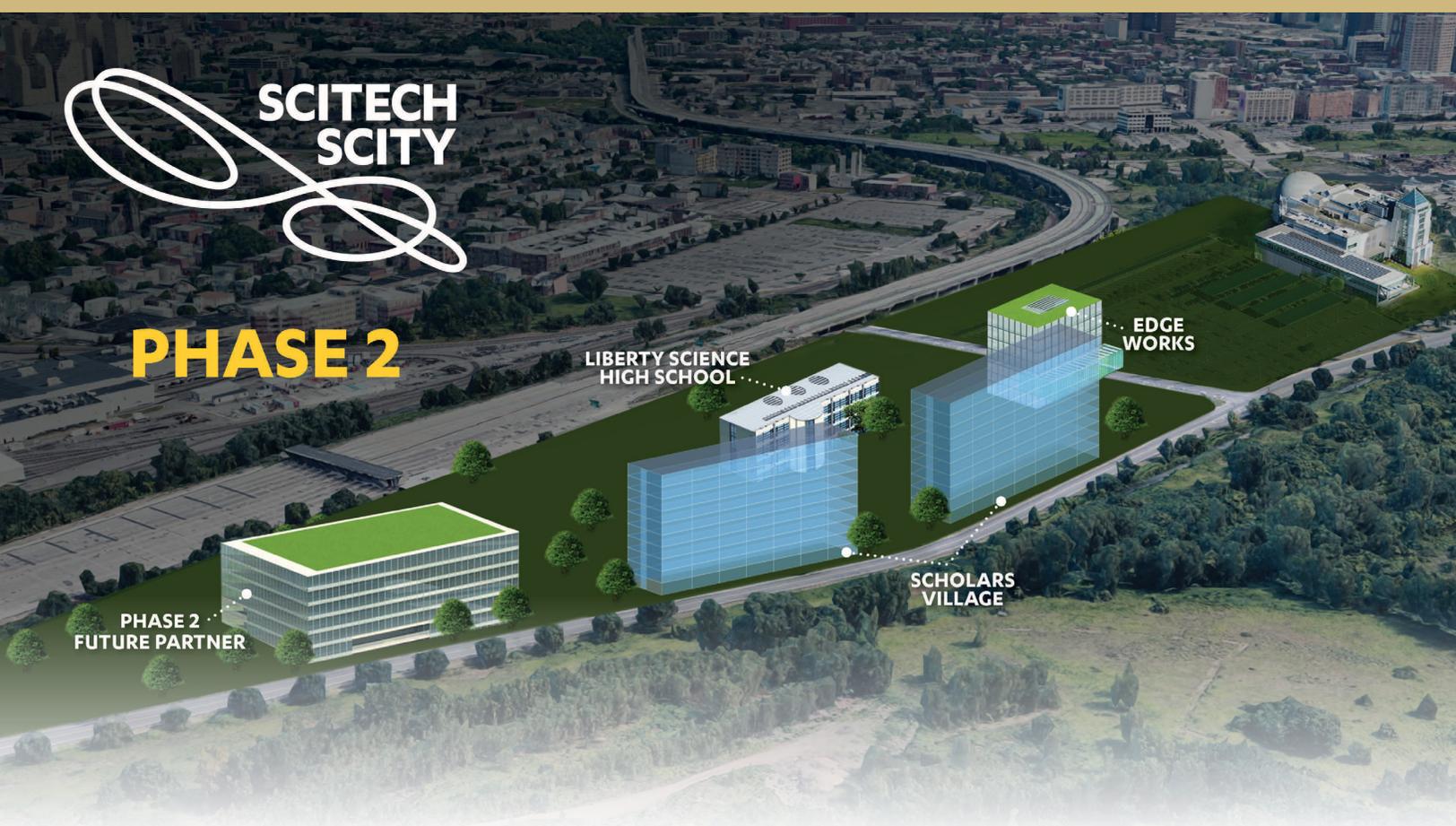


HCST Partnering with Hudson County, Jersey City and Liberty Science Center to Build New High School



The Hudson County Schools of Technology has entered into an agreement with Jersey City and Liberty Science Center to build a new County High School. Liberty Science High School will be established as part of the cutting-edge [SciTech City campus in Jersey City](#) that will include a revolutionary technological hub for students, innovators, entrepreneurs, and scientists working together to create a community for learning and innovation.

"At the Hudson County Schools of Technology, our mission has always been to inspire creative and independent thinking through diverse learning opportunities," said **HCST Superintendent Amy Lin- Rodriguez**. "Our vision for this campus mirrors our commitment to providing students with an actively engaging, career and technical education learning experience. We look forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to build an innovative school for Hudson County students."

As part of the agreement, HCST will oversee operations at the new public county magnet high school to provide 400 science-talented high school students from across Hudson County with a unique opportunity for a curriculum centered on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) that will leverage a work education program around the 200+ technology startup companies and entrepreneurs that will call SciTech City home.

"Hudson County is home to many of the most talented students in New Jersey, and it is critical we provide them with opportunities and resources to advance their future careers," said **Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise**. "The plans for our newest county public school reinforce our commitment to do just that, and as a former educator myself, I am immensely proud to be part of this process as plans begin to take shape."

Jersey City donated 12.5 acres to SciTech Scity and will provide financial assistance for school operating costs and Liberty Science Center plans to break ground on SciTech Scity in 2021. The project includes 100,000 square feet of research labs, private studios, open workspaces, a conference center and residential component for innovators, scientists, entrepreneurs, and their families.

"We are revolutionizing what public education can accomplish, and this partnership with the county is a significant step towards our vision of creating an ecosystem of innovation to educate and inspire future entrepreneurs and scientists," said **Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop**. "The students will also gain direct access to businesses onsite for unique internship opportunities to further cultivate their career paths. Overall, SciTech Scity will establish Jersey City as a worldwide destination for innovative forward-thinkers, bringing thousands of jobs and countless opportunities to our area."

"We are excited to work with the county and the city to create a world-class science high school," said **Paul Hoffman, President and CEO of Liberty Science Center**. "The students will have access to LSC's unique assets, like our Jennifer Chalsty Planetarium, the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, and to internships and mentorships at the cutting-edge startup companies in our Edge Works business incubator."

County Prep High School Receives National Blue Ribbon School Honor



The U.S. Department of Education has designated [County Prep High School as one of nine New Jersey schools](#) to be named a National Blue Ribbon School. The award, which was only presented to 367 schools nationwide, reaffirms the diligent effort made by the Hudson County Schools of Technology to provide students with a safe, engaging and rewarding educational experience.

"Receiving a Blue Ribbon Schools designation from the U.S. Department of Education is an outstanding achievement for our district and

validates our dedication, commitment and passion to education," said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "We are all incredibly proud of the students, instructors, support staff and leadership at County Prep High School for earning this prestigious award."

County Prep High School is one of Hudson County's two vocational high schools and gives students the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom through internships, partnerships with Hudson County Community College and other hands-on learning experiences. The school was designated as a National Blue Ribbon School under the category of "Exemplary High Performing Schools" for being among New Jersey's highest performing schools as measured by state and national testing scores.

"While this past school year was far from conventional, our students and staff have once again proven they are prepared to rise to the occasion, regardless of challenges they may encounter," said **County Prep High School Principal Barbara Mendolla**. "Today, and everyday, we celebrate the accomplishments of our school and are incredibly proud to be nationally recognized for our commitment to education and the long term success of our students."

"Hudson County Schools of Technology is home to many of the state's brightest and most ambitious students," said **Board President Craig Guy**. "The Blue Ribbon School designation is a tremendous honor for our district and on behalf of the entire Board, I congratulate County Prep on this achievement."

County Prep received its award during a virtual ceremony last month. [The school's acceptance can be viewed online here.](#)

500 Attend State's First Outdoor Job Fair Since COVID-19 Outbreak



The Hudson County One Stop Career Development Center, in partnership with the Hudson County Schools of Technology and the Jersey City Employment and Training Program, [hosted an outdoor job fair on November 7](#). The event, which was held in the parking lot of the Frank J. Gargiulo Campus, is the first large scale and outdoor job fair in New Jersey since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic eight months ago.

"COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our local economy and the livelihoods for so many in Hudson County," said **County Executive Tom DeGise**. "This job fair was critical to our economic recovery and I am proud of the work that the Hudson County One-Stop, Hudson County Schools of Technology and Jersey City Employment and Training Program did to make this event possible."

Upwards of 500 people attended and met with dozens of job seekers and trade organizations throughout the day. "The Hudson County One Stop serves as a lifeline to help individuals achieve their academic and career goals every day of the year," said **Steve Smith, Director of the Career Development Center**. "Despite facing challenges, we've remained committed to these goals and have identified ways to continue providing services to Hudson County residents."

Additionally, HCST provided free transportation to the Secaucus campus every 30 minutes from locations in Jersey City and Union City.

"Over the past eight months, the Hudson County Schools of Technology has worked collaboratively to provide essential resources to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic," said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "There has never been a greater need to help connect job seekers with employment opportunities and our district will continue to provide the support necessary to help our community recover and succeed."

Thank You



for your dedication

Thank You to Our Frontline Heroes

The Hudson County Schools of Technology thanks all of our faculty and staff for their commitment to our students during this challenging time. Together, we will come out of this #HCSTstrong. *Artwork done by Lauren Krasnoff, HTHS Class of 2018.*

Helping Students Navigate the College Application Process

Despite the challenging times we have faced, the Guidance Department at the Hudson County Schools of Technology have worked around the clock to help seniors navigate the college application process. One of the tools being used to assist is Naviance, a college and career readiness web-based program that provides students with college planning and career assessment tools.

Naviance allows for college applications, college visitation schedules, and signups to meet with school representatives to be arranged directly through the program. All HCST students receive log-in credentials to Naviance during their freshman year and complete various learning styles and career strengths inventories in their career education courses. Students also have the ability to facilitate college, career and scholarship searches and comparisons.

Food Services Continue to Provide Healthy Meals to Students



The Culinary Team with the Food Services Department is working hard to make sure students still have access to healthy meals during hybrid and distance learning. All students are eligible for free, complete meals that can be picked up everyday Monday by [filling out the virtual order form found here](#). More information can be found by visiting sites.google.com/hcstonline.org/foodservices.



High Tech Students Create Video To Promote Wearing a Mask

Students at High Tech High School, with help from their English Instructor Robert Dillon, created a catchy and informative video to help spread awareness about how each of us can do our own part to stop the spread of COVID-19. As part of an assignment in Dillon's European Literature and Rock and Roll as Literature classes, students learned about public relations and were tasked with writing a slogan to encourage individuals to wear a mask.

"Every year I start my classes with discussions of how their summer was and if anything interesting happened to help break the ice," said **Instructor Robert Dillon**. "This year, of course, was the issue of coronavirus and one major complaint from students was that some people were not wearing a mask, thus extending distanced learning. After group discussions, we decided to put together a video to demonstrate the importance of wearing a mask to stop the spread of the virus so students can enjoy a traditional high school experience."

A total of 67 students are featured in the 2:28 video. The campaigns students created include: "This is not a (mask)querade party, keep your mask on. People's lives depend on it," "Wearing is Caring," "Cover Your Face to Save the Human Race," "It's a Simple Task to Wear a Mask," and "Spread Awareness Not the Virus." [The video can be viewed online here.](#)

"Students, faculty and staff at the Hudson County Schools of Technology have gone above and beyond to achieve success during distanced and hybrid learning," said **Superintendent Amy Lin-Rodriguez**. "The video put together by Mr. Dillon and our juniors at High Tech High School is a testament of how our district has remained committed to our mission of providing students with diverse learning opportunities despite these challenging times."

The students who participated in the project are:

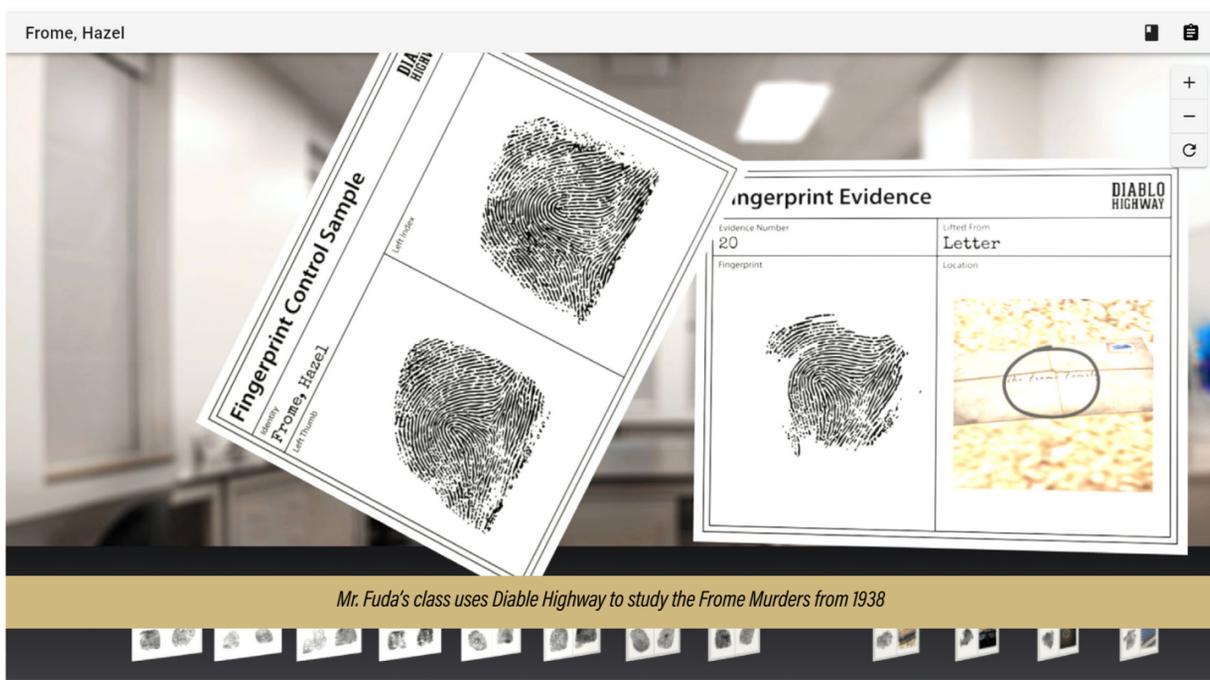
Agnes Guevara, Alessandra Blount, Alexa Malagon, Amanda Tennaro, Andrea Guzman, Andrew Mercado, Annette Goyburu, Ariana Osorio, Bharti Khubchandani, Briana Villafuerte, Briella Santin, Camila Suarez, Charlize Fernandez, Charlotte Leitner, Chinomnso Emenonye, Daisy Marin, Emily Guevara, Gerson Diaz, Gia Tarquini, Haby Diane, Hager Khalifa, Isabela Vargas,

Isaree Kumtrakool, Jackson Barere, Jaheem Ellison, Jianna Mendez, Joaquim Pereira, Juan Perez, Julia Caley, Kaitlyn Joynt, Karen Iskander, Kayla Coons, Kayla Williams, Khyah Craig, Lorey Cutkelvin, Mariam Saad, Matthew Bartoszek, Melissa Motta Lopez, Melissa Saenz, Mila-Angelique Chapin, Mireya Landaverde, Misha Godha, Molly O'Callaghan, Momar N'Diaye, Ndella Sall, Ndeye-Khady

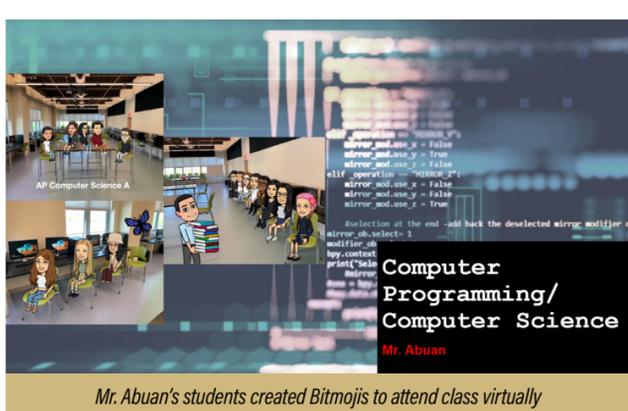
Ndiaye, Nicole Mendez, Nyrohah Alvarenga, Priscila Silva, Raghd Elzar, Rene Hernandez, Ruth Regan, Samantha Mestre, Sarah Jaafar, Sean Dong, Sofia Idrissi, Sophia Barere, Taina Dale, Taina Soto, Zachary Miller, AndreSebastian Garrovillas, Carlos Ascensao, Carlos Davies, Kendry Hilario, Nicolle Vilca, Radha Rench, and Sierra Jenkins.

Professional Development for Staff During Distanced Learning

In light of new obstacles during unprecedented times, HCST has implemented a Professional Development & Best Practices Committee, made up of District Educators, to provide our community with much needed workshops, training and seminars. These sessions have been available to all staff who support each other through Professional Development and share best practices through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our staff is one of our greatest resources and it is inspiring to witness the collaboration and support as we navigate the new reality. We are looking forward to a Professional Development/Wellness Day on January 15, 2021.



Hybrid Habits: How We're Keeping Students Engaged

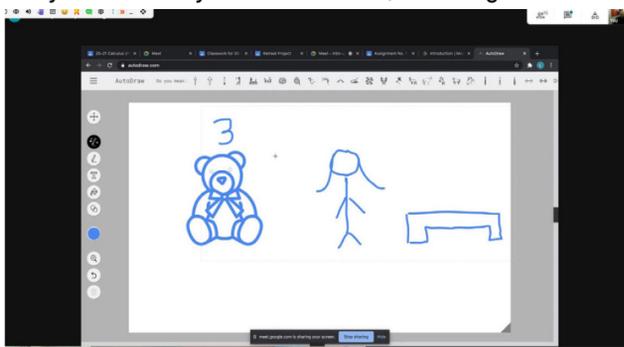


Over the past several months, many of our instructors have gotten creative and identified new ways to keep students engaged. We wanted to share with you a few of things we have done throughout the district to give students the most enjoyable learning experience.

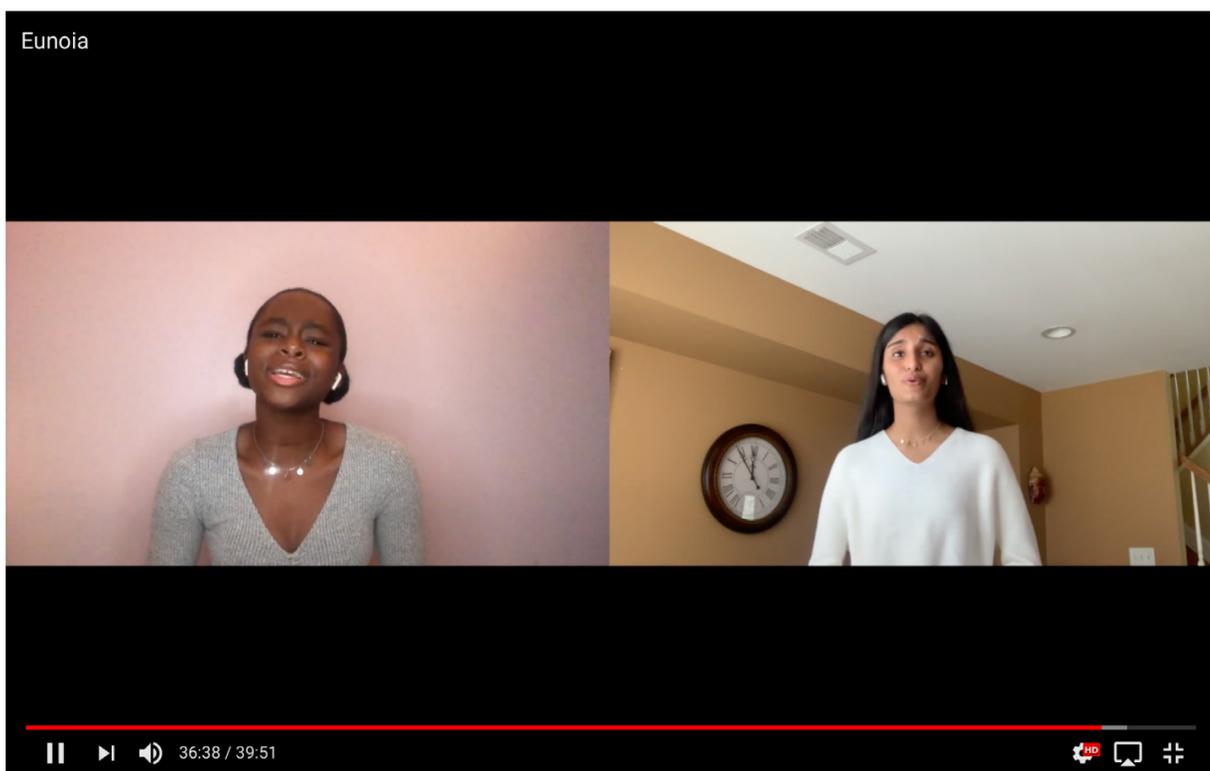
In High Tech High School's Design and Fabrication Academy **Vanessa Medina** plays online Charades with her students via autodraw.com; **Anthony Fuda** is using Diablo Highway web application, to conduct hybrid lab experiments, like the Frome murders from

1938; **Jeremy Abuan** has had his students create their own Bitmojis to virtually attend class; and **David Cincotta** has been using programs, like Khan Academy, to teach students about developing a growth mindset, qualities of perseverance, diligence, grit, and resilience.

At **Explore Middle School**, one student is selected each day to make daily announcements, including information about lunch and birthdays. The school also has theme days, like Motivational Monday and Weird Face Wednesday to start the day off on the right foot. Additionally, Explore Middle School has participated in virtual field trips and hosts activities for students to participate in remotely on Fridays.



In High Tech High School's Arts Academy **Ronald Kliesh** does circle time with his students **Rod Shepard** is preparing for an in school coffee house, live performances; **Trista DeFilippis** has students dancing at home and in school; **Jessie Delgado** has the students active and performing; **Tony Gongora** has students interacting with questions in real time, with answers; **Joseph Ensmann** uses videos, polls and questions using the Google Meet platform; and **Amy Coplan** has the students on keyboards in breakout rooms.



High Tech Students Organize Virtual Performance to Benefit St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital



To keep with the spirit of giving, a group of High Tech High School students organized a virtual concert to [raise over \\$2,000 for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital](#). The event, Eunoia, was meant to serve as an opportunity to celebrate "love and gratitude during these difficult times."

Eunoia was the brainchild of juniors Lauralie Mufute and Nanki Nagpaul, with the entire production being produced and performed by High Tech Musical Theatre majors.

"We were thinking about Thanksgiving and the holiday season and how we both have so much to be appreciative of, especially during this time where everything seems so negative," Lauralie and Nanki said. "We wanted to bring some positivity to people's lives and give back to the community, and we thought the best way to do that would be to use our strengths and talents to entertain those in need, while fundraising for St. Jude's."

The 40 minute production includes performances by: juniors Lauralie Mufute, Nanki Nagpaul, Christopher Martinez, Luke Millevoi Fournier, Hannah Beemer, Amelia Gallagher, and Jade Rodriguez, sophomores Gianna Scalcione, Kate Jensen, Derlin Rivera, and Mia Oliver and freshmen Bryn Robinson and Sienna Mello. The event was produced by Lauralie Mufute and Christopher Martinez, directed by Nanki Nagpaul and Hannah Beemer and hosted by sophomore Nervin Trueblood and freshman Avery Ramsey.



[The performance can be viewed online here.](#)

Student Spotlight

During the First Quarter, students at HCST had the opportunity to participate in hybrid learning, where they participated in the classroom once or twice a week and online. Two students from Explore Middle School took the opportunity to share their experiences and early successes with the entire HCST Community.

Michelle Ramneth is a sixth grade student at Explore Middle School and was elected as Student Council Representative for her advisory. She is currently participating in the Peace Islands Institute 2020 Art and Essay Contest that she learned about during orientation. She says: *"I really enjoyed this way of learning because we are interacting with our peers but taking safety precautions at the same time! I have been in contact with some of my peers, and we started to work on some projects together that required team work! Although it was still a project, we had fun and talked and planned out so much together."*



Colin Jette is a seventh grade student at Explore Middle School and participated in a number of clubs during the first quarter. He serves as a Peer leader and helped new sixth grade students adjust and feel welcome in a new school and participated in the Student Council elections. He says: *"While the first marking period took some adjusting for us all, there were many great things we were able to do. One great thing was the student council elections. Our amazing teachers and staff were able to pull together a great election, with an easy format for both in person and virtual students. The elections were followed up with a fun Halloween party which also was great!"*



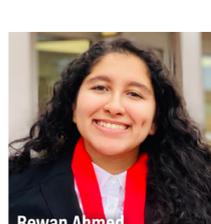
Student Corner, by Marisa Syed

Marisa Syed is a 15-year-old Sophomore at County Prep High School and wrote the following piece.

Covid has taken a toll on learning altogether since the initial nationwide lockdowns back in March of 2020. Despite the difficult circumstances, schools in Hudson County have done an amazing job transitioning from in-person learning to a completely virtual learning. Teachers and administrators are doing whatever they can in order to help students adapt to a virtual way of learning.

In addition to the virtual classrooms, many student-run clubs are still working and gathering new students to participate virtually. One example of these clubs which are still managing to do activities, competitions, and run many events that provide opportunities to students is the Health Occupation Students of America, or HOSA. I interviewed the presidents of the County Prep chapter about the challenges they faced during the transition to a fully virtual club. I spoke to Rewan Ahmed and Richa Shah, both presidents of HOSA.

What is the mission of your club? And as presidents what is your role in the club?



Rewan Ahmed: "The mission of HOSA Future Health Professionals is to empower our members to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience. As president, my role in HOSA is to conduct meetings, take the leadership role when working with officers and members, develop programs of work, coordinate activities with the chapter advisor, and appoint committees and coordinate programs throughout the school year. Along with that, I serve as a mentor to the members not only as an upperclassman but as a role model. I provide the members with resources to be used not only in the healthcare community but throughout their high school education."

Richa Shah: "As president, my role in this organization is to host chapter meetings and take leadership in working with other officers as well as the members, guiding them every step of the way."

What challenges did you face with the club when you had to make this transition to online due to the pandemic?



Richa Shah: "When transitioning the club online due to the pandemic we faced a series of challenges. The biggest one was thinking of ways we can still incorporate many of our traditional activities such as the blue tarp project, chemotherapy care packages, food drives, and hosting fun events for our members through this new virtual world. However, I am proud to say that we overcame this obstacle with the help of the rest of our team and our advisor Mr. Carey. We came up with great alternatives that not only keep our members involved but also educates them on the different health care topics."

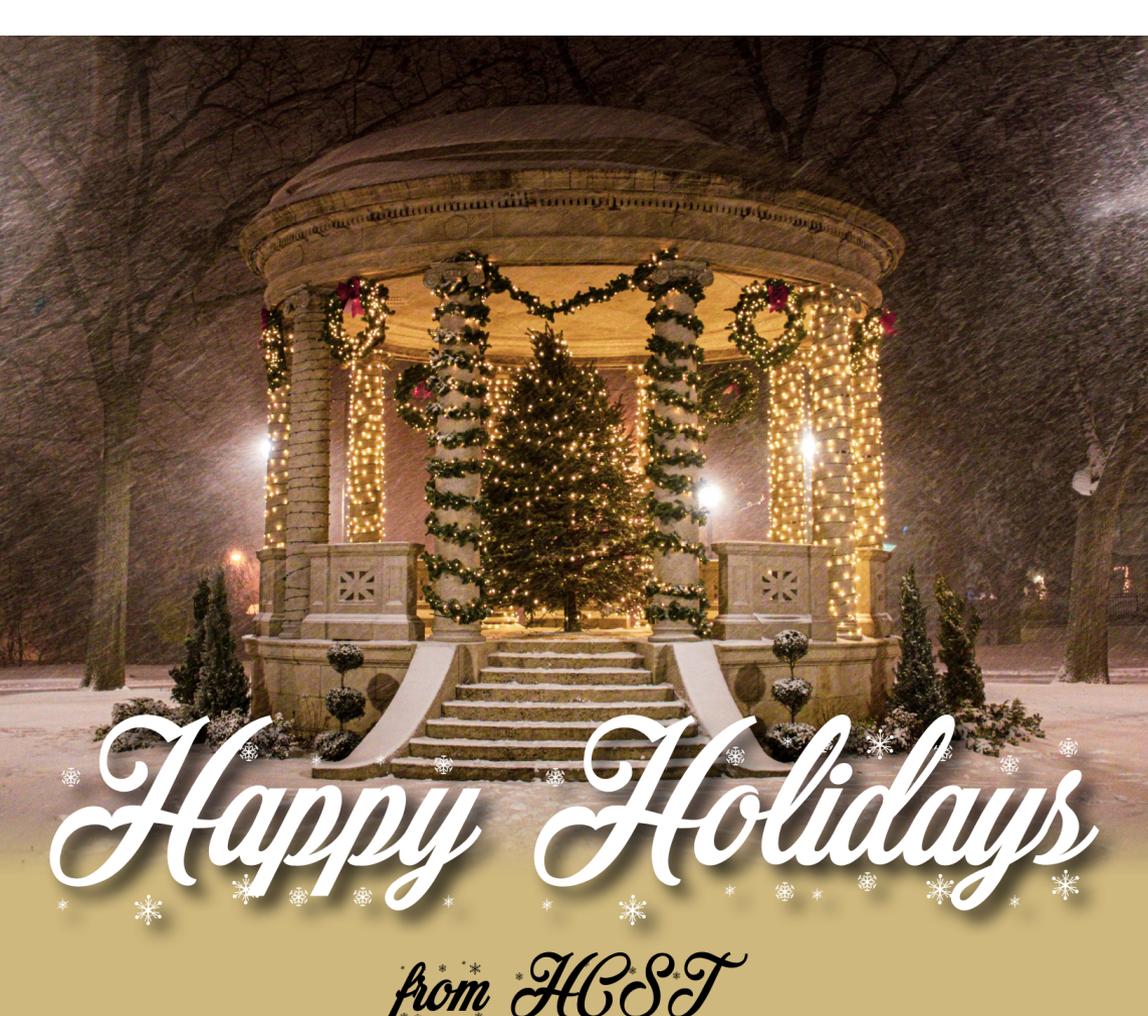
What kinds of activities is the club doing now since we have transitioned?

Rewan Ahmed: "Now that the club has transitioned virtually, our activities have changed but for the better! We have created different committees: Competitions, Journalism, Fundraising, and Informational Outreach. The Competitions Committee is working on preparing our members for the Northern Regional Conference and will help them all individually. With journalism, our members are able to utilize their writing skills and write articles on what HOSA members have been working on, create informative articles, and flyers. The Fundraising Committee is created to help raise money, generate ideas for HOSA, create projects for the student body, and more! Lastly, informational outreach is to help our members give back to the community, work on raising awareness for diseases and other causes. The online interface has increased our attendance and allowed HOSA to be reached to a larger audience."

Did the coronavirus play a role in educating students who look forward to being the medical field in the future? If so, how?

Richa Shah: "One of our main focuses this year as we continue with our chapter meetings is to inform our members of the effect that coronavirus has on our health care workers. We strongly believe that it is important to keep them well aware of all the challenges they might face in the future when they are in their shoes. It also shows them the importance of healthcare workers in our community and why their interest in medicine is so important."

Rewan Ahmed: "Yes, COVID-19 has had an impact in educating students on the realities of healthcare. It has shown them that healthcare workers in the community have been working hard, and how every single one of them makes a difference in society today. I believe this has also made an impact on their interest in the healthcare field as our healthcare workers have been so vital during this global pandemic. We strive for our members to make an impact in society and COVID has definitely opened their eyes and widened their interest in the healthcare field."



On behalf of the entire Hudson County Schools of Technology community, we wish you and your families a very happy holiday season and New Year. 2020 has been a trying year for each of us, but our students, faculty and staff have certainly risen to the occasion to continue achieving success.

This beautiful photo was taken in Bayonne by County Prep junior Casey Kelly during last week's snow storm as part of an extra credit assignment for Mr. Gerard Patten's class.

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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CYBER ATTACKS Studying and working remotely has caused an increased risk in cyberattacks across the world. To protect yourself, students are reminded to ask any questions or bring any concerns to our IT Department and not share any personal information or passwords. Learn more about how to prevent cyber security breaches by visiting hcstonline.org/technology-services/cybersecurity