

Celebrating Success

The GEAR UP program was signed into law in 1998, and began serving its first student cohorts in 1999. To mark the 10th anniversary of this federal grant program, September 18, 2009, was designated as National GEAR UP Day, and sites around the country and in New York State marked the day with a variety of events. NYGEAR UP flyers were distributed in the Albany High School cafeteria while students enjoyed slide shows of photos from GEAR UP-sponsored college tours. SUNY Jamestown NYGEAR UP students wrote to their U.S. senators and representatives about their GEAR UP experiences, and students representing SUNY Nassau Community College's GEAR UP cohorts read personal testimonials about the program's support of their academic accomplishments. In Yonkers, a "call to action" was issued to teachers and administrators in all of the NYGEAR UP partner schools, urging them to engage students in college awareness activities. Syracuse University NYGEAR UP students at Henninger High School heard Stephanie Miner, now Syracuse's first female mayor, speak on the importance of perseverance in the pursuit of a dream, while members of the St. John's University GEAR UP community received New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proclamation in honor of the day.

Over the past decade, GEAR UP has enriched the lives of many students. Today, GEAR UP serves more than 2 million children in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and 3 U.S. territories, among them nearly 18,000 young people in New York State. These students are well on their way to celebrating future success.

— Susan Nesbitt Perez
Vice President, Outreach Programs and Financial Aid
Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities



Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal grant program that awards grants to states or to local partnerships consisting of at least one college or university, at least one low-income middle school and one high school, and a minimum of two other partners (such as community organizations or businesses). Each GEAR UP partnership provides services to a cohort of students at high-need schools, beginning no later than grade 7, and follows these students through high school. Services may include: academic preparation; tutoring and mentoring; admissions and financial aid awareness activities for students and parents; college visits; career awareness; and professional development for staff.

In 2005, New York State received its second federal GEAR UP grant, called "NYGEAR UP II." This new grant followed on the heels of the 1999-2005 GEAR UP grant, and is again administered by NYSHESC. After a competitive process, NYSHESC awarded its NYGEAR UP funds to 11 community partnerships. In September 2005, these partnerships began providing services to a cohort of 7,285 students. These students, in grade 11 in academic year 2009-10, will be followed through 2011 (contingent on federal funding).

The federal government also awarded six-year grants directly to five community partnerships in 2005. These "Federal GEAR UP" partnerships began providing services to more than 5,000 students in grades 6 or 7. In 2006, three additional partnerships received six-year federal GEAR UP grants to serve an additional 5,192 students in grades 6 or 7. Most recently, in the 2008 competition, three partnerships in the state were awarded new six-year grants. See pages 19-20 for a list of GEAR UP programs and contacts in New York State.

A group of key partners in the state's NYGEAR UP program provides additional services to GEAR UP in New York State. These "State Partners" include: the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cicu), the Association of Proprietary Colleges (APC), City University of New York (CUNY), State University of New York (SUNY), the College Board, and the New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association (NYSFAAA).

In Gear II NY Alert newsletter is published by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, a partner in NYGEAR UP, New York State's GEAR UP program. The editors have made every effort to ensure accuracy; errors or omissions are unintentional.

Inside: Learn about the inspiring activities at each of the GEAR UP programs in New York (listed by grant lead organization):

* NYGEAR UP grantees. ^ Federal GEAR UP grantees.

Note: Some organizations received more than one grant, signaled by the type/number of symbols after their name.

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clcu's 2009 Latino College Fair

Latino representation in institutions of higher learning is growing, but Hispanic students in New York State still face many challenges in acquiring a college education. For example, 46% of Latino New Yorkers graduate from high school in four years, a rate lower than that of all other ethnic groups.¹

To offer useful information and guidance to young Latino students and their families about how to prepare for college, get financial aid, and navigate the application process, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (clcu) organized and held its second annual Latino College Fair on November 21, 2009. Fordham University hosted the event on its Bronx campus. The event was supported by a federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) and a GEAR UP grant, both awarded to clcu by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), the state agency designated to administer CACG and NYGEAR UP. The remaining funds were provided by The Sallie Mae Fund, Fordham University, and clcu's member colleges and universities. The New York State Bronx Assembly Delegation also provided support.

The first clcu Latino College Fair, held at the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, New York on October 25, 2008, drew nearly 400 students and their families; representatives of 29 of New York's independent colleges and universities participated. At the November 21, 2009, Fair, 58 independent colleges and universities were represented and nearly 900 attended, including students from NYGEAR UP

sites at Long Island University/Brooklyn, New Rochelle City School District, St. John's University, Syracuse University, and Yonkers Public Schools.

The program began with introductory remarks by John Buckley, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Enrollment at Fordham University, who introduced Father Joseph M. McShane, President of Fordham. Father McShane welcomed the group to the Fordham community. Laura L. Anglin, President of clcu, and New York State Assemblyman Peter Rivera both spoke about the value of a college education and praised the attendees for their commitment to their futures. Orlando Espinosa of The Sallie Mae Fund presented a workshop on "Saving, Planning and Paying for College." Families could then sign up for time with financial aid experts to answer their questions. Experts included representatives from: Adelphi University, The College of New Rochelle, Fordham University, Molloy College, St. John's University, St. Joseph's College/Brooklyn Campus and Teacher's College, Columbia University.

The representatives from 58 independent colleges and universities at the Fair highlighted the features of their campuses and explained the college admissions process. Colleges and universities represented included: Adelphi University, Alfred University, Barnard College, Boricua College, Bramson ORT College, Canisius College, Clarkson University, The College of New Rochelle, College of Mount Saint Vincent, The College of Saint Rose,

Columbia University, Concordia College, Cornell University, Daemen College, Dominican College, Dorothea Hopfer School of Nursing, Fordham University, Hartwick College, Hilbert College, Hofstra University, Institute of Design and Construction, Iona College, Ithaca College, Keuka College, Le Moyne College, Long Island University/C.W. Post, Marist College, Marymount Manhattan College, Mercy College, Metropolitan College of New York, Molloy College, Mount Saint Mary College, Nazareth College, New York Institute of Technology, New York University, Niagara University, Nyack College, Pace University, Paul Smith's College, Polytechnic Institute of NYU, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rochester Institute of Technology, The Sage Colleges, Sarah Lawrence College, Siena College, St. Francis College, St. John Fisher College, St. John's University, St. Joseph's College/Brooklyn Campus, St. Lawrence University, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Syracuse University, Teachers College/Columbia University, Union College, University of Rochester, Utica College, Wagner College, and Wells College.

Feedback from students, families, and counselors who attended the Fair reveals that events of this kind are important to help Latino families navigate college options and learn about admissions and the availability of financial aid to meet college costs. clcu will continue to reach out to and plan future events for Latino students.

¹Source: www.EdWeek.org, 2006

Resources. Focus on College and Scholarship Searches

• The Choice

<http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/>

At this site, veteran reporter and education writer Jacques Steinberg and his colleagues cover all facets of the college admission process. Recent posts have covered early admissions, 3-year degree programs, financial challenges for colleges, and the experiences and feelings of a mother as her daughter applies to college. Students, families, teachers, and counselors will gain insights and can contribute to the discussion in the "comments" threads.

• College Board Scholarship Search

http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp

This database, with more than 2,300 sources of college funding, can help students find scholarships, internships, grants, and loans.

• College Navigator

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

At this site, hosted by the U.S. Department of Education, students beginning a college search can learn about nearly 7,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. and can refine their searches in order to

narrow down options, build a list of colleges to compare, and pinpoint locations with an interactive map.

• College Scholarships, Colleges, and Online Degrees

<http://www.college-scholarships.com/>

This portal has links to college admission offices, online applications, information about scholarships and free scholarship searches, and online degree programs. Visitors to the site can investigate colleges in every state; 63 of New York State's independent colleges and universities are included.

• New York State Higher Education Services Corporation

<http://www.hesc.com/>

HESC's site offers links to information about saving for college, filling out applications for grants and loans, and up-to-date news about financial aid for college. A "quick reference" guide to grants, scholarships, and awards can be found at: www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/2/Grants_Scholarships_and_Awards.

• New York's Private, Independent Colleges and Universities

<http://www.nycollages.org/>

This site, part of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities' Outreach Programs, has information about more than 100 independent, private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State, including locations, information about financial aid, lists of academic programs, demographic information, and detailed profiles of each campus.

• University and College Accountability Network

<http://www.ucan-network.org/>

The U-CAN site, sponsored by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), offers more than 700 profiles of private, independent colleges in the U.S., including 62 in New York State. Visitors can browse alphabetically or by state; each profile contains data on admissions, graduation rates, class size, diversity of the student body, cost of tuition, financial aid, campus safety, and much more.

GEAR UP in New York State Program and Activity Highlights – Focus on GEAR UP Student Stories

Bronx Institute (BI) GEAR UP Network at CUNY Lehman College

► National GEAR UP Day September 18, 2009

Location: More than 50 GEAR UP middle and high school partners in the Bronx

Participants: More than 8,000 GEAR UP students

A proclamation was delivered from Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. designating Friday, September 18, 2009, as “GEAR UP Day in the Bronx” and was accepted by Rose Fairweather-Clunie, principal of the Information and Network Technology Academy, in recognition of the school’s work in collaboration with The Bronx Institute. Recognition of the work done by The Bronx Institute’s GEAR UP Programs was also read into the Congressional Record by U.S. Representative Eliot Engel on behalf of himself and his colleagues U.S. Representative José Serrano and U.S. Representative Joseph Crowley. Ms. Fairweather-Clunie told the audience of parents and students what an honor it has been to have GEAR UP represented in grades 8 and 11 at her school. She emphasized the importance of doing well in school and that it is essential to learn the skills that students will need to get into good colleges. When she asked the students seated in the auditorium, “Who anticipates going on to college?” all hands were raised. Students Angelica Sosa, Anderson Bridgemohan, Wilmer Cabral, Priscilla Inoa and Kevin Serrano spoke about their participation in GEAR UP activities. Each of the students urged their classmates to continue taking advantage of the opportunities that GEAR UP provides. At Bronx Leadership Academy, students celebrated GEAR UP Day with GEAR UP representatives providing college planning workshops for students. All students in grades 9 and 11 were provided with GEAR UP planners to keep track of their assignments and organize their time to make sure that their journey to college was a smooth one.

► Bronx GEAR UP 8th Grade Activities

• Rising Stars Summer Academy June 29 – July 30, 2009

85 8th grade GEAR UP students from MS 45, MS 101, MS 180, MS 181, MS/HS 241, PS/MS 228, MS 390, and MS/HS 505 attended a summer academy at Fordham University. During the morning sessions, students worked on ELA and science; in the afternoons, they worked with GEAR UP project associates on the Junior Achievement and College Awareness curriculums.

• Visit to Long Island University/Brooklyn November 16, 2009

22 8th grade students from Frederick Douglass Academy MS/HS 517 toured the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University. They also participated in a Q & A session to learn more about what the University offers.

• College Essay Seminar: Creating Brag Sheets December 22, 2009

24 8th grade students from Thomas C. Giordano MS 45 learned how to use brag sheet templates to aid them in incorporating their particular strengths and interests in a college application essay. Students also reviewed vocabulary and learned why college essays are so important.

► Bronx GEAR UP 8th Grade Student Stories

Bronx Institute GEAR UP Network’s 8th grade and 9th grade student stories were submitted by Iwan Notowidigdo, Director of Sustainability.

Educational Field Trip to the Liberty Science Center

Three Pablo Casals MS 181 students write about their experiences with various activities taught by geologists and geophysicists at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, NJ.

*Featured Student: Andrea Ventura, 8th grade
GEAR UP, Pablo Casals MS 181*

Scientists from the Liberty Science Center explained how rocks are made through the process of plate tectonics. Using clay and by posing problems through puzzles, they had us discovering the rock cycle process.

*Featured Student: Jevan Anderson, 8th grade
GEAR UP, Pablo Casals MS 181*

By showing us examples of sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, we learned how the rock cycle works. The globe was the most fascinating part of the workshop, because it looked like the real Earth, with clouds, water, and islands.

*Featured Student: Madiha Baig, 8th grade
GEAR UP, Pablo Casals MS 181*

In the Liberty Science Center workshop, I was astonished to learn about plate tectonics and the three types of plate boundaries – conversions, diversions, and transformations. I was amazed to learn that the plates are always moving and changing Earth.

Working With My Project Associate

In each Bronx GEAR UP school, a GEAR UP Project Associate works with college-bound students, answering questions and keeping them informed as they move from middle school to high school to college. Project Associates support GEAR UP students in a wide range of areas, such as facilitating workshops to promote academic readiness, creating after-school programs to provide academic challenge and enrichment, and helping them now to choose a high school and, later, to choose a college.

*Featured Student: Gregory Burgos, 8th grade
GEAR UP, West Bronx Academy for the Future
MS/HS 243*

GEAR UP has been at my school since I was in 7th grade, and this year I told Mr. Ghazala, my Project Associate, that I want to be very involved in the program. Often, he will ask me what I want to be when I grow up. I’ve asked him to help me research colleges, and he’s been a big help. We are going to GEAR UP programs so we can learn many things, including how to prepare for college. I really want to be ready for college.

*Featured Student: Anthony Moreno, 8th grade
GEAR UP, P.O. Edward R. Byrne MS 101*

When I met my GEAR UP Project Associate, Ms. Farrar, we immediately clicked. Now, I stop by her office regularly. She is genuinely interested in helping me get into high school and into college. Whenever I have questions about the high school application process, she is always there to explain.

*Featured Student: Jessie Kwong, 8th grade
GEAR UP, Henry Hudson JHS 125*

Ms. Emily Schroder, my GEAR UP Project Associate, has helped me with so many things. During the Kaplan SHSAT course, she explained the procedures and gave us information about the high school application process. She keeps me up to date about all the things that are going on in GEAR UP.

*Featured Student: Tien Ha, 8th grade GEAR UP,
Thomas C. Giordano MS 45*

Ms. Vecchio taught us about the high school application process. She encouraged me to prepare for the SHSAT (Specialized High School Admissions Test). I thought the work was difficult, but I came to every class. Because I went to the class, I have a chance of being accepted to one of the specialized schools.

*Bronx 8th Grade Student Stories,
continued on page 4.*

Choosing a New York City High School

In the fall, GEAR UP 8th grade students began the high school selection and application process. Bronx GEAR UP offered workshops for students and their families on choosing a high school, in-school information sessions, and prep classes for students interested in taking the test for New York City's specialized high schools.

Featured Student: Jahron Wynter, 8th grade GEAR UP, Jonas Bronck Academy MS 228

Since September 2009, I have been thinking about making the best high school choice. Our school counselor and our GEAR UP Project Associate helped. I took the SHSAT (Specialized High School Admissions Test) that I had been preparing for since the summer, and thought it was easy. I think that's probably because I studied hard.

Featured Student: Yismeiri Rivera, 8th grade GEAR UP, Thomas C. Giordano MS 45

When Mr. Evaristo Jimenez, a former high school principal and admissions director, came to my school, he really helped me to make some important decisions about high school. He recommended that we research the high schools by taking into consideration different things such as location, class size and the programs they offer.

Featured Student: Dae'Quan Collier, 8th grade GEAR UP, P.O. Edward R. Byrne MS 101

Mr. Jimenez came to MS 101 to help us prepare for the high school application process. He gave us specific information about the eligibility process, selecting a school that gives priority to Bronx residents, and selecting a school giving priority to students who attend an information session.

Featured Student: Kristie Jane Marino, 8th grade GEAR UP, Jonas Bronck Academy MS 228

I had been preparing for the SHSAT since the beginning of the summer. When school began, I attended GEAR UP's SHSAT test prep program in my school. This preparation helped me, not only for the SHSAT, but also with my school studies.

Featured Student: Anthony Brache, 8th grade GEAR UP, Mosholu Parkway PS/MS 280

I really liked the SHSAT class because the teacher was helpful and patient. I appreciated the class because it helped me improve my score. I scored more than 20% better on the second practice test than on the first. The class was very helpful because it didn't only prepare us for the test, it also helped us become better test takers.

Featured Student: Ashlyn-Maree Gonzalez, 8th grade GEAR UP, Jonas Bronck Academy MS 228

I took the SHSAT test prep class because I would like to attend one of New York's specialized high schools. There were things that were new to me and things I needed to brush up on. If you missed one class, you missed a lot of information. I'm happy I attended the class because I felt confident on the day that I took the test.

► South Bronx GEAR UP 9th Grade Activities

• Urban Male Leadership Distinguished Speaker: Felipe Luciano

October 8, 2009

21 9th grade students from DeWitt Clinton HS 440 listened to a speech by Felipe Luciano, a former Young Lords member and now a renowned radio, television, and print journalist. In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, he spoke about strengthening one's heritage through higher education. His presentation was part of a series of distinguished speakers presented by the Urban Male Leadership Program at CUNY Lehman College.

► South Bronx GEAR UP 9th Grade Student Stories

Capital One/Junior Achievement Finance Park

More than 600 GEAR UP students from 12 Bronx middle schools participated in Capital One/Junior Achievement Finance Park, a financial education program designed to introduce students to basic concepts of money management.

Featured Student: Alexandra Payne, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Pablo Casals MS 181

When a group of my schoolmates and I actually went to the Junior Achievement Finance Park, it turned out to be much more than I expected. At Finance Park we were able to live a fantasy life that was filled with making grown-up decisions and learning how to manage our money. The purpose of this trip was to show young adults how to know when to spend money wisely and to live within their means.

Featured Students: Shaquille Noble and Muhammad Ahmed, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Aspire Preparatory School MS 322

Finance Park was fun and educational and we learned how to budget money. We broke up into small groups and each person was given an adult identity for the day that included our career, our specific job, family situation, and annual salary. We visited different interactive stations and at each we had to make a financial decision such as buying a house or paying the mortgage on a house we owned, paying for a car loan, paying for education, and whether we could afford to buy electronics, clothes, or cell phones. In the end we found out how important it is to budget and spend wisely. If you make good financial decisions, you will be able to afford important things of value, like a college education.

Featured Student: Joshua Vega, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Mott Hall V IS 242

My trip to Finance Park was educational and very enjoyable. It wasn't all fun and games though. We spent some parts of the day crunching numbers into our calculators and making sure all our numbers added up correctly. I learned that even though you

• Visit to Fordham University

October 14, 2009

78 9th grade students from Bronx High School for the Visual Arts HS 418 visited Fordham University, where they attended a class, learned more about the Peer Health Exchange program, and watched *16 Summers*, a movie about the college planning process. They also found out about college life from a panel of 3 Fordham University students.

• New York Cares Day Project

October 17, 2009

19 9th grade students from Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice HS 505 participated in New York Cares Day mentoring activities, including painting murals and doors at PS 443.

may make a lot of money from your career, you can be left with almost nothing if you don't budget your expenses carefully.

GardenWorks at the New York Botanical Garden

Submitted by Joel Nuñez, Project Associate, South Bronx GEAR UP.

GardenWorks, an internship program based at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, introduces students to the world of plants. Via hands-on projects and experiments, students are academically stimulated and encouraged to learn more about plants, both common and exotic. GardenWorks has shown students how integral plants are to our existence, providing oxygen, food, and key components for many life-prolonging medicines. The program also encourages students to work with one another. Three students' thoughts are featured below.

Featured Student: Joyce Tang, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Michelangelo MS 144

I am really glad I signed up for The New York Botanical Garden program. I've learned a lot about plants and how they function. We visited the laboratory and learned about the different types of jobs available for people who like to work with plants. I saw nitrogen in its liquid form for the first time and learned how amazingly cool and cold it was.

Featured Student: Tenzing Dawa, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Aspire Preparatory School MS 322

The GardenWorks program has taught me a lot about botany and working in a botanical garden. We learned how several things come from plants, like food and chemicals. Every time I go to GardenWorks on Saturdays, I learn new facts about nature, plants and the Garden itself.

Featured Student: Najee Nunez, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Michelangelo MS 144

GardenWorks at The New York Botanical Garden teaches you about science, ecology and gardening. The program has made me interested in ecology. What I like best about GardenWorks is that you learn a variety of things.

Job Shadowing at Best Buy

Junior Achievement's Job Shadow introduces young people to the workplace and the many business opportunities available to them. Throughout the year the program invited 150 South Bronx GEAR UP students to a Job Shadow site located at Best Buy, a mega-store for electronics, computers, and entertainment software. The full day of learning gave students an experiential, behind-the-scenes introduction to how a mega-store like Best Buy operates. They talked with personnel from key areas, including management, inventory, sales, and marketing, and gained greater understanding of the teamwork necessary to make each store profitable. Students shadowed employees and learned about the specific requirements needed to be hired for positions they shadowed. Here are the students' stories:

Featured Student: Mark Franklin, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Paul Dunbar MS 301

The job shadow program gave me confidence and I discovered an interest I never knew I had. We arrived at the store location on 62nd Street in Manhattan just as it was opening, toured the store and then were assigned to shadow a worker. I was assigned to the appliance section. I was very interested in learning how employees helped customers in person and over the phone. It made me think that working with people in customer relations was something I'd like to do.

Featured Student: Usman Abid, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Albert Einstein JHS 131

The people who worked at the store were very helpful in explaining what they did. They showed us how they stock and count inventory, how they decide to order merchandise, and what it takes to make a profit. We participated in a scavenger hunt, which was interesting because we got to talk to different employees from each area of the store. For the hunt, we worked in teams to find the answers to questions. I was very glad that I had the opportunity to participate because I learned what it takes to run a large store and what it means to have a full-time job.

Featured Student: Randy Ferguson, rising 9th grade GEAR UP, Pablo Casals MS 181

Our GEAR UP Project Associate told us we would be participating in a job shadow program. On the day of the program, she told us that we should dress professionally, as if we were going to seek a job and that, whenever you are going on a job interview, you should try to dress as professionally as possible. I don't know if I will ever work for Best Buy. But I did learn a lot about it as a job choice.

► Bronx Institute GEAR UP 11th Grade Activities

• National Hispanic College Fair

November 17, 2009

19 11th grade students from Fordham High School for the Arts HS 437 attended the National Hispanic College Fair at CUNY Lehman College and received information about the application process and scholarships for honor students who apply.

• Columbia University Climate and Society Guest Speaker Presentation

December 3, 2009

Climate and Society master's degree candidates spoke to 16 11th grade AP biology students from Urban Assembly High School for Applied Math and Science MS/HS 241 on climate change and its impact on society.

• Visit to CUNY Hunter College

December 9, 2009

14 11th grade students from Bronx Leadership Academy HS 525 visited CUNY Hunter College and learned about its admissions requirements, available fields of study, and resources available at the college.

• Field Trip to El Museo del Barrio

December 17, 2009

24 11th grade students from Urban Assembly High School for Applied Math and Science MS/HS 241 attended the Nexus New York: Latin/American Artists in the Modern Metropolis exhibition.

• Field Trip to Museum of American Finance

December 17, 2009

21 11th grade students from Frederick Douglass Academy MS/HS 517 toured the Museum of American Finance and saw a video presentation about the history of the National Bank.

► Bronx Institute GEAR UP Network 11th Grade Student Stories

The Transition to High School: Some Words of Inspiration for South Bronx 9th Grade Students

by Stephanie Sukhoo, 11th grade GEAR UP, DeWitt Clinton HS

I was accepted into DeWitt Clinton High School as a Macy Honors student in 2007. Clinton offers several tutoring programs that assist students in achieving their goals. I also make sure to participate in GEAR UP after-school Regents prep courses.

During one of the student assemblies, the teachers explained the requirements that were necessary to get into college and how improving our study habits would benefit us. I took what they said very seriously and have been trying extremely hard in all my classes. As a result, my average increased to 90%. In addition to studying hard, it is important to make the most out of your high school experience by becoming involved in activities such as sports, clubs, and volunteer activities. I intend to continue volunteering and also to become more involved in community service by working with neighborhood organizations in the Bronx. The most important thing to remember is to be an individual and not a follower. Just remember to study hard and have fun! Good luck to the incoming class of 2014!

(Excerpted from Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives, a newsletter published in 2009.)

Bronx Institute GEAR UP 11th Grade Student Stories, continued on page 6.



SUNY Binghamton University GEAR UP students arrive at the Rochester Institute of Technology for a tour of the campus in the fall of 2009.

Bronx Institute GEAR UP Network on the Road

Students from across the GEAR UP Network cohort were invited to apply for educationally rich programs that took place at colleges and universities. Other students were accepted to The Experiment in International Living, a program that allowed them to travel to Japan, Germany, and Costa Rica for three weeks. Below are some of their impressions.

Experiments in International Living

Featured Student: Andrew Brown, 11th grade GEAR UP, High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College HS M692

My trip to Germany was an amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience. The experience that I learned from the most was the home stay. During that time, we were immersed in German culture 24 hours of the day. I learned several German/Bavarian phrases that I often used.

The greatest impact on me was the cultural immersion and learning about the government and history of Germany. Thinking about the experiences I had, playing "fooseball" with my host brother, playing soccer and spending time with the local youth, and bowling with my German counterparts, makes me smile. I am grateful to have had the opportunity of a lifetime.

Featured Student: Eduardo Bueno, 11th grade GEAR UP, Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science MS/HS 241

Having the opportunity to go to Japan has been one of the most extreme experiences I have ever had in my life. Never had I thought of actually going abroad and trying new things very far from my comfort zone. Religion, respect, culture, and all of its aspects makes Japan so different from our typical American life.

My host family helped to make my stay memorable. We visited amusement parks, saw the top of a mountain, and shared stories with one another that made us laugh. I enjoyed festivals, parties, and was able to immerse myself in Japanese culture. When it came to say goodbye, I was sad to realize that I would not see nor live with them again in a long while. I am thankful for the opportunity to travel abroad and experience life in a totally different way.



St. John's University NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP students visit the campus of Fordham University during the clcu Latino College Fair on November 21, 2009.

Summer Programs at Brown, Columbia, Cornell, and Harvard Universities

Featured Student: Nico Fernandez, 11th grade GEAR UP, DeWitt Clinton HS 440

Attending Brown University was an experience I can never forget. This experience helped me grow not only as a student but also as a person. Leaving New York alone and staying away from home was something completely new to me.

Arriving at Brown University was overwhelming. The campus was large, and there were students everywhere. Throughout the first day, I attended orientations and met with other students on different floors. Those on my floor were some of the best people I've met. I already felt as if I were part of a family. Some of the other students were from California, New Hampshire, New York, and even Turkey! I also met people who had traveled from places as far as Germany, Venezuela, and Ecuador. What I learned from this experience opened my eyes.

Featured Student: Loretta T. Mensah, 11th grade GEAR UP, Bronx Leadership Academy HS 525

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a summer program at Columbia University. I have to admit, it was not easy. The course I took was titled College Prep and the material covered was indeed college material. The teachings during the classes gave me a better idea and feeling of what college would be like.

In this program, there were students from all over the globe, from China to California. The college prep program took place from Monday to Friday with two classes per day that alternated. The classes were Expository Writing, Fundamentals of Math, Technology and Research, and Critical Reading. The Columbia program motivated me to achieve because I know that there is always someone out there more

academically prepared than I am and that I have no choice but to do my best.

Featured Student: David Herrera, 11th grade GEAR UP, Information and Network Technology School (In-Tech) HS 368

During the middle of my sophomore year I applied for a Diversity Program at Cornell University. I never thought I would be one of the few selected to participate in the CATALYST Engineering Program. I learned a lot about a profession I will strongly consider for the future, about the college application process, and also met new people from different parts of the country and the world.

We worked on a project where we evaluated florescent-proteins within bacteria that culminated in a presentation of our project. We learned about the many fields of engineering, from mechanical to biological, environmental to chemical. Being at Cornell University gave me a glimpse of what the whole college experience is going to be, which made me more certain about what I want to do in my life, what I want for my future, and what colleges I would like to consider. It also made me more open-minded.

Featured Student: Rachel Ansong, 11th grade GEAR UP, Mott Hall HS 252

This summer, I had the greatest opportunity through the Bronx Institute GEAR UP Network program to study at Harvard University. I learned fast that college was different from high school. The assignments were greater, the work was more advanced and it was up to an individual to pass the class. However, having resources such as the library writing center and numerous computer labs gave me hope that I would be able to push myself. Going to Harvard is the greatest experience I have encountered.

City School District of Albany (CSDA)

► CSDA NYGEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Alexandra Guerrero, Program Coordinator, CSDA NYGEAR UP.

Featured Student: Amani Franklin, 11th grade NYGEAR UP, Albany HS

When I began working with Amani, she was very shy and quiet. In addition, she was unsure of what she would do after high school. Now she definitely knows that she will go to college. She made the following comments to her peers during the celebration of National GEAR UP Day on September 18, 2009:

"My name is Amani Franklin. I am a junior and a participant in NYGEAR UP. GEAR UP has exposed me to more possibilities in life. It made me more open-minded about different colleges and where I might want to pursue my education. Through GEAR UP, I have visited several colleges and universities, was a student ambassador with The College of Saint Rose, and went to several cultural events. Over the summer I attended two three-day college tours, one of which was the African-American Cultural Heritage College Tour. I had the opportunity to visit Morgan State University, Bowie State University, and Howard University. So, fellow juniors, if you need help figuring out what you want to do after graduation or ever feel like you want to be a part of something special, NYGEAR UP is for you!"

► NYGEAR UP Activities

• 2009 clcu NYGEAR UP College Quest *June 29 – July 1, 2009*

16 NYGEAR UP rising 11th graders visited 4 private, independent colleges in New York State, accompanied by NYGEAR UP staff, Albany HS staff, and clcu staff. Students stayed at Ithaca College for 2 nights and also toured New York Chiropractic College, Utica College, and Wells College.

• African-American Heritage College Tour *July 7 – July 9, 2009*

20 CSDA NYGEAR UP students visited Morgan State University, Bowie State University, and Howard University during a tour of historically Black colleges and universities. They also saw the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, MD and took an "Egypt on the Potomac" field trip in Washington, D.C.

• NYGEAR UP and The College of Saint Rose Student Leadership/Ambassador Program

Fall 2009, biweekly

12 CSDA NYGEAR UP students attended tutoring and mentoring sessions at The College of Saint Rose.

• Visit to SUNY at New Paltz *October 20, 2009*

38 CSDA NYGEAR UP students, along with NYGEAR UP Coordinator Alexandra Guerrero and Albany HS staff, toured SUNY at New Paltz.

• Visit to ITT Technical Institute *October 28, 2009*

15 CSDA NYGEAR UP students, accompanied by NYGEAR UP Coordinator Alexandra Guerrero, toured the ITT Technical Institute campus in Albany.

► National GEAR UP Day *September 18, 2009*

Location: Albany High School, Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center

Participants: 600 NYGEAR UP students, 1 NYGEAR UP coordinator, 1 librarian, 1 assistant principal

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: Alexandra Guerrero, CSDA NYGEAR UP Coordinator; Sonji Greenaway, Library Media Specialist, Albany HS; Sophia Newell, Assistant Principal, Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center; Amani Franklin, student, Albany HS; Chavez Gibbes, student, Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center

After announcements were made, two students spoke about what GEAR UP has done for them. GEAR UP flyers were distributed to students and information about the program was placed on tents at every table in the cafeteria. During lunch periods, students enjoyed Stewart's ice cream as they watched slide shows of the 2009 summer college tours. The event concluded with a raffle drawing; four Albany High School and Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center 11th grade students won GEAR UP T-shirts and book bags.



Paul Cooley, guidance counselor at the Academy of Urban Planning, visits the SUNY College at Old Westbury gym with CUNY Brooklyn College NYGEAR UP students Nikos Villatoro, Marcos Peralta, Leonardo Rodriguez, and Geraldo Santana on December 10, 2009.

CUNY Brooklyn College Community Partnership (BCCP)

► CUNY Brooklyn College NYGEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Nate Klooster, Site Director, Bushwick Campus, CUNY Brooklyn College NYGEAR UP.

Featured Student: Stevenson Catul, 11th grade NYGEAR UP, Academy of Urban Planning

Stevenson Catul was the leader of a small group of students who planned, created, and edited a digital video about racial profiling and students' experiences with police. He has been an active member of the Project Peace Media Collective where students learn how to use digital technology, including video, photos, and blogs, on projects related to social justice and community issues.

► NYGEAR UP Activities

• Visit to SUNY College at Old Westbury *December 10, 2009*

20 11th grade NYGEAR UP students from the Academy of Urban Planning toured the campus of SUNY College at Old Westbury with BCCP staff. Alonzo McCollum of the SUNY College at Old Westbury EOP office hosted the students, and brothers from the Phi Iota Alpha fraternity served as guides and answered questions. Paul Cooley, Guidance Counselor at the Academy of Urban Planning; Kwesi Fenteng, SUNY GEAR UP Outreach Counselor; and Robert James, SUNY Associate Provost, helped in making this trip a success.

CUNY Middle Grades Initiative (MGI) GEAR UP

► GEAR UP Activities

• Harlem Scholars Saturday Math and Science Academy

October and November, 2009

60 GEAR UP students received academic enrichment in math and science during an 8-week program at City College of New York. Students also received Metrocards, math and science workbooks, and vouchers for lunch in the college cafeteria. In the afternoon, CUNY MGI GEAR UP advisors worked with the students on developing skills such as time management, note-taking, and career awareness.

• Family Night at CUNY Macaulay Honors College

December 16, 2009

Parents and family members of high achieving GEAR UP students were invited to attend an admissions session at CUNY Macaulay Honors College. A guest speaker presented a workshop to the students on how to write an effective personal statement and submit a polished college application essay. The CUNY Macaulay Honors College is a highly selective and rigorous academic program that offers 4 years of free tuition and other benefits to students who enroll in the program.

• College Now Information Session at CUNY Hunter College

January 12, 2010

Manhattan GEAR UP students and their families received information about College Now, a free program for New York City's public high school students. They learned how to take advantage of College Now's dual enrollment benefits, earn college credits in high school, and become eligible for certain scholarship programs. Attendees also learned about College Now's pre-college courses and workshops, designed to improve basic skills in core academic subjects and teach such skills as note-taking, time management, and organization.

Discovery Institute/CUNY College of Staten Island (CSI)

► CUNY CSI Teaching Scholars

Submitted by Sajdah Um'rani-Mansur, Senior/Parent Community Coordinator, Discovery Institute/CUNY CSI GEAR UP.

Featured Teaching Scholar Students: **Alison Langleiben, Robert Nicolas, Steve Prestigiaco**, CUNY CSI

GEAR UP Teaching Scholars are CUNY CSI students, with 3.00 or better GPAs and who are not education majors, recruited to assist GEAR UP students. Tom Hepworth, Parent Coordinator at Curtis HS, wrote the following about three of the Teaching Scholars:

Alison Langleiben tutors in English, French, social studies, and science. She also helps students in the computer center complete their research projects. With her help, students have been able to complete homework assignments and projects. In addition, Ms. Langleiben's enthusiasm for poetry is infectious and she has engendered a true interest in many of those students who were struggling and were somewhat turned off by school. The students she works with have enjoyed a higher level of academic success. She is energetic, dependable, and has an obvious and sincere commitment to the students.

Robert Nicholas helps students with their homework assignments in math, social studies, and science. He invites students to discuss social, political, and philosophical issues, opening them up to a whole new world of ideas, and has actually increased their grades substantially. Students who would have failed are now passing and mastering the concepts and skills they need to complete assignments on time. Robert makes them believe that college is not only possible, but an attractive possibility.

Steve Prestigiaco works with individual students, particularly in math. Several of the students whom he is working with now seem far more confident with the math assignments and seem willing to try problems without assistance. This is no small achievement for math-phobic students.

► GEAR UP Activities

• GEAR UP Awards

June 23, 2009

During the Dreyfus I.S. 49 graduation ceremony, the following GEAR UP Awards were presented: Quanavia White, GEAR UP Evelyn Morris King Academic Excellence Award; Ashley Wen, Ira Ko, and Benedict Acunin, GEAR UP Achievement Awards; Ida Harris and Jackie Steiner, Outstanding GEAR UP Parent Awards. All students received GEAR UP 21st Century Certificates and good wishes for continued academic success.

• Discovery Institute GEAR UP Summer Program at CUNY College of Staten Island

July 6 – 23, 2009

The Summer Program offers science classes, laboratory experiences, math courses, computer technology, and cultural events. Some of the rising 9th grade students in this program also participated in hands-on science experiments and activities designed to develop math and science skills. Students received a bag lunch and GEAR UP backpacks filled with books and other materials to help them prepare for classes. Lenore Vazquez, GEAR UP Summer Program Coordinator, and the staff of the Discovery Institute created a program that combines fun with learning and increases awareness of and preparation for college. 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th grade GEAR UP students attended the program.

• Back to Basics Parent Workshop

October 13, 2009

25 parents and family members of Curtis High School students attended a workshop offering them tools and resources to encourage their children's academic achievement. Presenters included Peggy Travers, GEAR UP College Advisor; Sajdah Um'rani-Mansur, Senior Parent/Community Coordinator; and Lenore Vazquez, GEAR UP Program Coordinator.

• College Awareness Parent Workshop

October 26, 2009

25 Spanish-speaking families attended a workshop on preparing their children for college. Presenters were Peggy Travers, GEAR UP College Advisor, and Sajdah Um'rani-Mansur, Senior Parent/Community Coordinator; Ruthie Jusino, Dreyfus IS 49 Parent Coordinator, was the translator. Pat Conway, an English Language Learner teacher, spoke on academic preparation and Linda Hill, Principal of Dreyfus IS 49, welcomed the parents and families to the workshop.



St. John's University NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP students enjoy a day of leadership building seminars at the "Be the Face of Change" Leadership conference on November 14, 2009.

• Student Science Workshop

October 29, 2009

Dreyfus IS 49 GEAR UP students participated in this hands-on workshop at the Christian Faith Power Center's Life Change After School Center, where they learned about the differences between water-based ice and dry ice and the uses and properties of each. Two Discovery Institute staff members, Science Mentor Peter Lytell and GEAR UP Special Events Coordinator Robert Shimony, presented the workshop.

• Dreyfus Seekers Robotics Team

November 10, 2009

Student members of the Dreyfus IS 49 Seekers, the school's robotics team, along with Carol Obler, a technology teacher, presented a robotics demonstration at a Dreyfus IS 49 PTA meeting.

• Write Your Own Story: Creative Writing Workshop

November 16, 17, and 18, 2009

Students at the GEAR UP Community After School sites (Kids' Café, Stapleton UAME Church, Life Change After School Center at The Christian Faith Power Center, and the United Multi-Cultural Center at the Liberian Cultural Center) participated in a creative writing workshop, setting down their own ideas in their own words. The students were enthusiastic and eager to share their stories.

• The Fabulous Chinese Acrobats

November 18, 2009

190 Dreyfus IS 49 6th, 7th, and 8th graders were treated to a colorful program of Chinese acrobatics and culture presented by a team of 5 acrobats. One student wrote: "I learned that people can do anything they want if they practice!"

• GEAR UP Teaching Scholars and the AVID Program at Curtis High School

Fall 2009 and Spring 2010

Curtis HS 9th and 10th grade former Dreyfus IS 49 students, 4 Teaching Scholars, and Tom Hepworth, Parent Coordinator, are participating in the GEAR UP After School Program at Curtis HS. Beginning in Spring 2010, two classes of 9th grade Curtis HS students will join the Achievement Via Individual Determination Program (AVID), a college preparatory program that helps underserved students meet state academic standards. The three main components of the program are academic instruction, moral support, and motivational activities; roughly 75% of AVID students are accepted by four-year colleges and universities. GEAR UP Teaching Scholars will assist former Dreyfus IS 49 students in the AVID program.

Dowling College

► Dowling College GEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Frank Pomata, Assistant Director of Dowling College GEAR UP.

Summer Chemistry at Dowling College

July and August, 2009

Featured Students: *Lasheca Lewis, Dawn Littles, Katrina Mobley, Paradise Taylor, Brittany White, 11th grade GEAR UP, Wyandanch Memorial HS*

Summer Chemistry at Dowling College gave several 11th grade GEAR UP students (see list above) the opportunity to enroll in a college-level chemistry course and earn 3 college credits. Students had classroom instruction, lab time, and did field work on the Great South Bay and the Connetquot River. They also prepared an oral presentation on a topic of their own choosing for an independent research project. A GEAR UP tutor and several Dowling College graduate students provided assistance. One student was so enthusiastic about taking a college-level course that she enrolled in an evening humanities course during the fall of 2009.

► National GEAR UP Day

September 18, 2009

Location: Wyandanch Memorial High School Auditorium

Participants: 100+ 11th grade GEAR UP students, 20+ Wyandanch HS faculty and staff, 2 GEAR UP staff, 1 GEAR UP classroom tutor, 2 student leaders

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: Rhoda Miller, Project Director, Dowling College GEAR UP; Kester Hodge, Principal, Wyandanch Memorial HS; Dexter Ward, GEAR UP Advisor and Guidance Counselor, Wyandanch Memorial HS; Frank Pomata, Assistant Director, Dowling College GEAR UP at Urban League of Long Island; Deven Kane, GEAR UP Classroom Tutor; Dawn Littles and Lasheca Lewis, 11th grade GEAR UP students, Wyandanch Memorial HS

National GEAR UP Day marked the 10th anniversary of the federal legislation that created and funded the GEAR UP college access program. GEAR UP students, Wyandanch Memorial HS faculty and staff, and GEAR UP staff "went green" by wearing their GEAR UP T-shirts to an assembly where Dr. Rhoda Miller gave a PowerPoint presentation showing how annual survey responses by students help to shape the GEAR UP program and its activities. Frank Pomata then presented certificates to students who participated in the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance by volunteering at a senior center and an elementary school. The assembly ended with a surprise as student leaders Dawn Littles and Lasheca Lewis, along with school counselor and GEAR UP Co-Advisor Dexter Ward, presented certificates of appreciation to Rhoda Miller and Frank Pomata and thanked them for their "ongoing efforts to help Wyandanch students to succeed."

Long Island University/Brooklyn

► Orientation and Project Back-to-School/National GEAR UP Day

September 18, 2009

Submitted by Kemoy A. Briscoe, Project Director, Long Island University NYGEAR UP.

Location: Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus

Participants: 35 11th grade NYGEAR UP students, 7 NYGEAR UP tutors, 1 NYGEAR UP director

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: Kemoy A. Briscoe, Project Director, Long Island University NYGEAR UP

The NYGEAR UP orientation included an introduction to GEAR UP, GEAR UP rules and regulations, student contracts, tutor and student introductions, and lunch. The Long Island University Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) Club and NYGEAR UP students also launched a school supply collection drive to aid families in need. NYGEAR UP students brought in 3 boxes of donated supplies, nearly matching the amount collected by the HEOP Club, for a total of 6 large boxes. These school supplies were given to the Coalition for the Homeless.

► NYGEAR UP Activities

• Homework Assistance

September 21 – December 10, 2009

Throughout the fall, 60 11th grade students from Science Skills Center HS and Benjamin Banneker Academy received assistance in completing homework and class assignments from 7 college tutors and 2 college mentors.

• Saturday Academy

September 26 – December 12, 2009

On Saturdays during the fall, 73 11th grade NYGEAR UP students received classroom instruction from 1 college instructor, 2 graduate assistants, and 3 college tutors. They also prepared for the SAT using the College Board's official online SAT practice tools and test questions.

"The Teaching Scholar is a role model to the students, letting them see that college is something they can reach for."

– Ivin Doctor, Teaching Scholars Program Coordinator, Discovery Institute/CUNY CSI GEAR UP

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continued from page 9.

- **Holiday Toy Drive**
November 5 – December 16, 2009

NYGEAR UP students partnered with Long Island University's HEOP Club to conduct a holiday toy drive. This drive was even more successful than the earlier school supplies drive; the groups collected eight large boxes of donated new toys for the Coalition for the Homeless.

"The support NYGEAR UP students showed for students less fortunate than they are was amazing to witness."

– Kemoy A. Briscoe, Project Director, LIU NYGEAR UP

- **clcu Latino College Fair**
November 21, 2009

12 Science Skills Center HS 11th grade students, 2 guidance counselors, 1 NYGEAR UP assistant, and 2 tutors attended the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities' (clcu) Latino College Fair at Fordham University, where they met admissions representatives of 58 private, independent colleges and universities.

- **Tour of SUNY University at Albany**
December 8, 2009

37 Science Skills Center HS 11th grade students, 2 guidance counselors, 1 NYGEAR UP assistant, and 1 NYGEAR UP director toured SUNY University at Albany, guided by Education Opportunity Program (EOP) students. They also met with Maritza Martinez, Co-Deputy Director of EOP at SUNY University at Albany, and EOP students, who answered questions about EOP and the university.

- **Meeting for 11th Grade Students and Their Parents**
December 9, 2009

18 Science Skills Center HS students and 20 parents met with 5 tutors, 3 Science Skills HS counselors, and 1 NYGEAR UP director to learn more about the requirements for the Gateway for Pre-College Education Program, a challenging academic program that prepares students for college-level science and math courses, and the College Now program offered by CUNY.

"The knowledge and information that our NYGEAR UP families obtained at the Healthy, Wealthy, Wise event was invaluable and informative."

– Denise Lynn Smith-Oquendo, NYGEAR UP Coordinator, RIT NYGEAR UP

New Rochelle City School District

- ▶ **New Rochelle City School District NYGEAR UP Student Stories**

Submitted by Camille Edwards-Thomas, Program Director of New Rochelle City School District NYGEAR UP.

Featured Students: *Mary Carmen Perez and Capriaty Alexandre*, 11th grade NYGEAR UP students, New Rochelle HS.

On January 20, 2010, two New Rochelle HS students, Mary Carmen Perez and Capriaty Alexandre, competed in an Oratory/Debate Contest sponsored by Academic Pathways and Bethesda Baptist Church of New Rochelle. Both young women are volunteers for Academic Pathways, where they tutor and mentor elementary school students. This competition gave them an opportunity to showcase their oratory and debate skills as they discussed the way society treats the elderly.

- ▶ **NYGEAR UP Activities**

- **clcu Latino College Fair**
November 21, 2009

20 New Rochelle NYGEAR UP 11th grade students and 3 chaperones attended the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities' (clcu) Latino College Fair at Fordham University, where they met admissions representatives of 58 private, independent colleges and universities.

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

- ▶ **NYGEAR UP Activities**

Submitted by Denise Lynn Smith-Oquendo, Coordinator, RIT NYGEAR UP.

- **Healthy, Wealthy, Wise**
October 19, 2009

NYGEAR UP students from Bioscience and Health Career School at Franklin, East HS, Global Media Arts HS at Franklin, and International Finance & Economic Development Career School at Franklin attended this event, accompanied by family members. Information on healthy living, money management, college choices, financial aid, and support services was presented by a number of community organizations, NYGEAR UP's clcu and vendors. All of RIT's NYGEAR UP schools were excited about this opportunity and assisted in promoting it to NYGEAR UP students.

Rome City School District

- ▶ **NYGEAR UP Activities**

Submitted by Wendy Waters, Rome Free Academy Literacy Coach and NYGEAR UP Committee Member.

- **Field Trip to SUNY Morrisville State College**
October 27, 2009

About 30 Rome Free Academy NYGEAR UP students and their chaperones spent a day at SUNY Morrisville State College experiencing a day in the life of a college student. The group toured the campus, spoke with professors, learned about majors and admissions criteria from admissions personnel, and mingled with college students while enjoying lunch in the college cafeteria. Many students were impressed by the trip and said that they would strongly consider applying to SUNY Morrisville.

- **Presentation by Dr. David Gallo, Oceanographer and Explorer**
November 20, 2009

Nearly 100 Rome Free Academy (RFA) NYGEAR UP students and their families attended a dinner held in the school cafeteria before Dr. David Gallo's presentation; more than 800 students, families, teachers, and community members attended his presentation in the Rome Free Academy auditorium after dinner. Dr. Gallo's presentation, "The Secrets of the Sea: Exploring Neptune's Realm" and "Origins, Evolution, and Destiny: Clues from the Deepest Sea," was free, while the dinner was funded by a GEAR UP grant.

In addition to the fascinating tales about his deep-sea explorations of the RMS *Titanic* and the German battleship *Bismarck*, Dr. Gallo had an important message for the students. He confided that his own learning disability kept him from doing well in school; when a teacher gave him a book about Robinson Crusoe, it opened a whole new world to him and sparked a passion that he never knew existed. He started doing better in school, went to college, and eventually earned his advanced degrees – goals that he never dreamed he could achieve.

Many students asked insightful questions following the lecture. One NYGEAR UP student said in front of the audience: "Dr. Gallo, you're my hero. I know I'll make it through school now."

• SAT Prep Course

January through April 2010

Nearly 120 Rome Free Academy NYGEAR UP students are participating in a 10-week SAT prep course that runs from January through the end of April. About 80 students attend the Sunday afternoon classes and another 40 attend on Monday evenings. Rome Free Academy math and English faculty teach the course, which uses resources from Cambridge Educational Services. Students paid only a \$15 registration fee; NYGEAR UP covers the cost of student textbooks, teacher stipends, and materials.

Students took a sample SAT test on Saturday, January 16, 2010, and the results of that test determined the focus of instruction for the course. Teachers used the cohort data to formulate lesson plans; students found out what their SAT scores would have been if they had been taking the "real" test. Each student also received a list of his or her responses to each question, the correct answer for each question, and the score he or she would have earned on the essay.

Course instruction also covered basic grammar, reading comprehension strategies, writing strategies, and basic math skills. Students received vocabulary packets and were encouraged to work on increasing their vocabularies on their own. Additional College Board resources were distributed.

After 8 weeks, students will take a test to determine what they have mastered during the course and to assess what they still need to work on before the "real" SAT on May 1.

St. John's University

► St. John's University NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Felicia Harper, Assistant Director, St. John's University GEAR UP.

Featured Student: Krystal Quintanilla, senior, Northwestern University

Giving Back

by Krystal Quintanilla

Currently I'm a senior at Northeastern University and I am graduating in May with a bachelor's degree in finance and marketing. Although I began college with a corporate mentality and thought I wanted to work in the financial industry, I have been involved in mentorship programs throughout my college career. After reflecting on these experiences, I have decided to actively pursue jobs in which I can give back and provide the support and encouragement for students that I was provided with, by my parents as well as by the GEAR UP program.

For this reason, I have chosen to apply for Teach for America. I was talking to my mother about my experience in GEAR UP and how much the program does to ensure the success of inner city children around New York. I am grateful for the program and the experiences I shared with the coordinators as well as with my peers. At this point in my life I have excelled beyond what I could have imagined and I am truly grateful for the resources I was given to help me see my potential. Hopefully all goes well and I am able to help and share my experiences in the way the program has helped me.

Featured Student: Diamond Price, 11th grade GEAR UP, Robert H. Wagner HS

GEAR UP is not only an academic support program that motivates students to achieve academic excellence, but it has also served as a platform for students to break away from the crowd and become future advocates of change.

Diamond Price has exemplified the characteristics of a leader in the St. John's University GEAR UP program since the 7th grade. She has always been very determined and vocal about her aspirations. When the program needed to promote upcoming events or to encourage students to challenge themselves, Ms. Price made sure students heard GEAR UP's voice. Diamond has shown a great deal of improvement in her studies since attending her last school. Her great effort and her desire to strive harder in a new environment have led her to become a strong leader in her community and among her peers. The skills that she has acquired from the GEAR UP program have motivated her to take on leadership roles in athletics. Her work ethic and drive in the classroom have been transferred to the passion and attitude of a champion that she demonstrates on the basketball court and the soccer field. Diamond Price has not only succeeded in the classroom, but she has demonstrated that, with hard work and dedication, one can also be successful in other endeavors.

► NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP Activities

• GEAR UP Residential Summer Camp 2009

June 28 – July 4, 2009

63 NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP students lived in dorms at St. John's University for a week of college preparation workshops, mock college classes, college visits, motivational speakers, a career fair, and much more. 3 parents, 15 GEAR UP mentors, and 22 presenters also participated in the camp's activities. Every day, students were exposed to college readiness workshops designed to prepare them for the college admissions process and the actual college experience. The first day of camp included a series of mock classes in photography, psychology, engineering, and criminal justice taught by college professors; a favorite was the criminal justice course taught by

renowned CUNY John Jay College professor Gloria Browne-Marshall. Other workshops at the camp were "Writing a College Essay," "Creating a College Portfolio," "Completing the FAFSA," and "College 101."

"I obtained a lot of knowledge during the week, especially from the FAFSA workshop. It will assist me in the near future and made me feel more comfortable about completing the form correctly."

– A St. John's University GEAR UP student

• GEAR UP Back to School Bash at Long Island City High School

October 3, 2009

25 St. John's University GEAR UP students, along with 10 GEAR UP mentors, met new staff members who expressed enthusiasm for their work and confidence in the students' future success. GEAR UP scholars were reminded of the critical junior year that lay ahead and of the programs that would assist them.

• Saturday SAT Prep Course

October 17 – December 5, 2009

20 GEAR UP students, 2 SAT facilitators, and 2 GEAR UP staff participated in these SAT prep classes. Sections of the exam and different ways to approach the test were discussed. Facilitators focused on building vocabulary, mathematical skills, and techniques that can boost one's score on the SAT.

• Big Apple College Fair

October 18, 2009

29 GEAR UP scholars, 5 parents, and 10 GEAR UP mentors attended this college fair on the St. John's University campus. Representatives from more than 100 colleges were on hand to talk to students and parents and answer their questions.

"I can make a better decision after speaking with the college representatives because I was able to gain a feeling for what they expect from us and what is needed to distinguish myself."

– Ashley Chang, a St. John's University GEAR UP student

*St. John's University,
continued on page 12.*

St. John's University,
continued from page 11.

• **Connect to College Seminars**
October 27 – December 10, 2009

These weekly seminars, attended by 40 Long Island City HS students, offered an opportunity to present information about a number of colleges. Each seminar featured a college representative speaking about his or her college, its majors, and its unique features. Among the colleges included were Adelphi University, Bard College, Barry University, College of Mount Saint Vincent, Columbia University, Fordham University, Long Island University (C.W. Post Campus), and SUNY University at Albany.

• **"Be the Face of Change" Leadership Conference**
November 14, 2009

38 GEAR UP scholars engaged in a day of leadership building seminars with 16 GEAR UP mentors and 8 presenters, and interacted with leaders in academic, athletic, and professional fields. Students learned about being an effective leader, discussed the tools needed to succeed in the NCAA, engaged in a scholarship search seminar, found out about the consequences of high-risk behavior, and heard from a panel that explored non-traditional professions. Alice Roberson, NYGEAR UP Director at HESC, was one of the presenters.

"Service Day was very humbling. It was amazing to see strangers work towards a bigger cause."

– Wilfrido Valentin, St. John's University
GEAR UP student

"I loved the career panel because the panelists not only talked about their careers but how they established themselves, as well as determining that enjoying their profession was better than the amount of money they earned."

– Masuka Akter, St. John's University
GEAR UP student

• **cIcu Latino College Fair**
November 21, 2009

43 NYGEAR UP and GEAR UP students, 2 parents, and 8 mentors attended the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities' (cIcu) college fair at Fordham University's Rose Hill campus, where representatives of 58 independent colleges and universities participated. Students toured the campus before the event, which gave them and their families an in-depth look at the admissions process, financial aid, preparation for college, and the opportunities available to Latino students.

• **Service Day at St. John's Bread and Life Center**
December 12, 2009

46 GEAR UP students and mentors assisted the center's staff in preparing for the holiday season. Students sorted toys, packed food for distribution, cleaned the facilities, and prepared certificates for turkeys given to families in need. Although the work was demanding, the students worked well together and took pride in their efforts.

SUNY Binghamton University

► **GEAR UP Kick-Off Ice Cream Social/National GEAR UP Day**
September 18, 2009

Location: Binghamton High School

Participants: 33 10th grade students, 26 11th grade students, 46 family members, 1 Binghamton HS Special Education teacher, 5 GEAR UP staff

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: James H. Pogue, Chief Executive Officer of The College Doctor, LLC

The GEAR UP Kick-Off Ice Cream Social began at 3:00 pm with a martial arts demonstration by James H. Pogue. Dr. Pogue is currently Director of SUNY Binghamton University's EOP program and is a sought-after speaker and consultant on higher education opportunities. From 4:00 to 5:00 pm, students and their families enjoyed ice cream and cookies while receiving information about upcoming GEAR UP events and activities.

"I want to take karate lessons – that was awesome. I can't wait to come to GEAR UP after school every week!"

– SUNY Binghamton 11th grade GEAR UP student

SUNY Cobleskill

► **NYGEAR UP Activities**

• **NYSACAC Camp College**
July 10 -12 and July 31- August 2, 2009

2 students from Richfield Springs CS and 1 student from Owen D. Young CS attended NYSACAC Camp College at Hobart and William Smith Colleges; 2 students from South Kortright CS, 2 students from Stamford CS, and 2 students from Jefferson CS went to NYSACAC Camp College at Marist College. All of the students were rising 11th graders who very much enjoyed the experience.



Long Island University NYGEAR UP students visit the Rose Hill campus of Fordham University during the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities' (cIcu) Latino College Fair on November 21, 2009.

• **Visits to SUNY Herkimer County Community College and SUNY Fulton-Montgomery Community College; Tri-County Counselors' Association College Fair at SUNY Fulton-Montgomery Community College**

October 15, 2009

22 11th grade students from St. Johnsville CS and Richfield Springs CS, along with NYGEAR UP and school staff, visited 2 community college campuses, but the main purpose of the trip was to attend the college fair at SUNY Fulton-Montgomery Community College, held from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. In essays about the experience, the students revealed that the fair opened their eyes to the opportunities available at many different colleges.

• **College Information Day at SUNY Cobleskill**

October 19, 2009

85 11th grade students from Laurens CS, Richfield Springs CS, Middleburgh CS, Fort Plain CS, and Charlotte Valley CS attended this college fair.

• **Visits to SUNY Morrisville State College**

October 30 and November 6, 2009

9 11th grade students from Morris CS visited SUNY Morrisville State College on October 30; 4 11th grade students visited the campus on November 6.

• **Visit to St. Elizabeth College of Nursing**

November 2, 2009

6 11th grade students from Richfield Springs CS, along with NYGEAR UP and school staff, toured St. Elizabeth College of Nursing, where they learned about careers in medicine and health care. The students participated in hands-on activities, such as using a stethoscope, and researched a medical topic of their choice for an oral presentation.

• **Visit to Union College**

November 5, 2009

14 11th grade Middleburgh CS students, with NYGEAR UP and school staff, toured Union College.

• **Visits to SUNY Delhi**

November 10 and 18, 2009

27 11th grade students from Laurens CS and Middleburgh CS toured SUNY Delhi.

• **Visit to Cobleskill Regional Hospital and SUNY Cobleskill's Wellness Center**

November 13, 2009

2 Stamford CS 11th grade students interested in medical careers, along with NYGEAR UP staff, visited Cobleskill Regional Hospital and the Wellness Center at SUNY Cobleskill, one of only 20 college health centers in New York State to be accredited by the American Association of Ambulatory Health Care. The students spoke with representatives of various departments at the hospital and had lunch on the SUNY Cobleskill campus, where a nurse practitioner talked to them about careers in nursing.

• **Visit to The Culinary Institute of America**

November 18, 2009

2 Richfield Springs 11th grade students and their mothers, accompanied by school staff, joined City School District at Albany NYGEAR UP students, toured the Culinary Institute of America and learned about careers in the culinary arts.

• **National GEAR UP Day/ Overnight Field Trip to 6 Central New York Colleges**

September 21 - 22, 2009

Location: Syracuse University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), SUNY Cortland, Cornell University, Ithaca College, SUNY Binghamton University

Participants: 37 10th and 11th grade GEAR UP students, 6 parents, 3 GEAR UP staff, 1 HESC NYGEAR UP director

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: Alice Roberson, NYGEAR UP Director, HESC; Lee Bostic, Senior Assistant Director, Admission; Karen Whalen, Parent and Activities Coordinator, Binghamton HS GEAR UP; Travis Park, Assistant Professor, Education, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University; Bobbi Jo Townsend, Cornell University; Jennifer Cuomo, Admissions Advisor, SUNY Cortland; Holly Doty, Admissions Advisor, SUNY Cortland; Susan Sanford, Director, Admissions and Inter-Institutional Relations, SUNY ESF; Paul Turner, Principal Investigator, SUNY Cobleskill GEAR UP; Amanda Williams, student, Information Studies, Syracuse University

At each college, students enjoyed a meal on campus, took an hour-long tour, and attended an admissions and financial aid presentation. Students stayed overnight at the Ithaca EconoLodge, where they discussed their likes and dislikes about the colleges they visited. Students were in bed by 9:30 pm, up at 6:30 am, and back on the bus and on the road at 7:45 am.

“With all of the federal and state aid available, I never knew that college could be so affordable. I wish GEAR UP had been available for my older son.”

– Parent of a Stamford CS student

► **GEAR UP Activities**

• **Trip to SUNY Herkimer Community College, SUNY Institute of Technology (SUNY IT), and SUNY Mohawk Valley Community College (SUNY MVCC)**

September 15 and 29, October 1 and 29, and December 2, 2009

GEAR UP students from Stamford CS, South Kortright CS, Oppenheim-Ephrata CS, St. Johnsville CS, Fort Plain CS, Owen D. Young CS, Laurens CS, and Charlotte Valley CS enjoyed tours of these colleges and had lunch or dinner on a college campus. Parents and tutors accompanied the students. Gary Loiacono, Senior Admissions Assistant at SUNY Herkimer CC, Kim Overrocker, STEP Program Coordinator at SUNY MVCC, and Kimber Haughton, Admissions Counselor at SUNY IT offered presentations on admissions and provided each group with student tour guides.

• **SUNY Cobleskill Campus Tour**

September 23, 2009

St. Johnsville CS students, GEAR UP staff, and 4 chaperones (parents and teachers) explored the histotechnology department at SUNY Cobleskill and enjoyed a hands-on presentation by instructor and lab technician Rick Sparling. Students were also treated to a tour of all the major buildings on campus, including the agriculture and dairy complexes, and enjoyed an all-you-can-eat buffet at Champlin Hall.

• **College Fair at SUNY Cobleskill**

October 19, 2009

50 students and 6 school counselors from Richfield Springs CS, Laurens CS, St. Johnsville CS, Fort Plain CS, Charlotte Valley CS, and Oppenheim-Ephratah CS attended this fair, where over 70 colleges were represented. Students visited college booths to speak with admissions staff. Participants enjoyed a buffet lunch on campus.

SUNY Cobleskill GEAR UP Activities, continued on page 14.

*SUNY Cobleskill GEAR UP Activities,
continued from page 13.*

- **Overnight Trip to Ithaca College, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, SUNY Cortland, Le Moyne College, SUNY Binghamton University**
November 2 - 3, 2009

South Kortright CS and Middleburgh CS students toured a variety of colleges, based on their projected areas of study and their responses on a questionnaire. Students stayed overnight at the Hampton Inn in Ithaca. All of the students learned more about these institutions, and continue to stay in contact with admissions staff at the colleges. Especially helpful during this tour were Lee Bostic, Ithaca College; Karen Whalen, SUNY Binghamton GEAR UP; Travis Park, Cornell University; Bobbi Jo Townsend, Cornell University; Thomas Meunch, Le Moyne College; Jennifer Cuomo, SUNY Cortland; and Holly Doty, SUNY Cortland.

- **Financial Aid Information Nights**
November 10, 17, and 23, 2009; December 1, 7, and 14, 2009

Students and parents from St. Johnsville CS, Charlotte Valley CS, Stamford CS, Owen D. Young CS, and Laurens CS attended these events, designed to educate parents and students about financial aid. Participants reported that they felt more informed and less worried about financial aid for college after these sessions. Everyone enjoyed a dinner of BBQ chicken, baked beans, baked potatoes, cole slaw, green salad, bread and butter, and dessert.

- **Trip to Le Moyne College, Cazenovia College, and SUNY Morrisville State College**
November 12, 2009

South Kortright CS students, parents, guidance staff, and an administrator toured 3 college campuses. The group ate lunch at Cazenovia and had dinner at SUNY Morrisville.

- **SAT Training**
December 4, 2009

GEAR UP tutors from South Kortright CS, Laurens CS, Morris CS, St. Johnsville CS, Owen D. Young CS, Charlotte Valley CS, Fort Plain CS, and Richfield Springs CS attended this SAT Test Prep workshop conducted by Matt Zarro of The College Board. Tutors learned about on-line test preparation and left with College Board materials to use with students.

“The best-planned, most organized college field trip I’ve ever been on.”

– Alice Roberson, NYGEAR UP Director, HESC

SUNY Jamestown Community College (JCC)

- ▶ **National GEAR UP Day**
September 18, 2009

Location: SUNY Jamestown Community College, Jamestown City School District, Dunkirk City School District

SUNY JCC NYGEAR UP marked the first annual National GEAR UP Day by kicking off an awareness campaign that included having NYGEAR UP students write letters to U.S. Senators and Representatives about their GEAR UP experiences, peer-to-peer mentoring of younger students by NYGEAR UP students, and community service activities. Since the program began in 2005, SUNY JCC’s NYGEAR UP program has served more than 400 students in Jamestown and more than 150 students in Dunkirk.

The program’s academic focus has been on developing mathematical skills. A full-time math mentor at Jamestown High School provided professional development that included model teaching, workshops, and curriculum improvement, while a part-time math mentor at Dunkirk High School taught a selected group of students and offered math labs for NYGEAR UP students. In 2008, more than 80% of the students enrolled in grade-level math courses in both school districts passed the course and the state math exam.

- ▶ **NYGEAR UP Activities**

- **Summer College Access Academy**
July 2009

44 Jamestown HS and Dunkirk HS students, including 19 NYGEAR UP rising 11th grade students, attended this residential program. 34 parents attended the report-out session and picnic on the last day of the camp. For the youth leadership workshops, SUNY JCC NYGEAR UP collaborated with Gear Up for Excellence, founded in 2003 to serve the growing GEAR UP community. SUNY JCC staff presented the *16 Summers* curriculum, a multimedia college access program designed to prepare students and their families for higher education. Student surveys indicated that, after participating in the program, students had:

- Better plans for life after high school
- More awareness of their options after graduating from high school
- More knowledge of how to conduct a college search
- Better knowledge of who to contact regarding admissions and financial aid
- Increased understanding of how to manage free time
- Plans to take the PSAT, SAT, and/or ACT
- Better understanding of leadership strengths and weakness
- Awareness of and appreciation for one another’s differences

SUNY Nassau Community College (NCC)

- ▶ **National GEAR UP Day**
September 18, 2009

Location: Uniondale Public Library, Uniondale, NY

Speakers/Leaders/Guests: Sean Fanelli, President, SUNY NCC; Craig Wright, Associate Vice President, Academic/Student Services, SUNY NCC; Marilyn Monroe, Director, SUNY NCC GEAR UP; Dorothy Goosby, Councilwoman, Town of Hempstead; Gabrielle Brooks, 7th grade student, Turtle Hook MS; Michael Kakish, 7th grade student, Turtle Hook MS; Amit Nath, 8th grade student, Lawrence Road MS; Matthew Beauge, 8th grade student, Turtle Hook MS

The focus of SUNY NCC’s National GEAR UP Day event was honoring the Uniondale Board of Education. Five student representatives from SUNY NCC GEAR UP’s 7th and 8th grade cohorts, accompanied by their parents/guardians, read personal testimonials about GEAR UP’s success at encouraging their academic achievements and increasing their awareness of college. Representatives of SUNY NCC expressed their gratitude to the USD for their commitment to and support of the GEAR UP mission. U.S. Representative Carolyn McCarthy and Town of Hempstead Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby issued proclamations calling for the observance of National GEAR UP Day throughout the 4th Congressional District of New York and the Town of Hempstead.

“Our GEAR UP class is run like a college class! I learned what a syllabus is and how to take better notes.”

– Turtle Hook MS SUNY NCC GEAR UP student



U.S. Representative Daniel Maffei meets Nicholas Jones, 11th grade Syracuse University NYGEAR UP student, at Nottingham High School in the fall of 2009.

"I am thrilled that GEAR UP is in my child's school. It's an excellent program!"

– Lawrence Road MS SUNY NCC GEAR UP parent

► GEAR UP Activities

• SUNY NCC GEAR UP Summer Academy

July – August 2009

7th and 8th grade GEAR UP students attended aviation-themed camps that offered hands-on experiences in flight simulation, art and experimentation designed to improve math, science, and technology comprehension. The Summer Academy also provided enrichment classes in science and math and a book club to strengthen ELA skills.

• Space Explorers Celebration

August 2009

7th and 8th grade GEAR UP students, parents, and administrators from SUNY NCC and Uniondale SD were present for the unveiling of an 8 by 10 foot mural honoring the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen. Students in the Space Explorers summer program, working under the guidance of the African American Museum of Nassau County, used various media to create the mural, now on permanent display at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City, New York.

• Parent Workshop Series

October – December 2009

This series of workshops, attended by parents of GEAR UP students, covered such topics as how to motivate children, how to communicate high expectations, homework management, and college savings plans. Workshops were scheduled alternatively in English and Spanish and garnered consistent attendance.

Syracuse University

► Syracuse University NYGEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Marissa J. Mims, Director, Syracuse University NYGEAR UP.

In September 2009, U.S. Representative Daniel Maffei came to Nottingham High School to discuss the GEAR UP program with a group that included Joy Langley, Government Relations Director, National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships (NCCPEP); Marissa J. Mims, Director, Syracuse University NYGEAR UP; Lynn Kelly Dew, Fowler HS NYGEAR UP Program Director; Amanda Williams, NYGEAR UP Office Coordinator; and Alice Roberson, NYGEAR UP Director, HESC. Three students also attended the meeting.

Kelina Imamura, a junior at Syracuse University majoring in journalism, is coordinating a NYGEAR UP newspaper project featuring articles by and for the cohort on a NYGEAR UP page in the *Syracuse Post-Standard* (every Monday from September 14, 2009 to June 26, 2010). Nicholas Jones and Mary DaCosta, 11th graders at Nottingham HS, spoke about their experiences in the NYGEAR UP program and as Summer College Scholars at Syracuse University. After the meeting, Nicholas spoke with Congressman Maffei about his love of politics. The two hit it off and began to keep in touch. Nicholas has been given an internship in the Congressman's office, which has never had a high school student as an intern before.

"I love GEAR UP. It's helping me do better in my classes."

– Turtle Hook MS SUNY NCC GEAR UP student

An Aspiring Politician

by Nicholas Jones, 11th grade NYGEAR UP, Nottingham HS

After a Congressional session, its members often convene to discuss the happenings within the Chamber; hearing each other's opinions, sharing plausible solutions, and recalling life experiences. On occasion, this may also occur between a seated Congressman and an "aspiring politician." Following a briefing on New York State's GEAR UP initiatives in cooperation with the city schools, I had the opportunity to converse with Representative Dan Maffei. I was there to discuss how NYGEAR UP benefited me with a scholarship to Syracuse University's Summer College, during which I studied political science and law. My honest assessment in praising GEAR UP was akin to a political office candidate promoting his platform. GEAR UP will help my future.

Representative Maffei, hearing about my apparent interest in history and politics, took immediate interest in me. It's an oddity for a student such as me, a junior in high school, not quite old enough to exercise my right of suffrage, to possess such a zeal for politics and its affairs. Growing up in Syracuse, witnessing a city in its waning stages, you are inspired to bring back its vitality, and political clout may accomplish this. My passion is not surprising considering that in my young life I have traveled to Washington D.C. more than I have visited Disney World – the count currently at three to one. The District of Columbia holds a special charm, in my opinion. The capital city, due to its population of politicians, is results oriented, not frivolous, something that I admire and would like to emulate. Representative Dan Maffei was not out of his element even when he was not present in Washington. Instead, he exhibited more than a keen policy sense, demonstrating a connection with me, an understanding of what I want to achieve. Representative Dan Maffei and I share a bond – we both attended Nottingham High School. We stood conspicuously below a plaque portraying his image, recognizing him as an alum, discussing the current status, not of a potential bill, but of my future career. As a token of gratitude he gave me his pocket Constitution, Congressional issue, signifying a miniature roadmap, a guidebook, directing me to my future destination, as a politician.

(First published on the NYGEAR UP page in the Syracuse Post-Standard in slightly different form, October 5, 2009.)

"I received insight on effective motivation factors that I can use to help my child be a better student."

– A SUNY NCC GEAR UP parent



Syracuse University NYGEAR UP Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central High School 9th grade students visit one of Syracuse University's libraries on November 23, 2009.

Syracuse University NYGEAR UP continued.

► **National GEAR UP Day**
September 18, 2009

To celebrate National GEAR UP Day, cakes were brought to each of the Syracuse City School District high schools. Stephanie Miner, then a candidate for mayor, and now the first female mayor of Syracuse, NY, spoke to 25 11th grade Henninger High School NYGEAR UP students about the importance of perseverance in pursuing your dreams.

► **NYGEAR UP Activities**

• **Summer College at Syracuse University**
July – August 2009

12 rising 11th grade NYGEAR UP students took a college course for credit while staying on the campus of Syracuse University. This program offers high school students an opportunity to experience college life while gaining valuable academic skills.

► **Syracuse University GEAR UP Student Stories**

Submitted by Sheila Kusi, Assistant Director of Programs and Assessment, Syracuse University GEAR UP.

Featured Student: Kashindi Loy, 10th grade GEAR UP, Nottingham HS

Many English as a Second Language students are hesitant to ask for help from tutors who come to help students during the GEAR UP tutoring blocks on Mondays and Tuesdays. On her first day at Nottingham High School (end of November 2009), Margaret Mueni, a Syracuse University GEAR UP tutor from Kenya, reached out to Kashindi Loy, a South African student who always sat quietly in the classroom, not interacting with anyone. During her first tutoring session with Kashindi, whose native language is Afrikaans, Margaret was able to get her to open up and talk about the subject areas in which she needed help. Margaret emphasized that she should not let language differences deter her from seeking the help that she needs. The following week, Kashindi sought Margaret out and told her that she had brought work to do during the session. Now not only does Kashindi talk, but she is also more personable, smiles more readily, and converses in the hallways rather than walking quietly along as if invisible.



SUNY Jamestown Community College NYGEAR UP rising 11th grade students pose with others attending the Summer College Access Academy at SUNY Jamestown CC during the summer of 2009.

► **Syracuse University GEAR UP Activities**

• **Undergraduate College Panel**
October 14 and November 16, 2009

A panel composed of Syracuse University undergraduate students with diverse backgrounds, all of whom attended inner city high schools, spoke about their personal college experiences, the obstacles and adversity they faced, and how it feels to be successful in college. 44 9th and 10th grade students and 4 teachers attended the event on October 14; 44 9th and 10th grade students and 5 teachers were present on November 16.

• **Parent Night at Corcoran High School**
November 17, 2009

30 Corcoran HS students and 39 of their parents attended this event, which was organized to inform parents of the importance of being involved with their children throughout high school, how GEAR UP would aid them in doing so as part of its goal and mission, and about how to use "e-school," a new technological system used by the Syracuse City School District to track the academic progress of students. Also present were Bea González, Executive Director of GEAR UP; R. Deborah Davis, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, SUNY at Oswego; Alton Hicks, Vice Principal, Corcoran HS; Eva Williams, Guidance Counselor, Corcoran HS; and 7 volunteers representing the Dunbar Center, Southwest Community Center, Hillside Family Agencies, Say Yes to Education, Liberty Partnerships Program, Upward Bound Program at Le Moyne College, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Syracuse.

• **Fraternity/Sorority College Panel**
November 20, 2009

Members of 3 Syracuse University fraternities (Phi Beta Sigma, Omega Psi Phi, and Alpha Phi Alpha) and 1 sorority (Delta Sigma Theta) talked to 44 9th grade students and 41 10th grade students

about college life and the goals of their organizations. They also presented a step show that helped to explain the African culture from which the art form originated. Students were able to ask questions, and comments about the event from both teachers and students were positive.

• **clcu Latino College Fair**
November 21, 2009

59 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from the Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central HS, Corcoran HS, Fowler HS, Henninger HS, and Nottingham HS attended a Latino College Fair, organized by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (clcu) at Fordham University. They met representatives of 58 private, independent colleges and universities in New York State, participated in a "Saving, Planning, and Paying for College" workshop, and toured the Fordham University campus.

• **"GEAR UP for College" Visit to Syracuse University**
November 23, 2009

74 9th grade students from the Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central HS visited Syracuse University, toured the campus, and learned about the college experience through a panel discussion presented by the Syracuse University admissions and the School of Information Studies departments.

• **Leadership and Team Building Workshop at Orenda Springs Summer Camp**
November 25, 2009

9 10th and 11th grade Henninger HS students participated in a ropes course and other team-building activities to learn about life skills, leadership, and working together. They were presented with various challenges while discussing and working on such life skills as perseverance, courage, common sense, responsibility, problem solving, patience, cooperation, and trust.

Yonkers Public Schools

► National GEAR UP Day

September 18, 2009

NYGEAR UP Program Director Nona Donovan and Fern Eisgrub, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Yonkers Public Schools, issued a “call to action” and requested that teachers and administrators at Gorton HS, Lincoln HS, Riverside HS, Roosevelt HS, Saunders HS, and Yonkers HS engage the district’s 900+ NYGEAR UP students in developing personal learning plans, locate colleges on a map, talk about college, work on college dream journals, and above all make the activities fun. Each high school had a different agenda: some held assemblies with administrators, teachers, and alumni speaking about their college experiences; other schools scheduled classroom activities in which students worked in groups to create PowerPoint presentations, poems, and skits.

► NYGEAR UP Activities

• NYGEAR UP College Pride Day

September 25, 2009

To celebrate college preparedness, NYGEAR UP Lincoln HS students and their teachers wore college attire to school. Marching band music was heard throughout the day, and photos of teachers and the colleges they attended were posted in a college hall of fame.

• Lincoln High School Health Day

November 13, 2009

Speakers representing various health care occupations, including dermatology, chiropractic, mental health, and nursing, introduced Lincoln HS NYGEAR UP students to careers in that field. Teachers and counselors were also present at the event.

• Visit to SUNY Purchase College

November 13, 2009

Saunders HS NYGEAR UP students and teachers toured SUNY Purchase College and attended workshops on college athletics, financial literacy, and life on a college campus. After lunch, students were treated to a student performance at the college’s Performing Arts Center.

“I have realized that I am in a play and that I am the author. I get to determine what settings I want to let affect my character.”

– Kevin Outlaw, 11th grade Yonkers Public Schools NYGEAR UP student

• clcu Latino College Fair

November 21, 2009

NYGEAR UP students from Roosevelt HS and Lincoln HS, accompanied by parents and teachers, attended the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities’ (clcu) Latino College Fair at Fordham University, where they attended workshops and panel discussions and met with representatives from 58 of New York State’s private, independent colleges and universities.

• NYGEAR UP Mentor Celebration

December 1, 2009

All of the Gorton HS NYGEAR UP students and their mentors met to review their transcripts and to examine the SUNY application form for 2010 and the clcu publication *Your College Search*. Barry Rothstein, an 11th grade guidance counselor, spoke about reviewing transcripts, Regents tests and grades, and the new Naviance program promoting success in post-secondary education and the workplace that is being used throughout the Yonkers school district. Lisa Panarello, an admissions counselor at the College of Westchester, focused on “one step at a time” milestones for each student during the college admissions process.

• Naviance Training

December 1 – 15, 2009

Riverside HS NYGEAR UP students were trained to use Naviance Succeed, an on-line program that improves college awareness and access. Riverside HS guidance staff and a Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE) college advisor were present during the training, which covered the elements of a college application and how to create a personal plan for success. All six of the high schools in the Yonkers Public Schools were introduced to the Naviance program in 2009.

• Introduction to College Planning

December 2, 2009

Saunders HS NYGEAR UP students, parents, administrators, and guidance staff attended an information session on high school graduation requirements, the college application process, and using Naviance.

• Trip to SUNY Binghamton University

December 4, 2009

Yonkers Public Schools NYGEAR UP students, many of them from the Business and Finance Academy of Lincoln HS, toured the SUNY Binghamton University School of Management and visited a college dorm. Students attended an information session and enjoyed lunch in the newest residential building. One student said: “I never saw so many computers located in one room.”

• Tour of Manhattan College

December 4, 2009

NYGEAR UP students in the Environmental Engineering magnet program, along with teachers and guidance counselors, visited Manhattan College’s School of Engineering, attended two classes, met with professors, and participated in a student demonstration of engineering projects.

• Visit to the University of Connecticut

December 10, 2009

Yonkers Public Schools NYGEAR UP students, along with parents, counselors, and YPIE staff, toured the University of Connecticut, had lunch on campus, and participated in an informational session about the admissions process. Students expressed surprise at the size of the campus and the number of different areas of study.

• Visit to Johnson and Wales University

December 12, 2009

NYGEAR UP students in the Occupational Sciences Academy’s Culinary Arts magnet program at Saunders HS toured the Johnson and Wales University campus in Providence, RI, sat in on a class, and met with instructors and students of culinary arts.

• The WOW Factor

December 15, 2009

Yonkers Public Schools NYGEAR UP students focused on techniques for college and job interviews and learned about the skills necessary for effective public speaking in a workshop presented by Lisa Panarello from the College of Westchester. One student commented that if you are late for an interview or refuse to make eye contact, then you probably didn’t really want that job.

• Community Service Project: Support Our Troops in Afghanistan

December 2009 – May 2010

Gorton HS NYGEAR UP students and faculty, along with other schools in the Yonkers Public Schools district, have joined together to collect specific items needed by U.S. military personnel stationed overseas. During this initiative, students have shared their own stories about family and friends who are in Iraq or Afghanistan. Collected items will be sent to friends or family members identified by the NYGEAR UP students.

► **Yonkers Public Schools**
NYGEAR UP Student Stories

Submitted by Nona Donovan, NYGEAR UP Project Coordinator.

The following poem was written by an NYGEAR UP student during one of the classroom activities at Yonkers HS during National GEAR UP Day.

GEAR UP Is Thinking Smart

by Bayan Baker, 11th grade NYGEAR UP, Yonkers HS

First comes the SAT
Then the number twos.
Colleges surely accept them,
You'll be thankful that you knew.
But know there's one more step,
You're not exactly through,
There's still Spring Time
For us Juniors here at school.

We'll study and we'll cram,
We'll ace every exam!
Pass the ACT test or the SAT,
Don't forget about the math!
Take regard of history,
The past is full of mystery,
English here and English there,
Second language can compare,
But never tops the best,
A science class can lead a quest,
To the day you begin to plan
And lead your life by your hands.

It's important we get a head start,
GEAR UP is definitely thinking smart!
It's our chance to show YHS
Why we've studied and why we've stressed,
Over every work, date and fact,
We know it will have a big impact.
On our future and our lives,
We'll be rewarded when it arrives,
But for now, just do your part
And keep on thinking Gear Up Smart!

And once that essay represents
And that application has been sent,
The only thing left to do,
Is sit tight, study and know that
Because you're an YHS student you'll get
through!

"As I look back on my GEAR UP experiences, it has made me excited to go to college...It truly has geared me in the right direction, exposing me to what has yet to come."

– Alexis Acuna, 11th grade Yonkers Public Schools NYGEAR UP student

Settings

by Kevin Outlaw, 11th grade student, NYGEAR UP, Roosevelt HS

We learn in English class that settings are important and affect character. I always thought that just related to plays, stories, and books, but never to my own life. Each setting we encounter gives us a different look at the world. Until I was in GEAR UP, my world was limited to drugs, gang violence, people and places where high school dropouts were the norm. The disregard for anything intellectual was how everyone lived their life. Once I tried to add up all the profanity used in a day and it was startling. Even though I am a teenager I was able to see how limited my friends' vocabularies were and how often cheap words were thrown in. I didn't notice this when I was living submerged in it all. GEAR UP showed me a greater and wiser perspective.

Visiting colleges showed me that settings do affect character. Where I'm from people depend on athletics as a vehicle to get into college, not their intellect.

One of the greatest influences in my life is having a GEAR UP mentor and administrator whose name is Dr. Burton. From my first day at Roosevelt High School Dr. Burton promised me that he will work tirelessly in preparing me for life after graduation and to be a lifelong learner. He's like a father to me when I am at Roosevelt.

I was not personally expecting to go to college until GEAR UP appeared in my life in the 7th grade. I was chosen as one of two students in Yonkers to get a clcu summer sleep-away camp scholarship and spent a week at Nyack College. Ever since then I planned to continue to stick with this program. GEAR UP has been a stepping stone to success.

On a visit to SUNY Purchase College the hosts had college students play classical music for us. It was a great experience because in my neighborhood I would never be exposed to this type of music.

During the trip, I spoke to one of the freshman musicians; he said he had been from the same environment growing up and he also stated that I couldn't use it as an excuse for not going to college. A peer had never given me this type of advice or encouragement before. Also while on this trip I heard a group of students arguing enthusiastically over varying philosophies. In my neighborhood I would hear the same enthusiasm but instead it would be over sneakers.

I have realized that I am in a play and that I am the author. I get to determine what settings I want to let affect my character. My friends who don't have GEAR UP don't understand the impact it had on me. These insights cannot be removed or taken away. My English teachers taught me the difference between a complex character and a static character. GEAR UP has shown me another way of life and I will never be the same.

An Experience of a Lifetime

by Alexis Acuna, 11th grade student, NYGEAR UP, Riverside HS

As a current student at Riverside High School, I have learned that academics aren't everything. It is equally important to be involved in activities that will help you expand your interests, making you a well-rounded person, and that is the key to success. At the beginning of my high school years, school was a walk in the park scenario for me academically, but I felt as if I wasn't being exposed to enough opportunities which will benefit me in my future. As soon as I knew it, I was signed up as an NYGEAR UP student, which changed my thoughts and feelings about my future, making school a place which made me proud to be a part of it.

GEAR UP is an amazing group that has made my three high school years an experience of a lifetime. I quickly became involved in all NYGEAR UP activities such as college trips, community service and career awareness activities. Being involved in this group gave me the ability to expand my interests, building upon them with every experience. As a GEAR UP student I had the opportunity to visit many wonderful colleges such as New York University, Princeton University, Manhattan College, CUNY Lehman College, and many more. These experiences made me realize that going to these wonderful colleges was possible. Finally, it made me realize how GEAR UP has geared me into the right direction, opening my eyes to a future that is quickly approaching.

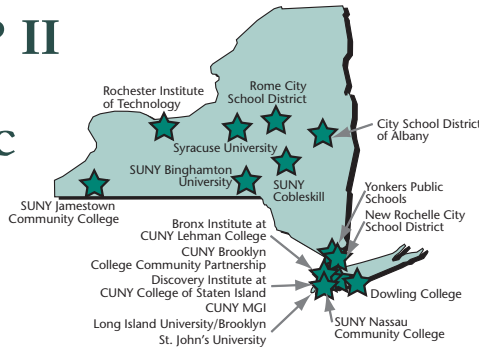
As a GEAR UP student I also had the honor to be one of the students to have the opportunity this year to receive a Kaplan SAT course, every Saturday, for a reduced price that made my parents very happy! The best thing about this course is that it's taught right here, in my very own school. GEAR UP has definitely given so many opportunities which opened many more doors. These opportunities have given me the courage and confidence to run for school president of my school. With all my hard work and support from GEAR UP, I was elected President of Riverside High School, 2009-2010.

As I look back on my GEAR UP experiences, it has made me excited to go to college in the fall of 2011. It truly has geared me into the right direction, exposing me to what has yet to come.

"GEAR UP has shown me another way of life and I will never be the same."

– Kevin Outlaw, 11th grade Roosevelt High School NYGEAR UP student

GEAR UP II 2009-10 Academic Year



► Bronx Institute at CUNY Lehman College

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Cohort size:
2,500 8th graders
2,500 9th graders
3,410 11th graders

GEAR UP schools:
8th grade: Aspire Preparatory School MS 322, Bronx School for Law, Daniel Hale Williams MS 180, Frederick Douglass Academy MS/HS 517, Government and Justice MS/HS 505, Henry Hudson JHS 125, Information and Network Technology School (In-Tech) MS/HS 368, Isobel Rooney MS 80, Jonas Bronck Academy MS 228, Mosholu Parkway PS/MS 280, MS 254, MS 390, P.O. Edward R. Byrne MS 101, Pablo Casals MS 181, Thomas C. Giordano MS 45, Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science MS/HS 241, West Bronx Academy for the Future MS/HS 243

9th grade: Astor Collegiate Academy HS 299, Bronx Center for Science & Math HS 260, Bronx High School for Visual Arts HS 418, Bronx International High School HS 403, Bronx Leadership Academy 2HS 527, Bronx Leadership Academy HS 525, Bronx School for Law, Government & Justice HS 505, Collegiate Institute for Math & Science HS 288, DeWitt Clinton High School HS 440, Gateway School for Environmental Research & Technology HS 295, Lehman High School HS 405, Millennium Art Academy HS 312,

Morris Academy for Collaborative Studies HS 297, Mott Hall Bronx High School HS 252, New World High School HS 513, Pablo Neruda Academy HS 305, Pelham Preparatory Academy HS 542, Renaissance High School HS 293, School for Excellence HS 404, Truman High School HS 455, Validus Preparatory Academy HS 263

11th grade: Bronx High School for Medical Science HS 413, Bronx Leadership Academy HS 525, Bronx HS for Law, Government and Justice HS 505, Celia Cruz Bronx High School for Music HS 442, DeWitt Clinton HS 440, Fordham High School for the Arts HS 437, Frederick Douglass Academy MS/HS 517, Information and Network Technology School (In-Tech) MS/HS 368, International School for Liberal Arts (ISLA) HS 342, Mott Hall HS 252, Riverdale/Kingsbridge Academy MS/HS 141, Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science MS/HS 241, West Bronx Academy for the Future MS/HS 243

► City School District of Albany

Contact: Alexandra Guerrero
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aguerrero@albany.k12.ny.us

Cohort size:
650 11th graders
NYGEAR UP schools:
Abrookin Vocational Technical Center, Albany HS

► CUNY Brooklyn College Community Partnership

Contact: Diane Reiser
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fax (718) 951-5927
diane@thebccp.org

Cohort size:
400 11th graders
NYGEAR UP schools:
Academy for Environmental Leadership, Academy of Urban Planning, Bushwick HS for Social Justice, HS for Youth and Community Development

► CUNY Middle Grades Initiative GEAR UP

Contact: Ciji Gardner
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Cohort size:
1,000 10th graders

GEAR UP schools:
East Bronx Academy for the Future, East Side Community HS, Frederick Douglass Academy II, Henry Street School for International Studies, Hostos Lincoln Academy of Science, IS/HS 10 Frederick Douglass Academy, MS/HS 368 Information Network and Technology Academy, Queens Gateway to Health Sciences School, Renaissance Charter School, South Bronx Preparatory, Thurgood Marshall Academy

► Discovery Institute at CUNY College of Staten Island

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Cohort size:
285 6th graders
279 7th graders
335 8th graders
181 9th graders

GEAR UP schools:
Curtis HS, Dreyfus IS 49, New Dorp HS

► Dowling College

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Frank Pomata
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fax (516) 570-6104
beacon006@aol.com

Cohort size:
125 11th graders
GEAR UP schools:
Wyandanch Memorial HS

► Long Island University/Brooklyn

Contact: Kemoy A. Briscoe
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fax (718) 780-4045
kemoy.briscoe@liu.edu

Cohort size:
455 11th graders
NYGEAR UP schools:
Benjamin Banneker Academy, Science Skills Center HS

► New Rochelle City School District

Contact: Camille Edwards-Thomas
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(914) 576-4273 after 2pm
cedwardstomas@nred.org

Cohort size:
400 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
New Rochelle HS

► Rochester Institute of Technology

Contact: Dianne L. Spang
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dlspop@rit.edu

Cohort size:
746 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Bioscience and Health Career School at Franklin, East HS, Global Media Arts HS at Franklin, International Finance & Economic Development Career School at Franklin

► Rome City School District

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Wendy Waters
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Cohort size:
413 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Rome Free Academy

► St. John's University

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Cohort size:
805 GEAR UP 8th graders
355 GEAR UP 11th graders
312 NYGEAR UP 11th graders
GEAR UP and NYGEAR UP schools:
8th grade: IS 145, IS 126
11th grade: Long Island City HS

► SUNY Binghamton University

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bhsgearup@gmail.com or
whalenkl@binghamton
schools.org

Cohort size:
450 10th graders
450 11th graders

GEAR UP schools:
Binghamton HS

► SUNY Cobleskill

Contact: Paul Turner
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liberty@cobleskill.edu

Cohort size:
480 11th graders
562 10th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Charlotte Valley CS, Fort Plain CS, Jefferson CS, Laurens CS, Middleburgh CS, Morris CS, Owen D. Young CS, Richfield Springs CS, St. Johnsville CS, South Kortright CS, Stamford CS

GEAR UP schools:
Charlotte Valley CS, Fort Plain CS, Jefferson CS, Laurens CS, Middleburgh CS, Morris CS, Owen D. Young CS, Richfield Springs CS, St. Johnsville CS, South Kortright CS, Stamford CS

► SUNY Jamestown Community College

Contact: Faith Graham
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Cohort size:
550 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Dunkirk HS, Jamestown HS

► SUNY Nassau Community College

Contact: Marilyn Monroe
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marilyn.monroe@ncc.edu

Cohort size:
516 7th graders
514 8th graders

GEAR UP schools:
Lawrence Road MS, Turtle Hook MS

► Syracuse University

Contact: Marrison J. Mims
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mjmims@syr.edu

Cohort size:
1,476 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Central Technical Vocational Center, Corcoran HS, Fowler HS, Henninger HS, Nottingham HS

Contact: Bea González
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bgonzale@syr.edu

Cohort size:
1,450 8th graders
1,550 9th graders

GEAR UP schools:
8th grade: Beard School, Bellevue MS Academy, Blodgett School, Clary Magnet School, Danforth MS, Edward Smith School, Expeditionary Learning School, Frazer MS, Grant MS, H.W. Smith MS, Huntington MS, Levy MS, Lincoln MS, Roberts MS
9th grade: Corcoran HS, Fowler HS, Henninger HS, Nottingham HS, Technology at Syracuse Central HS

► Yonkers Public Schools

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Cohort size:
936 11th graders

NYGEAR UP schools:
Gorton HS, Lincoln HS, Riverside HS, Roosevelt HS, Saunders HS, Yonkers HS

NYGEAR UP II Sectors and Partners.

► Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU)

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► Association of Proprietary Colleges

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► CUNY

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► SUNY

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► College Board

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► NYS Financial Aid Administrators Association

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GEAR UP in New York 2010 Events.

(as of March 2010)

► cicu College Quest with City School District of Albany (CSDA)

NYGEAR UP
Visiting Keuka College, Nazareth College, Roberts Wesleyan College, St. John Fisher College, University of Rochester
April 8-10, 2010

► NYGEAR UP Annual Conference

Buffalo Niagara Marriott, Amherst, NY
April 26-28, 2010

► cicu and College Board Professional Development Workshops

Hartwick College, Oneonta, NY
May 4, 2010

Mercy College/Bronx Campus, Bronx, NY
May 11, 2010

► NYSACAC Conference at Niagara University

Niagara University, NY
June 1-4, 2010

► NCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference

Washington Hilton Hotel and Towers, Washington, D.C.
July 18-21, 2010

► NYSFAAA Annual Conference

Adam's Mark Hotel, Buffalo, NY
October 19-21, 2010

► NYSSCA Conference

The Doubletree Tarrytown, Tarrytown, NY
November 5-6, 2010

NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC).

► NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC)

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The New York State Higher Education Services Corp. (HESC) is the state agency that has been designated to administer NYGEAR UP. HESC helps people pay for a comprehensive range of financial aid services, including the Tuition Assistance Program, guaranteeing student loans, offering guidance to students, lenders and colleges, and administering the nationally-recognized New York's College Savings Program. New York State is a leader in the national financial aid community, providing more grant money to college students than any other state in the nation.

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