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PHS SPECIAL OLYMPICS: Competing with Pride and Positivity

By Armando Martinez

Passaic High School has its very own Special Olympics team. The team competes at the regional and state level in various events. This is the third year that PHS has a Special Olympics team, and they are getting better every year!

On Sunday, April 2, the team competed at the Spring Games State Bowling Competition. Student athletes Lisette River earned a bronze medal and Moises Santiago-Ortiz earned a silver medal. Both athletes bowled extremely well and maintained excellent sportsmanship.

On Saturday, April 23, the Special Olympics Bocce team went to the North Area Competition. Passaic was represented by both traditional doubles teams and unified doubles teams.

This is the first year PHS has expanded the program to include unified teams. A unified doubles

team consists of one traditional athlete and a unified partner. The unified partners are from the PHS Track team. All of the athletes did a great job bringing home one fourth place, one bronze, five silver and two gold medals.

Ms. Cawthern, a PHS teacher that assists the Special Olympics team, said "The fact that we are doing this is phenomenal, these kids are, most of the time, self-contained and aren't visible. This gives them a way to participate in school activities."

Ms. Ackerson-Baez said "I would like to recognize and thank Coach Grant for his help in identifying interested students from the track program and for stopping by to support all the athletes, and Mrs. Cathy Palumbo for her continual support of our students and for stopping by the event. I would also like to recognize and thank Ms. Carrillo, Ms.



PHOTO BY MR. GRANT

The PHS Special Olympics team and the PHS Spring Track and Field team at the Special Olympics Bocce Competition.

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Black History Month Assembly Speakers Inspire Students

By Aleyshka Barbosa

On Thursday, February 23, The Passaic Board of Education

and the PHS African-American Club presented an outstanding presentation in celebration of Black History Month.

Reverend Pamela D. Sallie and Michael Spence spoke about their personal experiences and how they have overcome the

labels they were given. Period eight and nine classes were given the opportunity to hear the wise word of those who have experienced more and have used their experiences to teach others how to not make the same mistakes.

The assembly started with opening remarks by Mr. Velez, following by welcoming and acknowledgment of special guests by Kashim Cooks, the president of the PHS African-American Club. Quickly after, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and presentation of colors by the PHS NJROTC and the Negro National Anthem. Among the attendees of the presentation was Passaic Mayor Hector C. Lora.

Mr. Marvin Walker officially began the assembly with the libation ceremony, in which a plant is watered; if the spirit of the people are good then the plant will grow, but if the people are not righteous then the plant will die.

Rockaya N'Doye, a member

of the PHS African American Club introduced the first guest speaker, Reverend Pamela D. Sallie. Her insightful description of the struggles she faced and her how she overcame them, was made very clear with the confidence and the positive vibes that surrounded her in the auditorium.

Rev. Sallie made sure to leave her message behind when she confidently stated, "you heard my story and now you see the glory."

Students Ciara Flores and Brandon Santiago performed an African dance before the introduction of the second guest speaker. Bintu N'Doye, another member of the African American club introduced the guest speaker, Michael Spence. His words left the audience in silence and whirls of emotions surrounded the assembly.

Spence's message was clear; "If you don't change yourself, then you can't change the world."



PHOTO BY MS. SCIAMETTA

Ms. Bolton, Reverend Sallie and Ms. Hiller-Cousins.



PHOTO BY WWW.PICTUREMANGREG.COM

The ROTC Students escorted the Passaic Mayor, Hector C. Lora as he exited the black history month assembly.



PHOTO BY WWW.PICTUREMANGREG.COM

Administrators, teachers, students, guest speakers and Passaic's mayor showed their support during the assembly.



PHOTO BY MS. SCIAMETTA

Reverend Sallie addresses PHS faculty, staff and students.



PHOTO BY ALEYSHKA BARBOSA

Full Spectrum gave PHS students a performance that they will never forget!

US Air Force Band: Full Spectrum

By Aleyshka Barbosa

On March 17, the PHS NJROTC, band, choir, and orchestra members were recognized for their incredible talents and hard work. The students were excused from periods eight and nine to enjoy a special treat with a small concert featuring the US Air Force Band, Full Spectrum.

Mr. Velez and Ms. Romero started the assembly off by giving special thanks to the students for always helping the school with their contribution to the arts and their leadership skills.

After Full Spectrum was introduced, the auditorium went dark. The lights came back on with the band standing on the stage with big smiles. The students were surprised to see how much energy radiated off the stage. The band hyped the students up

by playing a cover to the rapper, Eminem's well-known song "Lose Yourself."

They made it clear that students were there to enjoy ourselves and they were able to sing along, dance and record.

Full Spectrum performed covers of recent hits and made students reminisce on past songs that they thought they had forgotten. Even so, every song was received with excitement from the audience.

This event showed the students of PHS NJROTC, band, orchestra, and choir members who give 110 percent every time they perform that PHS appreciates all that they do.

Full Spectrum showed students that they can always follow their dreams while doing something honorable, such as serving their country.

Annual Inspection for NJROTC Cadets

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Passaic High School's NJROTC held another outstanding annual inspection on March 2, 2017. In preparation for the annual inspection, NJROTC cadets studied basic military knowledge, prepped their uniforms to be as perfect as humanly possible and made sure they were nothing less than sharp for the big day.

Area Four manager, Commander Jimmy Miller, inspected the unit. Miller complimented the unit for their hard work and dedication to the NJROTC program.

PHS principal Mr. Velez thanked the cadets along with the NJROTC instructors who always give a good name to PHS and go above and beyond expectations.

"Thank you to all of the NJROTC cadets for always helping out the school; whenever the school calls NJROTC cadets are sure to respond and help," Ms. Romero told the unit, which is under the command of Lt. Commander Hac.

Miller not only inspected the unit but also reviewed financial records and held staff briefings.

Every NJROTC cadet of PHS makes sure to always remember and follow the Navy core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

NJROTC Academic Team

This spring, NJROTC students sat down to take a 100 question test with only one hour to complete. The students had to study basic military knowledge, current events, historical dates, and more.

When the cadets received the results from the test, they couldn't believe what they were hearing. For the National Academic Test, Team One placed 1st place in the area, and 44th internationally. Team Two placed 16th in the area, Team Three placed 34th, and Team Four placed 97th.

The top three individuals were Tonanziht Aguas, Antoni Hernandez, and captain of the academic team, Justin Rymut.

Teacher Spotlight: Ms. Hall

By Janessa Mejias

This Teacher Spotlight goes to Ms. Hall. Hall is a well-known chemistry teacher, who also teaches physical science classes. If you ask many, she is certainly one of their favorite teachers.

Hall has a major in biochemistry and a minor in psychology. She studied at the University of New Mexico. She continues to inspire and motivate us all to be who we want to be and do what we want to do. "I have had some

remarkable science teachers in my life and I have modeled my teaching after them, plus a little sense of humor" Hall says.

Hall is one of many teachers at PHS that is part of the Teach For America program. This program is an organization full of passionate people who want to teach. They help develop and mobilize as many national future leaders as possible. Their mission is to strengthen the educational equality and excellence, especially in cities that are below the poverty

line, and children in extreme poverty that are half as likely to graduate from high school.

Teachers such as Hall, keep great spirits in the classroom and never let us down.

"I want you to be the best most perfect chemist you can possibly be," she says almost daily.

What's also great about Ms. Hall is that she continues to love her students and what she does. "I love my students more than I love chemistry, which is a mole-lot!"

TEEN PEP Workshops

By Samantha Dume' and Samantha Reyes Lopez

What exactly is Teen PEP? Teen PEP, also known as Teen Prevention Education Program, is a health program designed to educate teenagers on how to make responsible sexual decisions in order to prevent illnesses.

In order to be a part of this incredible program, students' grades must be at an A/B average and students go through a 'test' to see if their skills fit the program. Teen PEP teaches students how to prevent the risks of receiving illnesses/viruses such as HIV, STDs, AIDS, chlamydia, herpes, syphilis, and much more. One of the activities created for this program is word/definition matching.

This program also involves skits! It is a way of testing the students' engagement and listening skills, which are then followed up by asking questions to see who was paying attention.

Recently Teen PEP worked together with the freshmen and sophomore classes in workshops that helped raise awareness of rape and toxic relationships. These workshops happened over two days during their gym periods where students worked in small groups with two Teen PEP leaders.

With every workshop, there are skits to give a bit more detailed explanation on possible incidents concerning the issue at hand. Teen PEP 2 presented four different pairs of teens at a party. These teens were drinking and the scene describes out of all the pairs only one is raped. The others girls handle the situation accordingly,

resisting the act as even the guy goes as far as saying it would not be a good idea. The scene is very dramatic with realistic acting done.

Soon after the scene, they broke off into small groups of 7-12 students along with two PEP leaders who gave out information on the importance of how to handle rape. They gave advice on what to do according to law if you or a friend has gotten raped or even committed said act.

One of the first activities was reading note cards with definitions on indecent acts that can occur during rape. They explained that not every rape victim would come forward to accuse the attacker and that not every rape victim is a girl.

The next day of the workshop, Teen PEP leaders explained scenes that were made up of characters who got molested and how they handled the situation. One was a teenage boy who got sexually assaulted by older guys. The teenage boy describes the situation as embarrassing, which is the case for many males in America.

Another scene is a girl who is shut off from school and any kind of social life. Instead of reporting the incident to the police or someone trusted she chose to remain silent. This choice evidently ruined her state of mind and relationships with others.

Another workshop done by Teen PEP included talking about toxic relationships. They talked about different types of abusive relationships, not only physical, but emotionally abuse, as well.

With another series of skits to help enlighten more to the serious

topic, a real life situation was read out loud to everyone. The situation is read from a girl's point of view. She starts off in a wonderful relationship with an older guy but after a while, things get rocky. He starts shouting and she tells herself it's not her fault. Soon things take a turn for the worse when he starts to physically hit her. At this point, she had closed herself off from people she used to be close with. The girl starts to believe it is all her fault and she's to blame. When she finally opened her eyes, the situation was brought to the attention of trusted adults.

Ultimately she walked away and learned a hard lesson. In the groups it was discussed why many don't recognize the abuse and why they don't come forward with it. The top two answers are blinded by love and the fear of others getting hurt.

Teen PEP does their best to keep learning about serious topics, like rape and toxic relationships. The truth is hard but incidents like these occur every day to not only teens but to everyone. Teen PEP is helping raise awareness to difficult issues that are almost every day on the news.

Teen PEP is not only a program involving communication skills but every member of the group has a strong bond that is very noticeable. Last but not least, when the members are done teaching their lesson, they introduce themselves by their first names finishing off with a saying, "AND WE'RE TEEN PEP!" loud and proud, putting smiles on the faces of every student in the room.

Ski & Board Club Provides Powerful Experiences

By Samantha Reyes

The Passaic High School Ski and Board Club was first created back in the 1970s by English teacher Mr. Fritz. The club's mission statement is to inspire character, courage, commitment and personal achievement in PHS students through challenging and rewarding experiences. The club annually serves over seventy PHS students.

Recently the Ski and Board Club took a trip to Windham Mountain, a popular ski resort, to put their skiing and snowboarding skills to the test. Ms. Lauricella, the Ski and Board Club adviser, Ms. Pyron, and Ms. Hall chaperoned the trip.

The Ski and Board Club fundraises to supplement the cost of their trip. Stephanie De Dios, a senior who has been in the club since her freshmen year, expresses her thoughts, "Although we struggled a lot with a low budget



PHOTO BY MS. LAURICELLA

Ski and Board Club members prepare for a day on the slopes at Windham Mountain.

we were able to make things work and get to go on those life changing trips. I will honestly make an effort to stay skiing and hopefully join the ski club on their trips in the nearby future."

Hopeful spirits like these are what keeps the club thriving

with dedicated members. A club like this is empowering not only through the winter sport but by leaving impacting life lessons. The club helps students a lot like senior Kelvin Bracero experience

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Youth Appreciation Dinner 2017: Optimist Club & Octagon Club

By Kimberly Martinez

The Youth Appreciation Dinner is an annual dinner that is held by PHS's very own Mr. Sheridan, the Octagon Club, and the Passaic Optimist Club. This year, it was held on April 6. At the event, students of all ages are rewarded and appreciated for their hard work and dedication to make a change in the Passaic community.

The dinner is held to highlight the positive contributions to society that the youth of Passaic are involved in. These young and bright students are nominated by a teacher, coach or staff who see something in them that's inspiring, motivating, and unique that separates them from the rest of their peers.

The dinner was held at the Sevilla Restaurant in Passaic. Various clubs and organizations have tables reserved especially for them, the award recipient and their guest(s).

The night began with a brief introductory speech by Juan Izaguirre, the President of the Optimist Club. Afterward, Mr. Sheridan explained the history and importance of the dinner.

Following the flag salute, Mr. Sheridan called a group of students with the teacher, coach, or staff member who nominated them. Each adult gave a speech about their nominee and described how

each dedicated student deserved this honor. Students gave heartfelt thank you speeches. Each speech given was extremely motivational and evoked emotions from everyone in the room. The words pulled strings in every guest's heart.

After a delicious meal, Passaic's mayor, Hector C. Lora gave a humorous and motivational speech. Keynote speaker, Salim Patel, President of the Passaic Board of Education, made a speech honoring the dedicated students.

The banquet ended with a reading of the Optimist Creed, which brought the crowd together and reinforced exactly how important it is to honor our youth for their good deeds.

Oftentimes, in society and the media, teenagers are portrayed as rebellious and immature. However, these students who were thanked at the banquet for their good attitudes, stand out from the crowd and remind us to not focus on negativity. These students contradict what society thinks of teenagers. They are dedicated, hard-working, selfless, and inspirational leaders.

There is no doubt that these students will continue to make a difference. This one of a kind event truly showcases and captures the positivity that all students should recognize and emulate in their own lives, and spread to others.



PHOTO BY MR. SHERIDAN

Jose Ledesma, Maryah Sabat, Thania Rubio, Cynthia Garcia, and Adriana Ize-lo were among students honored at this year's Youth Appreciation Dinner.

In The Heights

Passaic High School's Spring Musical

May 11, 12, 13 at 7 p.m.
Students \$6, Adults \$10

Come out to support your fellow PHS students
and to see a fabulous show!

STUDENT COUNCIL UPDATE

PHS Students Get Representation on Board of Education

By Bianca Pottinger, Aleyshka Barbosa, and Jessica Sanchez

A new board position created a unique opportunity for students' voices to be heard by policy makers. The Passaic High School Student Council President now has a seat on the district's Board of Education after the board at a public meeting approved a new policy.

Passaic High School Student Council President Catherine Sposato was sworn in and has

assumed the new duties.

Other advancements have occurred in the Student Council. During the recent months at PHS, the Student Council met to start to create plans to make changes in the school. The student government formed a committee of members who were willing to find a way to hear from the student body.

The student committee created a survey that would help the student government understand the areas that the student body

wanted to see a change in.

Over 1,250 students answered the survey showing that the students want to be heard, they want to see change occur. The student survey gave students the opportunity to express what they think of different topics such as uniforms, bathroom policies, etc.

"We want the student body to help the cause. The students gave us the blueprints and now we have to start building," said Sposato.

This survey could have had a

better outcome, being that the population of the school is much greater than the number of students who answered the survey.

Even so, this is only the start; the Student Council is still working on different ideas and projects that are still being deliberated.

"We work to serve the student body, this is the first of many actions we will take to create a better future for the classes to come" stated the Student Council's Director of Communications Committee.



PHOTO BY JOCELYN MARTINEZ

Above and below: Photographs taken by Photography Club members.

Snap Your Way Into the Photography Club!

By Johana Lastor

Mr. Peña, a teacher at Passaic High School who teaches Fine Arts and Advanced Drawing and Painting, is the advisor for the Photography Club, one of the newest clubs that Passaic High School has this year.

According to Mr. Peña, the entire club started when "a student by the name of Pamela Quezada came to me with an interest in starting the club." Since PHS does not currently offer a photography course, Quezada went to Mr. Peña and explained her vision for the club. "She wanted me to support her in her vision and also being the club advisor since I have a background in photography."

Foremost, Mr. Peña mentions that purpose of the club is "to be able to give students the opportunity to express themselves artistically and visually through the lens of the camera, not just traditional drawing or painting."

He states that when students get the opportunity to attend the meetings, students will "learn how to understand a camera and develop a sharp eye for shooting photography and at the same time gain knowledge of the elements and principles of art and design which apply to photography."

Mr. Peña hopes to achieve "a body of work created by the students in the club and hope that they can walk away learning and new skill or master the skill of photography."

With the new knowledge that the students learn from the meetings, he hopes that the members can "take it beyond the classroom and share their



PHOTO BY DIANA DOMINGUEZ

skills and experience with the world and become successful photographers whether it is as a hobby or potential career."

Mr. Peña assures that he hopes to "display students work throughout the school and hopefully it will inspire other fellow peers to want to become part of a blossoming club."

Mr. Peña states that his primary goal as an advisor is to "engage the students to want to become better at photography through guiding them, encouraging them to practice the craft as much as possible." He mentions that he assures his students who attend the meetings to "make every shot count."

When asking Mr. Peña about his interest for starting the club, he gave us some personal information by stating "I've always liked photography I am a professional photographer outside of teaching."

Furthermore, he mentions how he has always been asked about photography through the high school in past years, and "how come there is not a course or a club?"

Fast forward to this year, he states, "You have to start somewhere, so now that we have a club going we now have a foundation to work off of and take it towards the right direction."

In essence, Mr. Peña mentions how he is aiming to "establish a serious club where student will use it has a stepping stone to better themselves and grow artistically using the camera."

If you are interested in joining the club, make sure to stop by G-138 to talk to Mr. Peña!

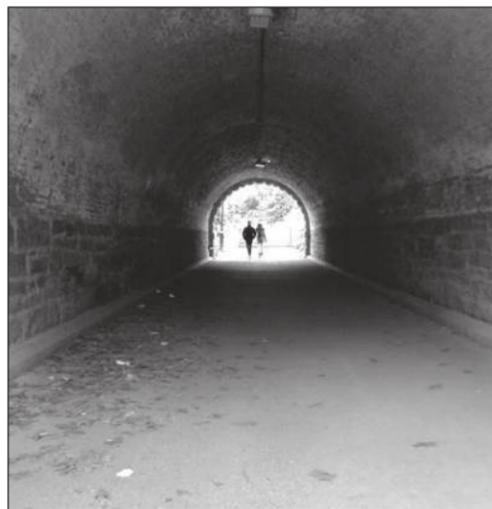


PHOTO BY KIMBERLY MARTINEZ

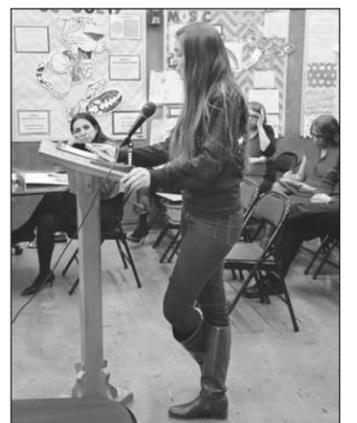


PHOTO BY MS. RUIZ

Student Council President Catherine Sposato addresses the Passaic Board of Education at a board meeting after gaining a seat on the board.

STRIVE 2017:

To Do One's Best and Nothing Less; What We Do in PHS!



The STRIVE Club and guest speaker Akeem Lloyd.

PHOTOS BY MS. JOSE

By Aleyshka Barbosa

STRIVE has hosted various events this school year, to get students involved and love the education that they are receiving. These include the Zero Free Challenge, Zumba nights, STRIVE Awards, and the seventh annual motivational assembly.

The Zero Free Challenge attracted 20 students, but was only successfully completed by six students: Marilyn Herrera, Riya Rana, Linzy Reyes, Ashley Tepale, Merelin Ponce, and Andrea Negrete. Their grades from the first marking period to the second marking period went up one or two letter grades

because of this one decision to submit all of their work.

On Monday, April 3, sophomore classes were given the opportunity to attend the motivational speech. In this assembly STRIVE members got to represent their clubs mission with their new t-shirts and staff member also showed their support by wearing their STRIVE t-shirts as well.

The guest speaker, Akeem Lloyd, is a youth advocate and poet. His words were astonishing especially because most students didn't expect him to be so real and not simply tell them to "stay in school."

Lloyd began and ended with a

poem. He spoke about the importance of breaking the cycles that so often trap our youth and lead them down the wrong paths in life. Student Ritesh Rana said, "His way of words definitely touched my heart."

"Some people think this is funny and I'm getting tired of it! I'm getting tired of young people who look like us going to jail" Lloyd said when trying to get us to understand that we are not what are labeled.

Many students were captivated by his words. His message when making the sophomore class repeat after him, "I am beautiful. I am brave. I am strong," left them with something to think about.



Six students completed the STRIVE Zero Free Challenge: Linzy Reyes, Ashley Tepale, Riya Rana, Merelin Ponce, Andrea Negrete, and Marilyn Herrera (not pictured).

After the assembly, he was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Ms. Jose and the rest of the STRIVE members. Student Emeli Soriano, wrote him a thank you note which read, "I like how you got real with every-

one; it was much needed." Akeem Lloyd's message and theme of breaking the cycle, made the students have hope that the cycle could be broken and that one day they could be the one to break it.

Special Olympics: Competing with Pride and Positivity

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Cawthern, Ms. Ruchalski and Mr. Whitmire for their continued help and support at all the Special Olympic events."

The team participated in the Track and Field Qualifiers on May 6. The girl's varsity basketball team accompanied them to show their support and help with management.

The team will compete at the state competition at The College of New Jersey on June 9, 10, and 11. Before the team departs for the competition, they will participate in a torch run through Clifton and Passaic with the town police.



PHOTO BY MR. GRANT

Mr. Grant and students who participated in the Special Olympics Bocce Competition.



PHOTOS BY MS. LAURICELLA

This year's Ski and Board Club trip was to Windham Mountain in upstate New York.

Ski & Board Club

Continued from Page 1

new and exciting trips. One of the few important lessons Kelvin learned is that "even the best people fall and you shouldn't be afraid to ask for help or ask if others need help."

Not being afraid to try and fail is better than not trying at all. Both seniors agreed that these trips are fun and help create memorable moments with friends. Experiences like these will never stop thriving as the club continues to stay active.

When asked about the future of the club supervisor Ms. Lauricella said, "as long as there are students willing to put in the time and effort to raise money, the club will continue to thrive."

It is staff members like Ms. Lauricella and Mr. Sheridan (the club's previous adviser) who help to inspire fellow PHS students in the club to be a better version of themselves. Not only being fellow club members they soon become close friends sharing powerful experiences with one another. There is no doubt that the Ski and Board Club will continue to attract members in hopes of changing students' outlook on life and helping to create memorable experiences.



Most Talked About Moments of the 89th Academy Awards

By Armando Martinez

It was an unforgettable night at the 89th Academy Awards, which aired live on ABC on Sunday, Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. ET. and took place at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood. There were four musical performances, a moving In Memoriam tribute, inspirational acceptance speeches, and some less than sweet jokes from the Oscars host Jimmy Kimmel toward his long-time "rival" Matt Damon. There were many moments the whole world would be buzzing about, and these are just some of the night's most talked about moments.

Jimmy Kimmel's Shady Monologue:

Kimmel opened the show strong, throwing political jabs and making a reference to actor Mel Gibson's not so shining moments. He encouraged the audience to give the "overrated" actress Meryl Streep a standing ovation, a clear shot to the President of the United States. Kimmel joked that in 2016 "black people saved NASA and white people saved jazz," where he was referring to Oscar-nominated films *Hidden Figures* and *La La Land*.



PHOTO BY BET.COM

Viola Davis holds her Oscar after receiving the award for Best Supporting Actress.

Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway pull a Steve Harvey:

The moment everyone was waiting for, was which movie would win the Oscar for Best Picture. Beatty and Dunaway announced that the musical *La La Land* won the award. However, that was a mistake. Midway through one of the movie's

producers' speeches, it was revealed that *Moonlight* won the award for Best Picture, not *La La Land*. Beatty said "I want to tell you what happened. I opened the envelope, and it said Emma Stone, *La La Land*. That's why I took such a long look at Faye and at you; I wasn't trying to be funny." This has never happened

before in Oscar history.

Viola Davis Acceptance Speech:

Viola Davis delivered a tearful and moving speech while accepting the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Fences*. Davis praised August Wilson, who wrote the play *Fences*, stating he "exhumed and exalted the ordinary people," whose stories she wants to share in her work. She goes on to say "I became an artist and thank god I did because we are the only profession that celebrates what it means to live a life." Kimmel joked that Davis should receive an Emmy nomination for her speech.

Mean Tweets: Oscar Edition

Kimmel added his famous "Mean Tweets" into his Oscar hosting routine. Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, Samuel L Jackson, Jessica Chastain and Natalie Portman were among the celebrities taking on the abuse. Kimmel even tweeted President Donald Trump with a mild tweet, asking "Hey @realDonaldTrump u up?" He was simply checking if Trump was okay, after all the disses he threw at him.



PHOTO BY FANDANGO.COM

Alex R. Hibbert and Mahershala Ali in a scene from *Moonlight*. Ali won the Best Supporting Actor at this year's Academy Awards.

Movie Review: 'Moonlight'

By Armando Martinez

The Oscar winning film, *Moonlight*, looks at three defining chapters in the life of Chiron, a young African American gay man growing up in Miami. In the first chapter, Chiron is ten years old, nicknamed "Little" who is taken in by a good-hearted drug dealer and his girlfriend. In the second part of the film, a teenage Chiron explores his sexuality as he falls in love with a close friend.

The final chapter follows Chiron in his twenties as he reconnects with people from his past. His journey to manhood is guided by the kindness, support and love of the community that helps raise him.

This movie not only gave expo-

sure to the LGBTQ community, but touched the hearts of everyone.

"Barry Jenkins's new film somehow manages to feel grand and intricate in the same moment, weaving random memories and crucial life experiences into a gripping tapestry." — The Atlantic

"Chiron emerges as the most touching exemplar of the film's nuanced perspective, as he grapples with the layers of his own identity as an African American man who happens to be gay." — Washington Post

"A socially conscious work of art as essential as it is insightful." — Vanity Fair

Movie Review: 'Fences'

By Aleyshka Barbosa

Based on the play written in 1985 by American playwright August Wilson, *Fences* was released in theaters around the US on December 15, 2016. The movie primarily takes place in the backyard of Troy and Rose Maxson's home during the 1950s.

The protagonist, Troy Maxson, not only believes that "a colored guy has to be twice as good to get on the team," even though Jackie Robinson has already broken the colored barrier; he strongly believes in everything he says. Troy and Rose are both people without much education, who live in a rudimentary neighborhood, and use impactful, almost poetry-like phrases and statements to reveal the message of the movie.

Troy Maxson, as described by many, can be a "monster." His temper and his stubbornness throughout the movie seem to cloud him being able to see past his own beliefs. Even so, he is a strong character who has seen the hardships of life and has never backed down from anything might throw at him.

As made evident by the name of the film, fences play a very important role throughout the movie. Rose has been asking Troy for years to build the fence and although they both want the fence it is for every different reason. As said by Troy's dear friend Bono, "some people build fences to keep people out, and other people build fences to keep people in."

During the movie, Troy admits to his wife that he had an affair and his mistress, Alberta, is now carrying his child. At this point, the movie takes a turn. Cory, Troy's son loses all the respect he had left for his father and Rose now starts soul searching in hopes to repair her faltering heart.

Troy begins to build the long overdue fence, trying to repair something greater than his hands can manage to repair. When the mother of the new born baby girl dies, Troy returns to his house and begs his wife Rose to forgive him and help him raise the innocent child. From that point on Rose

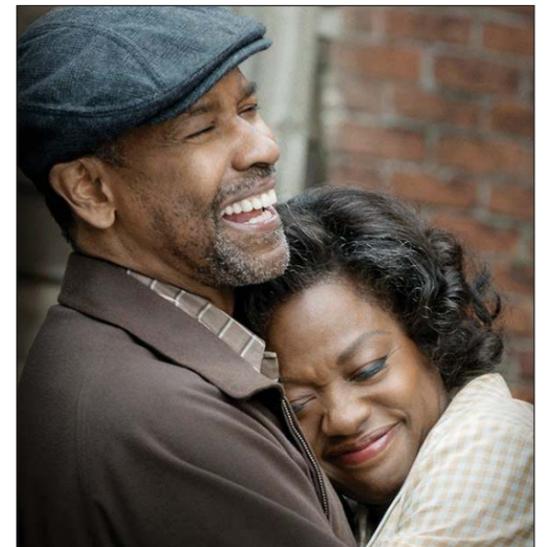


PHOTO BY FENCESMOVIE.COM

Denzel Washington and Viola Davis star in *Fences*.

takes in the baby girl, Raynell as her own, but does not let Troy back into her heart.

After a few years have passed, the film takes viewers back to the backyard now with a surrounding fence and a family who is preparing for the funeral of Troy Maxson. Gabriel, Troy's younger brother, who has never been the same since suffering an injury in World War II, sets Troy on his journey to the afterlife with the playing of his trumpet.

In this Oscar-nominated film, viewers learn the true meaning of the struggle in trying to keep something inside the fences, but finally recognizing no one can keep holding onto something that needs to be set free. Every character in the film had their weaknesses and struggles, but they were all trying their best to survive.

The audience is able to see spiritual struggles, internal battles, the art of forgiving and much more from watching this film.

Spring Fashion and Makeup Trends

By Yakelin Victoriano Hernandez

Fashion:

According to PBS News, "Fashion is a language which tells a story about the person who wears it. Clothes create a wordless means of communication that we all understand" Style (fashion) is a simply a way of expression.

Spring of 2017 holds a new beginning to trends. Trends tend to be started by celebrities. People will see something worn by a celebrity and will want it.

As most trends go, some die out but some live on. Some trends that are still loved now are chokers, cat ears, graphic tees, flowy dresses, cold shoulder crop tops,

and the Boho style.

For those who don't know what Boho style is, it is fashion that has a hippie influence that focuses on mostly flowy fabrics. It symbolizes a concern for the environment. The style emphasizes clothing that makes you feel in harmony with yourself and with nature.

A few trends that have died down, but are making a comeback include overalls, velvet, printed mini skirts and off shoulder tops.

New styles that have appeared would be denim floral dresses, metallic sandals, earthy headbands, and patched jeans. Denim floral dresses are a bit like flowy dresses with a dark washed jeans type color and printed or stitched

flowers on the bottom or spread around the dress. The metallic sandals have a sliver holographic type reflection to it. Most people wear them with white pants to tone down the holographic effect. They could also be worn with a flowy spring dress.

Makeup:

Spring is a time of brighter and more colorful products. Different trends come every season, whether new or old. A trend that is still present is glow. Glow as in highlight around the upper cheek area the bridge of the nose along with on top of the cupid's bow, the inner corners of the eye and the brow bone.

Another trend that has started that is placed around the upper cheek area to around the end of your brow bone area is bomb blush, which is a rosy pink blush.

Pop of color is yet another trend that was started in the beginning of spring. 'Pop of Color' consists of bright or bold colors that start off on the eyelid area and end a little past the brow bone area.

Smudge eye is another trend that is on the upper part of the face. Smudge eye is created when you apply a bit of pencil eyeliner on the line of your eyelashes and you take some eye gloss and rub it with a smudge eye brush.

Going on to the lower part of the face specifically the lips.

Bold lips a.k.a. brighter more noticeable colors are still in style. All bright colors that range from bright reds to pastel yellow are welcome.

Lastly for the lips, glitter is in. Dramatic glitter lips start with the amount of lipstick that is put on the lips. If you were put on too much lipstick, the glitter will slip everywhere.

You will have to apply about two to three layers of lipstick depending on the consistency of the lip product. You will later take a brush and roll the bristles around the glitter and dab lightly on the lips; you'll then have to press your lips together in order to get the glitter to stay stable.

President Trump vs. Illegal Immigrants

By Johana Lastor

President Trump made his arrival to the White House in the beginning of the year, January 20, 2017, and ever since then, segregation in immigration has been imploding. Before his inauguration, he broadcasted how he would try to deport immigrants out of the United States in order to “Make America Great Again.” When Trump took the victory with the electoral votes, numerous illegal immigrants realized that their biggest fears might turn into reality.

One of the first actions that President Trump took while being in the Office was reinforcing the amount of border protection officers. According to CNN Politics, there has been “an additional 5,000 border protection officers” which will allow more illegal immigrants to get deported back to their country of origin.

During the same time that the President increased the number of border protection officers, he also targeted “sanctuary cities.” *The Washington Post* describes the “sanctuary cities” as “[cities where] officials refuse to hand over illegal immigrants for deportation.”

Although with President Trump releasing an executive order in his first couple of days of being in office, he is withholding funding. The administration cannot completely cut off all of the federal funding, however, President Trump could manipulate the cities to hand over undocumented

people.

President Trump assured his voters that he would try to prevent and remove immigrants from the United States because they are “terrorists” and “criminals.” He installed an executive order that prevented refugees from entering the country, but specifically aimed at seven Muslim-majority countries. Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia were the countries affected by the new installation.

Countless individuals took to the airports and protested the direct bias that President Trump has indicated on Muslims. Eventually, the order was temporarily removed because a US federal judge claimed it to be “unconstitutional.”

Within the first week that President Trump was in office, there were millions of people protesting across the nation and internationally.

Particularly, the protest that primarily highlighted the unity of the country was the protest towards illegal immigrants known as “A Day Without Immigrants.” Many people took action across the nation to support their families or someone who they might know that is undocumented. The purpose was to demonstrate what America would be like without the tough grind that illegal immigrants go through on a daily basis.

In essence, President Trump has caused a lot of chaos and captured the attention of our nation, as far as immigration is concerned.

THE MANDELA EFFECT:

Are We Perhaps in a Parallel Universe?

By Janessa Mejias

If you’re all over social media and follow some of the most famous icons today, such as Shane Dawson or Tana Mongeau, then you may be familiar with the Mandela Effect.

The Mandela Effect got its name from Nelson Mandela. Many people believe that he died in prison during the 80s but in fact, he died in 2013. It wasn’t just one person who remembered it this way but millions of people do recall this, and thus, the Mandela Effect was born.

Over time, people began noticing misspelling or false dates on things they’d remember differently. A few famous Mandela Effects are the Berenstein Bears and Darth Vader saying the famous line, “Luke, I am your father.”

Many remember these things from their childhood, but if we take a look today, we notice that Berenstein is really Berenstain.

Also, huge Star Wars fans may notice that famous line, but if

you go back to the movie and listen, Vader says, “No, I am your father.”

Many people insist that they remember these things clearly and begin to believe that we may have been warped into a parallel universe which caused these small things to change slightly, leaving people to remember it differently.

There are many examples of the Mandela Effect that’ll possibly blow your mind!

Here are some of my favorites:

Mr. Rogers Neighborhood Theme Song isn’t “It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood”

Mona Lisa was never emotionless

Kit Kat doesn’t have a dash

The Queen in Snow White never said “Mirror, mirror on the wall.”

“We Are The Champions” by Queen never had the line “Of The World.”

There are many more examples, and it’s all very interesting, let’s see if you remember some of these things too.

School Uniforms—Necessity or Nuisance?

By Juliana Disla

We are expected to behave maturely at Passaic High School, but some students believe we are not able to do this without being given certain freedoms, such as the opportunity to wear our own choice of clothing to school. People frequently argue for their rights to wear regular clothes to show freedom of expression.

However, it is a form of school security to have all students in PHS uniforms. *But should we be wearing school uniforms or not?*

I conducted a survey with students in the school and got various responses.

Freshman Daniela Cuevas said, “Students should be able to wear their own clothes to have freedom of expression, and for some students it’s difficult to buy uniforms especially with the PHS logo. It would be easier to buy clothes at Walmart for five dollars.”

“Wearing my own clothes allows me to express myself, if I had to be honest. I own a lot of black clothes and I would rather

be expressing myself then wearing these uniforms,” said freshman Jizel Cruz.

Some people happen to like the uniforms. Janessa Mejias, sophomore, explains that “wearing uniforms saves money. Also, it helps me save time in the morning when I am getting ready for school.”

Wearing uniforms opposed from wearing other clothing is the easiest way to identify students and helps to keep us safe. Some students counter that wearing school IDs serves the same purpose. However, it is easier to identify students in uniform rather than a small ID tag.

The PHS Student Council conducted a survey a month ago for all students during homeroom, via Google Classroom. The survey asked students which color uniform shirt they would prefer if they had the option to choose.

For students who are having trouble affording the school uniform, clothes, or anything person they need to attend school, talk to your counselor for assistance.

Shoutout to Senior Catherine Sposato for her acceptance to 16 universities, including five Ivy League schools: Brown, Harvard, UPenn, Columbia, and Yale. Congratulations!

THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper of Passaic High School

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Thank you to the members of the PHS community who have contributed photographs, information, and articles to this issue of The Hilltop Star. Without your help, this publication would not exist.

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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Elevated Security at PHS

By Danielle Baez

The last two years at Passaic High School have been eventful. In 2016 multiple threats had been written on bathroom stalls and left behind on notebook paper. A threat was even written on an electrical cord in a classroom.

The previous bomb threats led to elevated security when students went to the bathroom. Students then needed to sign in and out, not only from their current class but outside the bathrooms as well.

At the time only 9 of the 16 bathrooms were open. Having seven closed made those that were open much busier and more time-consuming. After a protest walk out, two more bathrooms were opened.

Bathroom policies are also the same this year at PHS. Passaic High School regularly does security wandering some days in the morning. After a recent event in which a student brought a weapon to school, there was a wandering in which the student was caught. There have been cases where lockers were searched, as well as

Continued on page 7

Positive Student and Teacher Relationships

By Armando Martinez

Maintaining healthy student relationships with teachers has significant, positive and long-lasting implications for both students’ academic and social development. Those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will obtain higher levels of achievement, according to the American Psychology Association (APA). Students want to feel valued by people who are important to them. When they feel that their teachers value and care for them as individuals, students are more willing to comply with their expectations.

According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) ways for teachers to develop better relationships with their students is by:

- Showing an interest in your students’ personal lives
- Sincerely listening to students
- Empathizing with students

Teachers shouldn’t be too quick to give up on students, instead, they should try to motivate them to become better. Making an effort to get to know more about the student, which will lead to a connection with them. Students will notice this interaction and will open up to teachers. APA states that by creating a positive climate in the classroom teachers are able to both focus on “not only on improving your relationships with your students but also on enhancing the relationships among your students.”

Positive teacher-student relationships will draw students into the process of learning and promote their desire to learn.

Sources: <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/relationships.aspx>

http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/105124/chapters/Developing_Positive_Teacher-Student_Relationships.aspx

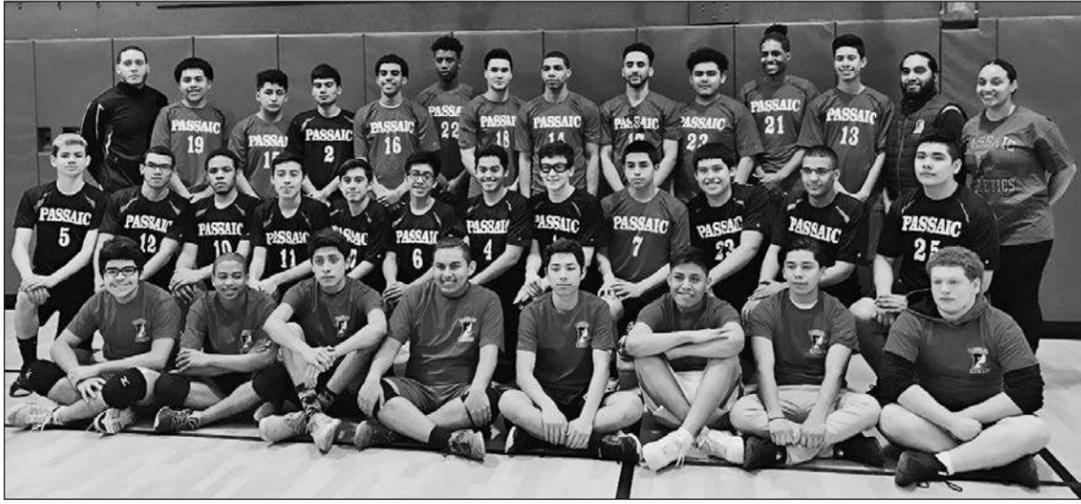


PHOTO BY MR. MUNOZ

The 2017 PHS Boys Varsity Volleyball Team.

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Growing and Improving

By Jorge Rios and Aleyshka Barbosa

The Boys Varsity Volleyball team has significantly improved since their last season. Varsity members have been striving to make every aspect of the team better. Now that sophomore, Ariel Aguilar has been named captain of the team, he hopes to bring change to the team and how they play.

“As the varsity captain, this season hasn’t been the best season for us, as we expected it to be, but what I do expect us to do is to take this season as a season of development. Meaning getting

to know each other better and understanding more about the game” said Ariel.

Although the season hasn’t been all they thought it would be, PHS staff and students have been sure to give their support to the growing team. The team currently stands at 5-16.

Varsity Head Coach Omar Munoz has made it clear to the boys that the teamwork in the practices will help them during volleyball games when they are under pressure. The boys have made it clear that they are dedicated to the game and growing as a team to be better.

Over the past years, the team

has changed significantly at PHS with the change in coaches and incoming and leaving senior players. The team has learned to always keep their heads up no matter what the outcome of any game is. They have developed a bond like no other PHS sports team.

As seen from their practices and games, the boys on the volleyball team never bring each other down but help each other get better. The positivity within the team is astonishing and every chant they sing during games makes it evident they’re a team that will grow to be one of the best.

PHS GOLF

Tournaments Coming Up for Golf Team

By Rosa Valentin-Bello

The PHS Golf team’s season is in full swing. The team’s record is 6-5, with big wins against Hawthorne and Kennedy. Coach Pratkan, along with captains David Buonafina and Chris Rodriguez, lead the team.

The rest of the team members are Lisberma Peralta, Carolina Romas, Via Gotoc, Estarlin Remigio, Alexis Alvarado, and Natalie Flores.

According to Buonafina and Rodriguez, “The best part about the golf team is getting the experience to join and do a sport people do not really talk about. It’s about the experience. It’s all fun, there’s no pressure.”

Rodriguez said, “This is a sport that we can continue to play for the rest of our lives, it’s not just limited to high school”

The team will be competing in the Big North Conference Tournament on May 11 and the Passaic County Tournament on May 17.



PHOTO BY CARLINES ESPINOSA

PHS Golf Captains David Buonafina and Chris Rodriguez

MEDITATION CLUB:

Release Your Stress

By Kimberly Martinez

Are you stressed out? Do you like to meditate? If so then you should come and join the Meditation Club, which is directed by PHS teacher Ms. Bohomolec.

The club meets every Thursday in room M231 at 2:40 p.m. All students and staff are welcome to join. Come and release all of your stress through meditation. Let your inner self have peace and release your mind and body from all the negativity.

The Meditation Club usually has time for four different meditations. Group members are in a



seated at desks set up in a circle. The meditations are done by a visual guide, that is both helpful and beneficial to high school

students as well as staff members. They are relaxing, calming and soothing. It is far more than a club in which they simply meditate; it is a way to be stress-free and negativity-free.

The Meditation Club has already done a meditation session with the Octagon Club and is hoping that in the near future they are able to meditate with the Future Meds Of America Club.

If you are ever free on Thursday, you should stop by and try it. Maybe it is for you or maybe it isn’t. But trust me, it is worth every minute of your time.

SOFTBALL

Hitting it Out of the Park

By Aleyshka Barbosa

The Passaic High School Indians Softball team has put their best effort forward this season and show the true meaning of teamwork and dedication. The girls have been working hard during the off season and throughout the regular season to push themselves and succeed.

A great way to start out the season was a win over Paterson Kennedy on our home field. The girls accomplished this on April 4, with a score of 21-4.

The hard work of head coach Kaitlyn Vinciguerra and assistant coach Kassie Neurouter has been made evident with the grow in teamwork between the players and helping the team understand the importance of the practice.

The varsity team captains, Chanely Diaz, Maryah Sabat, and Anlly Henriquez all have the same hope for the outcome

of this softball season. Not only for more wins, but also that the team works together better, not only on the field but also for the community.

Diaz stated, “Our coaches constantly remind us how we practice is how we play.”

On April 15, the team beat Paterson Eastside in Paterson with a score of 8-3.

Although the outcomes of the games don’t always work in the softball team’s favor, the girls understand the importance of their dedication to the game to the city of Passaic.

Sabat believes “the softball team represents pride in our community. No matter the outcome of our season is, we hold our heads up high and strive to be better.”

Diaz and the rest of the team knows, “The softball and baseball team are important aspects of our community. Without these teams, Passaic would not be the same.”

FOOTBALL PRE-SEASON

Gearing Up for the 2017-2018 Season

By Juliana Disla

Football season ended and the players are already putting in the time to practice and prepare for next year. The team has been focusing on playing as brothers, footwork skills to increase speed, and communication. Pre-season will help the football team play better and have a successful season in the fall.

According to various players on the football team, they feel that they have not been playing their game as a team, and they are working towards being more than a team and more like brothers. Freshman player Smirlin Cruz said, “Most of us have been working a lot in the weight room, and we are also working on communicating better as a family.”

Mr. Widener, the head coach, has taken the team out to watch a basketball game at Rutgers University as a way to work towards their goal of being a family.

Widener is helping the team prepare for next season by giving them the option to go to the weight room in the morning at 6 o’clock a.m. or after school, 3:30-4:30.

The football players lacked speed during their last games, so they are working on footwork to obtain better speed in the weight room. They would also watch films in the YMCA from their last games to correct their mistakes and do better next year.

With all of these preparations, the Passaic High School Football team will surely have a successful season next year if they keep up the good work!

Elevated Security

Continued from page 6

locks that do not belong to the school were cut off for security reasons.

Following the arrest of the student, there was a mandatory wandering and bag check for everyone who entered the school from then on. School started at the normal time, however, due to not having enough people wandering, a huge crowd outside the flagpole entrance began to form. Some students began to walk back home, some even getting in a passing taxi.

Although it may have been inconvenient to wait in the frigid temperature to get wanded it was for the safety of the staff and students. Those

who were late to class due to the wandering were not penalized for being late and classes resumed as normal.

Students have conflicting opinions regarding this matter. Various students feel that the security and new policies are “too much,” that there is no freedom whatsoever.

Other students wholeheartedly believe that the school is trying their best to ensure our safety leaving all these actions as their only option. Those students who feel this way appreciate our staff for caring about the students’ well-being and for collaborating with each other to promote and ensure the overall safety here at Passaic High School.

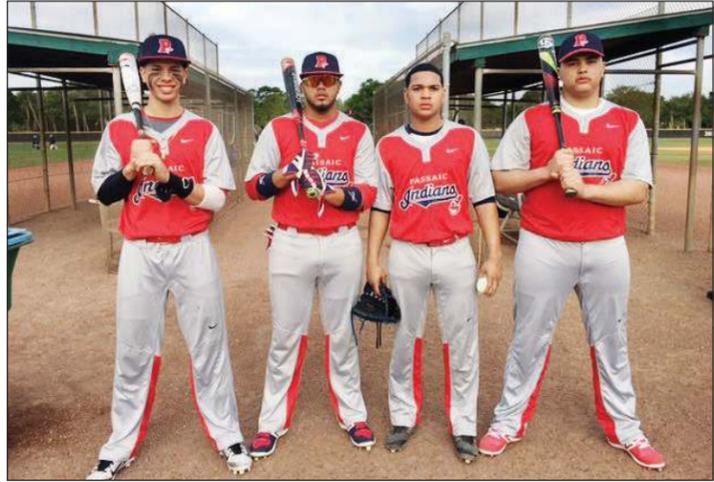


PHOTO BY MR. DIAZ

BASEBALL

More Than Just a Game

By Aleyshka Barbosa

This spring, the PHS Baseball Team has made their mark. The team has won four games so far and there are plenty more to come.

The team accomplished a big win over Paterson Kennedy early in the season on April 3, beating the team with a score of 5-1.

On April 7, Passaic beat Montclair in a non-conference game by 10 runs, with a score of 11-1. Some of the biggest highlights of the season come from the team's two victories over Bergen Tech on April 17 and 19. On April 17, Passaic beat Bergen Tech with a total of 7 runs.

On April 19, the game was close and went into extra innings. Finally, Erick Duran drove in the game-winning run in the bottom of the eighth inning, to secure the win, 6-5, for Passaic at Boverini Stadium.

The players in the baseball team have shown the town that practice does make perfect and the dedication and good attitudes resemble in the team's victories. Seniors make up the leadership of the team which includes, Jose Ledesma, Robin Santos, Brian Velez, Robert Sierra, Michael

Sams, Adonis Reynoso, Bernie Joseph.

Varsity player Isael Pichardo recently stated, "great vibes, great coaches, and team players really make the game I love to play even better."

The team is currently 5-10. "We are pitching well and playing solid defense. We need to come up with some timely hits," said head coach Diaz.

On Saturday, April 29, the PHS baseball team started off their beginning rounds to the Passaic County Tournament. Ledesma threw a shutout during the first round of the Passaic County tournament in which they defeated the Eastern Christian 10-0.

Passaic Indians scored six runs in the fifth inning. The big inning was thanks to a stolen base, a single by Cespedes, and a single by Liranzo.

Passaic Indians stole 15 bases during the game as six players stole more than one. Lenny Rodriguez led the way with three. Ledesma did allow just one hit and induced a groundout from Bitelli to end the game. Even with this victorious win, the Passaic Indians showed good sportsmanship to the other team.

BOYS TENNIS Practice and Persistence Pay off

By Brandon Garcia

What makes such a great tennis player you may ask? "What makes a good tennis player is confidence, consistent practice, and my coaches persistence. You have to be ready to play the game" according to varsity Tennis player, Dhruv Rana.

As the season commenced the PHS Tennis boys are off to a great start beating PCTI, Paterson Kennedy, Lakeland, and Paterson Eastside.

The PHS Tennis team played Lakeland at home, with winning singles matches by Sunny Rawel, Meet Rana, and Dev Patel

When playing Paterson Eastside at Home on May 1, Dev Patel and Meet Rana both beat their opponents 6-0.

According to Rana, "Coach Patel and Coach Major motivate and push the tennis team to strive to be, and become, the best team around."



PHOTO BY MR. DIAZ

PHS Boys Varsity Baseball Team listens to a pep talk from their coaches.

SPRING TRACK AND FIELD

Teams Work on Their Records

By Brandon Garcia-Salas and Adrian Serrano

Boys Team:

The Passaic Boys Track and Field team is hoping to make a huge impression on everybody this year.

The distance varsity team is Joel Garcia, Elijah Perez, Darshak Rana, Brayan Olivares, Leonardo Bravo, Jerry Olvera, and Mark Rodriguez. The varsity team for the sprinters is Luis Peralta, Brian Quintanilla, Carlos, Angel De Los Santos, and two others.

The track and field team expects to be able to compete for some titles because they are no longer missing people for throwing events and jumping events. Everyone wants to put Passaic back on the map when it comes to track and field, and they all want to get faster times as they progress through the season.

"The DMR (distance medley

relay) is a record that could be broken this year," said Leonardo Bravo. The DMR is a race composed of four legs, a 1200 meter leg, 400-meter leg, 800-meter leg, and a 1600 meter leg.

"My personal records that I want to beat are the 200, 400 and the 800-meter race," said Luis Peralta.

Girls Team:

Track and field is a sport that requires both boys and girls to give 100 percent when running, jumping high and far or heaving a heavy ball a long distance. Girls track is all about the hard work and dedication put into this sport. The team is motivated to do better this season and make sure they leave their mark on the track field.

Senior Rockaya N'Doye in her first year running track has been exceptional in the 400 meters, going undefeated in the event in dual meets. Athletes

also performing well are junior thrower Mabel Sanchez, sophomore jumper/sprinter Neidalys Polanco, junior distance runner Manuela Caraballo, and freshman sprinter/jumper D'yani Donaldson. The team is led by senior captains Monserrat Cordova and Michelle Contreras.

Two events that the girls participated in as a team (not related to Track and Field) are community service cleaning up Third Ward Park, and the Special Olympics Bocce Competition.

Recently the Passaic Girls Track Team raced against the PCTI Girls Track Team. Unfortunately, the event did not work in favor of the Passaic team but the girls did improve their personal records and their team working ability. It is not to say that the girl's track team is perfect, yet we can say that they have shown much improvement and their dedication to getting better never changes.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MR. GRANT

The PHS Track Team and Special Olympics Team at the Special Olympics Bocce Competition.



PHOTOS BY MR. GRANT

The PHS Spring Track and Field team participated in a clean up in Third Ward Park.

