

## A journey through the past, a glimpse into the future

Barbara Noisette Jackson experienced Pearl Harbor and the early years of World War II as a student at William S. Hackett Junior High School. Linda Jackson-Chalmers vividly remembers learning during her seventh-grade math class at Hackett that President Kennedy had been shot.

Mother and daughter returned to their alma mater together for the first time since the 1960s as the City School District of Albany reopened Hackett Middle School with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by more than 300 visitors.

"I was just amazed," said Ms. Jackson-Chalmers '69 (Philip Schuyler High School), a 1966 Hackett alumna and now the district's assistant superintendent for human resources and community relations. "What a beautiful job in restoring the historical aspects of the building."

Three generations of Hackett graduates – from as nearby as the surrounding blocks and from as far away as California—took a journey through their past and a glimpse into the district's future at the Aug. 27 event.

The 82-year-old school, one of the first junior high schools in America, got a complete update as part of the district's facilities project for elementary and middle schools.

The restored and renovated building combines many of architect Marcus T. Reynolds' original design elements—exquisite marble, ornate plasterwork and a stained-glass skylight above the majestic central staircase—with complete upgrades to the mechanical infrastructure and the academic wings on each floor.

The result is a state-of-the-art learning



Visitors check out the refurbished auditorium during the grand opening event at Hackett Middle School.

environment that preserves important pieces of Albany's history while providing an outstanding educational facility for the city's middle school students.

The district now is looking forward to the reopening of another neighborhood fixture this winter—the renovated former Public School 19, now known as New Scotland Elementary School.

New Scotland Elementary will return to its familiar location at 369 New Scotland Ave. in January following the holiday break. It will be the 11th school completed through the current facilities project.

Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) will be completed next summer, and the sweeping redesign of the district's elementary and middle school levels will be complete in September 2010 when Arbor Hill Elementary School returns to its fully updated home.

"As a school district, we have proved that we are contributing to Albany's stature as a historical city by restoring and rebuilding our schools," Ms. Jackson-Chalmers said. "At the close of the facilities project, we will have reached our goal of new schools in every neighborhood."

## Student achievement

### The aspiring senator from New York

Like a lot of high school seniors, Ocasio Willson isn't sure what path to take after graduation. He does have a pretty good idea where he wants it to lead.

#### The United States Senate.

Inspired partly by Sen. Barack Obama's run for president but mostly by his own love of politics and a desire to make a difference, Ocasio took advantage of an opportunity to study at Harvard during the summer and now is trying to decide where to go to college and what to study when he gets there.

#### All with that one goal in mind.

"I'm thinking about something in the social sciences area," he said. "I'm a big politics person, so I'm considering political science, economics, maybe going to law school and becoming a corporate attorney and then hopefully becoming a U.S. senator. That's my tentative plan."

Enrolled in Albany High's International Baccalaureate diploma program, a recipient of the YMCA's Black and Latino Achievers award, current Key Club president and a member of Natural Helpers, Ocasio has a list of achievements to match his high aspirations.

He added to it over the summer in the four-week Harvard program, in which he studied the Harlem Renaissance. He earned four college credits, receiving an "A" and a glowing letter of recommendation from the faculty member who taught the course.

"We studied how the Harlem Renaissance came about, how it was the ideal time for a surge of African-American culture, pride and identity, and how the Negritude movement was a global extension of that," Ocasio said.



Ocasio Willson '09 spent time at Harvard last summer and hopes to return as a full-time student next fall.

In addition to the history lessons and writing skills he picked up at Harvard, Ocasio says the thing that surprised him the most was the importance of time management. He credits his education at Albany High for preparing him to succeed at such a high level on an Ivy League campus.

"I learned a lot of great techniques and ways to write from my teachers here," he said. "I received 'As' on both of my term papers this summer and I think that says a lot about how what I've learned here impacted my writing."

As for the future, Ocasio calls Harvard his "dream school" but says he has been looking at a wide range of schools, including Boston University, American University, George Washington University and Vassar.

## We choose Albany public schools because ...

### Play time at Delaware, Pine Hills

Pine Hills Elementary School and Delaware Community School both welcomed new playgrounds this fall thanks to the hard work of school and community volunteers and the support of a variety of organizations and individuals.

"I think that people are having lots of fun and they are enjoying it," Delaware Community School fourth-grader Nigora Aripova said on a recent fun-filled morning before school.

Delaware Community School opened in January 2007 with a large play area that quickly deteriorated under students' feet. Despite efforts to regrow grass, the area consisted mostly of dirt and rocks by the

time the 2007-08 school year began.

That limited the play area's use until the district and school decided in the late fall of 2007 to close the play area completely to avoid further deterioration while a new plan was developed.

Thanks to the support of the district and a \$10,000 grant from Wal-Mart, the school was able to install a multi-use play area that includes a blacktop area, 9,000 feet of new sod and a separate playground.

"I like the big slide," Nigora said.

"And the rock climbing wall!" said fourth-grader Denise Lopez.

"And the monkey bars!" fourth-grader Edith Gonzalez chimed in, adding that the

playground makes coming to school more fun.

At Pine Hills Elementary, the school celebrated the grand opening of its playground with a community event Oct. 4. The school also had been without a playground since it opened in January 2007.

The Pine Hills Elementary School Playground Committee—made up of parents, teachers, administrators and support staff—worked tirelessly to make the new playground a reality. Students provided ideas about equipment and design, and also helped with fund-raising in addition to support from the district, private donors and grants.



Students enjoy the new playground at Delaware Community School.

Members of the school community gathered Aug. 23 to set up the new apparatus in time for the new school year.

## From the superintendent 2009-10 middle school enrollment planning



Superintendent  
Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D.

The City School District of Albany and a group of parents and community representatives are working together this fall toward a solution to one of the most important questions our school system has faced in many years: How do we restructure our middle school enrollment?

A newly formed Middle School Enrollment Planning Committee will consider

the steady and significant enrollment decline at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, which has approximately 250 students in grades 6-8 this year. That is approximately 100 fewer than 2007-08, as anticipated, and nearly four times below the building's capacity.

Because of this, our enrollment plan for 2009-10 includes phasing out Livingston as a middle school and establishing two middle schools – William S. Hackett Middle School and Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School. Our master plan for rebuilding our middle schools has provided two outstanding facilities for students at this important age, both offering state-of-the-art facilities.

We also will maintain North Albany Academy, the former Public School 20, as the district's only school for students in prekindergarten through grade 8. As another of the school district's fully renovated schools, North Albany will continue to serve about 150 students in grades 6-8.

The primary question before the committee is how we will enroll Hackett and Myers equitably, each with about 600 students.

Historically, the question of which of two public middle schools students in Albany attend has been an easy one for parents. Families on the north side of Western Avenue sent their children to Livingston; families on the south side sent their children to Hackett.

With Hackett and Myers on the same side of Western Avenue, a new model is needed, one that ensures the same opportunities for all students.

Should the district create "feeder" schools by designating middle school assignments for each of our elementary schools?

Should we use a lottery system?

Should we follow the nationally recognized Controlled Parent Choice model initiated 20 years ago in the White Plains (N.Y.) City School District? Controlled Parent Choice governs the placement of students based on parental choice, available space and a racial and ethnic balance policy that the board designed.

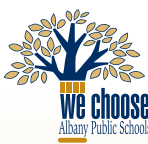
Is there another option that would better suit our needs?

The committee is scheduled to deliver a recommendation to the Board of Education for its consideration Dec. 2. The committee then will refine its plan based on the board's feedback.

The board will review an updated plan Jan. 15, and is scheduled to approve a plan Feb. 3 so that we can assure our families ample time to plan for 2009-10.

We are grateful to the dedicated volunteers who stepped forward this fall to help us plan for this important step. We look forward to their recommendation as we near the completion of our elementary and middle school restructuring plan and prepare to turn our attention and energy to the future of the district's high school structure.

Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



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## Voices | Q: Tell us about your favorite teacher



"I had many great teachers during my school years. The one that stood out as my favorite was my ninth-grade art teacher Roberta Wallack. When I first met Ms. Wallack, she was a breath of fresh air to me. I was comfortable with her and felt on common ground. I didn't think I could draw, nor did I believe I knew anything about art. But, Ms. Wallack's presence and love for art made me appreciate art as much as she did. I remember the hardest project I had in her class. We had to cut out a picture from the newspaper, draw it and then paint it. I was proud of myself, as was Ms. Wallack, with how well the project came out. She gave me an 'A' for it. Ms. Wallack instilled confidence in me that I'm capable of doing things beyond what I've ever expected of myself. Ms. Wallack was a wonderful person that I'm thankful I had in my life. She passed away from cancer, far too young. Thank you, Ms. Wallack, for being a great teacher and the great person that helped me believe in myself."

—Anitra Arrington '93, Grants Office clerk



"So far this school year I would have to say my favorite teacher is Mrs. Newman. Mrs. Newman is my favorite teacher because she explains math in ways that I can understand and remember. Mrs. Newman acts kind of like how us kids act, but more adult-like. She also makes math really fun and funny. Also, with her math isn't a headache, it's more of an easy, everyday thing. She doesn't give that much homework, too! Mrs. Newman is a nice, fun, funny, caring teacher. That's why she is my favorite teacher."

—Iyanna Byrd, eighth grade,  
Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School



"I'm having a great time at Hackett Middle School. I really like the new building. My favorite teacher is Ms. VanDyke because I like Social Studies, she is nice and she is my homeroom teacher. I've had a great experience so far at Hackett Middle School."

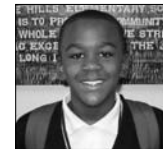
—John Dimase, sixth grade,  
William S. Hackett Middle School



"Last year I began my two-year International Baccalaureate Program. It was intimidating and challenging but one teacher really made me feel capable, Margot Plumadore. She was more than a math teacher, she was a mentor and a friend. She always made herself available for tutoring, especially after school. Ms. Plumadore treated us as equals and always went the

extra mile to make sure we reached our full potential. For example, we had an internal assessment due last spring for math. The entire class was working up until the deadline and Ms. Plumadore stayed up all night grading the assessments so they could be in on time. That's the type of teacher she is, always invested in her students."

—Rose Germano, senior, Albany High School



"I had a lot of interesting teachers but the best one is Mrs. Goldman. She is a nice and caring person. She helps us when we're unsure about our work. She also makes learning fun. An example of it is when we do experiments like weighing blocks or measuring water. Mrs. Goldman also puts experiences of her own that she had into learning. When we're in the computer lab she makes learning even better by giving us assignments that are challenging but fun. Mrs. Goldman is the BEST."

—Shaun Franklin, fifth grade, Pine Hills Elementary School



"I have so many teachers that are my favorite. Their names include Mrs. Gebhardt, Ms. Thompson, Mrs. Palella and Mrs. Cirigliano. If I had to choose one, I would pick Mrs. Cirigliano because she is hilarious and caring. The other teachers are funny and nice, too, but I had a special friendship with her. She knows my little brother, Rodney. Also, her daughter and Rodney are in the same class."

—Kayla Hemingway, fourth grade,  
Giffen Memorial Elementary School



"My favorite high school teacher was Mr. Cark, my PE teacher and wrestling coach. He ran very structured programs, which at that point in my life I needed. I believe his teaching style is ingrained in me! At the collegiate level, I would have to give this honor to Mr. Jocelyn, my Calculus teacher. He challenged me to look for the exquisite functions of various mathematical applications. Using pi as an example, he captured my interest and I never waned from wanting to learn, including content from other courses."

—Daniel McCarthy, science teacher, Albany High School



"My favorite teacher has to be Ms. McQuade. The reason that she is my favorite teacher is because she keeps it real. She doesn't make class boring. We always do fun activities. Ms. McQuade treats us as if we are her own kids. I have a lot of respect for Ms. McQuade and if I had to choose a teacher I could keep forever, it would be her."

—Taylor Wright, freshman, Harriet Gibbons High School

## At a glance: North Albany Academy

The former Public School 20 is the City School District of Albany's only school serving students in prekindergarten through grade 8. Renovated in 2004-05 as part of the district's ongoing facilities project for elementary and middle schools, North Albany Academy enjoys a unique partnership with the adjoining North Albany YMCA, which provides the school's students access to a pool, gym, track and a branch of the Albany Public Library.

**Students: 475 | Teachers: 34 | Total employees: 72**

### Points of distinction:

- Recognized by the New York State Department of Education in 2008 as one of eight "rapidly improving" elementary schools in the district.
- Daily Webcasts of the morning announcements at [www.albanyschools.org/schools/northalbany/nrthalb.htm](http://www.albanyschools.org/schools/northalbany/nrthalb.htm).
- Albany County Outstanding Youth and Community Service award recipient, 2006 and 2007.

### Partnerships:

- Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Albany Fund for Arts and Education
- Albany Public Library
- Berkshire Farms Truancy Abatement Program
- Capital District Community Gardens
- Children's Museum of Science and Technology
- Citizens Bank
- City of Albany Parks and Recreation
- The College of St. Rose
- DonorsChoose

- General Electric
- LensCrafters
- Lexus Nexus
- National Urban Alliance for Effective Education
- North Albany YMCA
- North Albany Academy Alumni Association
- North Albany American Legion Post
- Liberty Partnership Program
- North Albany Neighborhood Association
- Parent Advocacy Project
- Park Playhouse
- Police Athletic League (PAL)
- Ronald McDonald Dental Van
- Rensselaer Center for Initiatives in Post-Secondary Education (CIPSE)
- Siena College
- Tulip Queen
- Turner Construction
- University at Albany S.T.E.P

### Did you know?

Pulitzer Prize-winning author William Kennedy attended Public School 20.

### What makes our school special?

North Albany Academy's mission is to connect and build students' literacy, numeracy and technical skills across grade levels and throughout the content areas. We do this through enriching classroom instruction by partnering with community businesses and local institutions of higher education. Our goal is to help all of our students meet or exceed New York state standards in ELA and math. As Albany's only PK-8 public school, it is only natural that staff members get to know students and families well and strengthen these bonds over time. North Albany has monthly "family" activities that are informative as well as social, bringing together parents, faculty, students and alumni, and instilling pride in both the school and community.



A Champion of Albany's public schools: Alain Kaloyeros, Ph.D., senior vice president and chief executive officer, University at Albany College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE).

## Celebrating our Champions

The City School District of Albany was pleased this fall to present its Champions Campaign, an effort to highlight the great value of public education in Albany through the unique experiences and perspectives of community leaders.

Students and scholars, parents and partners, alumni and athletes, opinion leaders and more. The Champions understand and support the district's mission to educate and nurture all students to be responsible citizens, critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

The Champions have a broad range of experiences and are linked by their shared recognition of the myriad opportunities available to all of the district's students.

The Champions Campaign is the theme of this year's annual district calendar, and also was featured in a *Times Union* special section in September. You can read about each Champion at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org).

We also are grateful to our Champions sponsors: the *Times Union*, KeyBank, Turner Construction Co. and CS Arch.

## Principals attend Harvard program

Four City School District of Albany principals attended the Harvard Summer Principals Institute for Urban School Leaders this year, learning new strategies that each has put into practice this fall.

Anthony Clement from Harriet Gibbons High School, Thomas Giglio from Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, Vibetta Sanders from Pine Hills Elementary School and Cecily Wilson from Sheridan Preparatory Academy participated in the conference in Cambridge, Mass. The conference examined the role of race, culture, equity, special education and social justice in urban classrooms.

The Albany principals were given tips to become more involved in the classroom and ways to assess the effectiveness of instruction through data analysis. Other presentations included the impact of poverty on education and the benefit of inclusion for special education students.

## Love SAM expands at North Albany



North Albany Academy first-grader Janessa Vargas works with materials that are part of the Love SAM curriculum.

Citizens Bank has provided a \$5,000 grant to support and expand the Love SAM program at North Albany Academy.

Love SAM—Science and Math—was launched at North Albany in 2006 in partnership with GE and the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce. It since has grown to include elementary schools in five more counties throughout Tech Valley with support from the New York State Senate.

The first class of Love SAM students at North Albany now is in third grade. The announcement by Citizens Bank will allow North Albany to expand the program to include a first-grade class.

"Love SAM has been an outstanding partnership for the school district and for our students at North Albany Academy," said Superintendent Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D. "We are so pleased that Citizens Bank now has joined this partnership to help us sustain and grow it."

Love SAM supplements and builds on the state requirements for science and math through hands-on inquiry-based activities, field trips, cutting-edge technology and authentic science and math experiences with Tech Valley professionals.

## Giffen helps 'Keep the Peace'

Giffen Memorial Elementary School and the Albany Fire Department joined together this fall to call for an end to violence in the city.

The Oct. 14 "Keep the Peace" assembly in the school's gym was a formal pronouncement of peace and positivity.

"We need to stop the violence because people are dying and getting hurt in our neighborhoods," said Giffen student Antonio Saunders Jr.

Students Benjamin Powell Jr. and Cicero Holmes IV said that more community centers are needed to keep children occupied and off the streets.

Students presented a nonviolence banner to Albany Fire Chief Robert C. Forezzi Sr., a lifelong South End resident. He said it was important for children to take a stand against violence. The banner was put on display at the South End Fire House on Morton Avenue and South Pearl Street.

## Club R.A.W. begins second year

Club R.A.W. (Reading and Writing), an afterschool literacy enrichment program at Delaware Community School, began its second year this fall. Developed and run by teaching assistants and teachers at the school, Club R.A.W. utilizes peer mentoring in an effort to improve the reading ability of all students.

Teachers at Delaware noticed a marked improvement in reading and writing ability among students enrolled in the program last year. Teaching assistants worked closely with program director Derek Johnson and teachers to reinforce grade-specific reading and writing lessons.

Delaware showed significant progress last year on standardized English Language Arts tests and was recognized by the State Education Department as one of eight "rapidly improving" district schools.

This year Club R.A.W. plans to develop partnerships with third- and fourth-grade teachers to better prepare students for the third-grade ELA test. In addition, the club plans to introduce a Spanish-speaking element to program.

## Safety patrol a hit at school and home

Teaching responsibility and improving behavior at school were the main goals when Delaware Community School partnered with the Albany YMCA to launch a safety patrol this fall.

But the lessons haven't ended with the school day.

Parents also are seeing the benefits at home as their children eagerly embrace the task of being leaders and role models in



Fifth-grader Caleb Smith is among the leaders of the new safety patrol at Delaware Community School.

their school community.

"We're getting great feedback," said the Y's Christian Anthony, who supervises an after-school program at the school and worked with Interim Principal Gary Beadnell to develop the safety patrol. "The parents are excited."

So are the students. About 30 fourth- and fifth-graders are participating, with a waiting list equally as long—and growing. Safety patrol members monitor nine posts before school and also assist with dismissal.

"This is one little moment in their life that can change their life," Anthony said.

## Adult CE courses at Albany High

The City School District of Albany's educational programs aren't just for children and teen-agers. The district also offers nearly 20 continuing education courses at night for adults throughout the school year, ranging from Algebra and Chemistry to jewelry making and ballroom dancing.

Albany's Adult Continuing Education program is open to anyone over the age of 18. Classes are offered in three sessions—fall, winter and spring—on Wednesday and Thursday nights at Albany High School.

The 2008-09 winter session begins Dec. 10. Registration for winter classes will be held Dec. 3-4 from 6-9 p.m. at Albany High School. Registration must be done in person. Full payment is required upon registration (cash and checks are accepted).

The complete 2008-09 course schedule is online at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org).

For information during the day, call 462-7292. On Wednesday and Thursday evenings, call 454-3987, ext. 982.

## Magnet school dates for 2009-10

Mark your calendars for important dates this winter for families interested in the City School District of Albany's three magnet elementary schools—Albany School of Humanities (ASH), Montessori Magnet School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST).

- **Magnet Schools Community Day**  
Saturday, Jan. 24 from 10 a.m.-noon at ASH.

All three schools will be represented.

- **ASH Open House** Tuesday, Jan. 27 from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.
- **TOAST Open House** Wednesday, Jan. 28 from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.
- **Montessori Open House** Thursday, Jan. 29 from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.

Magnet applications will be available online at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org) on Dec. 1. They also will be available in each magnet school's main office and at the district's Magnet School Office at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, suite 303.

The deadline to submit magnet applications for the 2009-10 school year is Friday, Feb. 6. The annual magnet lottery will be held Thursday, March 19 at 10 a.m. at Livingston. Call the Magnet School Office at 475-6070 for more information.

## Soph swimmers set pool records



Hanlon MacDonald (left) and Brooke Longstaff have been a dynamic duo this fall.

Albany High School sophomores Brooke Longstaff and Hanlon MacDonald each had record-setting swims during a dual meet at Schenectady High School this season.

Hanlon cruised to victory in the 100-meter backstroke with a pool-record time of 1 minute, 4.23 seconds, beating her closest competitor by five full seconds and the previous pool record, set in 2005, by more than two seconds.

Brooke edged out Schenectady's Sabia Filiaci to win the 100-meter butterfly with a pool-record time of 1:05.11. Both swimmers broke the previous pool record of 1:05.27, which was set in 2006.

"Brooke and Hanlon have been fantastic this year," coach John Andrews said. "They have been working very hard all season and showing improvement throughout."

## Check us out online!

We have created an Online News Center at [www.albanyschools.org](http://www.albanyschools.org) to provide you as much news as possible about the great people and programs of the City School District of Albany. Visit our home page and click the Online News Center link in the right-hand column to read more about any of these stories and additional articles, including:

- Albany High among AP leaders
- Boys, girls finish second in Big 10 soccer
- Middle School Enrollment Committee
- Parent Portal expanding
- Strategic Planning update

You also can check out our District News and Photo Gallery features!

## Board of Education

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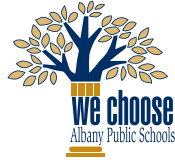
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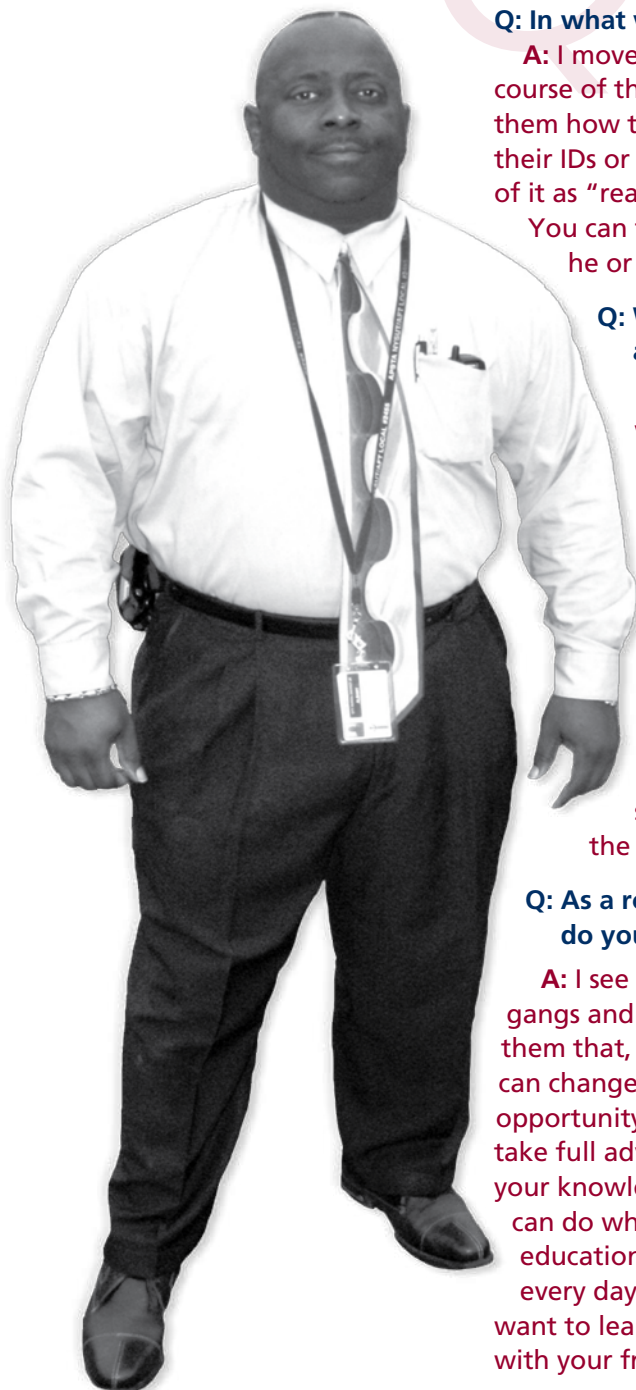
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## Leading the way Meet Issac Cancer '82 Hall monitor, Albany High School



**Q: In what ways do you interact with students?**

**A:** I move throughout the building in the course of the day, greeting students, asking them how their day is, making sure they have their IDs or seeing if they need direction. I think of it as “reading” them when they come in.

You can tell a lot about a student by the way he or she walks in the building.

**Q: What do you like best about your job?**

**A:** Establishing good relationships with the students and trying to be a positive role model in their lives. A couple of years ago students used to say to me “Ah, you’re just a hall monitor.” But several students changed their mind by the end of the year. One of them told me, “You know, I wouldn’t mind working for the school district. I wouldn’t mind being a hall monitor and being a positive force in students’ lives during their time at the high school.”

**Q: As a role model, what kinds of advice do you give to students?**

**A:** I see students dealing with peer pressure, gangs and difficult home lives, and I try to tell them that, as tough as your situation is, you can change it and make it better. You have the opportunity to get an education, and you should take full advantage of it. Nobody can ever take your knowledge away from you. But only you can do what needs to be done to get that education. And that entails coming to school every day prepared, with the mindset that you want to learn and not hang out on the street with your friends.

**Q: What is your goal each day?**

**A:** My goal is to speak to at least one student I didn’t speak to the day before, possibly learn a new student’s name and have them see me and maybe get comfort from knowing, well, OK, Mr. Cancer is in the school. Mr. Cancer works here. He cares that I came to school today and he spoke to me. If he cares about me getting an education, maybe I should care about me getting an education.

Issac Cancer graduated from Albany High School in 1982. After working for Amtrak for many years, he came to work with the City School District of Albany at the former Sunshine School, a special education transitional program, in 2001. He worked there until moving to Albany High in 2006. He currently is a hall monitor, ensuring the safety of the staff, the students and the building. He also is a mentor and role model, building relationships that help lead to student success.

## Alumni achievement

### Carolee Carmello '79—Acting queen!



Carolee Carmello '79

Carolee Carmello loves her job. It’s possible that you love her job, too, if you’ve seen her on Broadway.

An award-winning actress, Carolee currently is starring as Donna Sheridan in the Broadway production of “Mamma Mia!”

Born and raised in Albany, Carolee moved several times as a student, attending School 4, School 10, School 16 and William S. Hackett Middle School before graduating in 1979 from Albany High School. In her career, she has had leading roles in numerous Broadway productions, including, “City of Angels,” “Falsettos,” “Parade,” “The Scarlet Pimpernel,” “Lestat” and “Kiss Me Kate.”

She received Tony Award nominations for her roles in “Lestat” and “Parade.” However, her success on the stage would have been hard to predict back in 1979.

“I didn’t do any theater while I was at Albany High,” says Carolee. “I auditioned for one play, but didn’t get the role and that was the end of my high school acting career.”

After graduating from Albany High, she went to the University at Albany, where she majored in business administration with a minor in French.

“My plan was always to be some sort of corporate CEO somewhere, but it didn’t work out that way,” she says.

Carolee has fond memories of her time in Albany.

“I think the most important thing the school system did for me was teach me how to be a good learner,” she says. “It’s a cliché, but I think that is the single most important thing to take away from school. I’m learning things I never thought I would, like music and about movies and cameras and theaters.

“I was never trained to do that, but Albany schools taught me to learn any subject and to absorb material in the best possible way.”

**Word of Wisdom:** “My Latin teacher, Judy Greenwood, would come to visit all the freshman classes at the end of the year to encourage students to take Latin the next fall. She loved teaching Latin so much that it made it an attractive course. It was something I never considered taking but I was drawn to it because of her spirit and her love of it. I think the biggest lesson is to follow your passions. Mrs. Greenwood was someone who loved what she did and continued to love it. That inspires students beyond anything that comes from a book.”