

CommunityLink

June 2017

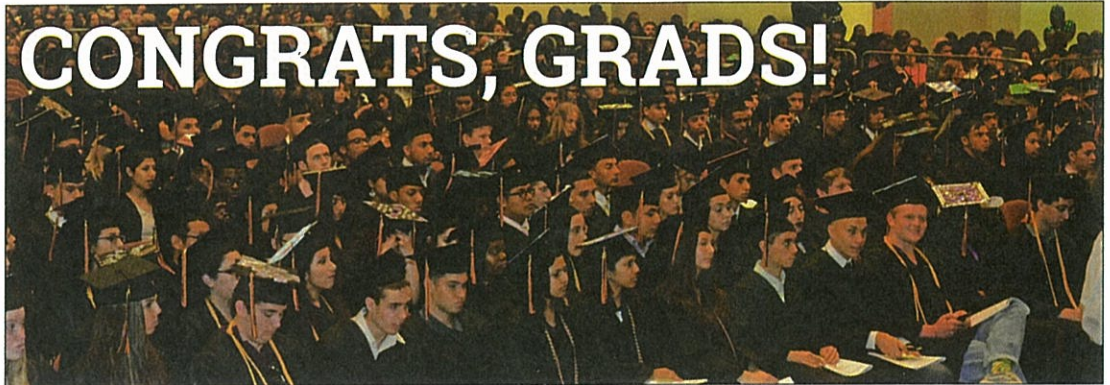
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COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

White Plains High School graduates have been accepted to many of the top colleges and universities in the country, including:

Brown University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Duke University
Emory University
Howard University
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Northwestern University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Spelman College
Syracuse University
Tufts University
U of California - Berkeley
U of Michigan
U of Pennsylvania
Wesleyan University
Williams College

Our impressive grads also earned more than \$185,000 in scholarships from community organizations.



Nearly 500 students graduated from White Plains High School at a ceremony at the Westchester County Center on June 22nd and were encouraged to stand up and speak out as they make their way in the world.

“I believe you will continue to be exactly who you are: hopeful, generous, empathetic, provocative, and curious,” said Principal Ellen Doherty.

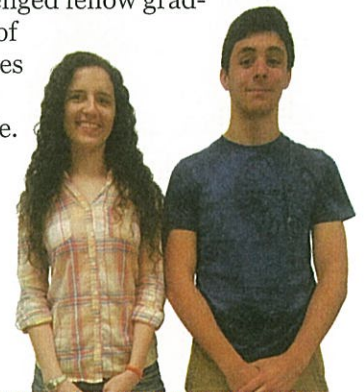
“I hope you will always opt for justice, not just for yourselves, but for everyone. I hope you imagine that a world filled with difference and diversity, united in hope, in peace and in kindness would be the best world to live in. I challenge you to challenge the generations that came before you. Change the narrative, change the rules, make things fair and equal and right. Look at what is, and, if it's not what it should be, change it.”

Valedictorian Danielle Herman urged her fellow graduates to work toward positive change. **“Breaking the rules can take**

on many meanings,” she explained. **“It can mean deviating from societal norms to be your true self and breaking unspoken rules, or doing the right thing when that's the unpopular thing. It can mean forging your own path free from outside pressures or questioning authority. The point is, although we may feel small in the huge world around us, we do have the power to make a difference.”**

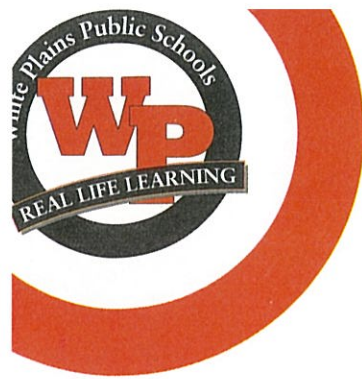
Salutatorian Nicholas Crino chose to rap his speech and challenged fellow graduates to step out of their comfort zones and take chances whenever possible. As he said, **“life's too short not to.”**

Valedictorian
Danielle Herman
and Salutatorian
Nicholas Crino



Movin' On Up

When 551 Highlands Middle Schoolers gathered at the County Center for their moving up ceremony earlier in the day, Principal Ernie Spatafore asked them to thank their parents and guardians for supporting their success, and recognized teachers for creating a culture of respect, tolerance and integrity, qualities he sees in students in his day-to-day interactions with them. Once again, five students offered greetings in English, Italian, French, Spanish, and Mandarin, and the Jazz Band and 8th Grade Choir performed.

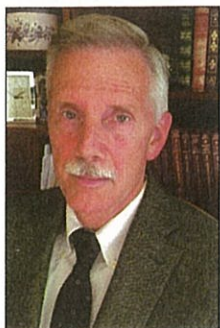


SCHOOL BUDGET PASSED!

The 2017-2018 school budget of \$214,135,854 was passed by voters on May 16th with 86.5% in favor. Our thanks to all who participated in this process, including parents and staff members, who provided valuable input in the budget development. Our students will benefit from expanded STEM enrichment, new elementary math specialists, increased capacity in the fine arts program, additional in-district programs for special needs students, improved security systems and procedures, playground improvements, and more. Thanks also to Ann Vaccaro-Teich, Assistant Superintendent for Business, for her hard work on this budget.

Also on May 16th, Rosemarie Eller and Randy Stein were re-elected to the Board of Education.

Message from the Acting Superintendent



When I took on the role of Acting Superintendent, I was looking forward to working in a well-resourced school district where good things were happening for students. As I finish my time here, I can say that what I actually experienced exceeded my expectations. The bonus for me has been the opportunity to meet and work with so many great people, from students, to parents, to school district staff, to the school board, to the folks who serve the community through city government.

I have found the students in White Plains to be notably friendly, polite and generous of spirit. Their overall conduct on a day-to-day basis is a true testament to the values that have served as the foundation for their upbringing. They are fortunate to have parents who advocate for them and are willing to make a positive contribution, both independently and through the committed efforts of the PTAs, in support of the work the school district is doing to meet the needs of our diverse student population.

The talent and dedication demonstrated by school district employees at all levels of the organization is remarkable. These are people who are deeply invested in helping our school district to operate at a level in keeping with the highest possible standards. This translates to an impressive work ethic that pushes the limits of sustainability. I hope they will all find time to recharge their batteries this summer!

Finally, I was struck by the commitment of school board members to not just show up at Board meetings, but to attend a wide variety of school functions and to make sure they are appropriately informed and knowledgeable regarding the general operation of the District and the matters that come before them. It is worth noting that they are aided in their efforts by an exceptional District Clerk with many years of service in that role. I was also impressed by the collaborative spirit that characterizes what has evolved as a true partnership between the school district and city government. This is a town that is well served by its public officials.

I am looking forward to a little quiet time, along with some time with my grandchildren (which will not be quiet). However, I confess to being a little envious of the opportunity that our incoming superintendent will have to put down some roots and enjoy some extended quality time with everyone here. I know you will all join me in welcoming Dr. Ricca and supporting him as he takes on the challenge of working in collaboration with all of the District's stakeholders to tap into any yet to be realized potential for the White Plains City School District to be all it can be.

Howard W. Smith, Ph.D.

Thank You for Your Service

The Board of Education honored 34 retirees and eight 25-year staff members at its June meeting. Board President Rosemarie Eller congratulated and thanked these staff members for their years of service to the students of White Plains.

25 Years of Service

George Davison
Deana Guarino
Tina Manorqui
Julie Pastore
Maria Rodriguez
Barbara Santarelli
Bari Slatas
Sadie Tatum

Retirees

Maria Alfonso
Agneta Ballesteros
Nancy Barnes
Linda Cantillano
Linda Carpenter
Roy Carroll
Donna Colombo
George Davison
Eileen Fitzmaurice
Eleanor Gaffney
Francine Greenberg

Mark Hauge
William Heinzinger
Suzanne Helbach
Charles Jones
Rosalind Keys
Meryl Kupersmith
Marie Lalli
Steven Levine
Mary Lincoln
Joyce Lopez
Judith McClain
Ernest Melendez

Sara Montalvo
Karyn Moore
Joseph Paulo
Barbara Santarelli
Jeanne-marie Shea
Merle Stewart-Hill
Christine Strachan
Sadie Tatum
Lonneta Tuck
Evelyn Ulmer
Margaret Vlasaty

Student-Directed Tech Learning at Eastview

Five students and their teachers, Visual Reasoning Enrichment (VRE) teacher Jody Kennedy and Social Studies teacher Jherlyn Lopez, participated in the 2017 Lower Hudson Regional Information Center Tech Expo this spring. Students presented projects related to drones, robots, coding, 3D printing and virtual reality while Ms. Kennedy and Mr. Lopez talked about the exciting impact of changing classroom technology and dynamics.

The presentations were developed using projects completed during *Genius Hour*, which is modeled after Google's 20% time. It means that students have a designated time in the week to work on projects of their own choosing. The learning is self-directed; students select and research a particular topic, design a project and are challenged to persevere through various iterations until they succeed with their creations.

“ In this learning model, the teacher becomes more of a facilitator of learning, ” said Kennedy. **“ We provide students with the freedom, time and resources, then guide them as they proceed through the steps. It was a little tough at first to let go of tight control over what’s happening in the classroom, but the results were amazing; the students were incredibly engaged. ”**

This engagement is a direct result of being empowered to decide for themselves what shape their learning will take and the best way to tackle their projects. According to

Kennedy, enthusiasm boiled way beyond the mandatory classroom time, with students coming in/logging on during lunch, after school and at home on the nights and weekend.

To manage a large volume of students working on different topics and projects at a different pace, Kennedy relied on a learning management system (LMS) called *Schoology*, described by Eastview’s resident *Schoology* expert Mr. Lopez as a “toolbox” for all of the technology-related learning tools students use (websites, software, online discussion boards, etc). It allows students to work from anywhere there’s an Internet connection, keep track of their work and progress without carrying their materials around, collaborate with one another, and interact with tech experts outside the school system. For teachers, it’s a holistic tool to track students’ work and progress and to keep parents in the loop. During *Genius Hour*, students used *Schoology* to consult with experts from the White Plains Library about 3D printing.

“ The concept of *Genius Hour* is to provide students with opportunities to explore topics of interest, to conduct research and to engage in design thinking with a focus on creativity and problem solving, ” said Dr. Debbie Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. **“ Encouraging creativity in the classroom and allowing time for all students to engage in this type of inquiry-based learning is important work for us. ”**

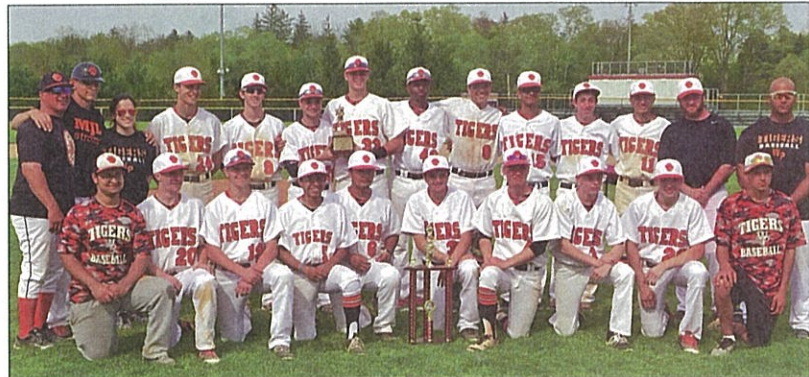


TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Jherlyn Lopez,
Joseph Cloherty, Jody
Kennedy, Ron Velez,
Kathy Barpoulis,
Debbie Hand,
Sha’Quanna Postell,
and Lucy Roman

FRONT, LEFT TO RIGHT:
Andrea El-Saieh,
Shravya Ankam,
Mason Kincheloe,
Patrick Stanton, and
Sean Reidy

High School Athletics in the Spotlight

Finishing the regular season with a 15-5 record, the WPHS Varsity Baseball Team made it to the Section 1AA Finals this spring. According to Coach Marcel Galligani their success is due to the level of commitment from the players and the coaching staff, as well as the fact that most of the team has played baseball together since childhood.



WPHS Track Team members Malik Boyd-Postell, Carl Fisher, Nate McCants, and Elizah Gordon won the Section 1 Championship in the 4 x 100 relay and went on to compete in the New York State Track and Field Championships in June, where they ran their personal best time.



The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.



White Plains Public Schools
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White Plains, NY 10605

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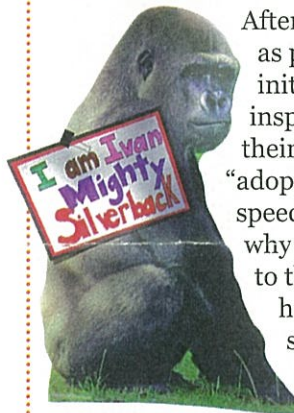
www.whiteplainspublicschools.org

12,000 FREE BOOKS GIVEN AWAY

The White Plains PTA Council hosted its 5th Annual Free Book Celebration in May. An estimated 12,000 books appropriate for grades K-12 were distributed to more than 1,000 people. Families also enjoyed food, fun activities and entertainment, including a performance by the WPHS Songwriters Club. Supporters for this year's Celebration included Stop and Shop, Trader Joe's, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Main Street Books, and Hachette Book Group.



Animal Activist Day at Church Street School



After reading the *The One and Only Ivan* as part of the One School, One Book initiative, Church Street School was inspired to help protect animals and their habitats. Students raised funds to "adopt" gorillas living in Africa and wrote speeches and created posters detailing why protecting animals is important to them. On June 12th, Church Street hosted Animal Activist Day, where students from each grade level read their speeches in the auditorium and participated in a rally outside of the school in order to show the community how much they care.



Students chanted "Protect the animals! Protect their habitats! Church Street School cares!"

Church Street adopted a silverback gorilla and a mom/infant pair through the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund.

Joe Cloherty Wins Music Award

Eastview Principal Joe Cloherty was honored as 2017 Administrator of the Year by the Westchester County School Music Association on June 14th. In her nomination, Band Director Laura Mazziotti said, **"Mr. Cloherty has elevated music education in our building to a level I only dreamed possible 25 years ago. With his support and encouragement, we enjoy equal status with all other departments, just as it should be."** She notes that at his request, the school has added large ensemble performance to its four honor roll assemblies and dress rehearsals. It's a wonderful opportunity for students to showcase their work, and they take great pride in performing for classmate

and teachers. Mr. Cloherty often goes above and beyond to support music students, has attended every concert in the district for 15 years and hosts a concert reception, at his own expense, after each winter and spring concert every year. In supporting letters, Choral Director Matthew Hommez and Orchestra Director Rebecca Hegenauer echoed these sentiments.



Jody Kennedy, Laura Mazziotti, Joseph Cloherty, Rebecca Hegenauer, Matthew Hommez