

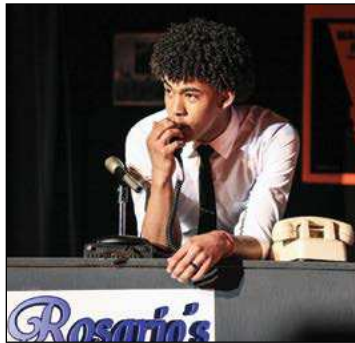


THE HILLTOP STAR

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PHOTOS BY MR. PEÑA

Spring Musical 2017: 'In the Heights'

By Samantha Reyes

This May, Passaic High School brought the talented works of Lin-Manuel Miranda to Shirelles Auditorium through the annual spring musical. This year's performance was entitled "In the Heights."

This year, band director Mr. Rusca took the reins of the theater production at PHS. Rusca had a different mindset for this year's musical with wanting to relate to the student body. Rusca decided on the musical made famous by Miranda, for which Miranda he wrote his own music,

lyrics, and script.

With different styles of music included, the show not only won two Tony Awards in best musical and Best Score but also a Grammy for Best Musical Show Album.

The PHS cast definitely had their work cut out for them but yet they persisted. With the help of choreographers Rick Delancy, former alumna Jennifer Sanchez, choir teacher Elizabeth Gauthier and set designer Holmes the team was set.

Auditions occurred in early January after break with the first musical practice soon follow-

ing. The four main lead roles of Usnavi, Nina, Benny, and Vanessa were taken on by seniors Francisco Martinez, Catherine Sposato, Diolenny Almonte and junior Bruce Ransom.

Usnavi is a bodega owner who looks after the Cuban woman next door, whom he treats as his grandmother, longs for the girl who works at the neighboring salon and wants to win the lottery to escape to the Dominican Republic. Nina is a young woman who made it out of the Dominican neighborhood with top marks and a ride to the prestigious Stanford. Vanessa is a

simple salon worker who wants to better her life while Benny is trying to become a businessman.

Other cast members included seniors Tianalee Bracho who played Daniela (salon owner), John Duran as Kevin Rosario (Nina's father), Nazier Navarro as Sonny (Usnavi's cousin) and Carla Sueldia as Abuela Claudia. Other major roles were played by juniors Irais Vazquez as Camila Rosario (Nina's mother) and Jessica Sanchez as Carla, Daniela's ditzy friend. The two act show was put together over the course of about four months.

Opening night was a success,

even though it was a school day. Despite some technical difficulties with some scenes the cast performed to their heart's content and every seat was nearly full. The same success followed Friday night where an even bigger crowd appeared for the show. The second show was another chance to improve on yesterday's performance and once again show off their many talents. The final show night is when the cast was hit big with every seat sold! Estimating about 500 tickets sold for the last show every seat was full.

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Class of 2017 Valedictorian

By Johana Lastor

As the Class of 2017 is counting down their final days as high school students, the question on who is Valedictorian in their class initiates. Meet Dev Patel, who ranks number one in the Senior class this year.

When I had the opportunity to interview Dev, he mentions that being Valedictorian is an "a surreal feeling." Throughout his four years of high school, he survived by "managing multiple extracurriculars and AP classes" and he is proud that it "has finally paid off." However, he states that "stats are not everything, the growth and the amount of things I have learned on this journey have really shaped who I am." The motivation behind his effort in his rigorous work? It's not the title of being number one, but for himself.

Throughout his high school career, Dev mentions his biggest

accomplishment has to be his growth, "becoming who I am today, someone that I am proud to be". Furthermore, he states that he has accomplished becoming a Questbridge finalist, first team all-county for tennis, honorary youth, scholar athlete, and MVP of the tennis team throughout his high school career.

As Dev closes one chapter in his life, he hopes that in the future he will be able to "engineer artificial organs and develop new gene therapy techniques to help people live a better life by eliminating the physical pain and distress." With his future achievements, he hopes that by then he will be recognized through his "breakthroughs in biomedical engineering" by winning the "Nobel Prize in Medicine and Biology".

Narrowing down his college acceptances, Dev will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute due to their "strong undergraduate research focus and their connections with pioneer companies that have access to the latest technologies for innovation." There, he will be majoring in biomedical engineering. His motivation for his major is, "growing up and having a dad who has polio meant that he couldn't do what other fathers could." Witnessing the struggles that his father encountered allowed Dev to grow an interest in eliminating "the limitations set by the body so that everyone can have equity in living their lives." He mentions that his

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Class of 2017 Salutatorian

By Johana Lastor

Being the Salutatorian of the Class of 2017 means that a student achieved enough to be acknowledged as number two in the class. This year, the Salutatorian is awarded to Wendy Ramos.

Having the pleasure to interview Ramos, she talked about her feelings and achievements to getting to the spot where she is now. Ramos initiates by stating, "I can finally say that everything is worth it after all the struggles..." Obstacles such as sleepless nights because of the rigorous work she has received has not prevented her from success. As well as Ramos states that being Salutatorian of the Class of 2017 is "a privilege and it makes me extremely proud that my hard work is being recognized".

As the closure for her high school career commences in a couple of weeks, Ramos reflects

on her achievements. She states that she has "achieved honor roll and high honor for all of my four years in high school." Furthermore, she has been awarded Honor Cadet in NJ-ROTC for her junior and senior year and has passed her AP Chemistry exam.

Ramos states that she hopes to become a chemical engineer because it has a wide range of job outlooks. Ramos interests for chemical engineering initiated because she wants to "make Earth better by obtaining new ways to use certain chemicals in a way that doesn't harm the environment." As well as she hopes to learn new languages such as Japanese or Korean because she plans to travels these countries once she is stable.

Wendy will be attending Montclair State University because it is closer to home. Out of all the acceptances that she received, she decided to pick Montclair because it's inexpensive compared to out of state universities. Along with Montclair being one of the colleges that she has admired since she was a little girl. Furthermore, she plans to help out her sister for college applications next year. Arriving to Montclair, she will be pursuing a degree in chemistry because of the concepts that are taught and the career options that come with it.

As summer vacation commences, she plans to work over the summer as a "certified lifeguard working for Sparkling Pool Ser-

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Senior Prom
See page 6.

In Memoriam

This edition of The Hilltop Star is dedicated in the memory of a beloved teacher and friend, Ms. Paula Dukes-Brown.

"Words are few, thoughts are deep
Memories of you we will always keep"



Dev Patel, Valedictorian



Wendy Ramos, Salutatorian

PHS Senior Survey

By Armando Martinez and Janessa Mejias

Which teacher made the BIGGEST impact on you? Why?

The teacher that made the biggest impact would be Mrs. Savinskaya because of her genuine love for mathematics has rubbed off me and I plan on following a similar path as hers of teaching the youth. – Ritesh Rana

Mr. Jernigan, He really was a very tough and enlightened teacher that made me realize things are going to be tough and treated the Honors Class like an AP course. – Dante R. Mota

The teacher who has made the biggest impact on me is my genetics teacher, Ms. Ament. She has introduced me to the world of genetics and in doing so, sparked my passion for science. I thank her for all the help and guidance. – Eric Mendoza

Ms. Kobus has made the biggest impact on me because instead of focusing on grades, tests, and benchmarks, she began actual discussions within the class. In doing so she taught us about the real world and why it's so important to gain knowledge about the world we live in, instead of living in ignorance. – Michelle Gonzalez

PO has been the most influential person in my high school experience, and as cliché as it sounds coming from one of the program's elite, he's had a long lasting impact on me. From the small things like talking, to the bigger things that affected my character, such as the countless hours he has dedicated to the drill team. He sees the potential in people and tries to bring that out, and sometimes he doesn't have the best way of expressing it, but he honestly cares about the kids. – Justin Rymut

The teacher that made an impact for me was Ms. Hild. I say her because she helped me open up my creative side. She made

learning graphic design fun for me and others too. – Isiah White

Ms. Kush helped me with determining what type of career I wanted to have. She is one of the reasons as to why I am majoring in Chemistry and hopefully to concentrate in pharmaceuticals. – Karen Lara

Ms. Kobus... she is my AP Government and Politics teacher this year and she instilled in me the desire to make a change in the world and the importance of being kind to everyone I meet. – Winifer Torres

My chemistry teacher, Mr. Koll, has made the biggest impact on me because he stood by my side no matter what and helped me in any situation I was stuck in even if it wasn't school related. – Bhumi Minesh Rana

Every teacher had an impact on me one way or another, but I would say the one the I feel had the biggest impact would be Mr. Martinez, my physics teacher. I believe because since he was undocumented as I am and he still achieve his dream makes me admire him more. People like him makes me believe hard work pays off at the end doesn't matter your status and never give up. – Silvia Mendoza

Ms. Baptist made the biggest impact on me because she saw a lot of potential in me and always helped me with school work because she wanted to see me succeed in my education. – Tony Blancas

Mrs. Yago, she's such a sweetheart... She made me feel like it worth going to college and to make sacrifices for my upcoming future. I always took in consideration to whatever it is she said and although I gave her attitude a few times I realized she just want the best for her students. – Angelica Suarez

The list could go on for teacher that have helped me but I'd say it's a tie between science teachers Ms. Kush and Mr. Sergio Martinez for creatively going over their fields. Ms. Kush helped me more in term of lab experience since I had her for AP Chem and Organic Bio Chem. Mr. Martinez in terms of starting the engineering club which helped me define my interests in chemical engineering. – Leo Jimenez

Hands down, Mr. Koll! Mr. Koll was one those teachers who genuinely cared for his students. He believed in me when others didn't. He tried his hardest so that all this students would see their self potential and have that desire to succeed. – Alejandra Herrera

Ms. Yildirim has made the biggest impact. She has made the biggest impact because she always has a positive attitude and has always encouraged her students to do better and be better people. – Samuel Rodriguez

Mr. Peña made the biggest impact on me because he's the type of teacher that would push you to work hard on what you want, and he showed me and my classmates that everything is possible and that there is time for everything. He is a busy man even after school and he manages to work as a teacher, artist, and photographer. – Diana Dominguez

Mrs. Godovanik, one of the piano teachers, made the biggest impact on me during my 4 years at PHS. I had her for all my 4 years at PHS, and she taught many things throughout my time not only in music but also in life. – Samyel Gomez

Mrs. Merced has had the biggest impact on me because she's led me in the correct

direct path and has constantly kept me in check when I needed to be. – Nazier Navarro

Mr. Newman. He was there for emotional support when I struggled to communicate and couldn't function during class because of how distraught I was. – Chandalina Estevez

Mr. Walker because he talked real with many things and he tried to help the students out and he was one of the coolest teacher to come to this school. – Edward Garcia

Mr. Martinez and Mr. Flores made the biggest impact on me. They made me feel confident about myself and they are the first male teacher that I've been close to. – Matilde Daniel

Mrs. Gonzalo because she was always there for me and I just love her enthusiasm for teaching students. – Bryan Adame

The teacher who had the most impact on me was my Spanish teacher, Ms. Junco. She is the sweetest teacher I have ever encountered in PHS. Out of many teachers she is the most [hard working] and caring of her students. – Jessica Flores

The teacher that made the biggest impact on me, was my sophomore year English teacher, Ms. Cooper. She taught me to never give up always strive for my goals. She was also one of the reasons why I was able to work on my public speaking and step out my comfort zone. – Grecia Colmenares

Ms. Yildirim made me the biggest impact because she always made the class so happy and fun especially when we have family time, and it made my day since it's the first class of the day. – Cindy Hernandez

Mr. Kleinman has made the biggest

impact on me because when I was at the lowest point in my life, he always would pick me up with words of encouragement. He always motivates me to be the best version of myself. – Jhossett Reyes

Through my four years of high school, I had tons of teachers coming into my life and impacting me in so many different ways. Though I can think of many teachers that I love with all my heart and am super thankful, I believe Mr. Kleinman, the counselor has impacted me on another level, he is the kind of person who does not care who you are, where you come from or how you look like, he would help you no matter what. I cannot thank him enough for everything he's done for me through my whole senior year. He really is a kind loving person that would do anything in his power for the student body. Thank you Mr. Kleinman, for everything and all the students you help everyday. Because of you, I have hope in this humanity – Thania Rubio

Mr. Barbara made a huge impact on me because he was the first teacher who was always there for me as a teacher and a friend. For example, when I needed a letter of recommendation he never turned me down, instead he encouraged me to exceed to become a better student. – Jeffrey Calixto

Mrs. Wellington. She had a huge impact on me because English is my weakest subject and for the first time I actually felt like I understood what I was doing and my reading and writing have progressed. I learned so many different technique to help me understand my reading, and also learned strategies to use when writing essays or answering open-ended questions. – Raynasia Scott

The funniest thing a teacher said was...

Mr. Martinez has this inside joke with his brother where they call each other whenever and make a random obnoxious noise and the receiver must reply with another obscene noise. So one day during class he called his brother and made the noise on speaker. – Dante R. Mota

"Sounds like a you problem." – Katherine Angulo

"Don't come to me last minute for help on the AP exam or else you're gonna have to catch me outside how bout that." – Leo Jimenez

"Go get that Gucci money" – Gisselle Negrete

"Don't be doing no crazy stunts." – Jaileen Rosario

"You guys look like a pile of trail mix." – Wendy Ramirez

It is not something he said, but he did. Someone in my class dropped out and every time he takes attendance he still calls her and says "she's probably on Snapchat." – Jennifer Chinchay

"You are all my children and these are your brothers and sisters." – Johanna Sanchez

"Be careful calling everyone your sis because that's the sound snakes make." – Maryah Sabat

"You never got you neck chopped?!" – Alejandra Herrera

Where do you plan on going to college/trade school/military OR where do you plan on working?

I plan to attend Passaic County Community College for two years and hopefully transferring out to Rutgers. – Ritesh Rana

Montclair State University – Liliana De Jesus

New Jersey Institute of Technology – Dante R. Mota

Montclair State University – Adriana Izel

Fairleigh Dickinson (Met Campus) for a year, then hopefully Cornell or Poland for veterinary school. – Justin Rymut

I plan on going to Passaic County Community College then transferring out to an university or go to a trade school. – Isiah White

I plan on going to Ramapo College of New Jersey where I will be majoring in

Chemistry. – Karen Lara

Rider University – Stephanie Perez

William Paterson University – Sicli Flores

I plan to go to Rutgers University – Newark. – Doreen Cabrera

I plan on going to PCCC – Tony Blancas

I will be studying political science at Columbia University in the City of New York this fall. – Catherine Marie Sposato

I will be working to become a chemical engineer and my first step to do so to major in chemistry at NJCU. But there is more to having fun in a lab for me. I not only wish to nerd out with chem and physics but in the later future I want to be a teacher possibly back here at PHS as a chem/physics/

math teacher to share my experiences with people who are in similar situations like me. – Leo Jimenez

FDU or Lincoln Tech. – Karina Nicole Feliz

I plan on attending PCCC then possibly transfer to MSU. – Diana Dominguez

I plan on going to PCCC to study Digital Media Production and Distribution. – Samyel Gomez

William Paterson University – Nazier Navarro

I am going to the army and serving as a military police. – Ivan Lucero

After college I will be joining the Navy and wait for boot camp on December. – Haylee Hernandez

The military. – Louis Pacheco

I plan on going in the military. – Bryan Adame

I plan on going to Kean or join the Air Force. – Matthew Villalobos

I plan on going to Saint Peter's University. – Jocelyn Diaz

After high school I will attend PCCC in this upcoming fall. I will study there to gain my associates in Early Childhood Education. – Jessica Flores

I plan on attending Montclair State University. – Grecia Colmenares

I plan on going to Elizabethtown College for Music Therapy. – Lefki Xique

Delaware State University – Crystina Nelson

Best Friends- Who was with you through it all?

My boy Josue – Ritesh Rana

Dev Patel, Ritesh Rana, Adriana Izel – Darshak Rana

Stephanie Rojas – Liliana De Jesus

Samyel Gomez, Thania Rubio, Oscar Martinez – Dante R. Mota

My friend Melissa, I met her the beginning of freshman year and she is still someone who has been with me through it all. – Adriana Izel

Brandy Figueroa, Thania Rubio, Rossanna Ramirez, and Jhossett Reyes – Krystin Caridad

Giselle Huitzil, Ezequiel Estevez, Luis Briones – Isiah White

My three best friends Rosa, Sandy, and Rashell. We have all been there for each other when situations come up and we need a bit of cheering up. – Karen Lara

Many of my friends stood by me, some of them are Wendy Ramos, Wendy Ramirez, Jessica Ariza, and Leslie G. – Bhumi Minesh Rana

My best friends are Cindy Hernandez and

Mery Martinez because they both are with me in my difficult moment and happiness too. They always there when I need someone and they are very supportive. – Silvia Mendoza

Yoreli Perez, Diana Dominguez, Michelle Almonte – Angelica Suarez

Shout out to Emely Baez for always being my partner in crime since day one and for gassing me whenever I wasn't feeling myself. – Leo Jimenez

Kenia Georgette Powell, Bintou Akeisha N'doye, Alyssa Marie Gonzalez, Carla Suedia, Lizbeth Santos, and Kyree Sapp – LiShawn Glover

Grecia Colmenares, Jasmine Calixto, Ana Alvarez, Madeline Tejada – Karina Nicole Feliz

My Best Friends are Angelica Suarez and Yoreli Perez. I've been with them since Kindergarten and 1st Grade. – Diana Dominguez

Me, myself and I. – Nicholas Louis Freitas

Dante Mota – Samyel Gomez

Stephanie Dedios was an amazing friend who helped me through a lot of **** in high school, I'll always appreciate her. Cynthia, Ivan and Ivon make up my squad during my last HS years. – Alejandra Herrera

Catherine Sposato – Nazier Navarro

Student best friend was Jonathan Alcaraz. Teacher best friend would be Mr. Newman. – Chandalina Estevez

Alexander Hernandez (The best) Ashley Deita, Jenny Bonilla, Justin Franchesci, & Randol Brito. – Cristian R. Glauco Perreux

Alexis Flores, Edward Moran and Jonathan Moran. – Jessica Trinidad

Paola Hernandez, Devanshi Rana, Jennifer Barrios and Jocelyn Diaz have been with me throughout my high school year. – Matilde Daniel

Lionel Medina – Louis Pacheco

My friend Tony Blancas. – Jeffrey Calixto

People always say you lose friends as you go through this journey called high school, but I am honestly so grateful to have a group of best friends that have been there

since freshman year. Thank you to Krystin Caridad, Jhossett Reyes and Sandy Delgado for sticking with me since freshman year all the way through senioritis. – Thania Rubio

Wildanys, Matilda, Paola, Jennifer, and Devanshi. – Jocelyn Diaz

My best friend is still Luis Ortega because we have seen the best and worst of each other. – Lefki Xique

I have had three close friends throughout high school. A few of us had known each other way back in part of elementary school and middle school. They have seen me at my absolute worst. I've had those days where I have broken down into tears from certain things that have happened through life. They were the ones that made everything okay even when I thought otherwise. Ranging from personal issues to school problems they have never turned their back on me, we each turn to each other knowing we can count on one another. – Ashley Flores

Kiara Sapp, Typique Robins, Crystina Nelson – Raynasia Scott

A Senior Farewell Letter from Acting Principal, Mrs. Torres-Gomez

To the Class of 2017,

Graduation is fast approaching. As I reflect on our time together, I feel a sense of pride for all you've accomplished during these past four years. I will always cherish the determination you displayed when it was time to perform. The hard work and final push into completing your course work and finalizing loose ends within the scope of your academic responsibilities was stellar.

My hope is that all of your experiences will serve you well as you continue your journey through life. I am confident that you will not only succeed but you will continue to inspire and give back to your community.

Please stay in touch with our community, the school and myself – I would love to hear about the paths you all choose to take from here.

Mrs. Torres-Gomez

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Pursuing a master's degree in Mathematics and hopefully teaching. – Ritesh Rana

I see myself entering med school. – Darshak Rana

In five years I see myself putting my skills of a business administration degree into practice – Liliana DeJesus

Working for NASA, SpaceX or Boeing – Dante R. Mota

Veterinary School with an anaesthesia specialization – Justin Rymut

I see myself going for my Masters degree and hopefully interning or working for a pharmaceutical company. – Karen Lara

In five years, I see myself fulfilling my parents' and my dream of becoming or in the process of becoming a nurse or pharmacist. – Bhumi Minesh Rana

In five years I see myself being successful in every aspect of my life. I see myself with my own company and having

my own car. – Silvia Mendoza

I see myself studying in college with a part time job – Tony Blancas

With an English degree – Angelica Suarez

I see myself still in college getting my minor for Criminal Justice. – Natali Cordero

I see myself working hard, writing, and with a house of my own. I can't see that far as to having a relationship of any kind but we are getting there. – Ana Camacho

I can envision myself freshly graduated from college with a degree in Chemical/Mechanical Engineering on my way to start a career that I am passionate about. I know I will accomplish this because I know I have worked hard throughout my educational experiences and nothing is going to detain me. – Leo Jimenez

Medical school – Gisselle Negrete

Working in a doctor's office, taking blood out of my patients. – Harlin Villanueva

I see myself married with a career in engineering. – Samuel Rodriguez

Doing what I love to do, making money, making myself and family proud, – Natacha Tejada

A multi-millionaire at least. – Nicholas Louis Freitas

I see myself in my own apartment, having a career in communications, specifically Video Production. – Samyel Gomez

I see myself finished with college and working in a hospital as a radiographer – Jaylene Martinez

Relaxing enjoying riches – Jose Urena Living in Manhattan, working for a magazine – Nazier Navarro

Hopefully with a job, saving up to move out. – Chandalina Estevez

Being a teacher in a preschool – Lisette Rodriguez

With my dreams accomplished and working as a nurse. – Eduardo Hernandez

In five years I see myself in the Navy being back in Jersey. – Haylee Hernandez

I see myself graduated from college, working in a good job, being able to buy the things I want with my own money and traveling around. – Maria DeLaCruz

Working as a counselor – Ruby Espinosa

I see myself still in college, working on my master's degree. – Jaileen Rosario

Being a pediatric nurse. – Bryan Adame In college about to graduate or on a Air Force base -Matthew Villalobos

I see myself working wherever my heart takes me, and being closer to my family. – Wildanys Familia

Almost about to finish my career, turning 22 and having my car already. Probably going back to my country, Peru to visit family I haven't seen in 10 years. – Jennifer Chinchay

In five years I picture myself settled

such as having my own home and teaching in a school, most likely third graders. – Jessica Flores

In five years, I see myself fresh out of college, helping those less fortunate families through my career. – Grecia Colmenares

In five years I see myself working as an FBI Agent or a detective. – Maryah Sabat

In five years I see myself working at a hospital with newborns and premature babies.-Cindy Hernandez

I would hope that somewhere in the future I am happy in the direction my life has gone, our futures are not definite so they are constantly evolving. – Ashley Flores

In five years I see myself still following my career path towards becoming a doctor. – Jhossett Reyes

In five years, I see myself training as a neonatal nurse at a hospital unit. – Stephany Coyotl

Who/What will you miss the most about PHS?

Many of my teachers and a few of my peers. Also my sport, track and field and Cross Country – Ritesh Rana

I will miss the people I surround myself with, I can say that there are people in this school that I have met throughout the years that I would like to keep in touch for the future. – Adriana Izelo

Hands down, the NJROTC program. Namely, PO and Senior Chief, and the uniform itself. It gave a sense of pride and self accomplishment while wearing the uniform because everything on the uniform has some sort of story behind it; and the program itself is what I've essentially built myself off of, which is why it's so important to me. – Justin Rymut

The mashed potatoes – Stephanie Perez I will miss many of my teachers and guidance counselor because they molded me into the person I am today. They are Mr. Kleinman, Mr. Koll, Mr. Valilla, Mr. Blath, Mrs. Savinskaya, Ms. Cawther and so many others – Bhumi Minesh Rana

I will miss my teachers because they were always nice to me and there to help me. – Silvia Mendoza

I will sincerely miss the kind hearted teachers who come here to educate students rather to show up for a paycheck because they are doing their best to give us a high quality education that is useful not just in college/work but wherever life takes us. Also, I will miss the engineering club because it was a place where we could apply math/physics in a creative way with our friends. – Leo Jimenez

I will miss going to my strings class and practicing music. – Jaylene Martinez

I'll miss being a cheerleader – Nazier Navarro

Mr. Newman, Rusca, my underclass friends, the band, being in the football games. – Chandalina Estevez

I will miss the most about PHS is soccer season. – Haylee Hernandez

The Environmental Science Club – Jocelyn Diaz

The chaos and the staff members that helped get to where I am now. – Cindy Hernandez

I know I'll miss the infamous art room specifically the one closest to the Mona Lisa mural. I spent many of my after schools in that room which served as a second home to me and many people. – Ashley Flores

How have you changed in four years at PHS?

It just made me realize that if you want to become someone there's many opportunities you just have to look for them – Liliana DeJesus

I became more mature like any other person, but I began to realize how different people can be and the difficulties that life after school will be. – Donte R. Mota

Beginning of freshman year, I can say that I was very quiet and shy, public speaking was never really my thing, but over the years I have become very outspoken and put myself out there. – Adriana Izelo

At the beginning of my freshman year I was very shy and stayed to myself. But as the years went by and I began pushing myself out of my comfort zone and joining programs such as Teen Pep, I started to be open and show my true self to those around me. Now as a soon to be graduating senior, I am confident with myself and eager to pursue new opportunities. – Michelle Gonzalez

I feel like I am more mature and I am not the shy girl who was afraid to speak up freshman year. – Winifer Torres

Yes, I have changed in the four years at PHS. In the beginning of freshmen year, I

What is your most memorable moment at PHS?

The most memorable moment at PHS for me was my week at American Legion Boys State that which changed my feelings of many things. – Ritesh Rana

Winning a county championship for the XC team. – Darshak Rana

My best memorable moment was my freshman year when we use to have different activities where it show school spirit – Liliana De Jesus

Playing my Senior Game for soccer in front of my family and closest friends. –Dante R. Mota

Being a part of the "In the Heights Musical" – Krystin Caridad

My most memorable moment at PHS was the interaction I had with someone in the art club at the end of my freshman year. It led to one of the most influential interactions I've had with someone and I still speak to them today. – Justin Rymut

National Drill competitions in Daytona Beach, FL. – Stephanie Perez

My most memorable moment at PHS is Sophomore year when I volunteered to cook for a recital night – Doreen Cabrera.

My most memorable moment at PHS was during Christmas time junior year. In the Octagon Club, we participated in helping buy gifts for children who didn't get

Which staff member will you miss the most?

Mrs. Savinskaya and Mr. Chomko. -Ritesh Rana

Ms. Kush and Mr. Martinez – Dante R. Mota

Ms. Bang – Krystin Caridad

It's hard to pick a favorite staff member because I have certain experiences with certain staff members that makes them unforgettable. Whether it's Kleinman, PO, Senior, Ms. Ament and Mr. Graham, or even Mr. Schmitz, each of these staff members have had some sort of impact on who I am as a person. – Justin Rymut

Mr. Caufield – Isiah White

Zeidan, Kush, & Gendy – Stephanie Perez Mr. Graham, Mr. Galan, Ms. Khalaf. They all had an impact in my life, made me grow as an individual. Pushed me to do better and I actually learned a lot from them. – Sicli Flores

I will miss Mr. Klienman the most because he was with me through everything. He helped me with all the issues I was going through. He guided me in making the right choices and I am extremely happy to have a guidance counselor like him. – Bhumi Minesh

new gifts every year. So to show and act of kindness we bought them the gifts they wanted so they had something to open on Christmas Day. – Bhumi Minesh Rana

My most memorable moment at PHS will be my English class with Ms. Jackson because without knowing she made me smile every time I was feeling down. – Silvia Mendoza

My most memorable moment at PHS will have to be the snowboarding trips I would go to with the Ski Club. – Tony Blancas

My most memorable moment at PHS was singing "Without Love" for the last time in the Hairspray musical my freshman year. – Catherine Sposato

The first day of Freshman year: The first class I walked into, the teacher Ms. Yildirim slapped a smile into my face when she yelled out "Class let's welcome our new Freshmen honor students". I was nervous about starting High schools because of all the rumors I have heard but being welcomed into that friendly atmosphere gave me hope that my first year will be alright (It went well). – Leo Jimenez

When the marching band won State Championships – Samyel Rodriguez

Field day my freshman year was prob-

Rana

I will definitely miss Ms. Cho, Ms. Merced, Mr. Rusca, and Mrs. Welch the most. The four of them defined various parts of my high school career and helped me get to where I am today. – Catherine Sposato

Ms. Ruiz – Natali Cordero

It's hard to choose but I'll mention both my History teachers Ms. Kobus and Ms. Waxmonsky (even though she retired). History was never my strength but both of these teachers genuinely cared about my education so we kept collaborating together after school to make sure I got comfortable with it. It was a tough journey but I persisted with the help of their constant motivation, patience, and kindness to help me think beyond my boundaries and for this I am extremely thankful. – Leo Jimenez

Mr. Caufield, Ms. Restrepo, and Mrs. Jackson – Harlin Villanueva

Ms. Ruscewicz – Jaylene Martinez

Ms. Patty, Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Colon from the main office. – Cristian R. Glauco Perreaux

Ms. Thomas – Lisette Rodriguez

ably the most memorable moment. – Eduardo Hernandez

The most memorable moment was when we went to the third ward park in my freshman year for the whole day, it was so much fun being in there, I enjoyed it a lot and I wished that they could had done it again. – Maria Delacruz

My most memorable moment at PHS is time when the whole school went to third ward park and we had a concert there and there was other activities to do and let's not forget about the food. – Cindy Hernandez

Field day during my freshman year – Isiah White

Freshman year with the concert in the park – Winifer Torres

National Drill competitions at Daytona Beach, FL. – Stephanie Perez

When I got Honor Roll in my Sophomore year. – Catherine Sposato

When the marching band won State Championships – Samyel Rodriguez

Performing at all the spring concerts – Jaylene Martinez

Senior year has been a blast. – Jose Urena

Definitely prom is one of the most amazing memorable experiences of my life – Jessica Trinidad

Ms. Torres Gomez and Ms. Romero – Ivan Lucero

The staff member I would miss the most is Mrs. Wellington. – Haylee Hernandez

Ms. Junco – Ruby Espinosa

Mr. Fumero – Jessica Trinidad

Mr. Rusca – Edward Garcia

I will miss Ms. Romero she has been an amazing teacher and V.P. – Matilde Daniel

Mrs. Gonzalo – Bryan Adame

I will miss the most Ms. Junco and Ms. Hamade. – Jessica Flores

Ms. G, the piano teacher is someone I will miss the most because she has been my teacher for all of my high school experience. – Lefki Xique

Mrs. Pagorik – Kemelyn Norma Montecinos

Staff member I will miss the most is Ms. Yildirim – Johanna Sanchez

The staff member I'll miss the most Mr. Contaldi and Mr. Harmon because they are my favorite teachers, I enjoyed their class and how their personalities are. – Jennifer Chinchay

Mr. Graham – Saul Perez

Farewell to the Greats at PHS

By Armando Martinez

It is always heartbreaking to see people who we've gotten close to and who have made an impact on our lives leave. However, the silver lining is that these people who we love and care so deeply about, are moving into a new chapter of their lives. Here are all the amazing staff members who will be retiring, after dedicating their lives to educate and encourage others. They will surely be missed, but never forgotten.

Robert Amacher
Susan Boudalis
Ira Brandwein
Fanny Cera
Olga Cordero
Lori Dowling
Sandra Gilligan
Zenon Hac
Dania Junco
Noelle Kehoe
Gladys Muniz

My biggest regret was...

Not standing up for certain things. Staying quiet when I knew what was right and what was wrong in a situation. – Justin Rymut

Not really enjoying my days as a kid without responsibilities and not trying out for clubs, programs, and sports. – Karen Lara

I have no regrets just lessons learned or experiences that will help me in my future. – Silvia Mendoza

My biggest regret was not joining many clubs and sports during my four years in PHS. – Tony Blancas

I wish I could have joined a sport earlier in my high school years because it would've helped me become more involved in school besides academics. My advice to upcoming freshmen or underclassmen is to look into activities around the school so you can meet more people and have fun. It's not always about the books! – Leo Jimenez

Not appreciating what I had at the moment – Louis Pacheco

Not trying my hardest in school my freshman and sophomore year. – Ritesh Rana

Not taking as many AP classes and not being a part of clubs. – Liliana De Jesus

Not trying my best from the beginning of freshman year – Guadalupe Tellez

Not letting myself grow as a person. – Doreen Cabrera

My biggest regret was not making glee club what it could have been. – Catherine Sposato

One of my biggest regrets was not taking advancement classes in freshman year to gain college credits. – Jessica Flores

No regrets, things happen for a reason. – Merelin Ponce

Memorable Moments of 2017 Billboard Music Awards

By Armando Martinez

The 2017 Billboard Music Awards was held at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas on May 21, 2017. Rapper/actor Ludacris co hosted the special night with Disney star Vanessa Hudgens. It was a long three-hour plus show, composed with somewhat live performances by Nicki Minaj, Miley Cyrus, The Chainsmokers, Lorde, and more. The night also included some meaningful tributes and remembrances. Here are some of the night's unforgettable moments.

Cher Makes us "Believe" Age is Just A Number: The 71-year old diva was awarded with the Billboard Icon Award. Cher came out to sing and parade her way through two of her classics, "Believe" and "If I Could Turn Back Time." For her "Believe" performance she wore a blonde wig, and a bunch of string, while for "If I Could Turn Back Time," Cher's look was a throwback to her 1980s music video outfit with a sheer bodysuit. Cher said modestly "I wanted to do what I do since I was four years old and I've

been doing it for 53 years," as she accepted her award, claiming that she's been lucky.

Drake Makes History: Drake owned the night by winning 13 awards including top artist, surpassing singer Adele's 12 trophies for the most wins in one night. He performed his single "Gyalchester" in the fountain at the Bellagio Resort and Casino complete with fireworks. During his acceptance speech for his Top 200 album win, Drake flirted a bit with the awards show co-host, Vanessa Hudgens by telling her how great she looked and also

showed some love to the other co-host, Ludacris.

Nicki Minaj's Opening Performance: Minaj kicked things off with a 9-minute opening medley. She was accompanied on stage by singer Jason Derulo, DJ David Guetta, and rapper Lil Wayne. Nicki opted to wear a black dominatrix ensemble, while managing to self-censor her explicit rhymes for the ABC audience.

Celine's Heart Will Go On: To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the blockbuster film *Titanic*, Celine Dion belted out the film's Oscar-winning theme

song "My Heart Will Go On." As scenes from the iconic movie played on the big screen behind her, Dion donned a Stephane Rolland haute couture gown with enormous sleeves.

BTS: Seven-member K-pop boy band, full name Bangtan Sonyeondan, blew up social media during the course of the evening. This was their first appearance at a U.S. awards show, and they handily took home the award for Top Social Artist. BTS even made some new fans, during the process, which included pop star Hasley.

2017 NBA Finals

By Bryan Castro

The Golden State Warriors beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 129-120 in Game 5 of the 2017 NBA Finals, concluding with the Golden State Warriors becoming 2016-17 NBA Champions on Monday night.

Last year they blew a 3-1 lead, but followed a game four loss with a victory that proved to everyone that they're "built to last." The team has now won their second title in three years.

The series finished 4-1, Kevin Durant won his first NBA title and was named the 2017 Bill Russell NBA Finals MVP. Durant averaged 35.2 points, 8.4 rebounds and 5.4 assists per game.

Durant had a dominant performance over Stephen Curry who didn't receive any votes for MVP. This says a lot about Durant's career in his first year with the Warriors.

LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers scored 51 points in Game 5 and became the first player in NBA history to average a triple double in The Finals. Also, Kyrie Irving was phenomenal for most of the series.

Kevin Love disappeared in Game 5, leaving the Cavaliers defense pretty defenseless. This gave the Warriors the opportunity for an easy score.

One Love Manchester

By Armando Martinez

On May 22, 2017, a suicide bombing was conducted outside of the Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, following a concert by Ariana Grande as part of her Dangerous Woman Tour. 22 of the concert-goers and parents who were in the entrance waiting to pick up their children after the show were killed, and injured over 100.

A few hours after the attack, Grande tweeted a message on Twitter: "broken. from the bottom of my heart, I am so so sorry. I don't have words." She suspended her tour and four days after, on May 26, Grande announced that she would host a benefit concert in Manchester for the victims of the attack.

One Love Manchester, was held on 4 June 2017, and took place at Old Trafford Cricket Ground in Old Trafford, Greater Manchester. It aired live on BBC One and simultaneously streamed live on various platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. 50,000 people attended the concert. The set list was star studded featuring, Justin Bieber, the Black Eyed Peas, Coldplay, Miley Cyrus, Marcus Mumford, Niall Horan, Little Mix, Katy Perry, Take That, Imogen Heap, Pharrell Williams, Robbie Williams, and



Liam Gallagher.

The British Red Cross has reported that they received 10 million pounds, which is about \$13 million, in donations for the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund. The funds will go to help the victims and their families. It is good to see celebrities come together, and bring some type of positivity to the world.

Teacher Appreciation

By Aleyshka Barbosa and Amber Ramirez

This year PHS has made it a goal to recognize teachers and their dedication to teaching and bettering our student body, one classroom at a time. Even though the teacher appreciation award came late in the school year, students made sure to take the time and initiative to recognize their favorite teacher. Students had the opportunity to vote for that special teacher via a Google form in their class Google Classroom. Teachers who won for the week got to use a parking spot in front

of the school (this is a great prize, because as we know, finding a good parking spot is like striking gold in Passaic). That being said, these are the teachers who have been recognized for their hard work:

Ms. Bang
Ms. Lardinelli
Mr. Bonilla
Mr. Ackerson Baez

Even though these teachers won the parking spot, there are many more great candidates who deserved recognition. Make sure that when the opportunity comes around again, vote for the teacher who's made a change in your life.

NJROTC Nationals

By Samira Pozo Robinson

On May 3, Passaic High School's very own NJROTC headed out to Daytona Beach, Florida for the most intense drill team competition of the year. The team has practiced consistently and diligently all year for this event.

The drive was a total of 22 hours with a few stops along the way. When the buses arrived the next day, students were not immediately settled into the hotel, but practiced for an hour before checking in.

The following day on May 5, the NJROTC was off to compete with multitudes of schools. The team marched into Ocean Center, where the competition would be taking place. The categories that the team took part in were unarmed regulation, inspection, color guard, and exhibition. They also competed in armed color guard, unarmed exhibition and regulation.

While other teams are competing, the rest are preparing and practicing for when their time comes. Both unarmed and armed did an amazing job at inspection,

regulation, exhibition and color guard. They were all sharp with each command. The team marched and performed with confidence and pride.

At the award ceremony, they announced the teams who placed. Unarmed received fifth place for regulation and unarmed commander received second place.

Jensix Roman, a freshman that competed in unarmed regulations, exhibition and inspection stated, "We did well in exhibition, but I felt nervous for inspection because there are people coming up to you and all the pressure is on you." Alexander Aquino on the other hand claims that he found it "easy and I didn't feel as much pressure as last year."

Sophomore cadet, Jessie Pimental competed in most events and claims that she felt "excited and every year just gets better."

Also competing at Nationals was cadet Jennifer Yumiguano claims, "Even though, I knew I was ready and our practice was going to pay off, I was still nervous because of all the other great

schools that attended."

Freshman Cadet, Johannie Jiminan competed for the first time this year and said "although it was very hard and she scary because it was a lot of pressure, especially during Inspection, but there was a lot of people there in our team helping everyone with nerves and getting ready for each event."

The event came to an end; unarmed regulation and their Commander Abe Jaramillo placed in the national competition.

The end of Nationals was also the last competition many of the senior cadets of NJROTC were going to attend. As the Passaic NJROTC left nationals with a sense of pride and greater respect not only to the program, but their instructors and cadets, they also said goodbye to friendships built on the love for drill and practicing for hours on end to be the best they can be.

As seniors said their goodbyes, new cadets were ready to face the challenge to go back to Passaic and next year come back new and improved.

THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper of Passaic High School

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The Hilltop Star Newspaper Club would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this year's issues and helped us out. We could not have done it without you! See you in September!

STRIVE Awards

By Aleyshka Barbosa

On the evening of May 25, Passaic High School's very own STRIVE club, with the combined efforts of the Lincoln Middle School (LMS) STRIVE club held their annual STRIVE Awards.

Throughout the course of the school year, STRIVE has done a great deal to motivate the student body in striving to do better in school. This ceremony not only motivated students, but gave parents even more pride in the hard work their children were putting in.

Thanks to the hard work from Ms. Jose, an English teacher at PHS and STRIVE's founder, and Ms. Washington, a teacher at LMS who also an adviser of STRIVE, there have been STRIVE Awards for seven years running.

"It started out as a pizza party in the cafeteria after school" said Jose. The awards ceremony now takes place annually at night in the auditorium, with a reception afterwards.

Over 60 students from both LMS and PHS were presented with a STRIVE Award from a

teacher that has seen notable improvement or outstanding performance from the individual student.

"The objective of the STRIVE Awards is to celebrate the hard-working students in our school who are sometimes surrounded by apathetic peers, and to promote a culture of success schoolwide" said Jose.

Assistant Principal, Ms. Romero gave the opening remarks for the ceremony, thanking students, parents, and teachers for the hard work and dedication that they put in to help achieve greatness. Romero also sang a beautiful rendition of our nation's anthem, which left everyone in the auditorium with goose bumps.

Washington introduced the guest speaker of the ceremony, Passaic's mayor Hector Lora. Lora commended the students for a job well done, and talked about his educational experience as a PHS student. Lora has a lot of faith in Passaic, and he is very proud of the city, especially the dedicated students of LMS and PHS. He stated that perseverance is key, and if Passaic's students work

hard, they will achieve their goals.

Each student was honored individually. Ms. Schultz, Ms. Jose, Ms. Washington, and Ms. Sciametta called up students and read a short dedication written by the teachers about why the student deserved the award.

Students were awarded for various reasons. Some students started out the year with an F average, and progressed to an A average at the end of the year. Other students changed their behavior and became dedicated to their coursework.

At the end of the ceremony, students, families, and teachers were invited into the cafeteria for a beautiful reception.

The pride that the students, teachers, and families had for the honored students will hopefully encourage them to keep striving for excellence and progress.

Honored student Linzy Reyes said, "Receiving an award made me feel like my accomplishments were being recognized. I hope that other students feel the same way I do so they keep pushing to do their best."

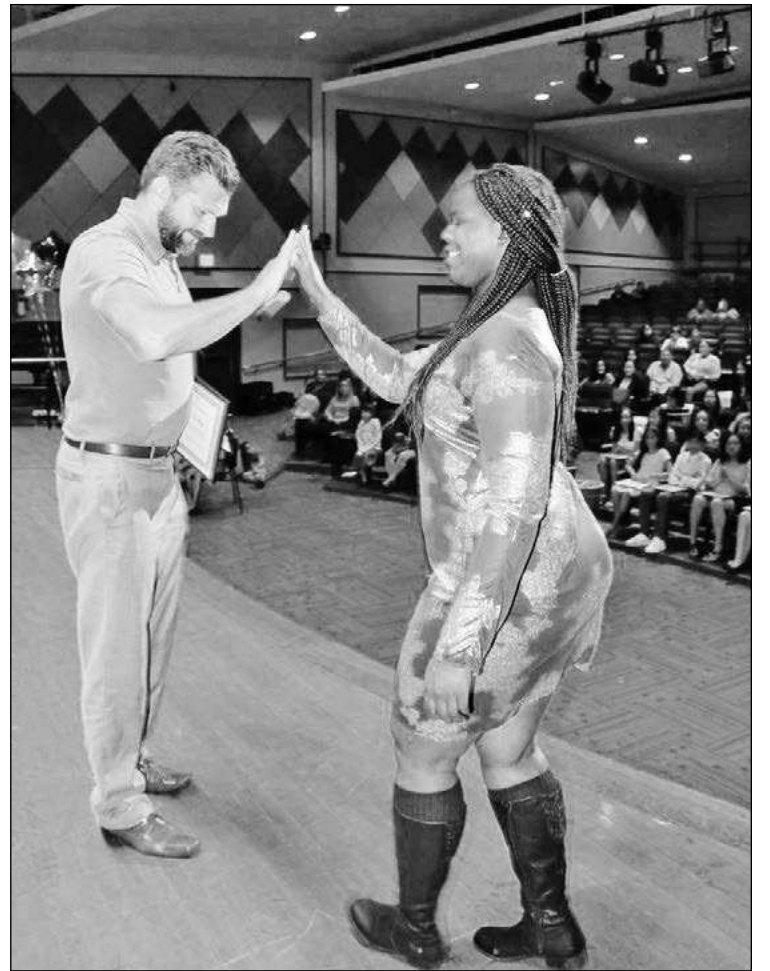


PHOTO BY MR. WILLIAMS

Mr. Sheridan awarded Dashani Hendley with a STRIVE Award.

Special Olympics State Competition at NJIT

By Armando Martinez

This year's Special Olympics State Competition was held at New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, NJ. Before the team departed for their meet, they participated in a torch run through Clifton and Passaic with the town police. The competition was held over the weekend, on June 9, 10, and 11.

Passaic High School's Special Olympics team said they had a great experience. Thirteen individuals participated; 6 unified athletes and 7 coaches. Bocce Passaic achieved the following: 4 - 4th place, 2 - Bronze, 3 - Silver and 2 - Gold medals. Track Passaic achieved: 1 - 6th place, 1 - 4th place, 2 - Bronze and 1 - Gold medal. "All the athletes performed extraordinarily and displayed excellent sportsmanship" said Ms. Ackerson-Baez, the head PHS Special Olympics coach.

The team would like to acknowledge the staff that gave up their time over the weekend to assist them. "Without the assistance and dedication of Karen Cawthern, Luz Carrillo, Erik Freifeld, Sam Meltzer, Karen Ruchalski and Rashad Whitmire this weekend would not have been possible" said Ackerson-Baez.



PHOTO BY MS. ACKERSON-BAEZ

2017 PHS Special Olympics Team at NJIT.

Full Results:

Bocce

Traditional Team Passaic A - Odamis, Gustavo, Jesus F, Lisette - Silver

Traditional Team Passaic B - Mauricio, Juan G, Chris, Jesus T - 4th place

Traditional Doubles Passaic A - Chris, Gustavo - 4th place

Traditional Doubles Passaic B - Odamis, Lisette - Gold

Traditional Doubles Passaic C - Mauricio, Jesus T - Silver

Traditional Doubles Passaic D - Jesus F, Brayton - Silver

Unified Team Passaic A - Lenny, Juan M, Di'Amonique, Rockaya

Unified Doubles Passaic A - Juan G, Bintou - Gold

Unified Doubles Passaic B - Rockaya, Lenny - 4th place

Unified Doubles Passaic C - Juan M, Di'Amonique - Silver

Unified Doubles Passaic D - Brayton, Dashani - 4th place

Track:

100m Dash

Gonzalo - 6th place

Jonathan - Bronze

Shot Put

Gonzalo - 4th place

Jonathan - Bronze

Unified Relay

Gonzalo, Jonathan, Alex, Angie - Gold

PHS HIKING CLUB: AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE



PHOTOS BY LINZY REYES

On May 20, 2017 the PHS Hiking Club went to Schunemunk Mountain. This mountain is 1,700 feet above sea level with 25 miles of trail to hike and is the highest mountain in Orange County, NY. The Hiking Club, advised by Mr. Reicher and Ms. Yildirim, only completed eight miles and still managed to make it to the top. It was an amazing experience to be a part of for the hikers, but very difficult. On the hike, they got to see a small waterfall, rattlesnakes, bugs, and the overall nature of the mountain. The club made a few stops to eat and relax. The students and chaperones needed all of their energy to ensure that they were hiking safely. It was important to take the experience very seriously and practice safety in order to make sure no one was injured or got lost.



PHOTOS BY MR. GRANT

The PHS Special Olympics Team, along with the spring Track Team, and PHS staff, participated in a torch run through Passaic and Clifton.

Salutatorian

continued from page 1
vices." With the financial benefits that Wendy will inherit, she will use it towards college materials.

Fast forward in a decade, Wendy envisions herself "working in a lab setting as a chemical engineer." She gives us background on the job position by stating that "chemical engineers use their knowledge to help solve problems that involve the environment or how to use chemicals." She

hopes to be working with BASF by managing and protecting the Earth's resources. Working with BASF, she will have the opportunity to conduct experiments and make new discoveries.

In summary, as Ramos closes her high school career, she is attempting to prepare for beginning a new one as a college student. We cannot wait to see what Wendy Ramos accomplishes with all of her achievements thus far!



"Arabian Nights" Senior Prom 2017

By Winifer Torres and Aleyshka Barbosa

Many students in the PHS Class of 2017 described it as "the best night of their lives." The magical night at The Venetian in Garfield, NJ created beautiful memories for everyone that attended. PHS seniors long awaited their last hurrah at high school on June 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Not only was this night filled with students ready to dance all night, but also full of students with a sense of accomplishment and the end to their high school years.

Senior advisors, Ms. Johnson Green and Ms. Cipolla worked all year to make this night spectacular for the seniors. At the senior meeting five months ago, the senior advisors said that they had the Venetian booked since last year! The efforts of both the senior advisors and the prom committee was well worth for an amazing night for all the seniors.

Many teachers came to prom to enjoy the night with the students they have gotten to know over the past four years.

The theme of the night was "Arabian Nights." Decorations and invitations reflected the sophisticated and romantic theme.

Both girls and boys felt the pressure of trying to create the perfect night for Prom. Many seniors agreed with senior Giselle Negrette when she admitted, "the hunt for my dress was such a hassle. I wanted to make sure that the dress fit me and who I am as a person."

A student commented, "Sometimes you will never know the true value of a moment until it becomes a memory." Prom will never be forgotten by the seniors who got to experience the "Arabian Nights."



Prom Queen Denada Castillo and Prom King Nazier Navarro



Photos by Ms. Benedetti and Mr. Peña



Indoor Track



Boys Soccer



Girls Tennis



Girls Basketball



Girls Soccer



Swim Team



Baseball

Varsity Sports Awards Ceremony

By Adrian Serrano and Brandon Garcia-Salas

Passaic High School is home to the brightest, most athletic and hardworking student athletes. On June 5, alongside the middle school Passaic High School's varsity sports gathered at the auditorium along with their loved ones and prepared to be recognized for their hard work at the Varsity Sports Awards Ceremony.

One by one each team was called up to receive their rewards, which had consisted of the MVP

award and the Character award. Every member of each team received a certificate, which gave them gratitude for their hard work and dedication to their team. With this they received the Varsity letter patch "P" and a pin for each individual's sport.

There were many teams that were recognized for their achievements and success this year. The following teams were especially recognized for winning various championships this year: Cross Country County Champs, Freshman Basketball County Champs,

and Cheerleading Big North Champs.

As the ceremony came to an end it was time to announce our annual male and female student athlete of the year. This award was given to the most promising and diligent student in PHS you must excel in both academics and sports outside and inside school. Both Luis Peralta and Maryah Sabat received the Male and Female Athlete of the Year Award.

Athletes and their families celebrated and enjoyed refreshments after the ceremony.



Cheerleading



Cheerleading



Football



Girls Volleyball



Softball



Boys Volleyball



Cross Country Boys



Wrestling Team



Cross Country Girls

Great job to our student athletes this year. You have made PHS proud!

'In the Heights'

continued from page 1

Not only were the cast members busy but behind the scenes crew who made the production happen were as well. Stage director Arleth Cespedes alongside stage crew Richard Castillo, William Sinning, Alexis Hernandez, Jason Flores, Jason Sequera, and Kelvin Bracero helped move the show along with lights, props and mics.

The crowds loved every performance made by the cast. The opening scene for Act One starts off by Graffiti Pete, played by Rose Holder, who is seen tagging Usnavi's bodega. The bodega owner comes just in time to stop any more graffiti happening to his store and breaks off into the opening song, "In the Heights." All the other main and major roles join along to make an appearance for the opening song.

Nina, one of the female leads, doesn't make an appearance until the second song "Breathe" where it's revealed she left school. Nina expresses her worries over letting everyone know she left school and how they'd all react. After it's revealed that she dropped out problems arise between her and her parents. These problems also cause a rift between Benny and Kevin Rosario.

Usnavi is handling his own problems with pinning after the girl of his dreams and figuring out who holds the winning lottery ticket. Vanessa is longing to leave the barrio and owning her own salon. Without spoiling the whole show the first act ends with the dual song "The Club/Fireworks" where a blackout occurs.

The opening of Act Two is quite surpris-

ing to say the least. Those who went to the three viewings of the show were shown a loving duet between Nina and Benny. Not to reveal too much, everyone's problems soon fell into place with Usnavi ending up having possession of the \$96,000 after learning that Abuela Claudia won the tick-



et who sadly passed away.

Abuela Claudia's last wish was for Usnavi and Sonya to split the winnings. Usnavi plans to use the money to repair his shop and gives money to Vanessa to help her move into a new apartment. Usnavi also lends Graffiti Pete money to continue his work as appreciation for the mural he painted of Abuela Claudia. Nina plans to return to school to continue her education. The musical ends with Usnavi rushing to say he's not leaving the barrio.

The show performed by fellow classmates and friends was phenomenal. At the end of each performance the beautiful acting, dancing, and choreography astounded the crowds. After seeing the plays, it is evident that there is a lot of talent roaming the halls of Passaic High School.

Spring Concert—Wowing the Crowd

By Daisy Gonzalez

On June 1, 2017, the PHS Band, Strings, and Choir performed their annual spring concert in the PHS auditorium. Impressed with the final product, it was a long journey to create this memorable experience for the Seniors who are graduating this year.

Soon after the winter concert ended, the strings, band, and choir began working on the Spring Concert selections.

Starting off the night, the beginner Strings played a number of selections that wowed the crowd. Soon after, the advance Strings were left front and centered. From the beginning of the year to the end of the year, the String program did not fail to impress the audience with their black and white outfits as well as their playing abilities.

Working day and night, the

choir successfully sang over six songs, which were amazingly executed. Dress to impress, the choir were their red and black gowns while the males wore their tuxes.

For the first time, pianists of PHS took on the stage to have their moment underneath the spotlight. From beginners to advanced players, the audience was left speechless. Parents were left amazed and proud to see their child shining bright like a diamond.

Ending the night, the band amazingly executed all three selections, "Procession of the Nobles", "Fantasia for Band" and "Songs of the Key of Life." From floral patterns to vivid colors to tuxes, the night was brightened as the music department shines their brightest stars.

The 2016-2017 PHS Marching Band members began working hard during school as well

as Tuesday nights from 5:30pm - 9pm. Over the course of a month, members of the woodwind and brass sections were chosen to be part of the jazz band. The jazz band was considered a challenge for most as well as preparation for the upcoming marching band season.

The Spring Concert could not have ran more smoothly, with the help of Band Director Mr. Rusca, Strings Instructor Ms. Rusewicz, Piano Instructor Ms. Godovanik, and the Choir Instructor Ms. Gauthier. The Music Department would not be the same without their endless hard work.

Important Message to Students of PHS: If there is anyone currently interested in joining The Passaic High School Marching Band, please see Mr. Rusca in G-150 before or after school.



PHOTO BY JOHANA LASTOR

Senior Recognition Ceremony at the NHS dinner

National Honor Society Induction Dinner

By Johana Lastor

On May 24, 2017, the PHS National Honor Society held their annual dinner at Valley Regency marking the Fortieth Annual Induction and Senior Recognition Ceremony. National Honor Society honors the high standards of scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

The event started with the NHS President, Adriana Izelo, greeting everyone for attending the annual dinner. Furthermore, the President called up the officers—Catherine Sposato, Dev Patel, Justin Rymut, Arnold Hernandez—to acknowledge the NHS principles.

Calling up NHS members—Jessica Sanchez and Massiel Tavaréz—to the front they had the pleasure of introducing the new candidates. This year twelve students from Passaic High School were inducted into National Honor Society at Valley Regency. Congratulations to Jordany Arias, Aleyshka Barbosa, Michelle Bautista, Laisa Fernandez, Brandon Garcia, Idali Gil, Jessica Guizar, Abe Jaramillo, Johana Lastor, Mariana Ovalles, Ashley Peralta, and Dhruvi Rana for being inducted to NHS!

PHS's Acting Principal, Mrs. Torres-Gomez, stepped up to give her congratulations to the new inductees and overall the NHS members and advisors for the annual dinner that was held.

After the high school's piano and violin musicians played while



PHOTO BY JOHANA LASTOR

NHS Induction

eating dinner, the ceremony continued. NHS members, Arleth Cespedes and Diana Tiburcio, were called up in front of the room to commend the seniors for their achievements.

Congratulations to the senior class—Jessica Ariza, Dionisy Caceres, Lesley Camilo, Justin Cancel, Kevin Gutierrez, Arnold Hernandez, Adriana Izelo, Nazier Navarro, Luis Ortega, Dev Patel, Darshak Rana, Devanshi Rana, Justin Rymut, and Catherine Sposato—for coming to closure with their high school career and initiating a new chapter in their life.

After the Senior Class of NHS thanked their individuals who helped in their academic journey, the President came up again. Miss Adriana Izelo gave her address as President and assured on thanking everyone who assisted in her accomplishments thus far.

In essence, NHS Co-Advisers, Mr. Theodore Graham and Caitlin Ament, gave their remarks as the dinner concluded. As the night ended, everyone left the reception with overwhelming emotions as the NHS members were acknowledged for their achievements thus far.

Band Day

By Yakelin Victoriano Hernandez

Music is a beautiful way to express oneself. Music can relieve stress and make others more motivated. However, it requires discipline. The commitment to play an instrument involves time management, determination, and organization.

Time management is something that is enforced when learning an instrument. It is important for students to keep their grades up while taking time out of their day to build up your playing skills.

On May 23, 2017 students all over Passaic got a glimpse of how the music programs in the schools that the band kids attended to learn music are progressing. Band Day is a tradition in Passaic to highlight all of the wonderfully talented student musicians.

Elementary school students came happy and eager to see the high school students. All the players from flutes to percussion were asking the high school students what instrument they play. They looked up to the students, which strengthened their love for music even more.

The day started with all of the young students being escorted to their seats with their peers.

High Temperatures

By Juliana Disla

In May and June, the air gets heavy and the school building gets more humid on especially scorching days. It doesn't seem like it could get any worse, but after walking inside a class without a fan or air conditioning and sitting down after walking a couple flights of stairs, you are nothing but exhausted and sweaty. Hot temperatures in school are a distraction and are getting worse.

Some students argue they cannot function in these hot temperatures. Freshman Johann Navarro said, "I can't focus on school work if it's this hot. Especially in the gym, because it is so hot, they should take us to the auditorium where it's cooler."

Another freshman student, Michelle Martinez explains "people have health issues and this heat can cause people to pass out."

Everyone is rushing to class in this heat causes hallways to get crowded and a lot of excessive breathing and humidity to

School No. 6 performed first, and even though they experienced a change in music teachers, we saw how much more of an effort was put to keep their music program just as good as the years before.

The show continued with School No. 19, No. 3, No. 9, No. 4, No. 20 and last but not least, PHS.

The past No. 6 School music teacher, Mr. Kevin Place, was transferred to LMS. Place left School No. 6 for LMS, and took his brother's spot. He puts in a lot of effort to have his music program perform at a high level, like his brother left it. His brother, Mr. Keith Place, was the previous music program director at LMS, and now works at School No. 20.

Music for many students is a way to let go. Music had helped me keep on track with what students have going on in school. From the teachers that help students keep up with their schoolwork, or Mr. Rusca telling students what is expected of them when they decide to join band, it is a commitment that helps strengthen all areas of academic and social life. Students have made friends in band back in middle school and continue to stay close today through music.

be produced. Leonardo Flores states "everyone gets sweaty and everyone is crowded in the halls so the school gets even more intensely hot"

Classroom teachers also have an opinion on this extreme heat. Teacher Ms. Yilmaz said, "Air conditioners would be a good investment for the school-classrooms are too hot therefore students and teachers have trouble performing their best."

Students are not able to work in class during this heat because they are too distracted by the sweating and the urge to get cool. The weather has been as high as 96 degrees.

In summer school it is normally around 90 degrees or higher everyday.

Students can pass out, get sick, or get hurt due to the extreme weather. Students should not have to miss school because they cannot handle 90+ degree temperatures indoors. For the safety of the students, faculty, and staff, it is important for our school to consider installing air conditioning units in all classrooms.

Valedictorian

continued from page 1
major "combines engineering principles and design concepts to medicine and biology for health care purposes."

Dev mentions that after his high school career, he hopes to travel internationally and become "immersed in all the different cultures that exist". As well as trying new things like "new ethnic foods, traditional dances, and live music."

Fast forward in a decade, he envisions himself "working for a state of the art research lab conducting clinical experiments to find a cure for cancer and

cystic fibrosis and many other diseases that impair quality of life for many."

He is also hoping to be "working on human cloning and artificial organs to treat transplant patients who reject foreign organs."

In essence, as Dev Patel closes his high school chapter in his life, he prepares to initiate a new one afterward that is far more arduous than what he has accomplished now. The future waits for the Valedictorian of the Class of 2017 and we cannot wait to see what he accomplishes!

Inner Visions 2016-2017

Passaic High School's Literary Magazine

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Mr. Osvaldo Matos, Assistant Principal
Ms. Graciella Romero, Assistant Principal
Ms. Jennifer Welch, Assistant Principal

Dedicated to the memory of our beloved teachers, Ms. Charonda O'Bryant-Hopkins and Mrs. Paula Dukes-Brown.

Love's Vocabulary

by Pablo Bravo

Love has no words
There is no way to express the muddle of feelings
It has wings of the best of birds
And might not even fly

There is no small whisper
That cannot send you into full-on jealousy
It is the thing that can kill
It is the thing that can heal

Love can turn into obsession
When you cannot put yourself past a setback
On your love track
Or turn into hopeless mindless hate
Such might be your fate

Don't laugh at me, I ain't a fool!
You don't listen to me
You will end up your lover's tool
Basically a puppet on strings
To your lover's every whim

You must control your desire
No I don't mean try to hide it
(Anyways it will leak through no matter what
method you use)
You must tread safely to avoid a bruise
On the treacherous path to true love

We might shun it
We might try to starve it
Well it will live on
You cannot make it be gone

It is like the light in a prism
It has all kinds of beautiful colors
You can choose from the mix
You can choose altruism
You can choose the dirtiest tricks
To reach your goal in love

It is the dirtiest game
The strong man's bane
You can play it your way
If you care to stay

It commands the bravest knight
It moves the weakest beggar
It can create war
It can put you in the cellar
Or it can raise you to glory

You cannot choose the steps it will take you on
That is the way love is
You can try it, you can hide it
You will embrace all it is.

Learn

by Bayron Ovalle

Men with poison on their lips
Pointing and condemning
Women at the end of their fingertips
Power appointed and exploited

Winds blowing and women hanging
Freezing nights and women burning
How come?

Men's evil running on streets unchecked
Women shamed and stoned
Quiet and small you must be to survive

But quiet and small you can't stay for long
From birth you were told that's the way things are
But oppression calls for uprising
As you learn it you must unlearn it.

The Unknown

by Kevin Martinez

Life is yet to be proven
Theories and beliefs
Many different assumptions
But nobody really knows
How

And why things were made like this.

Why Weren't You There?

by Kimberly Martinez

Why weren't you there? Was I not good enough? I was so young and naive. I didn't understand. I remember crying myself to sleep, wishing you were here. But no matter how hard I wished, you were never here.

You had one job. Your job was to stay. But you didn't. I remember being happy and excited to be meeting you after so many years. I've pictured you and what we would do together. I thought you were ready to be my father, but I was wrong. You weren't. You showed me your true colors and I was left with utter disappointment. I was left hurt and alone once again.

I thought you'd have loved me or at least cared for me, but once again, I was wrong. Because while I was wondering what I did wrong, crying and in pain, you were happy with your new family. One which I was not a part of. You moved on and left me behind. You forgot about me. You were there for your new family; why couldn't you be there for me? There were moments when all you had to do was be my father, but even then, you despised me, didn't you? You abandoned me and you hurt me. You've changed me. With everything you did to me, you've created a monster. A cold-hearted, emotionless, hateful monster.

You are the author of everything I've become.

Trilogies of War

by Quinton Riley

There has always been a cycle that was never ending since very long ago
The shallow ideas and cravings that lead to disputes and fights amongst mankind
Humans in our idealistic, perfect world are supposed to be superior to all
But overall we have not yet realized how brittle and foolish we can really be

Sacrificing ourselves day in and day out over materialistic things or even religious beliefs
Everyone slowly falling into the deep darkness confided in the evil in one's heart
Being controlled and persuaded by disfigured entities, shadows of the black
The supposed unknown boost of energy that increases one's strength, will, and determination

Can only come from your pure heart and connection to true love and self-righteousness
This true essence of power comes from the highest figure that rules this world and he
Would rather us as humans band together and protect the nature, and children of our future do
Cherish our earth and not destroy such a beautiful nourishing habitat of life

But there's always one who disobeys the power of God himself and continues to plague
Havoc upon their own kind, those who do not see where fighting will eventually lead us all
It will soon come to an end for the last war, will end our world in a catastrophic way, that last
Battle will be Warriors of God versus the hyenas of the dark or in other words, the foolish puppets

Millions will suffer and perish under this altercation, many souls will go to the most high's
Kingdom, while many will dine in the caves and pits of darkness. Until this time comes, clinging on
And cherishing life as it is now is essential to prepare for our world's oblivion.

The Holocaust*by Pablo Bravo*

Hitler's Germany has been very famous
 Due to the Holocaust against the Jews
 I believe it was Hitler's ignoramus
 To shape Germany's greatest abuse
 Yet it happened even though the Jews never cried
 "frame us"

The Jewish people were not bad
 Yet Hitler decided to separate them apart
 And lead them to ruin and be sad

Though Hitler tried his best
 The Jews were not going to play this kind of game
 They would not lay down and rest
 And in concentration camps feed the furnace flame

The Jews hid in homes
 Of noble friends of old
 To different countries and places they roamed

Many Jews were killed however in this genocide
 But famous works they could still write
 In which for a day free of oppression they cried

Inspired by Macbeth

They must lie there
 With blood
 What have I done
 Wash this blood
 From my hand
 I shame
 To wear a heart so white
 I left unattended
 I best not know myself
 I would thou couldst

*- Linzy Reyes***Daunting: A Poetry Journal of a Holocaust "Survivor"***by Elaysha Williams*

April 15, 1955
 People always ask me:
 What was the worst part of my experience?
 By experience, they mean my time in Nazi concentration
 camps.
 By experience, they mean losing my family.
 By experience, they mean losing my faith.
 By experience, they mean the Holocaust.
 My reply is always the same:
 The worst part was after it was over.
 Every part of it was horrid though.
 The waiting was unsettling.
 Captivity was absolutely odious.
 The liberation was hope inducing.
 But life after it...
 Life now...
 It's daunting.

February 15, 1941
 The Waiting

The ghetto had been established.
 Lodz, Poland was the town.
 I was a 13 year old girl at the time who seldom had a
 reason to frown.
 For I was very sheltered by my parents
 They protected me from the harsh truths of the world
 Like the Nazis.
 "Mama," I would ask, "will they get us?"
 "No, Anna, we are protected," she would always say.
 By whom?
 Now I can only think by God.
 The ghettos were a wretched place to live in.
 Stores with Jewish owners began to close down for no
 apparent reason.
 Anti-Jewish violence had broken out in place.
 Everything was eerie.
 Nazis were no longer hushed whispers by adults behind
 closed doors.
 Nor playground talk.
 They were not rumors anymore.
 They were real.
 They were dangerous.
 They were here.
 It became apparent that we were in danger when we
 were forced to wear Stars of David on our clothing.
 It was then when we were all waiting.
 What one was waiting on?
 Well, that depended on you and your faith.
 I did not know what it was we were waiting on,
 But it was coming.
 And we all knew it.

1944
 Captivity

You cannot put into words the agony one goes through in
 Auschwitz.
 Or any camp for that matter.
 I lost my father.
 My mother had died.
 I had lost my faith.
 My humanity.
 I lost everything.
 I was no longer a person,
 But an empty shell of hunger and pain.
 I was nothing

Liberation
 Joy,
 Hopefulness,
 Free.
 All things I should have felt after being rescued.
 Right?
 SHOULD have.
 But didn't.
 I didn't feel anything for a while.
 My family was gone.
 My hometown did not accept me anymore.
 At least...
 At least I was out of that forsaken place.
 I was free.
 Wasn't I?

April 16, 1955

People always ask me:
 What was the worst part of my experience?
 By experience, they mean my time in Nazi concentration
 camps.
 By experience, they mean losing my family.
 By experience, they mean losing my faith.
 By experience, they mean the Holocaust.
 My replay is always the same:
 The worst part is my life now.
 It's waking up in the middle of the night screaming.
 It's images of skeletons and death.
 It's the sensation of a corpse lying on your leg even
 though there's nothing there.
 It's the constant state of anxiety you're in.
 They're coming for me.
 When there's nothing to be anxious about.
 It's the fact that I am "free"
 But I'll never be free because my fleeting sanity is held
 captive by my memories.
 It's daunting.

We run again,
 Hardly near nothing
 We discover advantage

- Diana Romero

Blood no more
 I am afraid
 Look
 I dare not
 Guilt is with me
 Wash this blood
 I shame
 I lost
 To know my deed 'twere best
 Not know myself

- Mariel Gutierrez

Your death should enter
 Every shadow and discovery
 shall learn and endure
 Hope constrained hearts
 Our time, thoughts relate
 Towards war

- Christine Martinez

Ay, death, the days are near us
 Let every soldier endure
 Let our time approach
 Make us know
 We have no one we owe

*- Paulo Almiron***Dangling***by Aleyshka Barbosa*

These words will never be enough
 These words you wanted to hear will not be able to help me bring the oxygen back to your body
 These words will never help me bring back the pink color to your cheeks
 The words are still here
 They are still dangling from a thread, waiting to be said
 But without you here there is no one left for them to be said to
 I will watch them dangle until I can fall asleep and forget about you
 I dream of how you lay there without color in your cheeks, without oxygen in your body, and all
 I could think of were the words that were left dangling
 I will stand before your lifeless body
 Holding onto these words, hoping they might save me
 These words you claim to have needed to survive stripped you of your life and watched you die
 I will never say these words and you will never get to hear them from me
 Everyone stood around you and screamed these words, but I never got to tell you how much I
 loved you before you died because all I told you was goodbye.

True Feelings
by Kimberly Martinez

You live in the darkness that consumes you
 every day until it surrounds you completely.
 Every day you must pretend everything is fine
 and put the pain aside.
 In everyone's eyes you are the happiest person
 alive but inside you are dying.
 You have this hole in your chest, which is never
 fulfilled no matter what you do.
 This hole, that each day gets bigger and bigger
 That each time is far more painful to deal with.
 It's hard to deal with it every day, but you do it.
 You get through the day without crying, without
 screaming out how you really feel inside.
 Each time it gets harder to put up with the fake
 smile but you accomplish it
 Having to deal with the pain for so many years
 makes you numb to any happy feelings.
 But then again you can still feel the pain,
 the anger, the fear, the loneliness.
 You are left with a scar for life
 that each time it is almost fully healed,
 it reopens
 because you aren't meant to be happy.
 You are cursed to a life full of pain, which
 no one can save you from.
 You are damaged beyond repair.
 You're broken.
 Always and forever.

I am from...

by *Citlaly Cazares*

I am from New Jersey
From Passaic and spring
I am from the white building
That is tall, lovely, and bright
I am from a sunflower.
Sunflowers are beautiful, colorful, and lovely
I am from Mexico and the United States
My mom is Yanet and my sister is Jatlanezy
I'm from a playful and outgoing family
From a nice and respectful family
I'm sleepy during religion, I sleep on my side
I'm from Passaic, and my parents are from Mexico
My favorite foods are mole and pozole
Last time we got a dog named Coffee for Christmas and
my sibling and I were so happy that we got a dog
He was a brown and tall puppy
He has big paw and his eyes are small.
He's a really nice dog and playful with every person.

by *Ricardo Gonzalez*

I am from New Jersey
from Takis and ice cream
I am from the big kitchen, ugly, green, bitter
I am from Bird of Paradise that looks like a plant bird
I'm from cooking and curly hair
From Hilda Guzman and Denise Gonzalez
I am from the yell and fightin
From "Be myself" and "Don't let nobody change you"
I am from sleeping everyday, clean every
Sunday
I am from Puerto Rico
The land of Arroz con Dulce and Coquito.

by *Jasmin Tolentino*

I'm from Passaic
From ice cream and pizza
I'm from that white double floor house
Tall, red bright doors and the wonderful smell of the flowers

I'm from that bouquet of jasmynes
The white and nice sense of smell type
I'm from Mexico and the United States
From Jaime and Beatriz
From Jason and Jimmy
From Jas and Jasi
I'm from Passaic
From spaghetti and chicken
From the Tolentino Generation.

by *Via Gotoc*

I am from Mangaldan
From Boy Bawang and Cracklings
I am from the red and white house
Tall, big, bright.
I am from Gumamela
Beautiful, big.
I'm from faithful and helpful
From Edgar and Vilma
I'm from the loud and playful
From nice and respectful
I'm from the Philippines
Pancit, pizza
From when my mom was pregnant with my youngest sister
She saw a wishing star and named my sister Vinuz.

by *Joseph Coyotl*

I am from my family
From the sky and the stars
I am from the sky that has stars, a mood, and turns black at night.
I am from a rose that is red and smells good.
I'm from Mexico and the US
From my mom and dad.
I'm from the nice and wonderful family
From heaven and earth.
I'm from Cinco de Mayo
From a nice soft blanket.
I'm from St. Joseph's Hospital
My family loves tacos and mole.
I'm from a wonderful story my parents told me.

The Night

by *Anonymous*

Love is an intense feeling of deep affection
To me, it's more of a connection
I don't know if you're a blessing or a lesson

Love is in the air
But only some of us really care
It's a feeling we don't know but share
It's where your true feelings show
But it's okay, that doesn't make you shallow

Table for two in this love game
I remember the first time we exchanged our first names
When our hands touched, we both felt a flame
Nothing was ever the same
I will never forget that day

He still takes my breath away
His long dark brown hair
I wonder if he notices enough to care
His smile is more than I can bear
He makes me want to care
Should I even dare?

I'm the evil and he is the good in me.
With him, I'm completely free
I'm not the good girl that everyone expected me to be
He's the key when I'm lost in the coral sea

BUT...

Love stalks me day and night
It even makes me cry
All I do is try but it converts into a lie
When I have had enough, all I want to do is die
I feel like I'm on some sort of high.

Two years have gone by
At times we can't see eye to eye

I don't know if I'm the ally or the bad guy
Can you see my outcry?
The last thing I ever want to say is goodbye.

In those two years we never broke again
Everything I said came from my heart
You're my favorite form of art
From the hi's to the departs
Honey, that was just the start.

I learned many things along the way
To be careful of what you say
Love is no smooth highway
And not everything is gonna be okay
Some days are gonna be grey

You taught me that it's ok to express what you feel
Right now I'm here to tell you what I fear
Through everything we grew

I learned many things along the way
To be careful of what you say
Love is no smooth highway
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You taught me that it's ok to express what you feel
Right now I'm here to tell you what I fear
Through everything we grew

My One and Only

by *Gandhi Garcia*

Sometimes the little things of you can make
me smile
You are so perfect to me
I think of you all the time
I just want you in my arms
You're my one and only

When you aren't with me, I think of you
I know I've made mistakes
But I love you with my heart
Our love can be seen in photographs
I write this for you, to show my love for you
You're my one and only
And I'm never letting go

I miss you
I miss your kisses
I miss all of you
I don't want you to leave
You can be mine forever
Because I love you

I think of you no matter what
Your eyes are bright just like my heart
whenever I see you
Our love is saved in photographs and memories
And I don't know what I would do without you
You're my one and only
My one and only.
I don't know how to show you my love
But I hope this song does the job
Because you're my one and only.

BLACKOUT POETRY

