



## Student Council influences change at PHS

By Bianca Pottinger

The student council at Passaic High School was established to build a new form of communication and to further student education. The student council members are representatives of the student body from all four grades.

This year, teachers Mr. Brubaker and Ms. Ruiz support our student council and provide guidance. The student council is the voice of the people. For various complaints, concerns, and suggestions, the student council will hear your cry and speak up about numerous issues.

One of the sophomore representatives, Aleyshka Barbosa, stated, "I was interested in the position of student council because I knew that the school needed a change, and it also needed to be reminded that there's so much we can do in high school. So I thought to myself that I would be one of the best people to be apart of a



The 2016-2017 PHS Student Council Representatives

PHOTO BY BIELKA NUNEZ

team that can make this happen. Who doesn't want to be part of change?"

Barbosa believes she could bring some comedic relief to the

student council. "I'm a funny gal; I would say so even though student government deals with the problems of the school. I think I can be that comedy relief

that will reassure people that we are only human."

Junior representative Jessica Sanchez wants to be a part of positive change at PHS. "I am

interested in this position on student council because I care deeply about the issues we as students face at school on a daily basis. As a junior and rising senior, I want to make sure I leave this school in its best possible shape for the years to come. Student council is the best way to address and do something about our problems with the school, whether it be about bathrooms or uniforms or grades. I think I am capable of helping bring about positive change."

Freshman representative Ginelis Rodriguez stated, "My tactics for healing PHS issues is to have a deeper understanding of the problems and discuss with the other members of the council and find a way to fix it together."

Election day was held on December 15, 2016. It's been a long and hard battle to fight for such positions. We have a vast number of decorated and driven students on our PHS student council.

## Not Just Celebrated, but Valued: Black History Month

By Rosa Valentin and Brandon Cisneros

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

During the month of February, we celebrate the achievements by African Americans and it is a time for recognizing the fundamental role of African Americans in U.S. history. America has become one of the most diverse countries and it is time we honor the achievements that African Americans have contributed to our nation.

Memorable names that will never be forgotten include: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou. Their achievements have inspired people today to stand up for themselves and have given the world a

*"It is a good feeling that our school takes the time out to acknowledge such important people and events in America's history."*

—Anayelly Juarez

new perspective about how much stronger we are together.

PHS has made sure to honor this month during the morning announcements by remembering the lives of African Americans who have been prominent in our history. Teachers and students have shared poems and stories about important figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Frederick Douglass. Even in classrooms in all subject areas, teachers have made mention to distinguished people in the African American community.

Sophomore Anayelly Juarez said, "It is a good feeling that our school takes the time out to acknowledge such important

people and events in America's history. Sharing this information on the morning announcements provides some inspiration for students to receive at the beginning of their day."

Black History Month is about integrity, leadership, determination, and remembrance. We take the time to see what people before us have fought for and how people all races and ethnicities should have the right to equality. This month not only promotes equality and remembrance for African Americans, but also encourages acceptance and equality for all.

Through Black History Month, forever in our nation we are reminded of the voices silenced and those who left a mark that created a change.

*Ed. note: Passaic High School had the pleasure of hosting a Black History Month assembly on Feb. 23. There will be a follow-up article in the next issue.*



The PHS Blood Drive volunteers

PHOTO BY JOHANA LASTOR

### PHS BLOOD DRIVE:

## Saving Lives One Drop at a Time

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Saving a life and making a positive impact has never been easier than with donation of blood at our school's annual blood drive. Passaic High School hosted the Central New Jersey Blood Center Blood Drive once again this year with the help of over 200 donations by the students at PHS. The Future Meds of America and their hard-working advisor Mr. Nyabeta organized the event.

The members of the Future Meds of America arrived to our school gym before 7 a.m. in order to help set up. Tasks including everything from getting the registration papers ready, to setting up the stations, to the simplest job of setting up chairs in the waiting area. All volunteers put total dedication into this event, knowing the outcome was worth it.

Sophomores Rosa Valentin and Brandon Cisneros recently stated, "The blood drive is something we enjoy doing, it shows us the importance of do-

nating blood." The blood drive outcome was more than a success. "Passaic High School is absolutely our most successful high school ever in the history of the blood center, but our most successful blood drive of all blood drives!" said Karen Leadbeater, account manager of the Central Jersey Blood Center.

Mr. Nyabeta could not have put the outcome of the blood drive into better words when he stated, "We had some setbacks, but like a phoenix we rise better and fast... maybe not that fast but fast enough."

The blood drive was held to not only to help save lives, but also to spread the word for everyone to donate blood, not just students. New Jersey is one of the states that donates the least amount of blood yearly. Club advisor Mr. Nyabeta made sure to get the message across that, "The students get to know the benefits of blood donation; they get to participate in doing something good for themselves and for the community."



PHOTO BY MS. MERCED

Cheerleaders show their school spirit. Story on page 8. (More sports on pages 7 and 8.)

# LFD Takes Lead for PHS!

By Johana Lastor

One of the most recent additions to Passaic High School's list of clubs is called Lead for Diversity (LFD). The president of the club, Thania Rubio, who is part of the Class of 2017, said, "LFD is all about acceptance and having an open mind."

Going further in detail, she said, "In LFD we learn to love others and we help students educate themselves about the diversity that we have in not only in our school but the one that they will encounter after high school."

Rubio explained that "LFD came to be during the summer of 2016 when five students, including myself, went on a trip where we had no idea what was going to happen. In that trip, we spent five days creating a community with around 60 other students who came from different parts from New Jersey and New York."

"I have no words to explain the experience in the camp but my peers and I felt like everyone in our school needed to hear what we learned," she explained. "Due to this, we have worked for hard for the past six months to get this club started at Passaic High School."

Rubio said her biggest aspiration as the president for LFD is "to be able to reach out not only my school but my community." She said she hopes "to be able to break the boundaries of division."

In addition, Passaic High School always talks about wanting to prepare their students for the real world, and Rubio assures that this club brings that by stating, "I wish



PHOTO BY JOHANA LASTOR

The "Let Kindness Stick" Project is on display on the second floor of the M-Wing.

to make my peers great leaders and great educators not only for the future of LFD but for the real world."

Not only is LFD making an impact to PHS, but Rubio reassured that they are just getting started. "We have big plan for the LFD club; one of the recent ones is the wall of kindness."

Students get to witness the wall of kindness when walking past the bulletin board that is located on the second floor in the main building next to guidance. Furthermore, Rubio mentioned how the club tried to replicate the subway therapy that is found in New York City that was created after the elections to allow people to express their feelings on a post-it note.

"Since the elections, we know that it's only going to get harder for communities like ours. The purpose of this wall is that we want people to take some kind of positivity. Through this project it wasn't only LFD working but it was the whole school joining as one to promote

positivity."

She ended her statement by saying, "It gives me hope as a person that there are still kind people in this world and that is what LFD is all about; it takes one person to make a difference."

Considering that LFD is one of the newest clubs that PHS has presented, Rubio said, "I hope to reach out to as many people as a club and be able to make people understand that it is okay to have different perspectives on different topics. But we just to become accepting of one another."

Ultimately, she claimed, "I hope to make a big difference around the school and the community to share love, positivity and hope."

In essence, LFD is taking a lead for Passaic High School! For more information, talk to the president of the club, Thania Rubio. Make sure to get involved by checking out LFD for yourself in room M217 on Mondays after school!

pushed him to be the best that he can possibly be. Growing up with that mindset, all he has ever wanted to do is to make his family proud.

Duran is a part of multiple clubs at PHS that help out our community, such as the Octagon Club and the Environmental Science Club. Duran also actively volunteers on weekends at an elderly care center and he helps those who have fallen victim to a burning house situation.

"Serving the community is

a big part of my life," Duran said. John is a high achiever and finds that the support of his friends, family and teachers help to push him to be the best he can be, personally and academically.

"I plan to live my life the best that I can and I plan to improve every aspect of my faith, morality and academics."

Let's all congratulate John Duran for his success and for his motivation to achieve even more!

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By Janessa Mejias

This Senior Spotlight goes out to John Duran. He is known for being in NJROTC and Marching Band, but what he has accomplished will help you get to know him a little more. Duran, 18, was always motivated by his family and they always

# SHPE Representing PHS!

By Dyani Moreno and Darlene Martinez

The newest addition to extracurricular activities has been the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Jr (SHPE Jr.). This club is an extension of a bigger SHPE organization, located at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT).

Mr. Martinez, Dr Sanchez and Mr. Chomko are the advisors of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers club. In SHPE students have the chance to be part of fun experiments and labs. Students can also explore colleges and job opportunities that they might enjoy in the future.

Recently, members of the SHPE program got an opportunity to attend a competition at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) on Dec. 10. The event was hosted by SHPE-NJ, in partnership with SHPE New Jersey Institute of Technology, SHPE Rutgers and SHPE Stevens Institute of Technology. Our students participated against other SHPE Jr. Chapters from across north Jersey.

In the contest, the students created a definition for sustainability and presented it in front of other high schools and college students. The jury then picked the best presentation and asked the team members trivia questions about sustainability.



PHOTO BY STEPHANIE OCAMPO

The SHPE Team at their latest competition at NJIT.

The teams that attended the competition took first and second place. First place team members include seniors John Garcia and Josue Galvez, and sophomore Anthony Merejildo. Second place team members include juniors Michelle Bautista and Angel Gonzalez, and senior Leonardo Jimenez. Other PHS students that participated in the event were sophomores Anayelly Juarez, Darlene Martinez, and Eduardo Ramirez.

# Save the Date for Youth Appreciation Awards Banquet

The Passaic Optimist Club is holding a Youth Appreciation Awards Banquet on April 6, 2017 at 7 p.m. at The Sevilla Restaurant in Passaic. Passaic High School's very own Octagon Club, which is a junior organization of the Optimist Club, is participating in this event.

The Octagon Club, advised by Mr. Sheridan, is committed to community service here in the city of Passaic. Some of their primary activities include Bagging for Bucks at Shoprite in Passaic, Halloween Pumpkin Painting, Gift of Giving and Easter Egg Hunt with the Speer Village Kids, Student/Faculty Basketball Game, Thanksgiving, Holiday and Mother's Day Luncheon with Passaic's Seniors, and the Passaic High School Emergency Relief Fund.

The Passaic Chapter of the The Optimist Club has been

around for 48 years and awards \$30,000 in scholarships annually. The annual dinner gives students the recognition that they deserve for their positive influence on their school and community.

Tickets will be available at the door for \$35. Clubs, teams, and organizations have the opportunity to sponsor an outstanding youth student who is positive, hardworking, and goes above and beyond expectations. These can be students from Lincoln Middle School or Passaic High School. This prestigious honor went to 25 Passaic students last year.

All are encouraged to attend or submit a student for recognition for this truly inspiring event. All honorees and their parents/guests will be guests of the Passaic Optimist Club. For more information, see Mr. Sheridan.

# AP Classes Cater to Multitude of Interests

By Stephanie Ocampo

Students at Passaic High School have the opportunity to take a variety of AP courses throughout their time in high school. If students perform well on the AP exams, they may be able to earn college credits.

AP courses at PHS include: Art History, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Comparative Government and Politics, Computer Science A, Computer Science Principles, English Language and Literature, English Literature and Composition, Environmental Science, Music Theory, Physics 1, Physics C, Psychology, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature and Culture, Statistics, Studio Art (Drawing and Design), US Government and Politics, US History, and World History.

With the wide range of courses available, it is almost for students to not find an AP class that they are interested in.

"The main thing that a student needs in order to be successful is the desire to be successful. They need to be aware that [AP classes] are going to take a lot of extra work and may require some time after school in tutoring. But it is a great path to be successful in college and afterwards," said Ms. Welch, Assistant Principal.

## AP Sciences

Ms. Kush teaches AP Chemistry and describes the struggle of fitting so much material into so little time: "AP Chemistry is taking both General Chemistry 1 and Chemistry 2 and trying to fit it into a full school year. While in college, it takes two college semesters with classes that might meet for an hour everyday to complete their two courses."

Along with the AP Chemistry course, as well as a similar college course, comes a lab period. Ms. Kush stated, "Labs in college are three hours, and in high school, we only have 80

minutes."

This creates a challenge for science teachers to condense all the material into less than half of the amount of time. However, it is beneficial for students to complete these classes in high school so they can get a head start on college courses.

According to Ms. Kush, there are many real life applications to relate to AP science courses. "AP Physics offers introductory paths into engineering fields, and AP Chemistry offers paths into potential pharmaceutical science preparation. AP Biology can help students prepare for a medical route and AP Environmental Science can introduce students to an environmental policy career."

## AP History

Mr. Velez, a second year AP World History teacher at our school, expresses that only one year isn't enough to fit in all the content; he prefers it to be two years. But it is possible to teach all of the material as long as the teacher is focused and on track with his curriculum.

Taking AP World History gives students the opportunity to learn skills such as becoming more critical, asking both basic and high-level questions frequently in the classroom, and making connections during the different eras. The skills learned in these classes are applicable to other subject areas and in the future, whether in college or a career.

AP World History is one of the few AP courses offered to freshmen (along with AP Principles of Computer Science). It provides exposure to a history course before taking AP U.S. History, which is rumored to be more difficult.

Mr. Velez states that it may be helpful in the future for PHS and LMS to partner up to implement a Pre-AP course at the middle school level for students who may be prepared to take an AP course freshmen year in high school.

**CAREER PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT:****Biomedical Science**

By Anayelly Juarez

Career Pathways are new classes that offer much more information than regular elective classes. They were recently implemented to the school in the 2016-17 school year. These career pathways range from Engineering to Biomedical Science courses.

The Engineering pathway for example, allows the student the opportunity of obtaining college credits by the end of their high school career. Pathways allow students to take courses that will guide them towards their future careers. This way when graduating from high school, students have an idea of what is in store for them in college and or the workforce.

With intensive and rigorous work, these courses take the students to places above and beyond than what they have already learned in the classroom and allow them to expand their knowledge in the careers that await them in the real world.

The Biomedical Science pathway offered in PHS, allows the students to tackle real-life-challenges in the medical field before they reach college. This

course allows students to use the same tools any professional working in hospitals, and laboratories would use while they do their day to day tasks. Students have the chance to learn information on diseases like diabetes, extract DNA from plants and animals, and explore the job of forensic scientists as they correctly analyze crime scenes and make autopsy reports.

It is pathways filled with labs like this that allow students to have a taste of what their professions have waiting in store for them. "I like this class because you do interesting things; my favorite part of the class are the labs we do in groups," said Jennifer Perez, a sophomore who is currently take this class.

The Biomedical Science classes use special software provided by the school that is designed so that students can have access to Project Lead The Way (PLTW).

PLTW introduces students to the fundamental Principles of Biomedical Science. This makes it easy for student to access it through any electronic device with the given username and password assigned by the administrators.

Mr. Caceres and Ms. Russo are

the two Biomedical teachers at PHS.

Ms. Russo believes that these PLTW courses are great. "They are hands on and are taught like a college class. So the students are more independent, as far as the learning process, it is more student driven than teacher driven."

Ms. Russo added, "Biomedical Science, or Pathway courses are a great experience for students to dive into a field of study with less stress of traditional learning. In these courses, students have a more hands on experience, which allows for him/her to see if the field of study is right for them. The entire course is built on solving the medical mystery of how Anna Garcia died as we explore diseases, analyze autopsy and medical reports and conduct experiments."

Whether these students are aiming towards going in the medical field or not, they all are gaining a learning experience that will expand their knowledge. In all, courses like these have a different approach to learning while being interactive. Pathways are a great addition to Passaic High School and will help us achieve our goals for the future. These classes are possible thanks to the staff and administrators who want to see us succeed and have the best education.

**Culture Through Tongue**

By Yakelin Victoriano Hernandez

Learning a language is more than just about speaking it; it is about the history and culture that makes the language what it is. At PHS, students have the opportunity to learn three different types of languages: Spanish, French, and American Sign Language (ASL).

Mr. Jose Maria, one of the teachers of Spanish at PHS, stated, "The hope for the language department is for kids to learn and conquer a second language, not only that but to also know about the culture behind the language."

Mr. Maria believes that the more languages available to be taught, the better! He stated, "[the school] should consider adding two to three more languages so that the students at Passaic High School can expand their thinking."

As culture expands, so does the languages. Languages are a form of communication, it can open up your communication skills, and could help expand your social skills. By learning a new language along with a bit of background

knowledge of the culture providing you with some information making it easier for you to communicate without using stereotypes.

Mr. Maria states that languages will be useful for students in their futures, "they will help [students] in the future because people learn multiple languages, it helps them to communicate better with people and it will open up more job opportunities."

According to *The New York Times*, there is a true benefit to knowing more than one language. "Being bilingual, it turns out, makes you smarter. It can have a profound effect on your brain, improving cognitive skills not related to language and even shielding against dementia in old age."

All in all, learning a new language is beneficial to everyone it opens career paths, communication with others, new knowledge. These languages are and can be very beneficial to today's work fields.

Source:  
"The Benefits of Bilingualism" – *The New York Times*

**The Challenges and Rewards of Being an English Teacher**

By Bianca Pottinger

English, is a school subject that challenges the way we think, learn, and interpret information. There are various English teachers who express their love and passion for literature and spark their students' interest. The universally applied literary works can break down borders that are hindering our knowledge of the outside world.

However there is one who stands out above the rest. Ms. Aarons has been teaching for

a while. Her skills provide students the education they deserve. Ms. Aarons has put an abundant amount of effort into teaching these students. She is also a model of great discipline and hard work. Ms. Aarons teaches freshmen English 1 CP at PHS.

**The Hilltop Star:** What's one accomplishment you are the most proud of?

**Ms. Aarons:** "Being a mother who can provide for her child, the same way my parents struggled to provide for me. I have

more freedom as a mom."

**THS:** What do you think are the most important attributes of successful people?

**Aarons:** "Perseverance, intrinsic motivation, patience, generosity, and humility. Being humble, not caring about the fame of success. Paving it forward, others built a bridge for you don't forget to build one for those behind you."

**THS:** What are some challenges you experienced working with students transitioning from middle school to high school?

**Aarons:** "Unawareness of how they are viewed as a minority and the way they repeat the same cycles they know are not working. Their easy acceptance to settle for less and not the best."

**THS:** How does your personality help students become successful in English now and upcoming years?

**Aarons:** "I'm very humorous and blunt I'll make you laugh and make you think. I'm relatable as a minority growing up in the inner city of Paterson, New

Jersey."

Ms. Aarons is of Jamaican descent. Her parents came to this country seeking better privileges for their family. With the numerous amounts of barricades immigrants and alienated residents face, finding work becomes more and more difficult.

Mrs. Aarons has been teaching for roughly 13 years. To conclude, we thank Mrs. Aarons for being such a benevolent and chivalrous character, with her exertion of intelligence among the halls of Passaic High School.

**Military Ball 2016:  
A Night to Remember**

By Aleyshka Barbosa and Danielle Baez

Every year, the NJROTC program hosts an event called The Military Ball. This school year, the event was held Dec. 17, 2016 at the Best Western in Fairfield.

The annual Military Ball is a tradition that goes back many years for JROTC programs everywhere. Every year, NJROTC cadets gather at a venue dressing to impress. The female ca-

detts are given the opportunity to dress in long formal dresses while the male cadets dress in their formal uniforms.

The opening ceremony began with the singing of our national anthem and a presentation of the American flag.

As part of the opening ceremony all seniors who attended through the swords of the honor cadet members, known as "The Senior Entrance Sword Arch." Soon after the instructors said a few words and introduced the guests of honor.

Finally, as the dance floor is cleared and the guests were seated, the military ball court is called to line up. The Military Ball King and Queen were announced. Joan Pimentel won the crown for military ball queen; and the crown for military ball king went to Sergio Batista.

All of the attendees enjoyed a beautiful night with delicious food and amazing music and dancing.

Thank you to the Military Ball Committee and all of the Naval Science instructors that contributed to make this a successful event!

**REMEMBERING MRS. O'BRYANT-HOPKINS****'You don't have to wait until night time to sparkle.'**

By Rosa Valentin-Bello and Aleyshka Barbosa

Mrs. O'Bryant-Hopkins was an asset to the Passaic High School Community, no doubt about it. Not only was she the Radio and TV Production teacher, but she was also the advisor of the African-American club, a Homecoming organizer, and the Spirit Week coordinator. Here at PHS, we have a morning show called "Hot Topics" which featured her students in the TV Production class to showcase their editing skills, production and hosting.

Not only did she contribute to things we did here at PHS, but she was also an active member in her church and participated in many missionary outreach initiatives within the Linden area. Outside of school, Mrs. O'B lived a full life. She loved to travel, go to the movies, and try different restaurants. She enjoyed doing these activities with her husband and friends.

Besides her husband, friends and family, she loved her dog Boo Boo. She always made sure she made it to doggy day care in time to pick him up. She was extremely close to her brother and sister and they were a tight knit, small family.

"You don't have to wait until night time to sparkle." Indeed, this is what Mrs. O'B taught us as a fashionista. She would arrive to school in sparkly sweaters, eyeshadow, or even having her nails done to match her outfit! She even worked on a fashion show outside of school with Ms. Allen and did makeup for the models.

Ms. Allen couldn't have said it any better when



Mrs. O'Bryant-Hopkins

she said, "[Ms. O'Bryant] was an honest, hard-working, determined, energetic, bold, yet caring individual who would go above and beyond for you. This same energy was transferred in her classroom. If she made her mind up about something we all knew it was going to come to fruition because of her tenacity." This shows that Ms. O'B left her mark on the world in more than one way. Although we said farewell, her memory still lingers in our minds and she is forever in our hearts.

# Obama Helps Nation Transition to New Leadership

By Paul Morrobel

After eight years, it has come to an end. President Barack Obama is no longer our current president and is transitioning from presidential to civilian life. The very emotional address was capped by a night that was full of a revival of his 2008 campaign. This night was all about making sure that through his transition we come together – united as a nation.

Some present during the address, felt as if Obama was campaigning again due to the excitement in the convention

hall and the crowd's roar. Rather than showing a dull and lame attitude, he spoke with the passion of a presidential candidate.

Things got emotional once he started to thank his wife, Michelle Obama who he described as his "best friend."

To another person who had been there for the entire ride, Obama said, "To Joe Biden – the scrappy kid from Scranton who became Delaware's favorite son – you were the first decision I made as a nominee, and it was the best. Not just because you have been a great Vice President, but because in

the bargain, I gained a brother. And we love you and Jill like family, and your friendship has been one of the great joys of our lives."

Obama ended the night, by recalling his 2007 campaign address and stating that all he said back then was motivation for himself and Americans that made them all realize that it was all validated at the end of his presidency. He asked the crowd to "believe," to believe in themselves because they are the ones who will change the world.

"Obama, out."



PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

President Barack Obama shoots clay pigeons at Camp David in Maryland. Now that his term is over, Obama will have a lot more time for recreation.

## Our New President, Donald Trump

By Janessa Mejias

Our 2017 elected President Donald Trump's presidential inauguration was on Jan. 20, 2017. Inauguration Day is a federal holiday in Washington D.C.

One of the many traditions during this day at the White House is having our outgoing president accompany the incoming president to the Capitol. In this case, Former President Obama escorted President Trump and watched him take his oath of office.

The inaugural theme was the campaign slogan that helped get the business mogul elected- "Make America Great Again."

"The theme is very simple," Trump Inauguration Chairman Tom Barrack told ABC News. "The idea is to have a crosscut of harmony of America and normal Americans that reflects on them, not on the power and prestige of this man."

President Trump's inauguration attracted about 30 to 40 percent less people than Obama's 2009 crowd, which is



PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

President Donald Trump

about 700,000 Trump supporters. This big day for our new president consisted of a great transition in power. Although not necessary, the bible is used as another tradition also known as the Swearing-In Ceremony. This ceremony is the official oath of office.

After the traditional ceremonies took place, President Donald Trump made an outstanding

Inauguration speech which he reportedly said had taken him about three weeks to draft and 20 minutes to say aloud.

A special luncheon took place with the families of congressional leaders and members after both Trump and Vice President Pence were sworn in.

Welcome our new President, Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence!

## Movie Review: A Monster Calls

By Armando Martinez

*A Monster Calls* is the film adaptation of the book with the same name and written by Patrick Ness. The film discusses the life of 12-year-old Conor, dealing with his mother's illness, a non-sympathetic grandmother, and bullying classmates. He finds a most unlikely ally when a monster appears at his bedroom window. The ancient, wild, and persistent monster guides Conor on a journey of courage, faith, and truth.

"Visually it will certainly stick with you, and your children" – Neil Genzlinger for the NY Times

"A splendidly rendered, yet oddly ill-conceived terminal-illness melodrama that feels much too dark and serious for audiences Conor's age, and an even more curious fit for grown-ups" – Peter Debruge for Variety Magazine

"Watch it on a big screen to take in all the beauty. A couple



PHOTO BY FANDANGO.COM

Lewis MacDougall in "A Monster Calls."

of flawless live-action performances share the screen with lovely animation, and with whatever digital magic spawned the monster" – Joe Morgenstern for the Wall Street Journal

This is an incredible film that shows the importance of confronting one's own truths. It discusses the power stories have on our lives, how they can help us through the out most difficult moments and teach us life lessons.

## Jaw-dropping moments from the 59th Grammys

By Armando Martinez

The 59th Annual Grammy Awards were held live on CBS on Sunday, Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. ET. As expected, this year's Grammys were far from boring, filled with outstanding and superb performances by the top artists. Frank Ocean, Drake, Justin Bieber and Kanye West all boycotted the Grammys, which lead to the suspicion that it may end up being a "boring night." The host of the night, James Corden, didn't leave any room for a disappointed crowd. James Corden's enthusiasm and impromptu Grammy Carpool, added more to the show's festive atmosphere.

But aside from the said boringness this night would have brought, here are some more jaw dropping moments that will leave you speechless!

### Adele's Praise to Queen Bey:

Adele was the big winner of the night, winning all five of the Grammys she was nominated for, especially winning, once again, Record, Song and Album of the year. However, Adele felt she didn't deserve to win Album of the Year but strongly believed Beyonce was the rightful winner. Adele spoke highly of Beyonce and said "The way I felt when I first heard 'No No No' was exactly the same as when I first heard 'Lemonade' last year... The other artists who mean that much to me are all dead."

### Bruno Mars' Epic Tribute to Prince:

Bruno Mars showed his love for Prince, with an amazing performance of the icon's 1984 single, "Let's Go Crazy," while decked out just like the music legend. Not only did he kill the vocals, he shredded on the guitar in a performance that made it the best tribute to Prince. Truly iconic!

### Chance the Rapper Makes History:

Chance became the first artist to win a Grammy without



PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Beyoncé at the Grammys.

selling physical copies of his music, or any music for that matter. He remains unsigned to any record label, and his music is free to be downloaded online. Chance won three Grammys, best new artist, best rap album, and best rap performance.

### Beyoncé's Holographic Mesmerizing Performance:

The mother, pregnant with twins, delivered one of the most groundbreaking performances of the night that ended up being more like art than your standard live Grammys fare. She performed "Love Drought" and "Sandcastles," in a stunning gold embellished ensem-

ble with a crown to match.

### Adele Gives it One More Try:

Adele wanted her tribute to George Michael to be perfect, and after a pitchy start, she asked the ensemble backing her on a moody 2017 update of Michael's 1996 single "Fastlove" to start over. She said "I can't do it again like last year... I can't mess this up for him." This sincere moment from Adele was one to remember.

A full list of all the Grammy winners can be found at <https://www.grammy.com/nominees>.

## February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

# How to Tell If You Are In an Abusive Relationship

By Armando Martinez

When people hear the words “abusive relationship” their mind goes to straight to physical, not even thinking about how abuse can come in different forms. It doesn’t always need to be physical, it can also be verbal and mental abuse. Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from dating partner in a single year. It has been reported that 1 in 10 high school students have been purposely hit, slapped or physically hurt by their partner. This type of violent behavior usually begins around the ages of 12 and 18.

The question is, how does one know that they are in an abusive relationship?

Abusers will use a variety of strategies to manipulate you and use their power:

### **Dominance:**

Abusive individuals need to feel in charge of the relationship. They will make decisions for the you, and tell you what to do and expect you to obey without question. The abuser will treat you like their child or as property, they want to have control over you.

### **Humiliation:**

An abuser will do everything he/she can to embarrass you or make you feel less of yourself. If you feel

worthless or that no one wants you, you’re less likely to leave the relationship. They make you believe that they are the only ones that love you. Insults, name-calling, shaming, and public put-downs are all weapons of abuse designed to destroy your self-esteem and make you feel powerless.

### **Isolation:**

The abuser will cut you off from the outside world, to increase your dependence on them. He/she will keep you from seeing family and friends, or can prevent you from going to places. You will have to ask for permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone. Last time I checked the only people

that should be in control of you, should be your parents, but even they should give you some space.

### **Threats:**

Abusers will often use threats to keep their partners from leaving and scare them from telling anyone of the abuse. He/she may threaten to kill or hurt you, other family members and friends. They might even threaten to commit suicide if you leave them.

### **Denial & Blame:**

Abusers will make excuses for the inexcusable. They will blame their abusive and violent behavior on a bad childhood, a bad day, and will blame it on you. Your abuser partner may minimize or act as if

the abuse never happened. They will constantly make you responsible for their abusive and violent behavior. Abusers often will not admit they have a problem, and that right there is a problem.

If you have experienced any of the things listed above or feel that you are in an abusive relationship get help. Discuss with your counselor in school, tell an adult you trust and go to the police. If you aren’t sure if you are in an abusive relationship, look at the red flags and warning signs that signal abuse.

*Ed. note: Sources for this article are available on HilltopStar.com*



PHOTO BY JANESSA MEJIAS

The No H8 Club, with the help of PHS students, faculty, and staff, created a project that highlighted what people believe “love is.” This project is on display on the second floor of the M-Wing.

## Love is...

By Ginelis Rodriguez and Juliana Disla

The “No Hate Club” is a gay and straight alliance and their goal is to spread more love into school, life, and the world. This club is a place where you will be able to talk and communicate with people to express yourself and nobody will judge you. Anything you say will be only between the club and you.

A selection of the many topics the club will be discussing as a group are teen dating, healthy relationships, trust, communication, respect, anti-violence, happiness, and honesty.

The group members will spread awareness and provide advice about how to handle abusive relationships. The club guides you to have healthy friendships and relationships, and accepts equality for different genders and sexualities.

Teen dating is a natural thing, but most teens don’t know how to take the first step to have a healthy relationship. It’s important for teens to know they have to communicate with their partners to build a strong relationship with trust.

Resources that are explored through the club can assist all students in aspects of their daily lives, whether they are in a relationship or not.

## What is the best way to support students going through a rough time?

By Janessa Mejias

Support systems are a huge factor in a person’s life. Having a great support system can benefit you in many different ways. Out of the students that I interviewed at PHS, every single one agreed that it is important for every individual to have a solid support system.

Most students may go through a tough situation during their time in high school, whether it be their parents divorcing, a bad breakup, an abusive relationship, recent deaths in the family, etc. According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 1 in

5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually harassed every day- and many go unreported. These crimes may go unreported because many people may be afraid to speak up.

According to the organization Love Is Respect, only 33 percent of teens who were in a violent relationship ever told anyone about relationship abuse. Nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner in a single year. Having a solid support system may give individuals the confidence they need to report these crimes

Many people I have talked to agree that they would want be a

support system for a friend if they needed it. When asked, “how you would help a friend going through a tough time?”

PHS senior, Jayleen Betances, 18, said, “I’d be supportive, encourage them to talk to someone who can help such as a professional or listen to them talk and see how I could help.”

Mateo Ortiz, 18, also a senior at PHS, said, “If my friend chose to come talk to me about a situation, the first thing I would do is hug them because they obviously are in a dark place and I’d let them know they can talk to me.”

Many people are like Jayleen and Mateo and believe in the

importance of a support system. Ms. Hall, a PHS chemistry teacher thinks positively of support systems, whether it be to give or receive the support.

“I would definitely want to be heard. I’d want someone to be there for me when I’m going through a tough time,” stated Ms. Hall.

So how exactly do you help a friend who’s in a tough situation? How do you deal with the situation? How do you approach your friend?

• Be there for them and let them know you care. Let them know that things may be hard now but they will push through it.

• Don’t approach them irrationally and speak to them privately. Let them know you have noticed a change in them and you want to help.

• If your friend is trusting you with something very serious, take it into consideration. Keep it confidential and let them trust you to be their listener.

• If you or someone you know is going through a tough situation, think of all the options that could benefit you or them in some way, such as counseling, help hotlines, etc. Don’t shut them out. Everyone is going through their own battles and everyone deserves a friend!

## AROUND PHS

# Symphony of Beautiful Voices and Expertly Played Instruments

By Daisy Gonzalez

On Dec. 22, 2016, the PHS Band, Strings and PHS Choir performed their annual Winter Concert in our PHS auditorium. However, there is always a long road to create a fantastic final product.

Soon after the 2016 Marching Band season ended, it seemed like a happy ending to all, but the reality of what was approaching soon set in.

Only two weeks before the concert, Mr. Rusca, the PHS Band Director, along with the band, worked together to insure the pieces of music were perfectly executed. Every night practice, sweat, tears, and spit had fallen on the carpet that laid in G150.

The night of the concert, the band dressed in white and black to impress. The audience stood amazed as the band played the State-winning show, “The House of Cards.”

“It was great to see what a tre-

mendous turn out we had for the Winter Concert,” sophomore percussionist Daniel Velez said. “There was a ton of positive energy and it was a great atmosphere.”

“The concert was truly mesmerizing,” sophomore Marlene Sarmiento said. “I really enjoyed the piano solo.”

The Strings, directed by Ms. Rusewicz-Zagrobelyny, practiced endlessly in preparation for the show. Although they came across some obstacles, they pulled through and made an outstanding performance for the PHS audience.

The Strings also performed a beautiful medley of Christmas classics.

The PHS Choir was lead by Ms. Gauthier and sang a collection of sophisticated holiday classics, such as “New Fallen Snow.”

In order to prepare for the winter concert, the choir practiced everyday during their class peri-

od. When the concert was closer, the choir met after school on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and at one point, every day after school, to put in extra practice and work, in order to ensure they put on the best show possible.

Their hard work indeed paid off. The choir put on such a fantastic performance at the winter concert that Hector Lora, the mayor of Passaic, requested that the PHS choir sing at Passaic City Hall the following morning on Dec 23. They delightedly accepted and were excused from their morning classes the next day to perform.

“A lot of people that work at the Board of Education were there, as well as people who work at the Mayor’s office, including the Mayor himself. Even some Passaic firefighters came and brought us pizza and empanadas,” said choir member Raeven Ribot, “It was truly a memorable experience.”



PHOTO BY ALEX WILSON-CASTRO

The Choir and Strings groups both performed at the Winter Concert .

# Girls Who Code Club

By Daisy Gonzalez and  
Samantha Dume

As children, girls are stereotyped into the idea that all girls must like pink, play with Barbies, play house, and become a stay at home mom to care for the children while the husband goes off to work. As boys growing up, the opportunities are endless from being a truck driver, doctor, lawyer, officer, firefighter, engineers, and scientists. Many teen girls who have high hopes

in becoming an engineer and scientist are scattered, and the Girls Who Code hope to change that.

On their website, [www.girls-whocode.com](http://www.girls-whocode.com), their stated goal is, "The gender gap in technology and engineering is getting worse despite the increase demand for STEM-related jobs. GM and the national nonprofit Girls Who Code (GWC) today announced a partnership to inspire and empower thousands of U.S. middle and high school

girls to become future leaders in these fields."

Passaic High School, alongside Mr. Blath, stand together to empower the girls and show that the societal norm of the average girl deserves a change. The Girls Who Code Club accepts new members each week. Come down to S107 and make a change!

As Socrates once said, "The secret of change is to focus all the energy, not in fighting the old but building on the new."

# CTE Spotlight: Auto Tech

By Armando Martinez

For decades, Passaic High School has boasted a successful Auto Tech program. PHS students have the opportunity to gain skills through a hands-on experience every day. Many schools do not have the space or budget to build an auto shop, but PHS has offered this opportunity to students for many years.

This class gives students the experience of working in a trade setting. Auto Tech teacher Mr. Sciametta has taught in the auto shop for 38 years, and started off his teaching career here at PHS.

The Auto Tech program can help students develop skills they can use in the mechanics field, as well as other career fields. "They practice communicating with customers, working with others in a workshop setting, and learn to respect coworkers," Sciametta said. These skills are transferable to many postsecondary



PHOTO BY MR. SCIAMETTA

Students work on vehicles in the auto shop on a regular basis and gain hands-on experience.

career and educational paths.

To be successful in an auto shop setting, a good base in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)

is key. "In class, we explore science concepts such as principles of friction and the conversion of chemicals into heat, and mathematics concepts such as measuring and calculating," said Sciametta. "Students learn to formulate a scientific approach to diagnosis of vehicle problems."

The Auto Tech program has a bright future. Next year, PHS is offering an Auto Tech 3 course, which is a two period block class. Auto Tech 2 is also a block period and Auto Tech 1 is a single class period. Students will be able to take Auto Tech classes for three years during their time at PHS.

The program is on the threshold of gaining certification from the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NA-TEF). With this certification, students will be prepared for postsecondary training or direct employment in the Automotive Technicians career.



PHOTO BY BRENDA TELLEZ VILLARES

Augmented Reality devices and games have become increasingly popular throughout the past year.

## Augmented Reality Takes Over

By Brenda Tellez Villares

Technology is constantly evolving, and it's up to us as the youth to keep it going.

Augmented Reality, also known as AR, is something that is well known by many people. AR consists of images and sounds that are superimposed over what the user sees and hears.

You have probably already encountered AR games. The most popular in app stores today are Pokemon Go, Zombies, Run! and Ingress. These games drive you into leaving your house and getting to ex-

plore your surroundings. You have the chance to interact with new people and build friendships.

Different types of AR games share a similar features such as having a map of the world and its landmarks. Zombies, Run! Is a game where you are a runner en-route to one of humanity's last remaining outposts. While playing, you will be gathering supplies, rescue survivors and defend their homes.

These games are highly recommended for download, so don't miss out on your chance to participate in all the fun.

# THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper of Passaic High School

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If you would like to contribute articles, photographs, or information to be included in the next issue of The Hilltop Star, please contact Ms. Sciametta (in room M317) or a member of the newspaper staff. We are constantly searching for dedicated students who are willing to contribute to our newspaper.

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## Cell Phones and Headphones

By Ginelis Rodriguez and  
Juliana Disla

Each day there are dozens of electronic devices such as cell phones and ear phones confiscated from students. Is it worth the risk to use cell phones and headphones in school, especially since students know it is against the rules in the first place?

On Dec. 6, Class of 2020 had a meeting in the auditorium of Passaic High School where a student questioned "Why are we not allowed to use headphones and cell phones?"

According to Mr. Phil, a security guard at Passaic High School, "Headphones should not be allowed in school, there is no

need for them because you are in school to learn. Cell phones should only be allowed for emergency calls from parents or if you need to call someone in case of an emergency."

Smerlin, a student in the schools believes that "it's not fair because when you are listening to music you are not disturbing anyone. The teacher can't take your headphones for no real reason, same goes for the phones."

For some students, music is very helpful when it comes down to studying and staying focused while completing classwork. According to Denise C, "Music helps people concentrate on their work."

In recent years, scientists have

come to the conclusion that music in fact does help to keep the brain focused on one single thing while listening to music.

While students are still arguing that they should be allowed to use their phones, teachers are still urging students to see their side of things.

Mrs. Kiger-Williams claims that there are some benefits to using phones in classrooms, as seen when using Kahoot or when answering class polls. Even so, she believes that they can distract the students when trying to get through a lesson. She admits that as hard it is for students to keep their phones away, teachers face the same problem, but know that their actions have consequences.

## poetry

What does your soul look like?  
Is it blue? Red? Is it all of the colors of the rainbow?  
Is it fair with rage of love?  
These are the questions I ask looking at people,  
Seeing my soul in their eyes.  
The image I inspire not under the influence of  
The material energy of  
This material world.

By Ciara Flores

Life  
Life embraces beauty and hope.  
Life is full of mystery and wonders.  
Life is a journey that goes beyond the universe.  
Life will always have ups and downs.  
Life gives us experiences that we share with whom we love.  
Life creates adventure and exploration around the world.  
Life creates memories and stories.  
Life has a key to unlock the world.  
Life has two paths to take.  
Choose wisely.  
Remember that life will bring you down at times and all you have to do is get up and keep pushing forward.  
Life is all about dealing with pain and suffrage.  
And remember that life does not have a meaning – you have to find and create one.

By Samira Pozo-Robinson

## CHEERLEADING COMPETITION CHAMPIONS!



PHOTO BY MS. MERCED

The PHS Varsity Cheerleaders pose with their winning trophy.

## Cheering to the Top

By Samantha Reyes Lopez

With a new year, there are always new winnings. The cheerleading team has wasted no time in putting in the hustle to win big this new season after placing second in championships last year.

The Senior Cheer Captain, Nazier Navarro has worked hard to empower his fellow cheer members. "The hardest part about this season has been finding the accommodations for practice. We're such a big squad and it's been hard to find practice space to fit us with enough space to stunt." Nazier said talking about their main issue since the season began.

This did not stop the cheer team from achieving first place in their first competition of 2017 at Emerson High School. The Varsity

Cheer Squad competed Sunday, January 8. They placed first in their division and also received the judge's favorite award.

PHS also competed in the Cheer Olympics that took place right after the competition and won medals for the "Highest Basket Toss" and the "Longest Held Extension."

Those who competed in the Olympics were Reynaldo DeLaCruz, Angel Feliz, Nazier Navarro, Diego Ramirez, Christopher Rodriguez, Brandon Velez and star Flyer Nicole Rosario.

On Saturday, January 28, the cheerleaders competed in another competition and placed first in the Meadowlands cheer challenge. The team beat Clifton High School, which they have not done in years. On Sunday, January 29, at Woodridge High School, the team took first

place in the Blue Devil Cheer Invitational.

On Feb. 3, the team competed at the Big North Conference Cheer Championships and defeated PCTI, Clifton, Eastside and Bergen Tech to be named the Passaic County Champions. They also had the opportunity to perform their halftime routine at the Brooklyn Nets game at the Barclays Center.

Cheerleading paved a way for new experiences for each member of the team. This year, they even gained a few new brothers and sisters. Catherine Sposato is proud to be a part of the cheerleading team. She gave credit to fellow member Chelsea Ceron, a flyer for the team for assisting to win the awards earned. With teamwork and trust hand in hand the rest of their season should be successful.

## WRESTLING

## Tough Requirements for Wrestlers

By Danielle Baez

Wrestling is one of the toughest, most demanding sports that PHS offers. Our Passaic Indians practice two hours right after school almost every day of the week. Along with wrestling, many of the teammates are also involved in other after school activities.

Those who come to the meets only see a small part of what goes into the sport. What about all the grueling practices, hours of hard work, lengthy road trips, and injuries our athletes receive almost every day for months? Although these happen in almost every sport, a very small amount of high school seasons have been shown to deal with the mental and physical strain of wrestling.

When asked about what his motivation to continue in the sport Edwin Morales said, "I come into practice everyday to work hard so I can compete at the highest level possible."

Not only do wrestling practices push the participants to the point of exhaustion, but no other high school sport requires its participants to be at or under a certain weight in order to compete. Before every meet, each wrestler on the team must be weighed in and can be disqualified if they do not make weight requirements. "I joined my sophomore year looking for a challenge and wrestling definitely proved to be just that," said senior Keith Coyotl.

As a teammate, there is always someone that you can look up to and aspire to be like on the team. Edwin Morales looks to his team members for motivation, competition, a better mindset, and work ethic. "There is a bit of competition between members, and it is a way for them to push themselves harder" said Morales.

Members such as Royce Francisco and Angel Ysabel are known on the team for having a great

mindset and work ethic for the sport.

Our Passaic Indians started February off strong and won 36 to 33 against the Kennedy Knights of Paterson. Pins for Passaic were achieved by Adrian Serrano, Keith Coyotl, Edwin Morales, Royce Francisco, and Michael Sams.

Other major victories were achieved this season, with the Passaic Indians beating Leonia, Newark East Side, Christ the King, Barringer, and Paterson Eastside.

We are looking forward to seeing how the Passaic Indian Wrestlers finish out their season.

## SWIMMING

## Swimmers Meet Goals this Season

By Samantha Reyes Lopez

The Passaic High School Co-ed Varsity team have made great efforts going from 2016 into 2017. Many athletes on the team have accomplished a lot this year with setting new personal bests as well as placing higher titles at meets.

With championships coming up they're wasting no time in making huge splashes in the water. With times from their most recent meet at Tech, girls like Stephanie Rojas with a time of 1:20.20 in the 100 free and Michelle Almonte with a time of 2:55.74 in the 200 free. The boys don't fail to impress either with Luis Liriano in the 100 back with 1:55.17 and Luis Lopez in the 100 breast with 1:29.63.

Jocelyn Hernandez, a junior, who has been on the swim team since her freshmen year wasn't able to swim this

season due to medical complications, but that didn't stop her from assisting her fellow teammates. "This season has shown me not to worry about winning but to support each other through every race. Most importantly being there for them because after all we are all family and this sport means a lot to us all." Knowing the importance of support from not only family but through teammates is what makes swimming fun.

The Boys Varsity Swim Team has had their fellow highs and lows this season as well. With championships still coming up they hope to win medals that will prove others wrong. Christopher Kelemen, a sophomore, who has been on the swim team for multiple years, highly believes Passaic can prove themselves to other schools wrong and actually win. With this mindset and championships soon

## BOYS BASKETBALL

## Calling the Shots

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Basketball has been one of the most awaited sports in Passaic High School. Two of the Varsity Basketball team members made sure to let the school know that the game isn't about winning, but what you learn from the game. The basketball team has proven to learn from their mistakes in a game and practice harder. Each game brings new improvement and a new form of dedication.

"Playing a sport is more about teamwork than it is about trying to win" said #3, Jose Pereyra. There is no chance of a win if no one is communicating, right? Varsity team captains Qasim Wilson, #11, and Jamir Thomas, #1, have made sure to let their fellow team mates know that the effort they make while practicing is put to test on the court.

Players Maycoll Almanzar, #4, and Jose Pereyra, #3, respond to their ambition during games by saying "the way we communicate and the effort we put in practice causes us to lose focus during games." There is always a bigger picture when

striving for a win, the players on this team hope for the team to win together, but also be able to become stronger and wiser while striving for the win."

Jose Pereyra, #3 claims that in order to succeed, "the players all need to work harder together, communicate with each other and grow as individuals."

Twelve out of 14 players on the team are seniors so although the game is just a game to some, for these 12 boys it means a final goodbye to high school basketball.

The boys accomplished a win against Passaic County Technical Institute on Feb. 6, with a score of 63-62. Wilson, #11 scored a total of 16 points, and Robert Sierra and Diante Hudson both scored 12 points each. This win was well earned after a loss to Passaic Tech earlier in the season.

The Passaic Indians also won a game against Passaic Valley, with a score of 57-48. Player Nysaiah Frost scored a total of 24 points to lead the Indians to victory.

The boys team ended their season with a record of 6-10.

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Victory over Clifton

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Standing on the edge of something great, is a lot like standing in the girls basketball team practice. Hard work and dedication run through the blood of each of the girls as they practice harder and longer everyday.

This season though, has not brought the potential many expected. The girls have made sure to not set a goal for the end of the season, but a goal every time they step onto the court for practice and games.

Thanks to Coach Curry and Coach Iturrino, the girls receive great support on and off the court. Not only the coaches, but also the Varsity team captains Estephany, #5, and Valentina, #10. As mentioned by player #23, Moenay Mouzone, "The captains motivate us and when we do something wrong they don't call the individual out, but they bring the team together and make us all work on our

errors."

The girls have made it clear that they recognize the small mistakes that cost them their plays. Mouzone stated, "For example, we would have a nice pass and the person was supposed to go for a lay up, [however] they missed the ball and turned it over."

However, they are working on these errors in and out of practice and their coaches have added more drills, more laps, and more motivational speeches.

The girls accomplished a victory over Clifton High School, beating the team in a close match 23-22 on Jan. 28. Ashley Ramirez was the lead scorer for the Passaic Lady Indians with a total of six points that game.

The girl's basketball team record at the end of the season was 1-14. Even so, the Lady Indians team have left all their blood, sweat, and effort on the court; none the less, creating memories to last a lifetime.

ahead there are high hopes for this season to end with a bang.

The thrill found in swimming according to many members of the team is something that many will never experience. As said by Varsity swimmer Nicole Goicochea when describing how it feels to swim in competition, to her "It's a rush because when you are on the block and they say 'swimmer step up' silence creeps in the only thing you can hear is your own heart beat and then the whistle blows and all you hear is the water of everyone diving in."

The need to win is overtaken by the need to reach the end of the pool. Goicochea said, "you don't feel how fast your heart is beating or how hard you worked for not even 40 second moment until you get out of the pool and everything hits you."

## TRACK AND FIELD: GIRLS AND BOYS



Athletes of the boys and girls varsity track team at one of their competitions.

PHOTO BY MR. GRANT

## BOYS WINTER TRACK

# Track Runners Seek More Success

By Brandon Garcia and  
Adrian Serrano

After having an amazing Cross Country season the distance track runners are striving for more success. They had a rocky start in 2016 and they are ready to start off 2017 with a better record.

Captain Joel Garcia shared his opinion on what track actually means to him "Track to me means everything, it's the place where I can be in my own world, I can go as far as my body will let me. I've struggled through many hard times, and running, whether it be track or cross country has saved me from going down the wrong path. I've grown up in the track and it's taught me so much about how to approach life when times get tough."

To many, track seems like it's all about running. Of course track is a sport of running, but to the runners, this is their lifestyle. To many, track

isn't just a sport, but it is a way to escape everyday struggles. Students turn to running when their life becomes tough and they need to clear up their minds. For them, track isn't all about the medals and trophies, but the hard work they are putting into and the mental toughness to be able to run.

With this positive mentality, the Winter Track Team is ready to begin 2017 on the right foot and is prepared to do everything in their power to put Passaic High School on the map!

Many great runners, such as the most experienced distance runner in the team Joel Garcia and the newest young prospect Luis Peralta, lead the team. Joel Garcia became up League Champion last year for the two mile all county all around and Luis Peralta in the 400m Dash.

In the Big North Championships, Joel Garcia placed second in the 3200. In the

4x800 relay, Leo Bravo, Darshak Rana, Brayan Olivares, and Jerry Olvera placed second. Brian Quintanilla placed fourth in the 400 race. Leo Bravo placed fifth in the 1600 race and Jerry Olvera placed sixth in the same race. In the 4x400 relay, Brian Quintanilla, Darshak Rana, Brayan Olivares, and Carlos Pichardo placed fifth.

The team also had the chance to compete in the Passaic County Championships. Leo Bravo placed sixth in the 1600. In the 3200, Jerry Olvera placed third and Joel Garcia placed fourth. Luis Peralta won a gold in the 400 and set a Passaic High School indoor school record. His time of 50.23 puts him seventh on the Passaic County All-Time indoor track list.

Luis Peralta placed second in the 400 at the State Sectionals. He ran in the State Group Championships on Friday, Feb. 17.

## BOWLING

# They Roll, They Strike

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Under the wing of Chief Newman, the Passaic High School Bowling Team has strived to accomplish more than just winning.

Chief Newman said "I bring my experience of 30 years as bowler to the team, coaching and advising the team. I also attend coaching clinics to learn about the new techniques and equipment for upcoming seasons to pass on to my more experienced bowlers. I also teach them theory and application of bowling."

The team has shown everyone in the school that bowling takes more effort than many tend to see.

Although every bowler is working together in hopes of making it to the championship at Carolier Lanes in New Brunswick, NJ, they are still keeping their focus on the bigger picture. The team had a record of Varsity

Boys 3-3, and Varsity Girls 2-2. Chief Newman has made it clear that her bowlers are student-athletes before they are athletes.

In the 2015 school year, Coach Newman was hired as the Assistant Coach. The next school year she was hired as Head Coach for 2015-2016. Thirty years of doing something she loves brought her the opportunity to show younger bowlers the skills, patience, and dedication it takes to bowl.

The PHS bowlers ended their season with a bang. The end of the season came to a conclusion for the girls' team with six wins and eight losses.

For the boys' team it ended with eight wins and six losses. Boys Varsity bowler, Michael Polanco had an average score of 195, his outstanding season brought him to Individual State finals. Overall, the bowling team has made to sure to leave a striking mark on the bowling lanes.



PHOTO BY MR. GRANT

Brian Quintanilla races to the finish line during an indoor track meet.

## ATHLETES REPRESENTED AT SENIOR NIGHT



PHOTO BY EDWIN MORALES

PHS Senior wrestlers Jahyr Tejada, Michael Sams, Keith Coyoti, Royce Francisco and Angel Ysabel at senior night.

## GIRLS WINTER TRACK

# Racing to the end

By Anayelly Juarez and  
Brandon Cisneros

Low temperatures, weeks of hard work, meets, keeping up with schoolwork, and let's not forget about keeping up with a social life. All of these are things that the 2016-2017 Winter Track and Field girls had to deal with throughout their season.

Losing many of their graduating seniors last year must've hurt them, but not even that stopped them from giving it their all this season.

"We're doing okay, we have a young team, we're working hard, they put in a lot of time and effort," said Coach Grant.

Though the girls this season have had some losses, they were able to pick themselves up and show others what Passaic is made of. "It's always about improving your times and improving your distances, so that's the key it's always about getting better and I believe the girls are doing that," Coach Grant added.

The girls have had ten meets this season, which resulted in many accomplishments. Julissa Osorio, a junior who has been in the Winter Track and Field program at PHS for her second season said "The first meet for me was personally good, I hit new times for both the 800 and the mile. I placed individually and as a team in the mile too." Improvement has been shown a lot throughout the years of the program and will only grow stronger.

In the Big North Championships, runners Merelin Ponce, Michelle Contreras, Diana Romero, and Julissa Osorio placed fifth. Manuela Caraballo placed sixth in the 800 race. Runners Michelle Contreras, Monserrat Cordova, Rockaya N'Doye, and Manuela Caraballo placed fourth in the 4x400.

The cold has never stopped the girls from putting in work, whether it was in the weight room, in the halls of the schools, or on the track. With the girls still training and looking ahead to what's in store for them this season, we can be sure to be hearing from them soon.