

Explore Middle School Students Host Veterans Day Breakfast



The Explore Middle School Student Council and Peer Leaders hosted a breakfast for Jersey City veterans last month to thank them for their service and sacrifices they have made for our country. The program included students reading thank you letters, reciting poems and exchanging conversations with local veterans.

"This is the 10th year Explore Middle School has brought 'Doing Our Best for the Vets' to the Samuel R Shelton VFW 2294 Post and it has been a pleasure every single year to see our students converse with the veterans to better understand the sacrifices they have made," said **Ms. Michele Jefferey**, who organizes the event each year.



VFW Commander **Tony Goodson**, a former teacher at Explore Middle School, graciously shared his experiences of not just serving in the military, but also about his response to the September 11 terror attack in New York City.

"I was surprised to learn that when Mr. Goodson came back from Vietnam, it was very hard because of the political climate," said **seventh grader Melike**. "He explained that during that time period in American history, things were tense because of the war and people blamed servicemen for their involvement. So for a very long time he and other vets didn't talk about their experiences, get help they may have needed or embrace life as a veteran."

Additionally, members of the Post allowed students to look through personal photos taken during their deployment.

D|Fab Leaders Attend Social-Emotional Learning Convention in New Mexico



Mr. Gregory Simon and **Mr. Michael Diamond**, the Supervisor and Teacher-in-Charge of the Academy for Design and Fabrication (D|Fab) at High Tech High School, attended a four-day convention in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico, in support of a \$5,000 Innovation Award grant for Social and Emotional Learning.

Hosted by the Rockefeller Philanthropy Group, Education-First, and the NoVo Foundation, the four-day event was designed to bring all 101 winners of the SEL Innovation Award from around the country into one space to learn from one another. The conference promoted restorative practices for educators, counselors, and school leaders through workshops that addressed systemic issues of equity and social justice.

"By becoming more mindful of how social-emotional factors exist in students and teachers, I can be more intentional in providing them with the support they need to reach their full potential," said **Mr. Gregory Simon**, D|Fab Supervisor.



A Message from the Superintendent

Dear HCST Community:

With the culmination of 2019, we are pleased to share some of the real-world experiences provided to our students and staff in this edition of *HCST Connections*. As we welcome the new decade, we look forward to a continued and collaborative support for all of our district programs.

May you enjoy this holiday season!

Superintendent

Amy Lin-Rodriguez

County Prep Fashion Students Visit the Tenement Museum in NYC



County Prep High School fashion students learned about the lives of two families who lived at 97 Orchard Street from 1892 to 1935 during a recent trip to the Tenement Museum in New York City.

By the turn of the 20th century, the Lower East Side was both the center of the nation's garment production and a focus of its immigrant life. Students learned about the everyday life of garment workers and the hard work they put in to provide for their families. The tour introduced them to two particular families, the Levines and the Rogarshevskys, who like many

immigrants of their time, found a livelihood in the garment trade, New York's largest industry.

Explore Middle School Students Study 'Identity' at First Thematic Unit Showcase

During the first semester of the school year, Explore Middle School students studied the topic of identity by putting together a showcase that included art, videos, poems, short stories and "Open Mic Night" performances. The theme was chosen by the language arts department to encourage students to define what it is that makes us who we are.

In addition to the in-school projects, which included arts, poems, music and writing prompts, students visited the Montclair Art Museum, saw *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway and visited Ellis Island.



Students, like sixth grader **Lizbeth Perez**, said the semester's theme and showcase gave them the opportunity to express themselves through a creative platform.



"My poem was about my Dad and his role in my life and it was also about my Mom and her recent illness," said **Lizbeth**. "I wrote about how I feel like a tired bear that isn't able to hibernate. I wanted people to understand that my feelings right now seem like they'll never go away. My self-portrait was of me sitting with my chin rested in my hand. I wanted people to see that I had a lot on my mind and it was taking a toll on me, but I could only feel rested for a minute."

"Explore Middle School's *Identity Showcase* was a huge success," said **Ms. Heather Garrett**. "It was amazing seeing how all three grade levels brought their own creative flare to their work. I learned so much about the students through their artwork. It was truly a beautiful day!"

Wood Tech Seniors Take on Professional Project

Mr. Bolich's Wood Tech senior class is building on three years worth of knowledge and experience to put together a project that teaches them skills beyond the saw. For this project, students were asked to research, develop and design a product they can build in Wood Tech. Then, they are tasked with calculating the time to design and engineer the product while also conducting an analysis of material costs in order to calculate the cost of the project per unit.

Beginning with a single sketch, students will gain an understanding of the design-build process of taking a project from concept to reality and then successfully pricing that product to turn a profit. Unlike other theory-driven projects or practice tasks, **Mr. Bolich** says, the best part of this unit is that students get to take their work home with them.

The VMA-zing 90s Show Wows High Tech High School

The Musical Theatre department put on their first performance of the school year, inviting students, teachers, friends, and family for an interactive award show with hits from the 90s. The VMA-zing 90s Show was the ultimate experience, where students recreated iconic music videos, replicating outfits and choreography to stay true to the decade. Students dressed as celebrities like Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, MC Hammer, the Spice Girls, and heated up the stage with their performances.

The two-night event began with a pre-show, starting off with students performing as The Rembrandts, singing "I'll Be There For You," and appearances by Shania Twain and Gwen Stefani. DJs throughout the show, Lil' Kim and Eminem, kept the crowd entertained, while Puff Daddy introduced all the students for one of their big numbers, "Pump Up the Jam!" Groups like the Backstreet Boys and *NSYNC battled for best boy band! Each night, a new winner of *Best Music Video* and *Best Artist of 1999* was chosen by the audience.



Tech Club Hosts Information Session About STEM Careers



High Tech High School's Tech Club hosted a successful information session on the STEM field and college application process. Two former students, **Rebecca Rosas**, a Carnegie Mellon University mechanical engineering major, and **Zain Mughal**, a biophysics and computer science major from Rutgers University, were invited to speak on their experiences in the field.

Lead by Tech Club co-presidents **Leslie Moreno** and **Wilson Wong**, the event provided students with useful knowledge on engineering, computer science, physics, and the college experience in general.

"Tech Club is dedicated to creating a space where people can explore their love for tech. With this info session, we were able to bring real experiences of people studying STEM to anyone who wanted to learn more about them," said **Moreno**. "Tech Club has made a recent comeback after a one year hiatus due to the graduation of its former officers. The co-presidents, as well as vice-president **Devin Buergermeister** and treasurer **Ximena Varon**, helped found the new Tech Club, with **Mr. Krinsky** as club administrator.

"I hope those who attended obtained an amazing overview of how the tech field is developing," said **Wong**. "I want to thank the speakers and staff for making this event possible. We have many things planned to help students prepare for the future."

Become CPR Certified at Hudson County Community College

Hudson County Community College is offering three training sessions to become CPR certified. The four hour Basic Life Support Certification uses a scenario-based approach to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills to drive the best possible outcome for patients of all ages.

The training sessions are \$85, with a \$10 discount for current HCCC students, and will be held at 870 Bergen Ave. Jersey City, F Building on:

Saturday, January 25

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 22

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 14

9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

[Register online here](#)

County Prep Instructors Run New York City Marathon



County Prep instructors **Bryan Ehnstrom** and **Mark Rogers** joined thousands of runners from around the world by participating in this year's New York City Marathon.

Ehnstrom, a first time marathon runner, was inspired to run for his 1-year-old son Hunter, who was diagnosed with Spina Bifida. He was [a featured runner on the day of the marathon on WABC-TV](#), where he shared his family's story. On each of his runs, he keeps his wife, Rebecca, and sons Austin and Hunter on his mind.

"In my head I just kept saying, 'Hunter. Spina Bifida.' Like, what he's going through is so much harder than anything I'm doing," said Ehnstorm. "Hunter and Austin are the two happiest kids that I know. I love them so much."

County Prep Theatre Arts Students Attend Broadway Production of *The Rose Tattoo*



The County Prep Theatre Arts students attended the Broadway production of *The Rose Tattoo*, written by celebrated American playwright Tennessee Williams, with Oscar-winner Marisa Tomei.

Winner at the 1951 Tony Awards, the play, also considered by Williams as "his love play to the world", plunges the audience into the story of Sicillian emigrant Serafina, a widow who rekindles her desire for love, lust and life in the arms of a fiery suitor.

Students participated in a question and answer session with the actors and it was an overall enriching experience for everyone.

Student Spotlight



Chris "CJ" Martinez is a sophomore Musical Theater major who at just 15 years old has already established himself as a professional actor. CJ has played roles in Disney's *Timmy Failure*, *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* and has guest starred in *Blue Bloods* and *NYC 22* among other projects. He has done voice overs for major companies, which include Nickelodeon, Comcast, Subway, and Charmin and published the website *iKidsNow.com* with his brother, HCST alumni Sebastian Martinez, and has interviewed Selena Gomez, Ryan Seacrest, Ariana Grande, Joey King and The Jonas Brothers.

Ryan Nitschke is a junior Culinary Arts major at High Tech High School and currently works in the industry at Coco Bakery in Jersey City. Attending HTHS has given him the opportunity to work in the kitchen every day, with his favorite food to cook being any type of BBQ style meat. For the Culinary department's Thanksgiving feast, Ryan helped carve the turkey and helped prepare mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing and mac & cheese. He also came in early and stayed late to make sure that the kitchen was clean and running smoothly by coordinating interns and advising them on what to do in order to get everything done.



Julian Guerra is a student in the ACTE Academy who makes it his priority to do his part to help others, especially during the holiday season. He takes pride in his community and this past Thanksgiving surprised his neighbors with free turkeys. "My community is close, we always look out for each other," Julian said. Seeing people smile when I surprised them with a turkey for Thanksgiving was very rewarding." Principal Ms. Young said Julian exemplifies the quality and character HCST is proud to have in their students.

Zachary Fernandez is a senior in the Academy for Design and Fabrication studying Industrial Design and Animation. Zachary is currently proficient in industry-standard design software such as Autodesk Inventor, 3Ds Max Design, and Solidworks. With these practical software skills, Zach is not only able to fabricate his ideas through 3D printing, laser cutting and CNC machining, but his functional knowledge is in line with that of a current professional. He served as HTHS class President in 2015, was a 2018 Harvard Model Congress Representative and was the captain of the Memorial High School Tigers football team.



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