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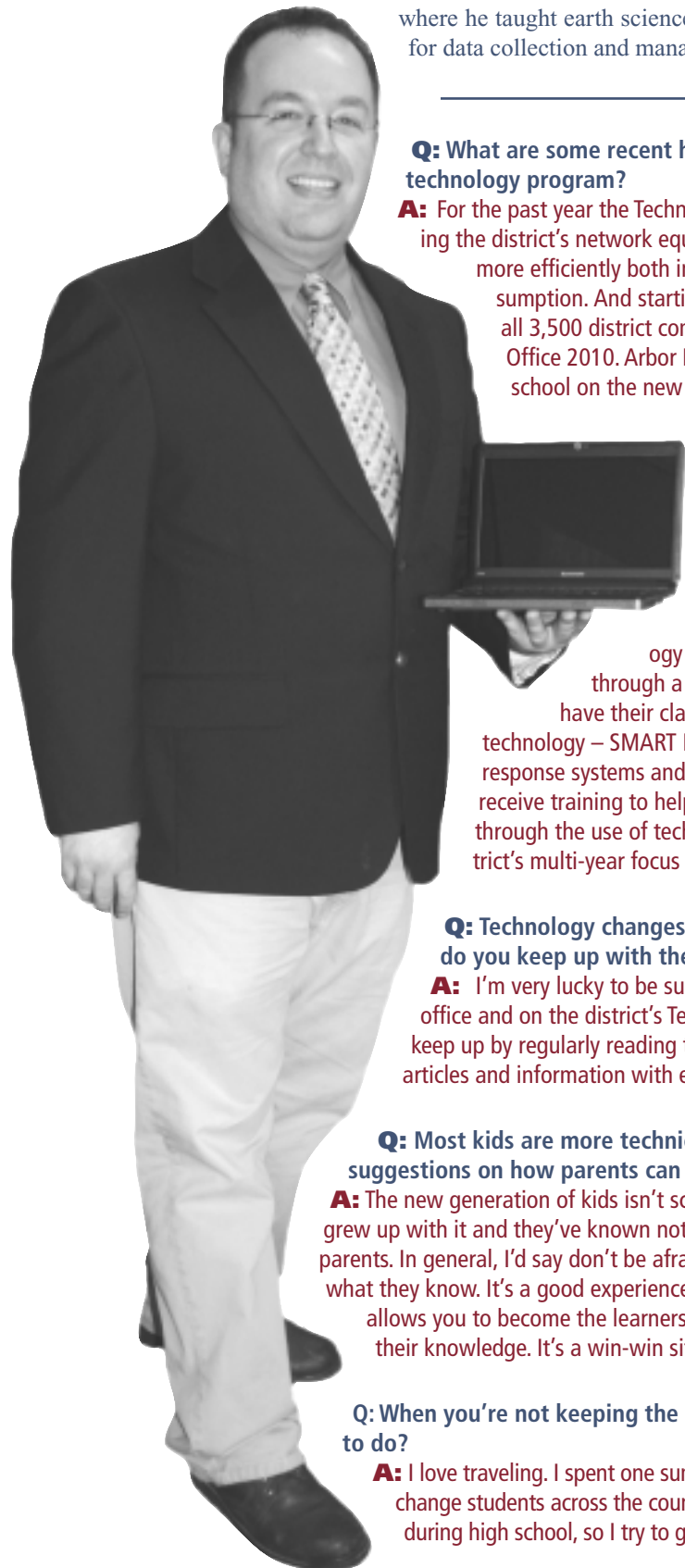
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Leading the way Meet Mark Place

District Technology Coordinator

Mark Place is a teacher first and foremost, so the average person doesn't need a manual to talk technology with him. That's a good thing, since Place and his team of 18 are the people who handle all things techie in the City School District of Albany: computers, printers, phones, data and the Internet. Place came to the district in 2009 from the Brittonkill Central School District, where he taught earth science and then became the point person for data collection and management.



Q: What are some recent highlights in the district's technology program?

A: For the past year the Technology Department has been upgrading the district's network equipment and making its servers run more efficiently both in terms of staff time and energy consumption. And starting this summer, we'll be upgrading all 3,500 district computers to Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010. Arbor Hill Elementary will be the first school on the new network.

We also just received a federal grant for \$500,000 that will allow us to upgrade a total of 20 classrooms at North Albany Academy, Giffen Memorial Elementary School, Albany High School and Hackett Middle School. This isn't just for technology classrooms, either. Teachers chosen through a rigorous application process will have their classrooms upgraded to the newest technology – SMART Boards, teacher laptops, student-response systems and Netbook computers. They will receive training to help them actively engage students through the use of technology. This grant kicks off the district's multi-year focus on purchasing interactive displays.

Q: Technology changes from moment to moment. How do you keep up with the trends?

A: I'm very lucky to be supported by the professionals in my office and on the district's Technology Committee. We all try to keep up by regularly reading technology publications and sharing articles and information with each other.

Q: Most kids are more technically savvy than adults. Any suggestions on how parents can keep up with their kids?

A: The new generation of kids isn't scared of technology because they grew up with it and they've known nothing different – unlike most of their parents. In general, I'd say don't be afraid to ask your kids to show you what they know. It's a good experience for you as a parent because it allows you to become the learners and allows your child to show off their knowledge. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

Q: When you're not keeping the district wired, what do you like to do?

A: I love traveling. I spent one summer escorting 1,300 foreign exchange students across the country. I also lived in Australia for a year during high school, so I try to get back there as often as possible.

Alumni achievement Amanda Serrano '06

Amanda Serrano is a drama queen. Really.

The 21-year-old actress started singing and dancing in the kitchen while still in diapers and added acting to her resume in elementary school.

Her first stage performance was at Albany School of Humanities (ASH), and she's never considered any other career.

"It's my passion. I can't imagine my life without it," Serrano said.

A 2006 Albany High School graduate, she performs in an array of productions that range from traditional musical theater to edgy dramas teaching kids about safe sex. She also studies theater full-time at Hudson Valley Community College.

"My first play was 'Alice in Wonderland.' I knew I could be Alice, but I was too scared," she said. She vowed she'd be the female lead in the school play the next year, and she was.

The private middle school she attended didn't have a drama program, and she was eager to return to the stage when she entered Albany High as a freshman.

"I knew Albany High had a great drama club," she said.

Serrano's first big lead was playing Mayzie La Bird in "Seussical the Musical" in both Schenectady Light Opera Company and at Albany High. In her last year of high school, she met one of her greatest teachers and mentors – Ward Dales.

"He's brilliant," she said of the director/teacher of the high school's award-winning Theatre Ensemble, with whom she continued to work after she graduated. "He calls me his surrogate daughter."

Another mentor and friend is Shirley Arensberg, a retired City School District of Albany teacher who now is director of education for Park Playhouse Inc.

In 2008, Serrano starred in a full-fledged Park Playhouse production in her favorite role to date – Anita in Arthur Laurents' classic "West Side Story."

"I always wanted to be in a spicy, in-your-face, proud Latina role," Serrano said. "I felt no one could give it authenticity the way I could."

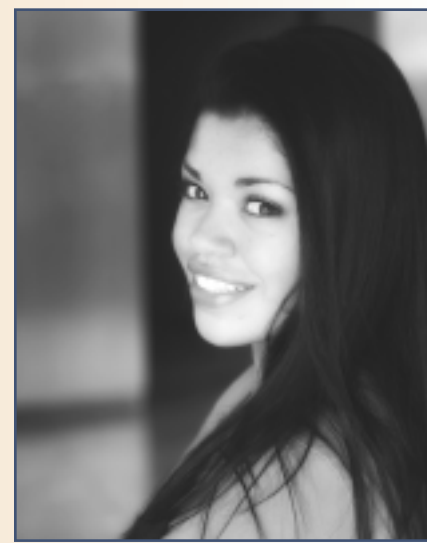
Her dream role is to play another strong Latina woman: Nina from "In the Heights," a musical about the Latino community in New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood.

Meanwhile, look for her this summer in Park Playhouse's production of "Annie Get Your Gun," which runs July 6-Aug. 15 in Washington Park's Lake House amphitheater.

She'll also continue to do work with Too Deep Entertainment, the multicultural theater troupe that takes on issues like racism, violence and other social issues.

And, yes, she wants to be on Broadway. But not just yet.

"I would love to be on a national tour first," she said. "I want to see a little bit of America while doing what I like to do. And if Broadway calls, that's amazing."



Actress Amanda Serrano – who's been performing since she was in diapers – pursues the perfect role.

Next stop ... college

Seniors contemplate life beyond high school

Astrophysics. International relations. Chemical engineering. Language. Pre-med.

Five members of the Albany High School Class of 2010 will pursue studies in these subject areas when they head to college this fall. Their destinations: Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Siena College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The students – among the 90 percent of Albany High’s Class of 2010 that will attend college in September – recently shared their thoughts about their education and the future (*see page 3 for a full list of colleges that accepted this year’s graduates*).

Immanuel Washington looks forward to being able to choose his classes at

Penn, the Ivy League school where he’ll study the universe and how it works. His eyes on the stars, he hopes to be an astrophysicist one day.

Rachel Dias Carlson isn’t sure what career she wants to pursue, but she plans to major in chemical engineering at MIT.

Owen Daniels plans a profession in diplomacy (“if being a secret agent doesn’t work out,” he said). He’ll study international relations at Princeton, also in the Ivy League.

Keva Luke and Clinton Mathai both have their sights set on becoming physicians and will pursue pre-med studies.

Luke also will study Spanish at Siena, and Mathai has been accepted into the accelerated seven-year physician-scientist program jointly run by RPI and Albany

(continued on page 3)



Onward and upward: from left, seniors Rachel Dias Carlson (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Keva Luke (Siena College), Immanuel Washington (University of Pennsylvania), Clinton Mathai (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) and Owen Daniels (Princeton University).

Student achievement

No ‘Ramblin’ Wreck,’ this senior bound for Georgia Tech

Maya Carrasquillo has a tough time finding words to describe herself.

“My friends would say I’m strong and driven,” said the 17-year-old Albany High School senior.

Her activities attest to those words.

She’s an honor student in Albany High’s prestigious and rigorous International Baccalaureate program. She competed in volleyball, outdoor track and indoor track in high school, and volunteers for an array of community groups.

She’s president of the Albany YMCA National Society of Black Engineers and vice president of the Albany PAL Youth Leadership Council.

And this spring she was part of a panel of six high-school students – also including 2009 Albany High grad Ocasio Willson – who shared their thoughts on education with rapper and actress Queen Latifah and an audience of 3,000 educators in New York City.

The words “poised” and “assured” come to mind after talking to Carrasquillo even briefly. Those traits didn’t come naturally, she said.

“I wasn’t always this confident,” she said. “Different experiences helped me get to this point. In school, it was learning to deal with peer pressure, drama with friends. You learn a lot about yourself.”

She also considers her mother, Theresa Carrasquillo, and grandmother, Elizabeth Harley, as pivotal people who shaped her character.

“My mom and my grandmother are very strong women and they’ve been through a lot in their lives,” she said. “Their passion and drive has been instilled in me. They never let me settle for



Maya Carrasquillo is engineering a bright future for herself.

less than what they knew I could do.”

Carrasquillo excelled from Albany School of Humanities (ASH) through William S. Hackett Middle School and on to – and through – Albany High.

“I love it here. I couldn’t see myself going anywhere else,” she said. “You get a chance to deal with different ethnicities and social backgrounds and it’s a very positive experience.”

Carrasquillo has her sights on becoming an environmental engineer with a minor in international relations. She will attend Georgia Institute of Technology (her first choice college, better known as Georgia Tech) in the fall, and would like to work on irrigation and waterway systems in third-world countries.

She feels well-prepared for college and credits her “amazing” experience at Albany High.

“I’ve had so many incredible opportunities that I wouldn’t have elsewhere,” she said. “I’m so grateful for that.”

School news directly to your cell phone, e-mail

The City School District of Albany is launching a new e-mail and text-message notification system that allows parents and community members to choose the information they will receive from each school and around the district.

School News Notifier will provide updates in 20 different categories, including news and events from individual schools as well as district-wide information such as transportation, athletics and Board of Education updates.

Text alerts, limited to 140 characters, will be sent out regarding school closings, delays and other time-sensitive emergencies. E-mail notices will provide the same level of information as well as more detailed notices about a wide range of additional news and events.

You can choose to sign up for this “opt-

in” service, and can unsubscribe at any time.

Sign up by clicking the “School News Notifier” icon on the www.albanyschools.org home page. You can choose to receive notifications from as many or as few categories as you would like.

“School News Notifier is a great way for families and community members to stay up-to-date about what’s going on in our school district, and to receive important updates directly to their cell phones and e-mail accounts,” said Chief Information Officer Ken Cioffi.

Text messages are free to people who have unlimited text-messaging services; cell-phone carriers may charge a fee to people who don’t. Check with your provider if you’re not sure of the terms of your plan.

Arbor Hill Elementary School gets a 21st-century facelift

After two years in temporary space, students and staff of Arbor Hill Elementary School will return this September to their Arbor Drive home.

It will be well worth the wait.

Arbor Hill Elementary has undergone extensive renovations, the final project in the City School District of Albany’s sweeping facilities plan to rebuild or renovate the district’s elementary and middle schools.

Arbor Hill Elementary’s facelift included converting the original open-classroom design, cutting-edge in education when the school opened in 1973, to individual classrooms. Each classroom now has doors, walls and windows, as well as new ceilings, lighting, paint, student desks and chairs, and white boards.

New floors have replaced carpeting in every classroom. Hallways and ramps have new rubber floors, and the gym floor

was replaced with a new, cushioned-wood floor. Also new are the media center/library and art room.

Then there’s the up-to-the-minute technology.

Arbor Hill Elementary will feature two mobile SMART Boards and 180 new personal computers, including three in each classroom, 17 in the new media center/library and 24 in the computer lab.

The building also will have seven 40-inch LCD televisions that can be connected to PCs to serve as large-screen displays.

Behind-the-scenes upgrades include heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and, like every other school, the building will be fully wired to meet the demands of its new technology.

Stay tuned for more information about a community celebration to mark Arbor Hill Elementary’s return home!

From the superintendent Reflections on a year of progress, potential



Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D.
Superintendent

As I near the end of my first year as superintendent, I realize we have many positives to build on.

This has been a very good school year for us. Our achievements are many, including the efforts – in partnership with the community – to restructure Albany High School and district alternative education programs. Both are priorities in our 2008 strategic plan, “A Vision for Tomorrow.”

At Albany High, our effort to raise achievement for all students was well underway when the state announced in January that the school is on a list of low-achieving schools statewide.

You will see changes at Albany High beginning in September, and our work to divide Albany High into four smaller learning communities for 2011-12 will continue to be a top priority.

We are hopeful state and federal support will help us with this restructuring, and we look forward once again to partnering with the community on this important endeavor.

Our successes also included the work of the Alternative Education Think Tank, which has made great progress in assessing alternative education for students from prekindergarten-grade 12. Its recommendations on how we can provide better programs and services will be vital as we reshape Albany High and these programs district-wide.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of these two initiatives. You will hear more about them in the coming months.

We know we must improve our efforts to assure that all students have access to the world-class programs and opportunities that define the City School District of Albany and Albany High. Students who need more help must get it.

This is our responsibility to our community. It will define our work as a school district not only in 2010-11, but in the years to come.

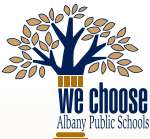
We also are proud to recognize the members of the Class of 2010. Our seniors were accepted at many of the nation’s top institutions of higher learning, again demonstrating the talent and diversity of our graduates and programs.

And whether our graduates head off to college, into the workplace or to serve their country, we wish them great success and hope they will find that their foundation in our school district has prepared them well.

Finally, I am grateful for your support in May for our 2010-11 budget and our plans to upgrade Albany High’s facilities and sell the former Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

While we were not able to avoid difficult budget cuts, we have maintained nearly all programs and services. Your support, especially in these difficult economic times, means the world to us.

I am eager to continue our work together for another year on behalf of our students and families. My best wishes for a wonderful, safe summer.



**CAPITAL
education**

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Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to Ron Lesko at (518) 475-6065 or rlesko@albany.k12.ny.us, or Lisa Angerame at (518) 475-6066 or langerame@albany.k12.ny.us.

City School District of Albany
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Voices | Q: Who is your hero, and why?



My hero is Barack Obama because he is a pioneer in so many ways. He is America’s first black president for one, and has taken firm stances on many issues that have not been seriously acted on before, such as his effort toward universal health care. Although I don’t want to go into politics as a career, his example as a pioneer is one that I would like to emulate.

—Robert Cosgrove, junior
Albany High School



My hero is my coach. He encourages me to push myself to the limit. He shares more than just sports drills. He shares advice and people skills, and has a dedication that spreads to the rest of us. He also is very caring and responsible. He checks up on my grades all the time. The biggest thing he has done is boost my confidence and make me a better person.

—Donald Gekonge, sixth grade
William S. Hackett Middle School



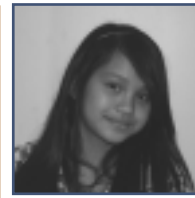
When you hear the word “hero,” you think about superheroes in comics. To me, a hero is someone that is with you through good times and bad. My parents, Vincent and Yolanda DiSanto, are my heroes. Their patience, kindness and respect for others are all qualities that they instilled in me. Thanks to their examples I can continue to “plant the seeds,” building confidence for a successful future in the young lives of my students.

—Emilia Giorgio, prekindergarten teacher
Giffen Memorial Elementary School



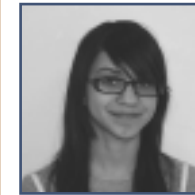
My mom is my hero. She is retiring this year after working as a physical education teacher for the past 41 years. Her dedication to her students, colleagues and community is exceptional. She teaches with enthusiasm and sees the potential in every child. My mom has taught me the importance of education and inspires me to make a positive impact in the lives of all my students.

—Constance Hogan, speech language pathologist
Sheridan Preparatory Academy



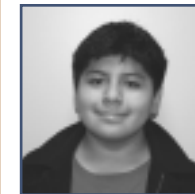
George Washington is a hero of mine. He’s a great role model, plus he fought in the American Revolution and won freedom from the British. He also made mistakes, which he changed. He had slaves but freed them because he thought that if the U.S. takes away other people’s freedoms because of color and nationality, then why do they deserve to get freedom from the British? Bottom line: treat other people the way you want to be treated.

—Rosemarie Lizardo, fifth grade
New Scotland Elementary School



My hero would have to be my older cousin. He doesn’t even know that I look up to him, but I’m glad he’s a positive role model of mine. He has already made great accomplishments in his life and influences me to live up to my dreams. He just inspires me to never give up no matter what the circumstances may be. I hope to do as well in the future as my cousin did.

—Kaidy Mendez, sophomore
Albany High School



My mother is one of the most hard-working and selfless persons I have ever met. She inspires me through the actions and decisions she makes. For example, even though she was taking care of five kids, she still chose to go to school and get her bachelor of science. I love my mom because she always tries to help others when they need her and tries to work out problems between people. She never gives up.

—Ronaldo Pintado, sixth grade
Pine Hills Elementary School



I am lucky enough to have two heroes in my life, my mother and my grandmother. They help me achieve my goals and find my way to a brighter future. They teach me right from wrong and always help me with my school work. Without my grandma and mommy, I wouldn’t be me. I am proud to have them as my heroes.

—Anisa Wise, seventh grade
Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School

At a Glance: Arbor Hill Elementary School

Built in 1973, Arbor Hill Elementary School is located on Arbor Drive across from Whitney M. Young Jr. Health Center. The building has undergone a two-year renovation project that will finish in time for the start of the 2010-11 school year.

When students return in September they will learn in a modernized facility with new computers in every classroom, walls and doors for every classroom – in contrast to the school’s previous school-without-walls configuration – new computer and science labs, an indoor atrium and a new heating and cooling system. Students also will be able to walk to school across a new pedestrian bridge that will span Manning Boulevard and link the school to Skyline Apartments and Lark Street.

Grades served: prekindergarten-6
Students: 341 | **Teachers:** 35 | **Total employees:** 60
Before-school program begins: 7:30 a.m.
Breakfast begins: 8:40 a.m.
School day begins: 9:05 a.m.
School day ends: 3:35 p.m.
After-school program ends: 6 p.m.

Points of distinction:

- ATLAS community school
- Full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten
- Fifth- and Sixth-Grade Scholars Institute
- Voluntary school-uniform program starting in September

Programs and Partnerships:

- Albany Housing Authority
- Catholic Charities
- Charles L. Touhey Foundation
- First Albany school banking
- Grow Girls
- Math Club
- National Coalition Building Institute
- School plays

- Seal-A-Smile
- Skidmore College
- Student newspaper – *Eagle Eye*
- The College of Saint Rose
- University at Albany
- Verizon
- Whitney M. Young Jr. Health Center
- YMCA

What makes our school special?

Arbor Hill Elementary School is an ATLAS community school – Authentic Teaching and Learning for All Students. ATLAS is a comprehensive school-reform design dedicated to improving student learning. Students, teachers, administrators and families work together to graduate students who exhibit a deep understanding of their world and the habit of living by and with that understanding. The school also is surrounded by beautiful grounds that give students a natural classroom where they can celebrate and study the environment.

Did you know?

The Arbor Hill Elementary motto is, “Dream it, believe it, do it!”

Hall of Fame Class of 2010 honors 14

The City School District of Albany has selected 14 new members for its Hall of Fame and will honor them at an induction ceremony in October.

The Hall of Fame Class of 2010 includes an array of accomplished people with one thing in common: they exemplify the strength of Albany's public schools and the community of people who support them. This year's inductees are:

John J. Bach – teacher, guidance counselor, principal, district superintendent

Eleanor P. Bartlett – teacher, principal, district deputy superintendent

Ben Becker – coach, principal, Class of 1925 (Philip Schuyler High School)

Carolee Carmello – actress, Class of 1979

Robert J. Danzig – journalist, author, publisher, Class of 1950

Adolphus Cunningham Hailstork – musician, composer, college professor, Class of 1959

Rebecca Gottstein Holden – basketball player, Class of 1998

Milton E. Horne Sr. – basketball player, coach, Class of 1969 (Philip Schuyler High School)

Robert Koonce – football player, educator/student advocate, Class of 1982

Wayne Morris – district employee, Board of Education member, community volunteer

Larry T. O'Neill – athlete, teacher, coach

Josephine Sano – teacher, union leader

Ron Sontz – teacher, coach, administrator, Class of 1951

John Velie – drama teacher, director

The members of the Class of 2010 will be inducted Oct. 8 as part of Albany High School's Homecoming ceremonies.

The Hall of Fame was established in 2009 to honor accomplished graduates and others in the community who support our schools. It serves as a means of recognizing and honoring those who made significant contributions in academics, athletics, music, performing arts or other extracurricular activities, and alumni who have excelled through their community involvement or in their careers.

Hall members also are selected in two additional categories: administrators, coaches and teachers who demonstrated exceptional leadership, character and achievement during their careers; and contributors who have been loyal and devoted supporters of the district.

Visit www.albanyschools.org for more information about the Hall of Fame.

Next stop ... college

(continued from page 1)

Medical College. He is the first Albany High graduate ever accepted into this prestigious program.

The grads look forward to starting the next phase of their lives, but admit there are things they'll miss about Albany High.

One-on-one attention from teachers. Interacting with a wide variety of people. Not the cafeteria. The doors opened by programs and classes they took. The Gatorade machine. Sports, music and other activities.

Mostly, they'll miss the people – friends

and teachers who made a difference in their lives. That list includes math teacher Varada Pandya-Vaughan, physics teacher John Sawyer, social studies teacher Paul Contento, chemistry teacher Rita Gava and more.

The grads agreed their Albany High education has prepared them well for the challenges of college, and they're eager to move on to what lies ahead.

"New friends, thrilling teachers, dorm life – I look forward to the whole experience," Luke said.

Grads off to impressive institutions

The members of the Albany High School Class of 2010 have been accepted at more than 100 colleges and universities in New York state and across the country.

Check out the impressive list of institutions of higher learning below – and congratulations to all of this year's graduates!

Alamance Community College	Lincoln University	State University of New York College at New Paltz
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences	Long Island University	State University of New York College at Old Westbury
American University	Loyola University Maryland	State University of New York College at Oneonta
Amherst College	Manhattan College	State University of New York College at Oswego
Bard College	Maria College	State University of New York College at Plattsburgh
Bennington College	Marist College	State University of New York College at Potsdam
Berkeley College, New York City	Marymount Manhattan College	State University of New York College at Purchase
Boston College	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	State University of New York College at Binghamton
Boston University	McGill University	State University of New York College at Buffalo
Bowdoin	Mohawk Valley Community College	State University of New York College at Stony Brook
Brandeis University	Morgan State University	State University of New York Maritime College
Bryant & Stratton	New Jersey's Science and Technology University	Syracuse University
Bryn Mawr College	Niagara University	Temple University
Cazenovia College	Northeastern University	The Catholic University of America
Central Pennsylvania College	Onondaga Community College	The College of New Jersey
City College of New York	Pace University	The College of New Rochelle
Clarkson University	Post University	The College of Saint Rose
Coastal Carolina University	Prince George's Community College	Tufts University
College of New Rochelle	Princeton University	Tulane University
College of the Holy Cross	Quinnipiac University	Union College
Cornell University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Arizona
Delaware State University	Roberts Wesleyan College	University of California, Berkeley
Drexel University	Roger Williams University	University of Connecticut
Emmanuel College	Russell Sage College	University of Georgia
Fisher College	Sage College of Albany	University of Hartford
Fordham University	Schenectady County Community College	University of Massachusetts Amherst
Fulton-Montgomery Community College	Siena College	University of New Hampshire
George Washington University	Skidmore College	University of New Haven
Georgetown University	South Carolina State University	University of Pennsylvania
Georgia Institute of Technology	St. Bonaventure University	University of Rhode Island
Hamilton College	St. John's University	University of Vermont
Hartwick College	St. Lawrence University	Valdosta State University
Haverford College	St. Michael's College	Vassar College
Herkimer County Community College	State University of New York College at Canton	Villanova University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	State University of New York College at Alfred	Voorhees College
Hofstra University	State University of New York College at Buffalo	
Howard University	State University of New York College at Fredonia	
Hudson Valley Community College	State University of New York College at Geneseo	
Iona College	State University of New York College at Morrisville	
Ithaca College		
Keene State College		
Kutztown University		
Le Moyne College		
LIM College		

Hackett renovations lauded ... again!

The William S. Hackett Middle School renovation project has received the Preservation League of New York State's prestigious "excellence in historic preservation" award.

"It's an honor that the Preservation League selected Hackett Middle School for this award and recognized this historic project for the City School District of Albany and our entire community," said Superintendent Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D. "The building is truly magnificent. Everyone involved with the restoration deserves recognition."

This is the third award the district has received for the Hackett project, which was part of the district's facilities project to completely rebuild or renovate all of its elementary and middle-school buildings this decade.



Hackett's striking main staircase is one of the school building's many award-winning features.

The Historic Albany Foundation recognized Hackett with a Preservation Merit Award for the rehabilitation of a significant public building in 2009. The second recognition for Hackett was an Award of Merit presented by the Eastern New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects at the annual 2009 Design Awards reception.

Built in 1925-27 and designed by renowned architect Marcus T. Reynolds, Hackett is named in honor of Albany's 67th mayor. The school was completely updated in 2007-08 as part of the district's decade-long facilities project, incorporat-

ing many of Reynolds' original features in a complete overhaul and update of every floor and wing in the building.

District partners on the project were Envision Architects PC, of Albany; Excel Engineering PC, of Latham; Klepper, Hahn and Hyatt Structural Engineers of Syracuse; Sano Ruben Construction Co., of Albany and Hamlin Design Group.

The Hackett project was one of nine statewide to receive the prestigious Preservation League award, presented on May 12.

WE CHOOSE



Albany High School seniors ushered in the city's annual Tulip Festival on May 7 with the ceremonial washing of State Street. Decked out in authentic Dutch attire are, from left, Kasiah Knight, Allie Diefendorf, Sholanda Addison, Amanda Villela, Ayesha Holloway, Anazha Holt, Sabina Bektesevic and Catherine Gibbons.



Giffen Memorial Elementary School second-graders Sui Len Par, left, and Jazmin Galloway clown around after seeing the greatest show on earth May 7 at the Times Union Center.



Delaware Community School first-graders party Latin-style during the school's Cinco de Mayo festival and community dinner. From left are Deisis Ramirez, Stacey Espinosa and Mercedes McLean.



The College of Saint Rose volunteer Stephanie Zonca and kindergartner Reina Hinton plant a seedling together during Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology's (TOAST) Earth Day celebration on April 22.



Arbor Hill Elementary School first-graders Clint Davis and Kianna Tatum get into the spirit of a community barbecue their school held May 18. Family, friends and neighbors joined that day to celebrate the fact that the school's renovations are almost complete, and to get a sneak preview of the new and improved facility.



William S. Hackett Middle School seventh-graders Lianne Parmalee, left, Coral Weissman-Frosse, center, and Maritza Morris rehearse before their May 18 concert, when they and their classmates in chorus and orchestra performed a world premiere of a musical and theatrical composition they wrote with a world-class composer.



Sophomore Anissa Roberts looks the part of a job-seeking professional during the April 27 "Dress for Success" day at Abrookin Vocational-Technical Center.



Pine Hills Elementary School first-grader Ziari Brown, with author-illustrator James Ransome in the background, prepares for a lesson in drawing using a number as a model. Ransome visited May 19 as part of William Kennedy Junior Writers Week activities.



Mollie Kather, a seventh-grader at Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School, runs the first leg of a relay race at a modified track meet in Schenectady.



Montessori Magnet School third-graders Jahira Hines, Quanair Williams, Mazzy Gazzaway and Caleb John do the moves of a mischievous martial-arts monkey during a school-wide "One World Classroom" performance of music, acting and storytelling.

ALBANY SCHOOLS



Albany Symphony Orchestra trumpeter Eric Berlin has an enthusiastic audience of Schuyler Achievement Academy second-graders interested in an animal horn, an early ancestor of the trumpet. From left, are Tarenea Dickens, Shamari Holland, Alex Jimenez, Judea Johnston, Iahana Green, Raeshauna Mitchell, Melina Mendez Ramos and Destiny Stenson.



Albany School of Humanities (ASH) fifth-graders Ciera Green, left, and Maeve Cahill learn a thing or two about Australia from an exhibit about the country that first-graders created and displayed in the school's museum room.



Eagle Point Elementary School fifth-grader Danica Baz and second-grader Manjir Hossani take a joy ride during the school's end-of-year picnic for students in Eagle Point Elementary's English-as-a-second-language program.

Thompson connects schools, volunteers

Fiona Thompson is looking for a few good people.

OK, more than a few.

The new volunteer coordinator for the City School District of Albany, Thompson is the bridge between district schools and people in the community who want to support them. She's looking for people willing to spend a few minutes or a few hours helping out across the district.

"Some people think volunteering in schools is limited to reading to children, or that you have to have a child in the school," she said. "Others think they have nothing to offer or that it has to be a big time commitment.

"The reality is that there are numerous opportunities to help out, and you can work in a school or from your home."

Family members, neighbors, friends, working people, retirees, students – all are welcome.

Thompson is committed to finding the right fit between a volunteer's interests and a school's needs – a critical piece in assuring that everyone benefits.

The Board of Education appointed Thompson in March in response to the need



New Volunteer Coordinator Fiona Thompson urges people to contact her if they'd like to help out in district schools.

identified in the district's strategic plan, "A Vision for Tomorrow." Thompson is in the process of identifying volunteer programs currently operating in the district and evaluating their effectiveness.

She also has developed district guidelines for volunteering.

To find out how you can volunteer, call Thompson at 454-3987, ext. 465, or e-mail her at ftompson@albany.k12.ny.us.

You also can visit the Volunteering section at www.albanyschools.org for more information or to download an application form. Sign up today!



Fourth-graders Tasir Brown, Leanna Gardner and Tonja Sinclair sport North Albany Academy shirts, a staple in the school's voluntary uniform program.

Schools uniforms in style at six schools

North Albany Academy Principal Dale Getto thinks school uniforms are terrific.

"They put more of the emphasis on education and less of the emphasis on what you're wearing," she said.

This year marks the school's first foray into voluntary uniforms. North Albany, serving students in prekindergarten through eighth grade, became the fifth district school to have a voluntary school-uniform policy.

Others are Pine Hills Elementary School, Schuyler Achievement Academy, Sheridan Preparatory Academy and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and

Technology (TOAST).

Starting in the fall, Arbor Hill Elementary School will become the sixth school to have a voluntary uniform policy.

Albany Police Officer Kelly Kimbrough is the father of fifth-grade twins at North Albany. He's a school-uniform fan, too.

"From a police officer's standpoint, a uniform does away with the issue of haves and have-nots and the problems that causes," Kimbrough said.

"It's a no-brainer from a parent standpoint. It looks better. You have uniformity. And I think it builds school spirit."

District updating alumni directory

The City School District of Albany is in the process of updating its alumni directory and is working with Harris Connect, which helped the district prepare the most recent version in 1997.

Representatives from Harris Connect are contacting graduates of Albany High School and the former Philip Schuyler High School by mail and telephone to update directory and biographical information.

The process only requires your time –

alums will not be required to buy anything, but will have the opportunity to purchase the directory once it is complete. The project is of no cost to the district or taxpayers, and a small percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the hard-cover directories will benefit the district.

If you have additional questions or would like more information, please contact Lisa Angerame in the Communications Office at langerame@albany.k12.ny.us or (518) 475-6066.

Nano³: Third group completes unique program

The power of the world's tiniest technology continues to fuel career possibilities for Albany High School students.

Nineteen students graduated from the NanoHigh program in May, marking the third group to complete the groundbreaking program.

Developed jointly by the University at Albany's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering and the City School District of Albany, the NanoHigh program began in 2007 and is believed to have been the first initiative of its kind at an American public high school.

The program enhances Albany High students' opportunities to take advantage of a growing number of nano-related careers

being developed in the Capital Region, across New York state and around the world.

"With each passing year we are recognizing more and more just how integral nanoscience and nanotechnology are to our future," said Superintendent Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D.

NanoHigh includes courses taught at Albany High as well as interactive laboratory activities at the college's world-class Albany NanoTech facility.

"Our students are so fortunate to have the opportunity to get an inside view and hands-on experience with this technology that continues to transform the way we live and work," Dr. Colucciello said.



Fifth-grade "scratcher" James Robertson shows off his creation on one of TOAST's new PCs.

TOAST 'scratches' the tech itch

French and Spanish, move over. Students at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) are speaking a whole different language.

It's called Scratch, and TOAST students are so conversant in it that they recently gave a seminar about it to teachers-in-training at The College of Saint Rose.

Scratch is a free, kid-friendly computer programming language designed by MIT. Students fluent in Scratch – called "scratchers" – use the language to create their own interactive games, stories or projects.

TOAST is the first Capital Region school to take up Scratch, according to the team of educators leading the project there:

teachers Laurie Ellis and Steve Costello, and library media specialist Alice Florance.

The project started as an after-school program of a dozen kids from a range of academic levels. At the end of each session, students didn't want to stop, so engrossed were they in their work on projects based on what they study in school.

The TOAST team's goal is to make Scratch part of the regular school day, and to help other district schools start scratching, too!

"It's a collaborative team, modeling collaboration for the children," Ellis said.

Added Costello, "It doesn't get any better than that."

Canine boosts reader confidence

Buster, a lovable pug, tilts his head and fixes his one good eye on a reading child. You'd swear he was listening to the story.

A certified therapy dog in the Tail Waggin' Tutors program of Therapy Dogs International, Buster arrives for reading lessons at Sheridan Preparatory Academy every other Tuesday. Students clamor to see who gets to read to him each time.

Principal Cecily Wilson isn't keen on canines but was open to the idea that they might help struggling readers improve their skills and confidence. Since the program began in her school in January, she's seen apprehensive readers benefit from reading stories to their new furry friends.

With parent permission, children who need extra reading help have the opportunity to practice for either Buster or a German shepherd named Arabelle.



Sheridan Preparatory Academy first-grader Christain Burgos tells a tale to the ever-attentive Buster.

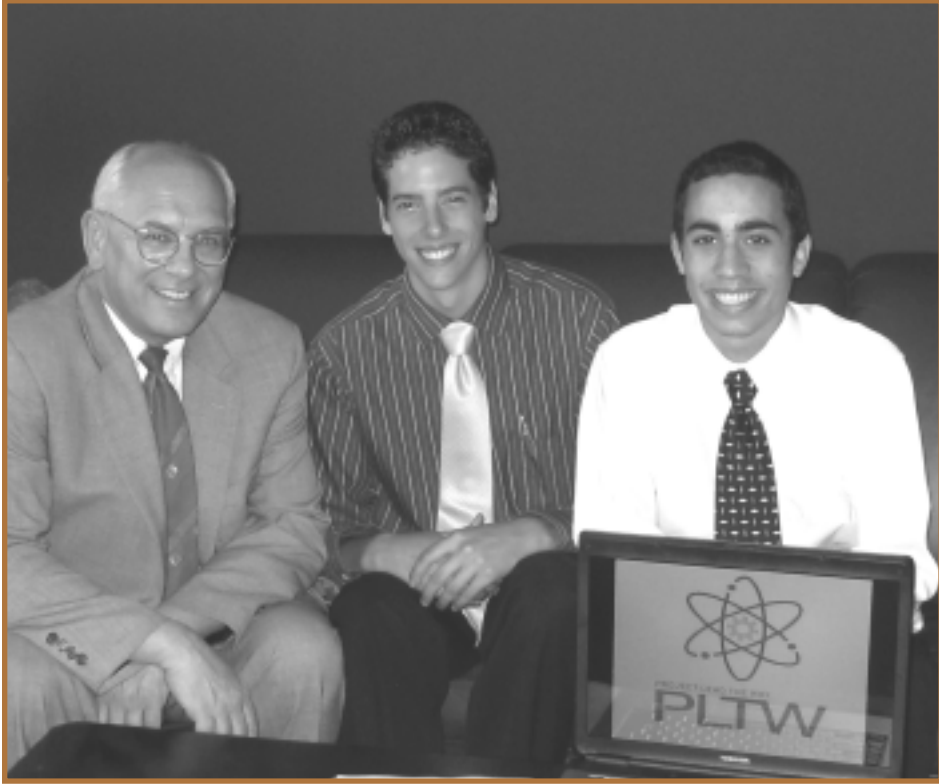
Some of the students are learning to read and speak English. Others are reading below grade level. Most lack confidence – until they go before their four-legged, tail-wagging audience.

Montessori students present at Green Summit

Fifth-graders involved in a project to curb waste at Montessori Magnet School presented their findings at a Green Summit at the University of New Hampshire over Memorial Day weekend.

Marjani Brown, Ebony Burnett, Jacob Citone, Jack DeLong, Alyssa Ibarra and Heaven Williford discussed the fifth-grade initiative that led to the school switching from disposable plastic to reusable metal flatware.

They are students of Jannine Walton, whose class last fall started studying ways the school could reduce its carbon footprint. They identified problems caused by the lack of landfill space, consulted with the Department of Environmental Conservation, collected data about waste in their school, looked at options for change and discussed the issue with every grade.



U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko hears about the importance of STEM educational programs from Albany High seniors Patrick Rahm, center, and Peter Barth, right.

Future engineers teach Congress about STEM

Two Albany High School seniors and one of their teachers visited Washington, D.C., in May to urge lawmakers to make it a priority to fund science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education programs.

Students **Peter Barth** and **Patrick Rahm** and technology teacher **Brent Cady** lobbied education leaders in the nation's capital on the benefits of STEM programs like Albany High's Academy of Engineering. They met with U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko, staffers from Sen. Charles Schumer's office and leaders from Indiana, South Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Barth and Rahm were Project Lead the Way students at Albany High from freshman year forward. They both plan to study engineering when they enter college this fall.

Running down an Olympic-sized dream

Time is an interesting concept in Kareem Morris' life, measured so often in the blink of an eye or the beat of a heart, fractions of seconds he chases in pursuit of a distant finish line.

Rio 2016. The Summer Olympics.

But first there was the matter of 14-hundredths of a second.

That's all that had separated Morris from his best time in the 200 meters and the longstanding Albany High School record he so badly wanted to take with him when he moves on to the University at Albany in the fall.

Taking on all challenges during a stellar do-it-all senior season – Morris won four events at the Section II track championships May 28 and earned the Director's Cup as the school's top athlete in 2009-10 – he got down to one of his last chances in the 200, his favorite event.

Then he blew away the record at the state qualifying meet June 4. His time of 21.74 seconds topped the 21.94 Gary Ramsey ran in 1987 (*Capital Education* went to press before the June 11-12 state championships).

Now Morris is intent on his next goal – as much of two full seconds as he can reel in by 2016. That can be an eternity in a sprinter's life, but Morris will take it one heartbeat at a time.

Shaving a second or just a little more would give him a chance at the 2016 U.S. Olympic trials. Take off another second and throw in another blink or two and anything is possible.

Stan Gasorowski coached 1988 Olympian Tracy Baskins and every other member of the Albany High boys' track and field team over the last 34 seasons. He ranks Morris among the top three athletes he has coached.

"He can do it all," Gasorowski said. "The best thing about him is he is very humble and just goes about his business."

In the fall, Morris will study computer science at UAlbany – "people probably wouldn't think that I'm a computer geek," he joked – and he'll continue accelerating toward that sultry summer samba six years from now in South America's most glamorous city.

Times Union acknowledges outstanding seniors

Three Albany High School seniors have been honored in the *Times Union's* 2010 Scholars' Recognition Program.

Owen Daniels, Clinton Mathai and **Daniel O'Connell** were selected among this year's group of outstanding Capital Region students. Nominated by their teachers, the scholars are recognized for scholarship, leadership and service to their schools and communities.

They were acknowledged in a special section published in the April 22 *Times Union* and honored at the Annual Scholars' Recognition Program dinner.

PAL recognizes Sheridan Prep teacher volunteer work

Special-education teacher **Janet Mangold** received a "Community Supporter" award in April from the Police Athletic League (PAL) for the karate classes she volunteers to teach.

Mangold, who also teaches kindergarteners and first-graders in a self-contained classroom at Sheridan Preparatory Academy, has taken karate for 30 years and taught it for 20. She has volunteered for PAL for three years: in weekly programs held at Sheridan Prep and Giffen during the school year and at programs at PAL during the summer.

Students attend prestigious conferences

Four students from Pine Hills Elementary School and one from Albany High School joined outstanding students from around the United States this spring at prestigious leadership conferences in Washington, D.C.

Pine Hills Elementary students who attended the Junior National Young Leaders Conference of the Congressional Youth Leadership Council are **Xhuliano Brace, Shaun Franklin, Annie Okichy** and **Sara Popp**.

Albany High junior **Victoria Clo** represented her school at a similar conference designed for older students – the National Young Leaders Conference, also sponsored by the Congressional Youth Leadership Council.

In both cases, students had the opportunity to interact with people who work in the three branches of government, the media and the international community.

Harriet Gibbons educator wins three grants

Harriet Gibbons High School library and media specialist **Emer Geraghty** has received funding from the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center for three proposals to improve teacher and student learning.

Her first grant, through the center's Learning Profession Partnership, will underwrite creation of a project for teachers on using Google to enrich learning. Geraghty also received funding for two mini-projects: "Silence is Golden" and "Reading and Relaxing in the Library."

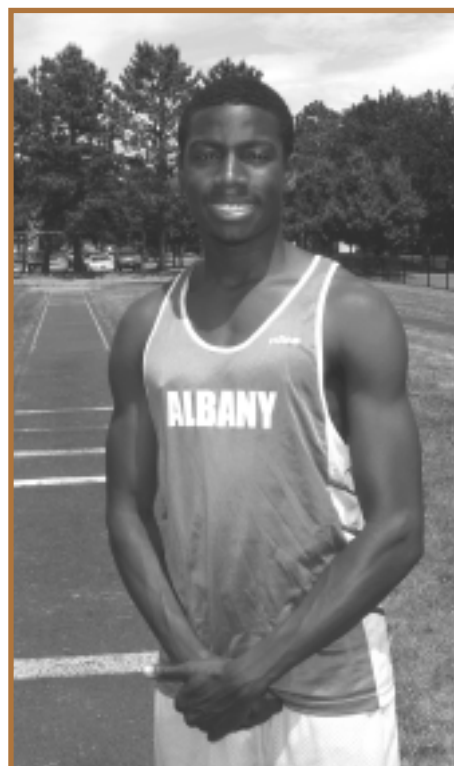
111 represent district in Workforce Team Challenge

One of the largest groups taking part in the 2010 CDPHP Workforce Team Challenge came from the City School District of Albany.

A team of 111 teachers, staff and administrators participated in the annual 3.5-mile event, which attracted more than 8,600 total runners and walkers on a day when the temperatures reached into the mid-80s. This year's event benefited the Boys and Girls Club of Albany.

The district team, led by Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School Assistant Principal **Lesley Buff**, garnered an award for having the second-largest team from an educational organization, following Shenendehowa.

Ms. Buff and team members **Carrie Barown** (Albany High School physical education teacher) and **Ken Lein** (Montessori Middle School principal) presented the team's award – an engraved crystal plaque – at the June 3 Board of Education meeting.



University at Albany-bound senior Kareem Morris dazzled in numerous events during a record-breaking season for the Albany High boys' track and field team.

Check us out online!

We have created an Online News Center to provide you as much news as possible about the great people and programs of the City School District of Albany. Visit www.albanschools.org and click the Online News Center/Photo Gallery link in the right-hand column to read more about any of these stories and additional articles, including:

- A year in photos: Photo Gallery 2009-10
- Summer reading materials available
- CDTA to offer kid summer discount
- Registration for kindergarten, pre-K and magnet schools available for 2010-11
- Albany High students named 2010 black and Latino achievers

You also can check out our District News section!