

# CommunityLink

Winter 2016-17

Integrated Co-Teaching	2
Book Tasting	2
Kudos	3
Science on the River	4
Spelling Bee	4
Safety First	4

## Board Begins Superintendent Search

Board of Education President Rosemarie Eller has announced that the Board has begun a search for a new Superintendent of Schools who would begin on July 1, 2017. Current Acting Superintendent Dr. Howard Smith is under contract until June 30th, replacing Dr. Paul Fried who recently tendered his resignation as of January 15, 2017. Dr. Fried has been out on medical leave since last May and his resignation was accepted by the Board on December 12th. Mrs. Eller said the Board is confident that the district will attract excellent candidates for the position and will be successful in its search for a new leader who will move the district forward.

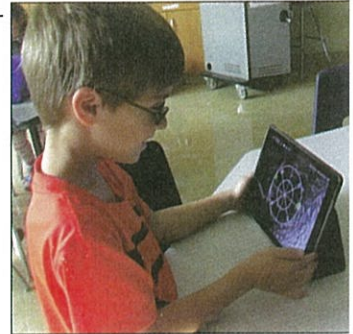
## STEM Enrichment For All K-1 Students

Kindergarteners and first graders districtwide are learning the collaboration and creative problem-solving skills they'll need throughout school and adulthood, thanks to enrichment. Our new full-time STEM — Science, Engineering, Technology and Math — Enrichment Teacher, Frances Carlos, will spend 30 days in each building on a rotating schedule during the school year, using the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) "Launch" curriculum.

Students work together and use an inquiry approach to develop possible solutions to a proposed problem. For example, kindergarteners are learning about the relationship between the structure of the human body and how it functions, and using basic math and engineering skills to design a cast for a character who has fallen off the monkey bars and broken a bone. First graders are studying the sun, moon and stars and have been challenged to design and build a model playground structure that will protect them from ultraviolet radiation. Students learn that there are different approaches to solving a problem and develop troubleshooting skills that encourage perseverance and risk-taking.

According to Elementary Math Coordinator Kathy Barpoulis, positive results are already evident.

**“I've heard students explaining their thinking and reflecting on and evaluating their designs. They start to figure out what worked or didn't and how they can make it better. That's a real engineering design process.”**



PLTW is technology-infused, giving children the opportunity to use iPads to work on projects. The curriculum also helps students develop soft skills, such as how to listen actively, to provide feedback to one another and to express disagreement in a respectful and productive way.

PLTW Launch is a primer for the PLTW Gateway modules the district has recently implemented at the middle school level, including Intro to Computer Science, Robotics and Design/Modeling. The district also offers an array of PLTW engineering courses at the high school.

## Private School Students Tour High School

Over 100 families — the largest group ever, according to High School Principal Ellen Doherty — attended the open house for eighth grade students who are currently at parochial and private schools and their family members and who might be interested in enrolling in White Plains High School for ninth grade. Held on November 18th, the visitors got a glimpse of school in session and all that our high school has to offer.

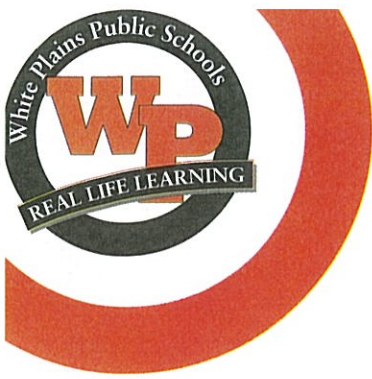
Tours were led by 16 Honors students and Student Government leaders, some of whom had attended private schools before coming to WPHS. According to one parent, **“The tour guides presented well and all were**

**well-spoken and enthusiastic.”** He added that school staff succeeded in exciting everyone about the curriculum offered. This parent concluded that he expects WPHS to be his daughter's choice for school next year.

Another parent, of a student who came into the high school in 10th grade from private school, spoke about how happy her daughter is and how well the transition went.



Tour guides.



## New! Integrated Co-Teaching at Elementary Schools

An exciting addition has come to White Plains City School District. As part of the continuum of special education services available to students with learning differences, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms have opened at Ridgeway and Mamaroneck Avenues schools.

**“Inclusive education is founded on the belief that all students have the right to attend school in their own district, in general education classrooms, with the supports and services necessary to be successful,”** explains Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services Debbie Augarten.

**“Integrated Co-Teaching, an established, research-based educational practice that supports the inclusion of students, is one way White Plains provides access to the general education curriculum and classrooms.”**

In each ICT kindergarten classroom at Mamaroneck Avenue and kindergarten and first grade at Ridgeway, a general education teacher and a special education teacher, share responsibility for the education of all students. The strength of the model is that students work in small heterogeneous groupings throughout the day with the core

content being differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

The benefits extend to everyone involved. Research shows that all students do better academically, socially and emotionally. Teachers working with smaller groups of students improves student participation and teacher feedback. Working with peers allows students who have mastered a skill to be an expert for another student. All these skills require the students to engage in higher level thinking skills.

Ridgeway Principal Tashia Brown calls ICT the “gold standard of education” because students benefit from having two very skillful teachers in the classroom and have a variety of “access ramps” to achieve a learning objective and to be successful.

**“This was a natural next-step for Ridgeway, as we have already built an inclusive environment with our teachers, children and families,”** she said. **“What’s really amazing is that when you spend time in our integrated classrooms you cannot tell the general education children from those who have an Individual Education Program.”**

ICT has been well-received at White Plains. Teachers, psychologists, speech pathologists, and social workers participate in ongoing professional development and the families of students in the classrooms have been involved in the planning and are extremely pleased and supportive of the outcome.

## “Book Tasting” at Highlands

Highlands students were inspired to engage in more independent reading and explore new reading material as part of a recent, restaurant-themed “tasting event.” Librarian Christine Ciofalo set the tables with books from a variety of genres, including non-fiction and historical fiction titles, that are not checked out as often as others. Teachers Caryn Friedman, Raquel Reale and Kara Lyons created a “menu” for five-minute “tastings” (i.e., a quick read and review) and books were rotated for about 20 minutes. The remaining time was spent reviewing the “restaurant’s” website — the online library catalog. Students were shown how to order books for pickup and to read and write short online

reviews attached to books in the catalog, much like diners might review a restaurant on a website like Yelp. Mrs. Friedman, who brought the idea to Highlands courtesy of other teachers sharing on Instagram, says students are reading much more as a result and choosing themes and titles that might not have piqued their interest prior to this exercise. Various creative activities similar to this one will continue throughout the school year.



## Health Education Award



Lisa Sherman, a health education teacher at Highlands Middle School, has received the 2016 Distinguished Service Award from the New

York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NYSAPERD). According to NYSAPERD President Jim Rose, **“she has demonstrated leadership and has a reputation for exemplary work.”**

## Business Skills Olympics: First Place!

WPHS students took first place in the annual African American Men of Westchester’s (AAMW) Business Skills competition, held at Morgan Stanley in Purchase. The team analyzed a graduate-level business school case study titled *“Uber: An Empire in the Making”* and were judged on their ability to identify the problem/issues within the case study, as well as any social/legal/political/financial impact, their proposed solution and overall presentation. According to Business Teacher and Team Advisor Anna Burns, the competition not only introduces students to the business world, it gives them the opportunity to solve problems collaboratively and gain valuable time management, organizational and presentation skills. Completely student-driven, team members make all decisions regarding when to meet, what to research, how to communicate with each other, what roles they will take on, and how to present their findings.



The winning WPHS team: (Back) Spencer Lodes, Zyh’Ana Moody, Jacqueline Juarez-Rojas, Jordan Stengle, (Front) Sydney Barest, Revital Aloni, Carolina Cardozo, Evelyn Lopez Rodriguez, and members of the AAMW.

## National Merit Recognition

White Plains High School seniors Nicholas Crino, Elana Hausknecht and Noah Lichtblau were named Semifinalists in the 2016-17 National Merit Scholarship Competition – placing them among less than one percent of U. S. high school seniors. They continue to compete toward Finalist level to be eligible for about 7,500 scholarships worth more than \$33 million. Commended Students, who placed in the top five percent of entrants in the competition, are: Mairav Aloni, Mark Bosmediano, Dominick Cardon, Rose Gebhardt, Danielle Herman, Henry Roach, Alisa Thomas, and Steven Yeung. Fabio Nierhoff was named a Scholar in the National Hispanic Recognition Program. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation, a not-for-profit organization, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Program, to honor the nation’s scholastic champions and to encourage the pursuit of academic excellence.

## Academic Challenge Team

The WPHS Academic Challenge A Team kicked off the season with a win at the first competition of the year at the Metropolitan Academic Challenge Conference meet hosted by Horace Greeley High School. Participants Danielle Herman, Noah Lichtblau, George Kalyvas and Aaron Ditkoff walked away with not only bragging rights, but a plaque and a \$100 cash prize. The B Team took second place at the meet. This success follows a second place overall finish in last year’s national competition, held in New Orleans, and demonstrates that the 20-member team will remain strong and improve this year despite the loss of some talented graduates. Erick Larson, Coach and Faculty Advisor to the group, has taken over for longtime Coach Les Roby and credits the students with ensuring the continuity and success of the team. **“They’ve taken on a leadership role, taught me how things work and ensure that everything runs smoothly.”** Mr. Larson says that participation on the Academic Challenge Team prepares students for success in college and beyond through development of leadership and public speaking skills, the ability to think under pressure and the need for true teamwork.



## Athletics Hall of Fame Inductions

The White Plains High School Athletics Hall of Fame held its second annual induction event on November 4th, honoring Tom DePaso, Manson Donaghey, Alan Egler, Whitney Ford, Otis Hill, Aaron Hopkins, Charlie Jenkins, Ed Kehe, Oscar Moore, Frank Navarro, George Rooks, Sr., Don Salls, Art Schult, Carl Waite, Bruce Weinstein, Brant Wintersteen, and Sal Yvars, as well as the 1966 White Plains High School 880 and one mile relay team: Dave Jackson, Carl Reed, Larry James, and Otis Hill. All made significant contributions to White Plains High School athletics.

White Plains Athletics Hall of Fame 2016 inductee Whitney Ford (left) receives her plaque from her former Tigers Track & Field Coach Fred Singleton. Ford graduated in 2006 and became an All-American in the triple jump, long jump and sprints at Boston University.



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  
5 Homeside Lane  
White Plains, NY 10605

**Dr. Howard W. Smith**  
*Acting Superintendent of Schools*

**Board of Education**  
Rosemarie Eller, *President*  
Charlie Norris, *Vice President*  
Peter Bassano  
Sheryl Brady  
James F. Hricay  
Rose Lovitch  
Randy Stein

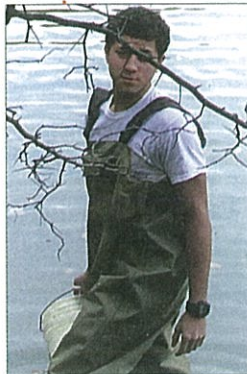
Postal Patron

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #47  
White Plains, NY  
ECRWSS

[www.whiteplainspublicschools.org](http://www.whiteplainspublicschools.org)

### Science Class on the River

Earth Science students from Rochambeau Alternative High School recently participated in *A Day in the Life of the Hudson River Estuary*, an annual event sponsored by the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Hudson River Estuary Program and produced with assistance from the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. White Plains students were among thousands stationed at 100 sites along the river from NYC to Troy. They measured the salinity, temperature and dissolved oxygen content of the river and surveyed the fish population at Inwood Hill Park in Manhattan. The data was then shared with the DEC, where it will contribute to ongoing research projects. Students enjoyed the day and learned about how "their" piece of the river fits into the larger ecosystem. ▶



### Eastview Thanksgiving Spelling Bee



The day before Thanksgiving vacation was even more exciting than usual at Eastview Middle School, where the 1st Annual Team X Spelling Bee took place under the leadership of Team Leader Bill McGuinn. Fifty students initially signed up to participate and 30 qualified for the final round, which took place on the stage in the auditorium in front of students, faculty and staff from Team X.

Using the standard Scripps Howard format, students were eliminated one by one over the course of 90 minutes while cheers erupted from the crowd each time the moderator announced that a word had been spelled correctly. It came down to three students: Ryleigh Falvey, Aleksei Sincerbeaux and Liam Keane before Ryleigh was finally crowned the champion. The day concluded with all the participants sharing in a small celebration.

### Safety First at Church Street

During their annual visit to Church Street Elementary, Lt. Craft and Firefighter Fitzpatrick of the White Plains Fire Department educated third graders about the importance of smoke alarms. Students were inspired to go home and talk to their parents about fire safety.



The Church Street Safety Patrol is a group of 22 fourth and fifth graders, organized by Teaching Assistants Oulea Choukri and McSheller Edwards, who help out during morning arrival and special events, reinforcing school rules and encouraging classmates to be safe, kind and responsible.

