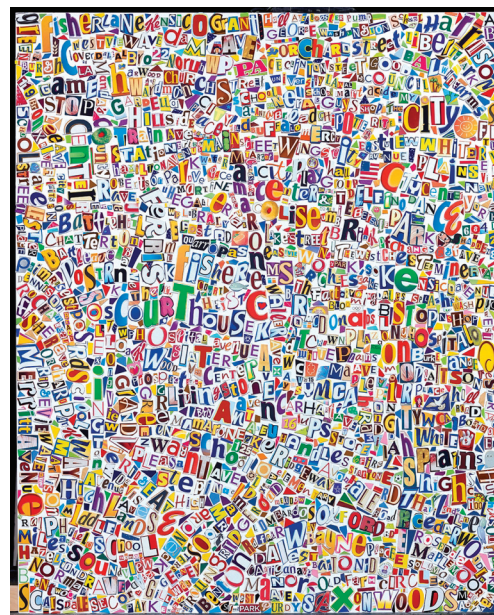
Performers

- Nick Jonas
- Hozier
- Fall Out Boy
- Kanye West
- Sam Smith
- Wiz Khalifa
- Meghan Trainor
- Iggy Azalea
- Nicki Minaj
- Imagine Dragons
- Kelly Clarkson
- Mariah Carey
- Ed Sheeran



**PLEASE!!**

- ❖ Do not forget to bring back your overdue library books.
- ❖ There are no fees or penalties for books that are late.
- ❖ A replacement fee will be charged for LOST books.
- ❖ Please see Ms. Ciofalo in the library or log into the school library system to check the status of your library books.
- ❖ <http://library.wpcsd.k12.ny.us/> - Click Highlands and log in with school ID and password. Status is under the 'my info' tab.
- ❖ Students must settle all outstanding library accounts before the end of the school year.



**The finished map-collage of White Plains! Created by our 7th grade art classes and Mr. Michael Albert!**



# Art is In the Air

By Hannah Cheitel

There is something happening. This something is big. Planet Earth is getting louder, with art!

There has been a sudden outburst of art in our local schools. From anime to simple doodles, this hobby is turning into a lifestyle for the average middle school student. In this article we will be discussing the opinions of average middle school students just like you about how they feel on drawing. Do they like it? Do they find it unintelligent? Let us find out.

We interviewed students with the following questions:

1. Rating from 1-10 (1 being not at all, and 10 being YES!) how much do you like to draw?

2. What kind of drawing do you like to do?

3. On a scale of 1-10 how skilled do you believe yourself to be at drawing?

## Finn O'Callaghan

1. **10!**
2. **All of it!**
3. **8.8**

## Natalie Claire

1. **8**
2. **I like to draw henna patterns, flowers, and people.**
3. **I would say a 7.5**

## Dylan Mcgovern

1. **An 8**
2. **Realistic drawings**
3. **I would rate myself at an 8**

## Marley Westlund

1. **About a 7**
2. **Realistic drawings**
3. **A 6.5**

## Noel Holcomb

1. **10! 10! 10!**
2. **Anime**
3. **8**

## Ashley Collins

1. **8**
2. **Anime**
3. **7**

## Gabriela Bober

1. **10!**
2. **Anime is all I ever do**
3. **9**

**Face it folks, from Anime to realistic drawings, the world is becoming one huge masterpiece. Can you handle it?**

## Poetry Corner

Hannah Cheitel

Hearts

Why?

Why are our hearts melting away,  
like ice on a hot summers day?

Is the world oblivious to what is going on?

Or am I simply just wrong?

Kindness is key,  
but one is too blind to see.

Every day another heart melts away,  
Day after day, after day.

Life

LIFE, it is a word with so much meaning. "Life is precious", "life is too short" and "life stinks". What is life? Sometimes I think to myself under a starry moonlit night, "After life what is there?" to be honest I don't think we will ever know, but what I do know is you have to make the most of it; and that is what I am going to do.

# ASK TIGRESS



By Tigress

## Target Practice

Dear Tigress, I really need your help. I have a teacher named \*\*\*\*\* , and all she ever does is yell at me and make fun of me. Then the class starts laughing along with her! I feel like no one is there for me, and that I am just broken. She targets me! Only me! Please help.

## Dear Target Practice,

Whoa, slow your roll. I get it, you get yelled at a lot; but that doesn't give you the right to give up! In this life there is no quitting. Stand up and tell an adult you trust how you truly feel, and try to recognize why she yells at you. Finally, once you have figured it out, try to work on it and tell her how you feel. She will understand.

## Impractical Joker

Hey Tigress! I have a problem. I am a joker. A class clown. And I make the other kids smile, but I cannot seem to make the teachers smile. In fact, they frown when they see me goof around. From "Oh, do your work dearie," to "Sit down in the corner and think about your life," I have heard it all. But I am a little different from the other kids. I want it to stop, but I still want to be funny. What do I do?

## Dear Impractical Joker,

Ha! I used to be just like you. A class clown thinking about their line of work. So, here is the deal. You should tell the teacher that you are going to try to improve your behavior, and you can still be funny in class! Just do not let it get over the top, which, I am assuming you do now. Don't worry, be a funny ducky and stay afloat.

## Bulky Hulky

Hello Tigress. Let me introduce myself. My name is \*\*\*\*\* . I am a short, stubby, guy. But none of that really bothers me. It is the fact that I am weak. WEAK. I have a label and this is what it is. I work out every day. I play soccer and basketball, but to be honest I am no good at anything physical. Don't get me wrong, I'm not the type of guy who's good at math and all that, but I am not good at any physical activities either. What can I do to be strong like the characters in my comic-books?

## Dear Bulky Hulky,

It sounds to me that you are just trying to fit in and not focus on what you truly like to do. But if you truly want to be active, join some child acting groups. They are active and fun. It also increases memory and other skills. Trust me, it's worth it!

## Cave Troll

What up Tigress? I am kind of in a situation that I don't know how to get out of. Literally. I can't get out of the house. The thing is I LOVE video games! GTA, Minecraft, Pokémon, and etc. So much in fact, I can't even spend time with my family and friends. I say I will get off in ten minutes and that turns into an hour and so on. Please help me get out of the basement and up into the living room so I can live!

## Dear Cave Troll,

Are you like my long lost twin or something? Do you have black stripes and whiskers? Probably not. Anyway, just stop playing for about a month. I know it will be hard; but you have to or else you will never be cured. Instead of gaming you can do the arts, read, write, or even sports. Now, if you excuse me I have to go follow my own advice!

## Exam of Evil

Hello Tigress, my name is \*\*\*\*\* and I am really scared for the final exams of the year. I feel extraordinarily unintelligent, so how am I going to pass? I have a feeling I am going to have to stay for another year, and if I am lucky I will make it to high school by 2020. There is really no hope, give it your best shot Tigress!

## Dear Exam of Evil,

Don't you dare call yourself unintelligent! I bet you are so smart, dolphins come to you for advice. You are EXTREMELY smart! My advice is talk to a teacher that teaches you a certain topic that you are not so sure on, and ask lots of questions in class. Don't worry about what others think. It really does help to ask questions that are bound to be answered. And last of all, study. It is a great way to get your learn on. And remember, you are as smart as can be and there is always room for improvement.

# Spotlight on S

## Exploring Human Rights At Highlands

By Ashlen Chevalier & Ella Einstein

In Critical Literacy we read A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park. This profound book informs the readers of the life of Salva Dut and his experiences during the Southern Sudanese War. Also, Linda Sue Park includes the point of view from a modern day Sudanese girl named Nya who must walk four hours to the watering hole twice a day every day. Ultimately, this book is about the day to day struggle of living in Sudan and how a man named Salva has affected many people's lives. Finally, I learned many life lessons especially from Salva's quote such as to persevere because it will lead to much more happiness than quitting.

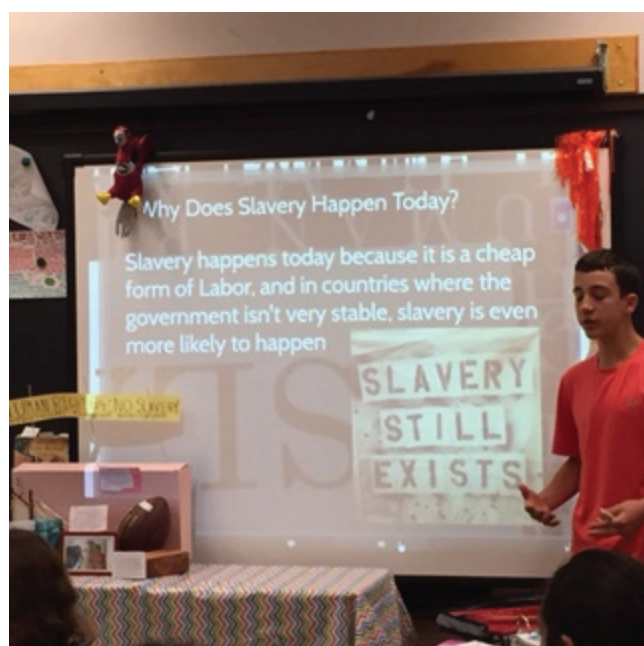
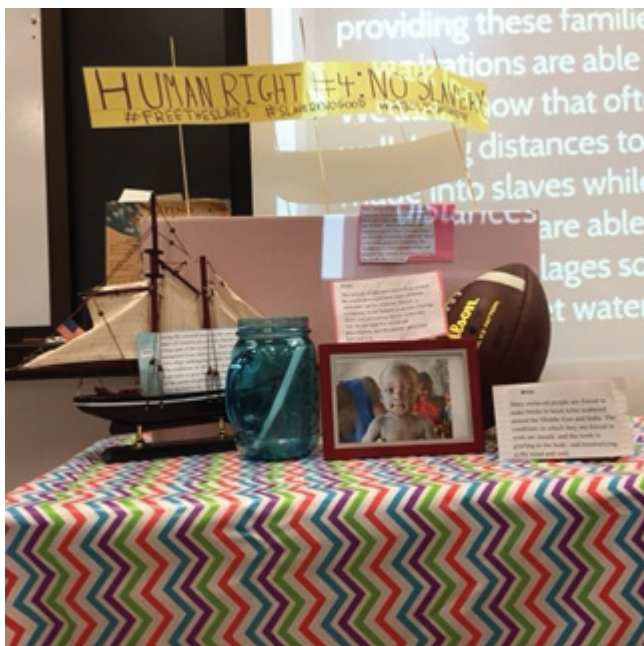
Next we did a museum exhibit project where we were exposed to how many humans have had their rights violated and are oppressed in the world by others. We had to create artifacts to represent the most important aspects of our human right. We had a museum expert, Emily Timmel, who designs exhibits come in to inform us so that we could create our own. She was paid for by a PTA grant.

The project also included creat-

ing a Prezi where we had to convey specific information about our human right. This assignment was also used to express the celebrations of human rights and how we can acknowledge and help those whose rights are being violated. Finally, we presented to our peers.

Through this experience, we came across an important question as we studied this: why do we even have human rights if they are constantly violated? Whenever we think of these violations, we think of the negatives such as child labor, freedom of expression, or even food and shelter. This is why it was important to also look at the positive sides of these human rights through the ways they are celebrated. This made the project interesting because we had to think about and research both sides.

By attending Critical Literacy, my knowledge about the world and literacy has expanded. This class has been great all year round and is effective in teaching students in a way they can participate most of the time. I believe most students will benefit from Critical Literacy and its teachers.



## Student Reflections on Human Rights

*Human rights are important because they protect our everyday lives and rights.*

-Vernon G.

*This project made me wonder about all the human rights being violated and the people violating them.*

-Ashlen C.

*Human rights are important because they help people stay protected and safe.*

-Christopher C.

*The most important thing that I learned was human rights are essential to the foundation of Human Life and for people to live.*

-Henry O'Donnell

*This project made me appreciate all the rights I have every day, and made me realize how many people around the world don't have the same rights as me.*

-Diana Quispe

*This project made me realize how much human rights is important in my life also showed me how other countries deal with human rights being broken.*

-Vanessa Remedios

*This project made me realize how many human rights are violated and how it starts with us learning what our human rights are to make a change and actually help people all around the world.*

-Jennifer Mercado

*This project brought to light all of the world's injustices and that it is our responsibility to help these people whose rights are being violated all around the world.*

-Caleb Gillen

*The most important thing I learned was that even though everyone has equal human rights it doesn't mean that everyone follows or respects other people's right.*

-Sean Larkin

*The most important thing I learned was that how many people absolutely ignore human decency when all these rights are the basis of people's teachings of kindness.*

-Giovanni De Lia

*The most important thing I learned was that people are entitled human rights and that all over the world, people's rights are violated and celebrated in different ways.*

-Ella Einstein

*The most important thing I learned was that people around the world are meant to have equality, but that doesn't mean every human is equal, demonstrating that their rights can be celebrated or violated in various ways.*

-Karleighana Jones

*This project made me realize that there are many problems around the world that some people are trying to ignore and act like there not there, but they are. It made me aware of problems in the world that people don't acknowledge.*

-Daisy Rosado

*Doing this project made me realize how much cruelty there can be in this world, just because we have food, water and shelter that doesn't mean there aren't any people in the world suffering. People do suffer and we have to learn to appreciate what we have in our lives.* -Monica Sanchez

*This project made me feel different about the human rights because without them we wouldn't be free.*

-Hanan Sarrar

*Human Rights are important because without them, people would be mistaken/violated. They will feel uncomfortable and the world would be different.*

-Kaylin Obrochta

*This project made me realize that the society we live in is much more privileged society than most people live in. We have many rights (freedom of speech, expression, thought, etc.) that most people throughout the world are deprived of. ☺*

-Marlee Reinmuth

*This project made me realize how serious slavery is, and that we are extremely fortunate to live here where there is no slavery. People suffer for their entire lives because of slavery, and we could all help them.*

-Dana Boshart

*Human rights are important because they help to protect those who can't protect themselves. Human Rights help the innocent to be able to live a free life.*

-Phoebe Marwill

*This project made me realize that human rights are a necessity to living a happy life.*

-Lauren Elmer

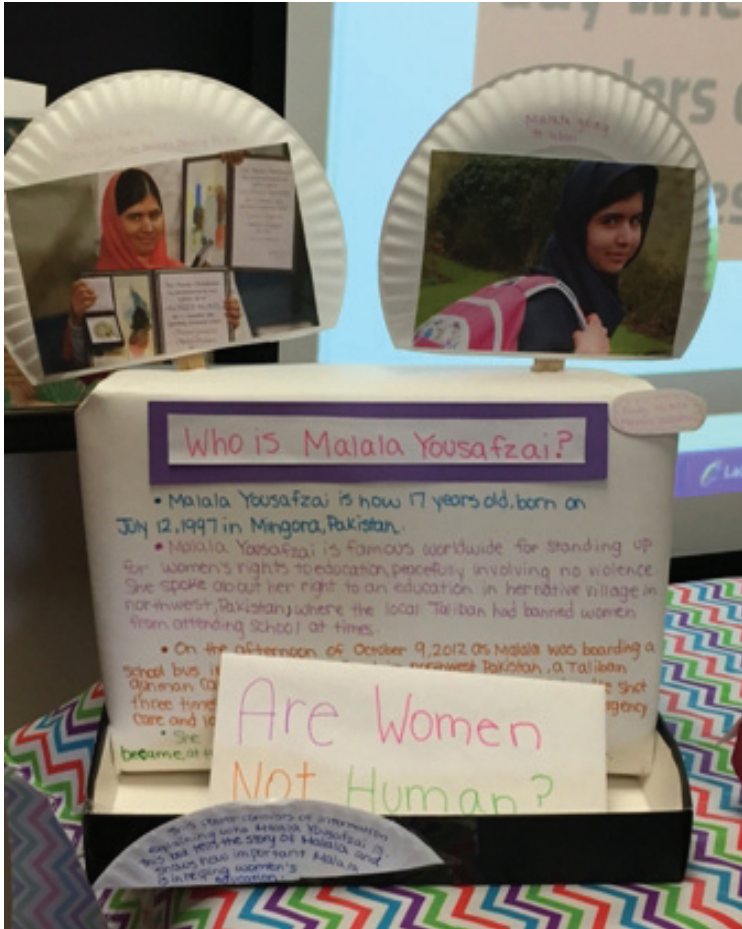
*This project made me realize how lucky we are to live a life in the U.S. where we have so many freedoms.*

-Jillian Pope

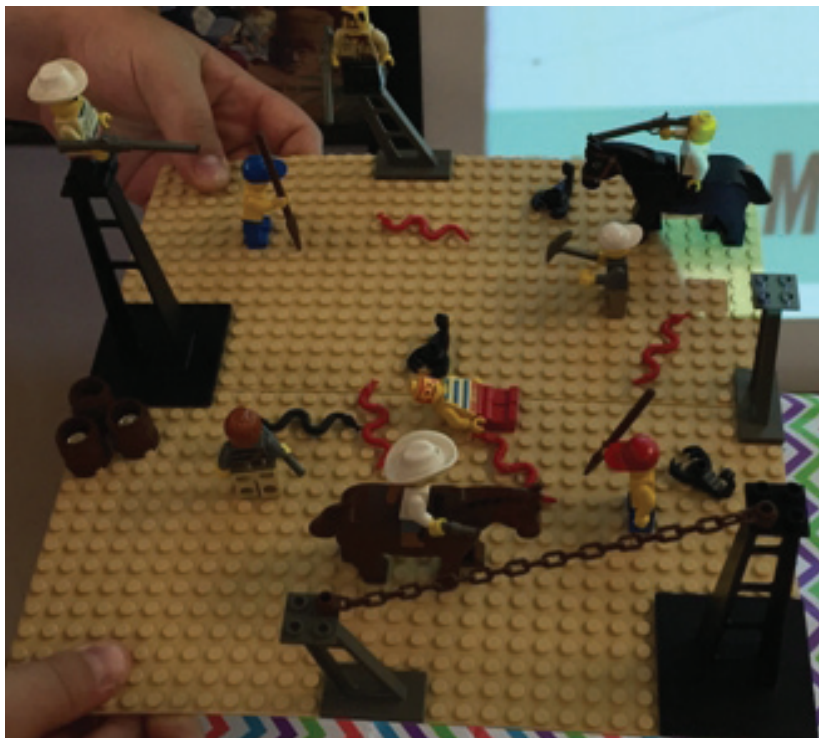
*Human rights are important because it's key to a happy, safe, and healthy life.*

-Marley Westlund

# Student Work



You Have Rights Wherever You Go -Isabella Florindo, Sofiya Milkova & Lauren Elmer



Students use legos to create scenes as artifacts. - Jamani Johnson and Michael Mayeri



Students use recycled materials to create artifacts. Here Jillian Pope illustrates the importance of education.

## Inventos Que Revolucionaron El Mundo

Por Henry Valencia

Los inventos más importantes de la historia para mí son los que estén relacionados con la tecnología. La brújula, el láser y el microchip son los inventos que más me han impactado. La brújula es un invento muy importante para los medios de transporte. Los avances de la tecnología han dejado de lado a la brújula y la han remplazado con sistemas modernos de navegación como el GPS. El primer láser en la historia fue de Rubí, funcionó el 16 de Mayo de 1960. La palabra laser significa Ampliación de la Luz por Emisión estimulada de Radiación. L.A.S.E.R es una sigla en inglés y deriva de la palabra luz (light). El microchip es conocido como circuito cerrado. Un ingeniero llamado Jack Kilby, inventó el microchip en 1958. Él fue galardonado con el Premio Nobel de Física en el año 2000 por contribución de su invento al desarrollo de la tecnología de la información.

La brújula es un instrumento de orientación que utiliza una aguja imantada para señalar el Norte terrestre. (La brújula giroscópica se calibra con haces de Láser) La brújula fue inventada en China en el siglo IX. A mí me parece que la brújula ha contribuido para el transporte y ha mejorado de la vida de muchas personas alrededor del mundo.

El láser quiere decir Ampliación de la Luz por Emisión estimulada de

Radiación. En 1917, Albert Einstein propuso los fundamentos para su desarrollo, él dijo que los átomos podían ser estimulados para emitir fotones en una misma dirección. En 1960, construyeron el primer láser funcional que llevaba un Rubí que emitía una luz "más brillante que el centro del sol". El láser también ha ayudado para avances en la ciencia y en la medicina. Me parece que ha sido un invento extraordinario que ha facilitado la vida de las personas especialmente, en áreas que necesitaban ayuda de un objeto como este.

El microchip es importante por las contribuciones que ha dado a nuestras vidas. Son pequeños artefactos de silicio y metal. Son usados en juguetes, tanques, motocicletas y hornos microondas. A medida que transcurren los años, van evolucionando cada vez más pequeños, mejorando su eficiencia y su eficacia y de esta manera también mejorando la vida de los demás.

La brújula nos ayuda a entender por qué se dio el descubrimiento de las Américas y nos ayuda a transportarnos de un lugar a otro sin perdida. El láser ha cambiado al mundo por el aporte a la ciencia y el apoyo a las cirugías mediante rayos láser. El microchip es un invento que guarda documentos digitalmente y nos ayuda a tener acceso a ellos desde cualquier lugar. Estos son los inventos más importantes para mí.

## Should Students Get Paid for Getting Good Grades?

By Adrian Lepe

Yes: A reason students should get paid to do well in school is it gives them some real life experience. Getting paid for working hard will show them the benefits of getting a real job later in life. Also, certain students don't want to learn and can be disruptive in class. However offering a reward to do better can improve students' attitudes towards learning and give them something to strive towards. With students having an eagerness to learn this improves school districts' rankings as well. Formerly lower ranked school districts can now attract more students.

No: While offering a reward to students who do well can improve certain aspects of a school, it has a few downsides; one being that certain students cheat. Offering pay to do well will only encourage them to cheat more, and makes them rely less on their intellect but more on someone else's paper. Secondly some students try their best but have little success. Do the students who don't do well get paid less, or not at all? This damages students' self-esteem and can be very hard to build back up. If students are constantly rewarded for doing well they will always expect rewards. This could cause a decrease in community service projects and charitable or volunteer work. People should be able to do good deeds without expecting rewards.

# Girls' Softball Spring 2015

# Select Choir Spring Tour



By Shannon Rogers

The Girls Modified Softball Team had an amazing season! Coach Francisco has been coaching the Girls Softball Team for 9 years other than once when he was injured. This season he trained 19 girls at the beginning but ended with only 16 players. He tries to teach them about developing strong skills and how they all have to pitch in a strength to improve the team. He also believes that the girls need to trust and help each other out on the field and he always makes sure that they have good team chemistry. In previous years, the team would practice at Eastview but now they practice at Ralph Field near Highlands typically from 3:00 to 4:15 but sometimes even later. This team has a pretty set routine; they start by warming up for about 10-15 minutes and then work on throwing, fielding, pitching and hitting. They continue working on different situations they might run into during a game. The

team worked very hard this season and it shows, they won 9 times out of their 10 games! Coach Francisco thinks that some of the most valued games were against Harrison, Albert Leonard in New Rochelle and the last win against Eastchester which ended early due to thunderstorms. In the last couple of games, the team started to play together, not individual players but as a team in which everyone trusted one another. One of his players, Andi Friedman says, "I loved being on the team this year and I can't wait to come back next season as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader." Coach Francisco would like to say the following to his players this season, "I am very proud of them and wish the 8<sup>th</sup> graders the best and look forward on working with returning and new players next season. Congratulations to a great season!" I would like to thank Coach Francisco for the help in writing this article and congratulate the players for a wonderful season!

## Salute to Summer!

SCGTXDAATFASTCHPOOLY  
 KNAVTPVOYOGATCAVCHIX  
 RNRUBNUSLUCTAIQMIDGV  
 OSZSZCVIIRVESQUBPPCS  
 WWCSQWYNMTBSPIASUTLX  
 EMSIAHUMAHFJWOOWMEVM  
 RFOUNAHFPVOLTNMGEIAZ  
 IRVHMCSRWFJOBKPCIWL  
 FIFUUMIRTJKCFITRBTS  
 PEHHQMEPTUQDONZPGUFL  
 BNZEZSIRNLSIGEOXQQLI  
 UDLAEHNDYSJLTRVSVAHY  
 ISDTWWGSICAPTTKYBBWR  
 SEUCEBRABTHOLMVEJECX  
 XTBHZTIVEQYOIKSNDPRT  
 MOWWBGXULWVYOAQOBNKD  
 AWXETIOIDAIXBLYCXVLH  
 OLENVCZVUQGRMEKJIESQ  
 VACATIONIYGTAAFSUZLO  
 TUEFMVAKCNFVWKHQYRC

AIRPORT  
 BARBECUES  
 BASEBALL  
 BEACH  
 CAMP  
 FAMILY  
 FIREWORKS  
 FOURTHOFJULY  
 FRIENDS

HEAT  
 HUMIDITY  
 PICNICS  
 POOL  
 SLEEPINGLATE  
 SUMMERSCHOOL  
 SUNBURN  
 SWIMSUITS  
 VACATION



On Friday May 29th, the Select Choir set out for their 2nd annual singing tour. This Spring Tour is to educate the students in our WP elementary schools about Chorus and Select Choir. The 8th graders who addressed their younger colleagues were: Ben Kohl, Leah Levine, AJ Scapoli, Maya Lynch-Samant, Devin Burns, Kira Litchblau, and Alex Sanchez. Highlights of our tour were performing also at the NY Presbyterian Hospital and the Galleria Mall. A great day was had by all. Especially Alex Sanchez who was worshipped like a rock star at Ridgeway Elementary!



**The Courier Staff would like to wish everyone a happy, safe, and healthy summer! See you next year!**

