# CHRONICLER

# BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION!



On most days, the cafeteria seating at Central Office is sparsely occupied, allowing plenty of space for people on break to enjoy a quick meal. That wasn't the case for three days in late August as over a hundred new teachers to the District filled the room during their orientation sessions. From Tuesday, August 29<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup> the New Teacher Orientation greeted Paterson Public Schools' newest educators to its ranks and provided training in how to utilize the District's technology resources, an introduction to the PEA, described benefits coverage, and gave other information to get them ready for teaching in Paterson.

While the District is still in need of teachers to fill vacancies, these newest additions go a long way in bridging the gap. School districts across the country are facing similar issues in teacher staffing, but the Human Resources Department and its' team of recruiters have been making every effort to attract talent to the District. One such effort is the Referral Program that offers \$1,500.00 for the referral of a certified teacher. Details can be found on the Employment page of the District website.

With a month already passed, the newest to Paterson's frontline in education are already doing their part in making the city's future brighter. To our recent hires, welcome to the Paterson educational community!

#### SUSTAINABLE FRIENDSHIP

#### "CHANGE FOR CHANGE"



School No. 7 held an assembly in support of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and to announce its participation in the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund's "Show Us Your Team" initiative in support of one of its students, Camila Izaguirre. She is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader that has been dealing with cancer since she was first diagnosed at 1 1/2 years old. The Jay Fund launched a social media campaign in September for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month called "Show Us Your Team," in which patients take a photo of their own team – the people who help get them through difficult times in life – and post it on social media with the hashtag

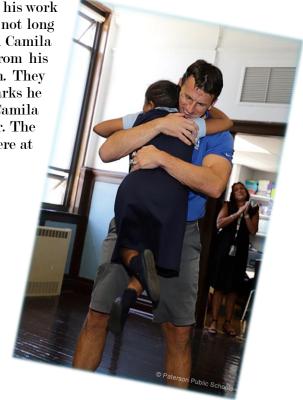
#ShowUsYourTeam and tag @tcjayfund.

Unknown to Camila was the participation of a close friend of hers, Chris Snee, who for his ten-year career in the NFL played as a guard for the New York Giants. Camila sat amongst her classmates in the audience as they listened first to Principal Pamela Powell greet them and then to Superintendent Laurie Newell speak to them about kindness and encourage the school's efforts in the initiative. It was an emotional moment when those closest to Camila came out one at a time from the wings of the stage. The members of her special team included her mother, Evelyn Izaguirre, her art teacher, Jeri Ann Stetson, Tom Coughlin Jays fund's Communications Manager Mary Carnovale, and Chris Snee.

Chris Snee has known Camila for close to ten years through his work with the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund. He met her for the first time not long after she was diagnosed with cancer at age 1½. Since then, he and Camila have formed a special bond as she receives emotional support from his visits. When he came from the side of the stage, she ran to him. They hugged for a long time as he lifted her high off the stage. In remarks he made on stage, Mr. Snee said, "The big thing about today is that Camila has not been alone since day one. She has a large team around her. The (Tom Coughlin) Jay Fund, her family, most important, you all here at school. She is battling this with all of your support."

School No. 7 Art Teacher Jeri Ann Stetson has been teaching Camila art since Kindergarten. "She touched my heart when I met her, we had a really good connection" Ms. Stetson said. During Kindergarten, Camila was in the hospital often. To lift her spirits, Ms. Stetson would encourage Camila with stories about her horse, Lucy. While schools were closed during quarantine, Ms. Stetson had Camila come up to West Milford to spend time with Lucy to learn how to ride and groom the horse. The photo that Camila was presented with by Ms. Stetson is of her and Camila together during a recent photoshoot.

Evelyn Izaguirre said after the assembly, "School 7 is a very big support for me and my family, especially for Camila." When asked about her reaction to hearing about the



assembly for the first time, "I didn't expect it; I didn't know that they were going to do this beautiful surprise for her." She would say later, "Sometimes you don't have enough

strength to keep going, but things like this and all the support that you receive from so many people that is not your family, but is like is your family is very important for me.... It gives me more strength to keep going and to fight for my daughter."

"This was a beautiful event," Dr. Laurie Newell, Superintendent of Schools, said of the assembly. "There's so much we can do for each other every day. For Camila and her family, it is about showing our support and being a community for her. The School 7 community, under the leadership of Principal Powell and the support of her incredible staff, are doing wonderful things for their school community. I'm very happy that Camila has the support that she needs here in her school and through the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund."

At the close of the assembly, staff and students proclaimed their commitment to Camila's team. Classes will be donating their spare change to a collection named "Change For Change". The money will be collected by Camila later and donated to fight cancer.



2023 SUPERINTENDENT'S INSTITUTE

The 2023 Superintendent's Institute allowed administrators across the District to meet, as well as to learn about updates and new techniques in education together.

There was even an opportunity to get artistically creative.



### BREAKING SCHOOL NEWS

#### COSMOS TO GO

Why go to outer space when it can come to you? Although the immensity of the universe is almost impossible to imagine packed up into a several large boxes, somehow Dr. Carlos Miranda has done just that, or the next best thing at least. The District's Planetarium Manager at Paterson P-TECH has spent the last few months perfecting a portable planetarium, which he had already showcased a few times, particularly at the Superintendent's Institute that took place at the close of August at Dr. Hani Awadallah School. It is described as "an immersive and educational experience designed to bring the wonders of the universe directly to audiences of all ages. This program utilizes a state-of-the-art portable planetarium dome, advanced projection technology, and presentations and content that will inspire curiosity as we journey through the cosmos.





The system consists of a nearly twenty foot in diameter fabric dome, white on the inside with light-blocking black material on the exterior, that is inflated with the use of a quiet high-volume blower; up to thirty second-grade students can comfortably fit within. Inside, a high-resolution portable projector shines a 360-degree image within the dome that can show everything that a full-sized planetarium can. In fact, some of the programs that are available for showing to students are seen in full-sized planetariums like the one at Liberty Science Center.

The portable planetarium is available for school visits. To reserve a day of stargazing and celestial educating, visit https://www.ptechplanetarium.com/ and then follow the steps below:

and then force

- Navigate to the "Road Show" under the Service menu on the website.
- Choose the appropriate grade band that aligns with the students you are planning the program for.
- Once you have selected a program that suits your needs, click on the program to make a reservation.
- Click on "Request to Book", you will be taken to a sign-in page. Teachers, please see your school administrators for the password.
- After completing the reservation process, a reservation request will be submitted for approval. Once approved, a confirmation email will be sent containing details of the reserved date, time, and program for your upcoming Portable Planetarium Program experience.

Paterson Public Schools was awarded a \$250,000 Trees for Schools grant to fund the costs associated with the purchase and planting of trees, this includes planning, site preparation, watering, monitoring and related expenses over a three-year period.



The Trees for Schools program is a joint effort of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Sustainable Jersey and The College of New Jersey. Funded by Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) auction proceeds, the Trees for Schools grant program will plant more than 3,000 trees across the state.

The trees that the District will be receiving

are mature trees that will require professional planting. The project is slated to begin in Spring of 2024 and run from late March to May 31st, barring any delays that would then push the project start time to Autumn of that same year. So far, plans include plantings at fourteen schools, those being Schools 5, 8, 10, 12, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, Roberto



Clemente elementary, Dr. Hani Awadallah elementary, New Roberto Clemente middle school, and John F. Kennedy High School.

Beyond beautifying our educational communities, these trees will play a part in making our schools feel more welcoming," said Superintendent of Schools Laurie Newell. "Children will be able to watch these trees grow as they do and connect them to the memory of their schools as adults. Of course, they will also be useful as tools to teach our students about the world around them and the importance of nature in an urban setting."

Chief Officer Of Facilities And Custodial Services Neil Mapp stated, "The greening of the District is part of an ongoing effort to provide more green spaces at school locations for our students and the community at large. Green spaces contribute positively to the mental and overall health of our students and families and are known to positively impact the indoor and outdoor air quality."

STEAM Director Dr. Caccavella said, "This is such as exciting opportunity for Paterson Public Schools! The planting of trees is a positive step toward mitigating the effects of climate change in Paterson. We are so grateful to be the recipients of such as generous grant which will have a lasting

impact on the environment."

"These grants are an important step to help mitigate the impact of climate change and are an investment in healthier schools and communities," DEP Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette said. "Trees store carbon and reduce greenhouse gases and energy use, thereby mitigating the impacts of climate change and

strengthening the resilience of our communities. Equally important, the planting of these trees will inspire our young people to become tomorrow's leaders in the fight against climate change."

"Congratulations to the schools, colleges and universities that received a Trees for Schools grant. Planting and caring for trees help our students learn about ecosystems and the valuable role trees play," said Randall Solomon, director of Sustainable Jersey. "We look forward to working with the grant recipients to expand their campus tree canopy while allowing students this important connection."

The Trees for Schools grant recipients will now work with the project team to develop their tree project design and will participate in tree-planting workshops. The tree plantings are scheduled for spring 2024.

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## DRUG AWARENESS ASSEMBLY AT SCHOOL NO. 27

"Chasing the Dragon" was the presentation provided by The Bergen Performing Arts (BPAC) and The FBI from Newark, NJ to the fifth graders at School 27. One hundred-thirty students were invited to attend an important drug prevention/awareness assembly where educational materials and specific strategies to remain safe, healthy and drug-free were provided. There was a question answer session as well as an opportunity for students to share what they had learned. The school was also presented with a beautiful painting that will be displayed in the gymnasium. We commend Bridget Miller, the



A few of Public School No. 27 fifth graders posed with the picture that was presented to the school.

\*Photo Credit: School staff\*

Student Assistance Counselor at the school, for putting this event together.

## EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH HONOR SOCIETY CHAPTER



First Spanish Honor Society meeting preparing for new events and new candidates.

Photo Credit: Marbel Tamayo

The Esther Forero Chapter of the Eastside National Spanish Honor Society (ENSHS) of Paterson, held its first meeting of the 2023-2024 school year in September. The 25 new candidates, who will be inducted in the month of May 2024, were welcomed. At the meeting, the new events that will be held during Hispanic Heritage Month were mentioned, such as music and dancing talents, essay, poetry, and painting contest. The new candidates had the opportunity to listen to their advisor, Mrs. Marbel Tamayo, who spoke about the importance of Hispanic culture in the city

of Paterson, emphasizing that through these cultural contests they would learn about the diversity of the Hispanic World, in addition to creating spaces where students can celebrate who they are and where they come from. We wish all the new candidates, success in the 2023-2024 school year. ¡Todos a una!

## PTECH SENIOR RECEIVES TWO ACADEMIC AWARDS



"Congratulations to Amina Pleasant, a junior at Paterson P-TECH. She is one of 72,000 students from across the country who earned academic honors from College Board's National Recognition Programs! Amina received the National African American Recognition Award and the National Indigenous Award.

The National Recognition Programs honor the strong academic achievements of underrepresented students. They're a way for students to showcase their hard work in high school. The criteria for earning such awards demand students maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher, score in the top 10% of PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10 or earn a score of 3 or higher on two or more AP Exams.

The programs not only benefit students, but also colleges looking to recruit diverse, talented students."

## DONUTS WITH PRINCIPAL

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) held a welcoming kick off event for School 27 parents. Principal White greeted the parents who attended with coffee, tea, juice and delicious donuts and pastries. The goal of this event was to welcome and invite the parents to become members of the school's PTA.

Principal White stated parental involvement is important for children's social and emotional growth. She also emphasized to the parents that every child matters and every moment counts in Public School No. 27's culture of caring environment. Staff members Jennifer Jaworowski, Carmine Pindilli, and Penny Torres planned the hugely successful event.



#### ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

Anthony Maestry is the District's Supervisor Of ESL/Bilingual Instruction. Originally from Newark and raised in Hoboken, he has a Bachelors in Business Finance and Masters in Administration and Supervision, as well as in Special Education. He's been with the District for 26 years, which surprises even him, "I never thought I would be here

#### The Best Part of My Day

"The best part of my day is when I see parents bring a situation here to Central Office and we're able to not only help them, but also resolve the problem," Mr. Maestry said. As a parent, I emphasize with the families that come seeking assistance, putting myself in their place as I help other parents with their needs.

so long, but it's been a journey and I want it to continue." Mr. Maestry started his time with PPS at Eastside HS as a Special Education teacher. After three years he took the opportunity to be its Teacher Assistant to the Principal. Eventually, a position became available in Central Office, where he's been part of Academic Services and Special Programs for the last 20 years.



A Quote to Live By... His motivational quote comes from a scene in Rocky II, in which the titular character asks his wife if she wants him fighting an opponent to whom he has already lost to. Her answer, "there's one thing I want you to do for me ... WIN."

#### SCHOOL NO. 3 NEWS UPDATE

It has been a month since the students and staff of School No. 3 relocated from their building, due to health and safety concerns, to other District school buildings. The District Chronicler wanted to see how things were for them since then....

"The transition has been wonderful," said School No. 3 Vice-principal Dr. Burnice Bristow. "Given the circumstances, we probably couldn't ask for a much better situation. Let me give a lot of kudos to Mr. Sanducci and his staff." He went on to say that the School No. 3 staff have been very appreciative of how their Dale Avenue School colleagues have made them feel at home. VP Bristow points out that the arrangement isn't like a school within a school, but rather that the School No. 3 students and staff are fully integrated into the school activities. Currently, both groups are working on a Hispanic Heritage Month project together.

Dale Avenue Principal Richard Sanducci said, "School 3 has been a pleasant addition to our Dale Avenue Team. We truly enjoy including them in all our activities."

School No. 3 Principal Jose Correa said, "Like the mighty Passaic River, our School No. 3 students flow through the branches of knowledge, uniting in two different school buildings, yet their thirst for learning remains undivided. In the halls of Dale Avenue and MLK, they forge a path of resilience, unity, and excellence, proving that no matter where they stand, their educational journey is a powerful force that cannot be separated."

Vice Principal Anthony Licamara of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Complex/30 said, "Everything is going very smooth. We've gotten into a rhythm and a routine. We just love having our extended family here at MLK."

#### **DISTRICT SHOUT OUT!**

For 10 years, the Senator Frank Lautenberg School (SFLS) has been under the watchful eyes of Andrew Muckle. He's watched children come and go, being an active part of their days as the SFLS Security Supervisor. His story with SFLS, also known as School No. 6, started earlier though.

#### Quote to Live By

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me'." — Erma Bombeck, Author/Humorist

A native Patersonian and Eastside HS Hall of Fame inductee, he was also a Paterson police officer for thirty years. During his career as an officer, he was a juvenile detective and his sector was around School No. 6. After he retired from the police department, he decided to put his time towards working with the District, starting a few programs to help children.

Eventually, because of his background in law enforcement, increased gun violence across the nation, and familiarity with the School No. 6 neighborhood, he was hired as an armed guard for the



District and allowed to be assigned to the school that he was already familiar with. Speaking about SFLS, Mr. Muckle says, "Sometime this school, because of the surroundings, gets a bad rap, but in general, there's some excellent young men and women in this building; that this school has graduated some real super stars. I have no qualms whatsoever with choosing this school. I'm glad that I came here, this is my home, I like it here, I like the neighborhood, I like the people, I like the kids, and I have no issues, it's been a good ride, so to speak." One of the benefits of his life experiences as a juvenile detective and then as a school guard is that he can now see the story of some children from both sides of the fence.

#### The Best Part of My Day

"In the morning times, when I look into their faces, their eyes, and I sort of understand what's going on with them..." Mr. Muckle refers to how children in urban schools have very different experiences on the way to school than their suburban counterparts. He lists the litany of environmental stresses that children witness on the streets, then adds, "So when I see them smile in the morning and come in, I say to myself 'WOW', these kids can still walk with a smile on their face after going through what they went through. So, that's the good part of my day, in the morning... some adults probably couldn't take what these kids take. They are real troopers"

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#### GREEN SPACES OF THE DISTRICT

The vegetables at School No. 2 soak in the sunlight on an early September morning, as Principal Vanessa Serrano shows Superintendent Newell the garden beds situated in the back of the school grounds. Located in two separate outdoor sections of the school, gardens that are tended by staff and students flourish where blacktop would normally be. Vice-principal Mike Ollo shares what one teacher said about the garden project, "The gardens are the best. My students are stimulated by them and are speaking the language of nutrition, planting, tending, ownership and using specific language. They are fully engaged."

The statement would seem to be echoed in other District schools as several are actively tending gardens, while others are looking to refurbish existing gardens that went fallow over the pandemic era closures or needed extensive repair, such as at Schools No. 12 and No. 13 respectively. Plans are in place to create community gardens at Full Service Community Schools locations with help from the United Way of Passaic County. There is even gardening happening in a school without any soil being involved at all.

Paterson and other urban school districts are seeing the benefits of having a garden as part of their schools' facilities. School gardens serve as classrooms, helping children learn how to grow their own food and care for plants, Garden-based nutrition education can motivate school children to eat healthier and increase their physical activity. They can also provide a source of community. Gardening allows for team building and promotes communication skills. Planning a garden, planting the seeds and watching them grow give kids a sense of purpose and responsibility. Making sure that the plants get enough fertilizer, water, and sun fosters mindfulness. Principal Vanessa Serrano of School No. 2 said that she is "delighted to be able to provide students the opportunity to learn new skills while developing and fostering relationships within the school community." These are just the basic advantages that school-based gardens can provide.

There are also benefits that are specific to students who are of the large immigrant population in Paterson. Students coming from rural areas of their country-of-origin reminisce as they tend the plants, as two students from School No. 2 do. A fourth grader told Vice-principal Ollo, "I picked these (vegetables) with my father in Ecogranjita and Granja El Arriero before I came here", while another, J.E., shared that they, "love this school because the gardens remind me of home".

Schools looking to get new gardens, whether newly installed or through refurbishment, will see the same benefits once the projects are underway. Up until last year, School No. 13 had a vegetable garden and outdoor classroom next to the school's playground; they still have an active flower garden in front of the school. The vegetable garden needs repairs, but Principal Nicole Booker-Toney and Vice-Principal Cosmo Braico plan on rebuilding it in the near future. School 13's Green Team club is made up of students from 5th through 8th grade. It helps with planting and maintenance, as well as fundraising, throughout the school year, while school staff tend the gardens in the Summer. School No. 25 had a Green Fair last June to showcase their new garden. Math teacher Sigil Kaplan spearheaded the project with the help of the EmPowered Schools Program by Sustainable Jersey For Schools. The fair featured outdoor lessons and displays in plant life.

Many of the gardens at District school buildings were made possible through partnerships. City Green helped Schools No. 2 and No. 13 accomplish their gardens. The Full-Service Community Schools department has partnered with United Way of Passaic County to implement the Farm to School Grant Program at various locations. Schools involved include school numbers 2, 10, 15, 16, and Al "Tambua" Moody Academy. This initiative aims to establish school gardens that will contribute to alleviating food insecurity within the Paterson community.

Not all gardens are built the same. While plants traditionally need soil to grow from, it's only because they derive nutrients from it. Joseph A. Taub Middle School has a lab attached to one of their science classrooms that utilizes two different methods to produce the same food without soil. On one side of the lab, they have created a hydroponics garden. Plants are grown in slots in pipes that have running water in them. The water is enriched with a nutrient solution to feed the plants. A filter is needed for this system and electricity to keep pumps going. In the middle of the room is the aquaponics garden, which also uses a pump and filter system, but forgoes the nutrient formula. Instead, the water circulates between a fish tank, tilapia to be precise, and the plants. The fish produce waste that is pumped into a filter where beneficial bacteria grow. The water then flows to the plants, which absorb the bacteria as nutrients. The water now cleaned of waste is returned to the fish. It is a system that shows students the symbiotic nature of the water cycle. In time, the fish will also be grown and bred for

food as well. The advantages are obvious in that production can be year-round in a controlled environment, but they are offset by the need for electricity and equipment maintenance. Regardless of the differences from organic farming, the lab garden still provides students with a way to learn about gardening and food production. Science teacher Ivette Soto said of the aquaponics and hydroponics systems, "This is something they don't see every day (in an urban area). So, to get their hands in this environment, to see it grow, from the science lab to the table, is an exciting thing that they get to experience." "The students are able to see how the world is interconnected. How every part of our life relies on something else," said JAT Principal Cecala of having a garden as part of the school's learning tools.

Gardens do not only yield crops and flowers. People and animals can also take a moment of peace from them. For School No. 1, its garden of perennials is a place of refuge and food for Monarch Butterflies. The winged visitors are a welcome sight in the early Summer for the staff and students. Their use of the plants gives the Garden Club a satisfaction beyond the beautification of their school. At School No. 2, separate from the vegetable garden on the other side of the school, sits the Zen Courtyard. It is here that counselors will sometimes bring students who are having difficult emotional experiences in their day. The sunflowers and other colorful plants in the silent space surrounded by the tall brick facades of the school and high fenced off walls of residential homes, create an oasis of peace; it's almost quiet enough to forget one is in a city, if not for the distant car horns that interrupt the moment.

It's in the Zen Courtyard that Principal Serrano ends her tour for Superintendent Newell. The space will have new murals painted in it. One of which will state the school's garden motto, written by poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Adopt the pace of Nature, her secret is patience!"



#### **Important Dates**

October 9 District Closed – Italian Heritage Day/Indigenous People's Day

October 12 Progress Reports

October 25 Professional Development for All Staff
No School for Students



**Board of Education Meeting** 

The October 5th Board of Education Workshop meeting will be held at Joseph A. Taub School.

Those who want to give public comments must do so in person. They should register for the meeting.

The October 18th Board of Education Regular meeting will be conducted remotely.

It will also be live streamed at pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents.

#### Simultaneous Language Interpretation

Online simultaneous language interpretation is available at all Board meetings in Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, and Turkish. Simply choose the preferred language at pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents.

The District Chronicler is a publication of the PPS Department of Communications. We welcome your submissions on school and district-related news. Submit stories and photos to <a href="mailto:ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us">ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us</a>.

Mr. Daniel Juan, Interim Director of Communications Department Mrs. Maria D. Rosado-Leon, Confidential Secretary to the Communications Department

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