

Paterson Post

Paterson — A Promising Tomorrow

Together We Can

February 2022

EHS Lady Ghosts Are Passaic County Champs

“Kool-Aid,” “Money in the Bank” lead 46-44 defeat of top-seeded Wayne Valley



Head Coach Brandon Pilgrim and the EHS Lady Ghosts rejoice in their Passaic County championship victory. *Photo by Paul Brubaker*

has because of her smile, she told *The Record*). After being awarded the tournament trophy and plaque, Pilgrim called his team and coaching staff out to the court. Many of the players were wearing or waving t-shirts with the motto, “Glisson Strong,” in tribute to Eastside’s former Principal of Operations, Dr. Gerald Glisson, who died in 2020 after being diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus.

Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly, the PPS recreation director, with Symiaha Brown-Cobb, a.k.a. “Kool-Aid.”
Photo by Paul Brubaker

Call them Champions!

Eastside High School’s Lady Ghosts won the Passaic County championship on Saturday, defeating the top-seeded Wayne Valley Lady Lions, 46-44. It was the first time the Lady Ghosts won the county title since 2016.

It was a close game in which Eastside’s prowess on getting rebounds and freshman guard Neveah Banks’ hitting numerous three-point shots were vital to the win. Head Coach Brandon Pilgrim gave Banks the moniker “Money in the Bank” because of her last name, according to *The Record*, as he encouraged her to take the long-distance shots.

Also key to the team’s win were the offensive moves by junior point guard Symiaha Brown-Cobb, a.k.a. “Kool-Aid” (a nickname she



PPS Partners With Paterson Police In Recruiting Students To Take Exam

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116 students respond to outreach by signing up for the exam

Paterson Public Schools and City of Paterson officials teamed-up to visit district high schools and encourage seniors to consider careers in law enforcement. Dalton Price, the district's Director of Safety & Emergency Preparedness, worked with Lt. Sharon Easton of the Paterson Police Department's Community Policing Division (and a 32-year veteran of the department) to speak at student assemblies held at P-TECH at PANTHER Academy, Eastside High School, John F. Kennedy High School, and the Rosa L. Parks School of the Fine and Performing Arts.

At each assembly, Paterson police officers who are also alumni of the district's high schools spoke about their own rewarding experiences on the force and encouraged the students to sign up to take the upcoming test for the Police Academy, which will be scheduled later this year. Lt. Easton reported that a total of 116 district students signed up to take the exam.

"A career in public safety offers a young person the chance to serve their community while building a bright future for themselves," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. "Opportunities to pursue higher education, benefits, and a pension are often among the rewards of working in public safety. But perhaps the greatest reward is becoming known in the community as a respected individual upon whom people can rely for help when they need it."

Mayor Andre Sayegh, who participated in a presentation at Kennedy High School, said that presentations to high school students were a part of an aggressive recruiting campaign that includes community outreach efforts and paid advertising.



Director of Safety & Emergency Preparedness Dalton Price, a 25-year veteran of the Paterson PD, talks to JFK students. *Photo by Daniel Juan*



Lt. Sharon Easton of the Paterson PD's Community Policing Division and a 32-year veteran of the department speaks to JFK students. *Photo by Daniel Juan*

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On **Instagram**, it's Paterson_Public_Schools_NJ.

On **Twitter**, it's @Paterson_Public.

Seven PPS Students Accepted Into Private Prep Program

High-achieving scholars receive assistance with college application process

Seven college-bound students have been accepted into the Private Prep “Learn To Thrive” Scholarship program, which will provide them with resources, tutoring and coaching for the college admissions process.

Among the requirements for the program are a strong desire to go to a four-year college or university and a minimum unweighted 3.5 grade point average. The seven students accepted into the program are:

- Saminha Ahmed, HARP Academy
- Yerlin Gomez, HARP Academy
- Nena Ramos, Rosa L. Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts
- Marianela Geraldino, Rosa L. Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts
- Angelise Fermin, Eastside High School – Culinary Arts, Hospitality, and Tourism School (CAHTS)
- Fhameda Sultan, John F. Kennedy High School – School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)
- Ivan Malave, Rosa L. Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts



private prep
learn to thrive

“These seven students have been working hard in school and have their sights set on getting a college degree, and that is why they were accepted into the Private Prep Program,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “I congratulate all of them for this achievement and wish them luck as they complete the college admissions process. I want to thank the district’s Director of Guidance Tamisha McKoy and everyone at Private Prep for their work in creating this opportunity for our students to help them achieve their dreams of going to college.”

The Private Prep “Learn to Thrive” Scholarship Program empowers students from backgrounds that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Its goal is to combat the systemic inequities, particularly race-based inequities, of the American education institution by helping our students develop and employ skills that will allow them to create greater opportunities for their futures.

The program provides test prep for the SAT or ACT that includes one-on-one tutoring for up to six months, materials for independent work, proctored practice test and analysis of results. It also provides comprehensive one-on-one college admissions counseling that includes helping the students choose where to apply, write their college essay, and navigate the admissions process.

All services are provided one-on-one, in-person and online. Private Prep tutors and coaches meet with students according to what is convenient for their schedules. For test prep tutoring, tutors meet with students weekly for 90-minute sessions. For writing college essays and completing college applications, Private Prep coaches meet frequently with students and provide written feedback.

Noor Hassan, who graduated from JFK-STEM Academy last year, had participated in the Private Prep Scholarship Program. She now attends Stanford University.

Private Prep will be accepting applications for the Class of 2024 starting in April 2022. For more information, visit <https://privateprep.com/scholarship-program/>.

Three EHS Football Powerhouses Sign With American International College

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Amir Smith, Jahsin Jacobs, and Ahsin Jacobs commit to Division II program



From left, Amir Smith, Ahsin Jacobs, and Jahsin Jacobs . Photo by Daniel Juan.

Three Eastside Football Ghosts powerhouses have signed letters of intent to attend American International College after being awarded full scholarships to play football for the college's Division II program.

Wide receiver Ahsin Jacobs and defensive tackle Jahsin Jacobs, twin sons of the Ghosts' Defensive Coordinator Lindsey "Coach K" Jacobs, will join running back Amir Smith at the Springfield, Mass. college in the fall. The three players signed their letters at a special ceremony held in their honor at the Eastside High School gymnasium.

"I congratulate these three special student-athletes for their decisions to continue their academics and athletics at American International College this fall," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. "All of them have worked very hard to achieve this milestone. I also congratulate their parents and their coaches for everything they have done to help them achieve their best. We all look forward to seeing what Ahsin, Jahsin, and Amir accomplish in college."



Amir Smith surrounded by his proud family.
Photo by Daniel Juan.

Smith, who rushed for 1,345 yards and ran in 12 touchdowns in 2021, was joined by his father, Jamaar Smith, his mother, Jessica Mack, and his younger sister, Ahmeera Smith, who is a student at Public School No. 6.

All three players were cornerstones of a thrilling 2021 football season that saw the Eastside Ghosts get closer to a state sectional title than they had been in a long time. Eastside Head Football Coach James Magazine said that the three players learned valuable lessons last season.

"They learned how to work as a team, and they're going to carry that with them into college," said Magazine, who played quarterback for American International College before graduating in 1999. "I'm proud of them."

Please see, "Eastside" on page 5.

Eastside*Continued from page 4*

“Words cannot explain how happy I am. I’m very proud of him,” said Jamaar Smith.

Smith’s mother set the record straight behind her son’s success.

“He got into that school because of his academics,” she said. “Athletics are for a moment. For the long run, you need an education.”

After “Coach K” Jacobs proudly posed for photos with his twin sons, he reflected on the hard work that began when his sons were in the fifth grade. He was also grateful for the scholarships his sons earned.

“It’s definitely a blessing,” he said.

Ahsin, the wide receiver, had 36 receptions last season, seven of them in the end zone, and has had First Team All-County honors since his sophomore year.

Jahsin, the defensive tackle, was named to the First Team All-League, All County, and All Group IV, and was named to the Second Team All-State last season.

When asked how he felt about knowing where he would be attending school and playing football, Jahsin Jacobs said, “It’s exciting to finally find my home.”



Lindsey “Coach K” Jacobs, Eastside Football’s defensive coordinator with his sons Ahsin, left, and Jahsin.

Photos by Daniel Juan.

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School 10 Math Teacher Featured In National Magazine

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Tonya Lynne McCombs profiled in Marquis Who's Who Millennium Magazine

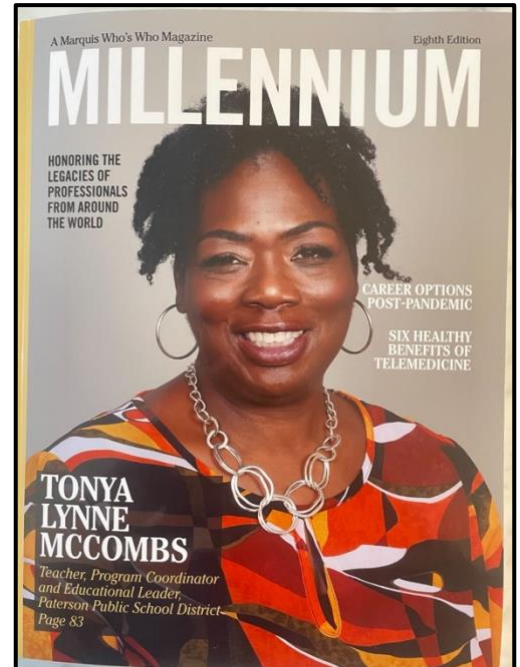
Tonya Lynne McCombs, a 23-year veteran teacher at Paterson Public Schools who teaches math at Public School No. 10, has been profiled by the national biography magazine, Marquis Who's Who Millennium.

"Throughout her teaching career, her goal has been to inspire young minds, provide students with greater opportunities, share knowledge and wisdom, and give back to her community," the article stated.

The story traces McComb's professional life which began in the business world after she earned her bachelor's degree in management at Morgan State University. After working for more than a decade at Motorola, Inc. and later at FG Montabert, McCombs made the transition to education in 1999.

During her years as an educator, she earned a master's degree in educational leadership from William Paterson University. Her community involvement has included her serving as the president of the Board of Trustee of Mount Olive Baptist Church in Hackensack.

"Ms. McCombs attributes her profound success to her determination, the support of her families, and the encouragement of her daughter, Tiana, who inspires her to persevere in life," the profile states.



School 10's McCombs on the Marquis Who's Who Millennium cover

Photo courtesy of staff

School 7 Students Inducted Into Safety Patrol



Members of the School 7 Safety Patrol and their faculty advisors. *Photo courtesy of staff*

A dozen students at Public School No. 7 have been sworn in as officers of the school's Safety Patrol by Principal Rebecca Cecala, Physical Education Teacher Michael Levine, and Special Education Teacher Diana Gerges.

The School 7 Safety Patrol Squad is led by a captain and lieutenant, and every squad member is assigned a post. Squad members must report to their posts daily from 8:10 to 8:25 a.m. and from 2:55 p.m. to 3:05 p.m.

"I want to make others feel welcomed and safe. I also want to show others I am responsible and a good safety leader," said Maimoona Manir, a seventh-grader, about why she joined the Safety Patrol.

Please see, "Safety Patrol" on page 7.

Safety Patrol*Continued from page 6*

Another seventh-grader, Mauro Cedillo said, “The reason safety patrol is important is because schools need a lot of safety. I want to be part of the solution.” Eighth-grader Christy Gonzalez said, “I think safety patrol is important because it helps keep balance in the school.”

School 16 Student Selected As A “Freedom Writer”

12-year-old author chosen for Freedom Writers Foundation/Penguin Random House book project



Leilani Fermin

Leilani Fermin, a 12-year-old student at Public School No. 16, has been selected to be the New Jersey’s contributing author for the upcoming book, *Dear Freedom Writer: Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation*.

The book is the latest protect of the Freedom Writers Foundation, which is rooted in the work of Erin Gruwell. In 1994, Gruwell was a high school teacher in Long Beach who successfully taught students who were thought of as “unteachable” by helping them develop writing skills to tell their own stories. Renee Cleaves Bryant, a 20-year veteran teacher in the district, for mentored Fermin through the Freedom Writers project.

As a co-author, Fermin needs to be at the book’s launch at the end of March. The only trouble is, she needs the money to get there and to pay for her participation in the week-long symposium with the other student-authors from around the country. That is why [a special Go Fund Me online fundraising campaign](#) has been launched on her behalf by her mother, Idelisa Valdez.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see Fermin’s video message about the fundraiser.

“Leilani has brought a tremendous amount of pride to School 16 and the entire school district being the only student in the state to be selected for the Freedom Writers upcoming book. I congratulate her on this great accomplishment,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer.

Teachers Take The PD Lead At School 5

Teachers at Public School No. 5 have been spending their mornings engaged in peer-to-peer virtual professional development. The virtual morning program, which launched in November, was developed by the school’s principal, Dr. Jorge Ventura, and William Paterson University Professor-In-Residence Dr. Betsy Golden. Teachers have led the 30-minute morning sessions to cover topics including the Orton-Gillingham approach to teaching reading, and how to use online resources such as Screencastify to create instructional films and Kahoot! to engage students and assess their learning. All of the sessions have been recorded. Teachers who attend the sessions in real time or watch the recordings earn professional development certificates from the university. Teachers who lead the sessions earn presentation certificates.

School 5 In-Service Gets Interactive

Peer-to-peer professional development was a part of a January in-service session at Public School No. 5. Staff members who had attended the university's Bilingual and Technology Conference used *Screencastify* to create videos summarizing what they had learned. The videos included embedded questions to check their colleagues understanding of the concepts presented. Ventura created a choice board incorporating each video that allowed teachers to choose the order in which they viewed the videos. He also created a virtual bulletin board using the *Padlet* online resource, which allowed teachers to post feedback for the presenters. Ventura also created his own instructional videos, demonstrating how to use the choice board and how to post on a *Padlet*.

School 7 Students Make 'Safe Landings' With BAE Systems' Help

Students engage in "Safe Landing" activity as they learn about the engineering field



Public School No. 7 sixth-graders were given a mission: put a ping-pong ball in a plastic cup then drop the cup at least one foot without the ball falling out and without putting a lid on the cup. It's harder than you think.

Fortunately, the sixth-graders had the help of professionals from BAE Systems. They were invited by Principal Rebecca Cecala as guest speakers to ignite the students' interest in the engineering field. "The students were extremely engaged," Cecala said. "It was great to see them working today, problem solving, and using

their 21st century skills. It was a fun, productive, and amazing experience."

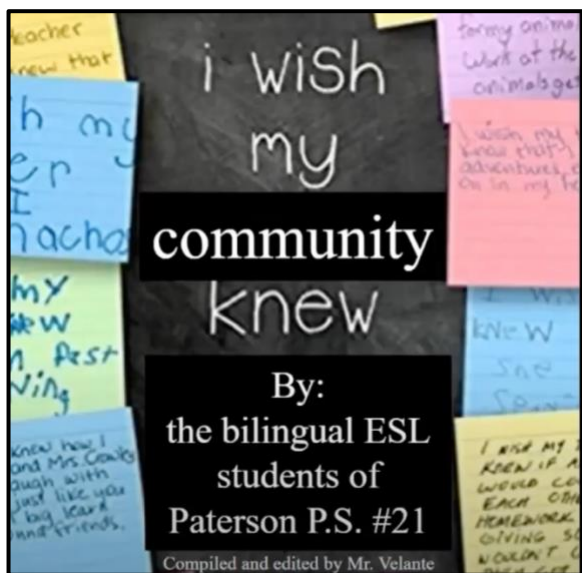
Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer thanked the BAE Systems volunteers and commended Principal Cecala and her team.

"I want to thank everyone who worked to make today's engineering experience happen for our School 7 students," Shafer said. "It's experiences like these that can set a young person in a direction to pursue a lifelong passion and fulfilling career. We greatly appreciate the time and talents of the people of BAE Systems who visited School 7 today."

Happy Landings BAE Systems volunteers worked with School 7 students to spark their interest in engineering. *Photos by Daniel Juan*



School 21 Bilingual Students Hold Virtual Book Launch 9



Bilingual students at Public School No. 21 held a virtual launch of their latest book, *I Wish My Community Knew*. The event was held online on February 17th with the help of Jason Velante, a bilingual education teacher at School 21, and in partnership with the Paterson Free Public Library. The book is a collection of contributions from School 21's bilingual students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Copies of the book are available to be checked out at the library and a video of highlights from the virtual book launch can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZVo7sODAGc>

This is the second book project Velante has led with his bilingual students. In 2018, he led students to publish a collection of first-person immigration stories for *Why I Came To America*. The project was later honored by the

New Jersey School Boards Association as an outstanding educational program.

EHS JROTC COMPETES AFTER COVID HIATUS



In their first showing at a live drill competition since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Eastside High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), a.k.a. the Mighty Ghost Battalion, showed that they haven't lost their step when it comes to competing against other school's battalions.

The Mighty Ghosts took home third place honors in the Platoon Unarmed Regulation and Armed Color Guard categories at the competition hosted by Delsea Regional High School in Franklinville, New Jersey.

"The Eastside JROTC's strong dedication to training and mentorship by senior Cadets from year to year was on full display," said Senior Army Instructor and Department Chairman Major Luis Barraza. "We are looking forward to continued success during

The Eastside High School Mighty Ghost Battalion. Photo courtesy of staff

our next competitions in the coming weeks and months."

Upcoming Events

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- Mar. 2:** Special Board of Education Meeting*
5:30 p.m.
- Mar. 4:** Staff in-service, 1:00 p.m. dismissal for students
- Mar. 9:** Board of Education Workshop Meeting*
6:00 p.m.
- Mar. 9:** Progress Reports, pre-K to 12
- Mar. 14:** Special Board of Education Meeting*
5:30 p.m.
- Mar. 16:** Board of Education Regular Meeting*
6:00 p.m.
- Mar. 18:** PEA in-service, 1:00 p.m. dismissal for students and staff

*All Board of Education meetings are live-streamed at pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents. Those who want to give public comment should register in advance by emailing public@paterson.k12.nj.us by 4:30 p.m. on March 2nd and March 14th, and by 5:00 p.m. on March 9th and March 16th. Participants are asked to provide their name, address, and the phone number from which they will be calling.

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