



PHOTOS BY ARMANDO MARTINEZ

Students gathered together to protest gun violence and school shootings by the flagpole of PHS on March 14, 2018.

PHS Walkout: Taking a stand against gun violence

By Aleyshka Barbosa '19

The year 2018 made its debut only months ago, however, there has already been 20 school shootings where someone has been injured or lost their life. Every day, it is made evident that the safety drills practiced at schools are being taken to another level of appreciability. All due to the everlasting fright of not knowing what

tomorrow can bring in schools due to student exposure to gun violence.

About a month before the national school walkout day, called for by the Women's March Youth Empower, PHS Student Council held its regular Tuesday meeting. The meeting reached a turning point, when the topic of how the school would address the shootings and make students continue to

feel safe in their school environment, with the chaos found in the hallways of other schools around the country.

From that point on, PHS Student Council took on the school-wide initiative to make sure that the students of Passaic High School could be a part of the national school walkout. The walkout took place on March 14. Weeks before the event, our school principal, Ms.

Torres-Gomez, made clear that she fully supported the student council's decision to take part in the march. She indicated that she would help in whatever way necessary – especially when trying to get the Board of Education approval.

There was constant communication between Ms. Torres-Gomez, her staff and the students that were leading the initiative for the PHS student body.

Everyone – teachers, security guards and students had to make sure that they knew what was going to take place. There were plans created in case of inclement weather and other factors that could change the original plans that were established.

PHS senior Saray Ramos said that although, "some people might have been saying that this wasn't really a student led

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'EDUCATION IS THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS'

Rutgers-Camden Chancellor Haddon's striking Passaic legacy

By Lisberma Peralta Aquino '20, Armando Martinez '19, and Lixangelys Ruiz '20

Accomplished, talented, passionate, humble: these are the words that come to mind when describing Chancellor Phoebe Haddon's vehement character. Having faced more than most can say, Mrs. Haddon serves as an exemplar individual whose words and touching stories often culminate with new perspectives for its audience.

Haddon's story comes from a historic background full of misfortune and attainment. Her name comes with special historical meaning, as she is the daughter of Ida Bassette, whose name can be found through the pages of the novel Hidden Figures, as a computer who worked alongside Dorothy Vaughan at NASA Langley Research Center.

We had the opportunity to speak



RUTGERS-CAMDEN TWITTER

Chancellor Haddon stands outside her office at Rutgers-Camden University.

to Mrs. Haddon over the phone and hear a little about how her past brought her to where she is today.

Born in Washington D.C,

Haddon spent most of her early childhood in the nation's capital, during the end of formal segregation. Her father was a dentist, who was a graduate of Howard

University, and was looking to relocate from the south to New Jersey, due to the job opportunities available up north. Like many other African-American families, the Haddons did not approve of the segregation that existed in the south, and was not going to let that hinder their path to freedom.

Upon arriving in Passaic, Haddon and her brother attended the Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, while her mother served as a middle school and Passaic High School teacher. Even though she faced discrimination and nuisances over her race in a state that was alleged to be "equal," Haddon believes that what incentivised her to overcome these struggles were the teachings from her family. Both of her mother's and father's family believed that "education is the pathway to success," which is why they are all committed to excel in whatever they do.

Haddon comes from a family

of highly educated people who assist others in receiving a higher level education. She and her brother have a scholarship under her mother's name to give people the opportunity of obtaining this form of education. Her personality was much affected by both her parents, and the Passaic environment around her as she grew up amidst hindrances regarding her skin color. Even against these impediments, she managed to flourish and go on to become a role model.

Haddon is a role model to many and enjoys guiding others. During our interview with her, she spoke about many important topics and provided a lot of useful advice. She says that "education is the pathway to success." Haddon encourages people to work hard, to be creative, practice problem solving, to think outside the box, and to seek advice from wise peo-

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AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH



PHOTO COURTESY OF MS. JOSE

Ms. Kellam, three veterans, and Ms. Torres Gomez at the African American History Month assembly. See story on page 3.

PEER LEADERSHIP SPRING RETREAT



PHOTO BY MS. JOSE

Our PHS Peer Leaders attended their spring retreat on Friday, April 13. Their advisors are Ms. Jose and Mr. Izaquirre. This year our senior peer leaders have served as mentors for over 100 freshmen who have period 1 gym. They have prepared and facilitated about 20 outreach sessions focused on making healthy choices, communication skills, study habits, diversity, goal setting, etc.

PHS students are winners at National History Day

By Hilltop Star Staff

Students Michelle Carpinteyro and Melissa Reyes, both freshmen, won the National History Day competition held at William Paterson University on May 5. They won first place qualifier for the Senior Group Exhibit.

The group's exhibit was a presentation about Japanese internment camps during World War II. The students interviewed Japanese-Americans that either lived through the camps or had family members that did. One of these individuals was a member of Congress, Norman Mineta, who was the Secretary of Transportation under President George W. Bush.

The group competed against 21 other exhibits from schools in the state. They previously won a regional competition to qualify for the event at William



PHOTO BY MS. SCIAMETTA
National History Day winners Michelle Carpinteyro and Melissa Reyes.

Paterson.

The students will now move on to the national competition at the University of Maryland. Carpinteyro and Reyes have been advised throughout this process by Mr. Velez and Ms. Huze.

Talent Show showcases best of PHS

By Hilltop Star Staff

On Tuesday, March 1, Aleyshka Barbosa, Johnny Torres, and the rest of the Class of 2019 were hosts to the PHS Talent Show, held in Shirelle's Auditorium. They were able to organize this event with the help of Ms. Soto and Ms. Barbosa.

Opening remarks were made by Ms. Soto, and attendees were treated to the finest performances by PHS students and a special guest performer, Mark Isaiah, a top 10 finalist of "The Voice" in 2017.

Although all of the students performing were extremely talented, there could only be three winners. Judges for the show were Ms. Jose, Mr. Rusca, Mark Isaiah, Kimberly Perez, Nickole Carran-



PHOTO BY MS. JOSE

Talent show winners pose together after a job well done.

za, and Irais Rojas-Ahuatl.

Chiane Anderson won first place for her rendition of "Bitter." Second place went to Yansely Estrella,

for her performance of "Grand Piano." Finally, third place went to Citlalli Carino, for her dance performance to "Who You Are."

PHS Choir performs at Carnegie Hall

By Samantha Reyes '19

Every year without fail, the Passaic High School Choir attends Carnegie Hall to give a splendid performance, not only among their peers but with others from around the country. Over 200 students attended from schools all over the United States, from New York all the way to the west coast. The three-day event began with practices the first two days in New York, with the final third day being the ultimate performance in a high-rated concert venue.

The Passaic High School Honor

Choir performed selections "Let All The World in Every Corner Sing," "Verleih' uns Frieden," "The Seal Lullaby," "Tread Softly, I'm Gonna Sing" and "Pure Imagination" from Willy Wonka. The selections varied from English to German. Guest Conductors included Jo-Michael Scheibe, an in-high-demand conductor, and pianist Dr. Mory Ortman, who is well known in not only in New York City but nationwide.

The Passaic Honor Choir was led by choir teacher Elizabeth Gauthier. Ms. Gauthier leads an exceptional group of students who

have high passions for singing and performing arts. Senior Livic Inoa comments on the great acoustics the hall had to offer and how the performers got to "meet so many different kinds of people from all over the country, and it was really neat to see different people's perspective on things. Overall it's a great experience and it really does make us stronger singers individually and as a group."

Music has its own way of bringing people together and the experiences these individuals gained is unforgettable.

Optimist Club hosts Youth Appreciation Dinner

By Yakelin Victoriano '19

On April 12, a Youth Appreciation dinner was hosted by the Passaic Optimist Club at the Sevilla Restaurant to shine a spotlight on students who have brought about change in Passaic High School clubs and sports. Twenty students were selected to celebrate this heartfelt night with their friends and families to recognize the hard work and dedication they have for their school and community.

The ceremony began with a welcoming speech by the president of the club, Mr. Izaguirre, followed by a flag salute and warm welcomes by the Optimist Club. Before presenting the students being honored, leaders of a local



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OCTAGON CLUB
Ms. Jose was an honorary speaker at this year's Passaic Optimist Club Youth Appreciation Dinner.

baptist church made a breathtaking speech to commemorate the students' hard work and to bless the room with positivity.

Students were split into two sessions, one before and one after dinner service, followed by a powerful speech about struggle and upcomings, determination and success, by PHS graduate and current English teacher, Ms. Janelly Jose.

Ms. Jose's speech moved everyone and brought forth a few tears. She shared her story, her struggles and her accomplishments so that we, the students, don't give up and keep our heads high because "someone is always rooting for you."

After all of the speeches, stories and memories were shared, Mr. Izaguirre closed the ceremony with motivating remarks and a special recitation of the Optimists' Creed.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MR. RINZLER

A picture of Mrs. Scheraga from the Echo yearbook.

Conversation with a PHS legend: Former Adviser Mona Scheraga

By Felicity Rivera '21

Mona Scheraga, a student, a mother, a teacher, a friend. Scheraga lived in Passaic for the majority of her life.

"Everything I am today comes from going to and working at PHS," said the retired teacher.

Graduating with the class of 1947, Scheraga would soon devote most of her life to teaching at the place that helped shape her. Scheraga would work in English Literature and as an ESL teacher at Passaic High School from 1960-1985. Additionally, she worked as a faculty adviser of *The Hilltop Star*, PHS' newspaper club, where she worked as a student.

Growing up and developing her identity during an era of war, discrimination, racism, the Great Depression, and many more adversities, Scheraga touches on topics that occurred all around her.

Being a person who loved being around kids and someone who enjoyed teaching, Scheraga values diversity. When she was a student, Passaic High School was predominantly white and black. However, as time went on, more blacks, Hispanics, and Indians started entering the school as she

was teaching.

"Passaic is very diverse, which can help shape you. [I] wouldn't change anything about my life." While the diversity in race became apparent, there was no diversity in newspaper choice. Everyone went to *The Hilltop Star*, it was the only thing in town. "[*The Star*] is where you went to get information and gossip."

The Hilltop Star wrote about topics such as World War II, atomic bombs, college, and even interviewed real celebrities. Due to the time period and the lack of technology invented, newspapers were the main source of information. Students couldn't wait to get their copy to find out what's what.

A person's environment can help develop their character. Scheraga is one those people in your life that you don't want to let go because of their grace and influence. Some of her former students had a 10 year reunion and flew in from California to see her, which speaks volumes itself. Scheraga states it was "due to the type of relationships I have with my students."

Thank you Mona Scheraga for your devotion to your roots and to those that came from them too.

SENIOR SURVEYS are due 6/1 and will be shared in the next issue of the newspaper. Ask your senior English teacher or Ms. Sciametta about how to fill one out.

Chancellor Haddon's Passaic legacy

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ple. She believes that making "decisions in a vacuum" is not healthy and often limits people. Haddon believes that it is important for a person to make an impact on others by leading by example and give others opportunities. Therefore, it is important for you to act like a role model and impact people positively. Here is a list of all the things Haddon advises you to do, so that you can live a happy and successful life:

- Keep getting up.
- Stay energized.
- Prepare for everything. Preparation is key.
- Learn about other people that are different from you.
- Think outside of the box.
- Practice problem solving.
- Put yourself in different settings.
- Know your audience when

speaking and expressing yourself.

• Travel!

One of the things that Haddon emphasized was traveling. She absolutely loves to travel! She highly recommends the book, *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson. This book focuses on history and America's Great Migration. According to her, traveling widens not only your perspectives, but your experiences, which is what is most needed when facing the daily issues that everyone struggles with.

Phoebe Haddon is the ideal example of how education truly is the path to success. Haddon was raised in Passaic, just like many of us, and this connection will hopefully open the eyes of some kids that doubt themselves. She faced many obstacles, but she got through them



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Phoebe Haddon

all, step by step, and learned lessons from them. Education will get you places, and so will taking care of yourself and nurturing your skills. It is the start of many wonderful things, not only for yourself, but for others around you. Haddon walked through these same streets that you are walking now, and chose to walk through the streets of triumph, and you can do the same too.

Junior Night Out: Class of 2019

By Samantha Reyes '19,
Bianca Pottinger '19 and
Amber Ramirez '19

An event that hasn't happened for the past three years, was finally made possible due to the strong efforts of the Junior Class Council and graduating class of 2019. The money received from the Valentine's Day Gram, the Talent Show, and staff dress downs all went into funding the event, which itself will provide funding for next year's prom.

Junior Night Out began at 6 p.m. at The Royal Manor in Garfield. Those who attended enjoyed a full-course meal prior to the start of dancing. The lights were dimmed and the DJ began to play the music louder. A small group of people began the hype for the night. As the night progressed, those who attended let loose and had fun with

their classmates. From free-style to cumbia dancing there were always fun moments.

With delectable food and the company of our friends the event was certainly worth attending. The service was great, with waiters who were kind and attentive. There were an abundant amount of festivities.

The night ended with a game of hot potato played individually at each table. It's a fun interactive game where a red napkin was passed around from person to person. When the music stopped the last person with the napkin loses. Each winner would have had the chance to win some form of luxury for prom 2019, with a choice of a hairstylist, pedicure, or manicure for the top winners. It was a night to remember and those who attended truly felt like royalty.



Juniors gathered at the Royal Manor in Garfield for a fun night out.

PHOTOS BY ARMANDO MARTINEZ



PHOTO BY ARMANDO MARTINEZ

Students made posters to show their support for stricter gun laws.

PHS Walkout

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event because of how much the faculty was involved, but we wanted to do this the right way."

Many students at first believed the walkout was simply a PHS event, but throughout the days leading up to the march it was clarified that this was a national event, in which hundreds of other schools around the country were taking part in. This event was so much greater than many were able to see. It was a walkout for hope that went beyond another sympathizing tweet or Instagram post that could make no change in what America truly had to face.

All those taking part would walk out at 10 a.m. across every time zone on March 14, 2018 and stand for 17 minutes. Hundreds of Passaic High School students walked out of the school building towards the school flag pole. While the students were standing outside, 17 students walked out holding up a poster with the face and name of one of the 17 victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida.

Student Council President Diana Tiburcio, commented on the event as being an "amazing experience because it was student led and it highlighted the prominence of student empowerment on all levels. The students who walked out not only commemorated the students who died in Florida, but supported their peers who were participating in the event. It lets kids know that if they want to do anything like this again in the future it's totally possible because we are one strong community."

Ramos, who was one of the student organizers, stated that "we never want the students at PHS to forget is that there is so much going on outside of Passaic and it's important to stay aware of the world outside our comfort zone. It's important to talk about the issues that make us uncomfortable. It is vital to acknowledge how lucky we are to be able to go to school and get a free education, to see our friends on a daily basis, and to go home to a family who loves us, because not everyone has that same opportunity."

Chromebooks at PHS?

By Aleyshka Barbosa '19

Student Council members have been seen strolling the halls of PHS carrying laptop bags with the logo of the Passaic Public School system. The blue bags have been frequently seen throughout the past months, giving speculation that soon the trial only being done by the PHS student council will expand to the whole school. All students can do is wait and find out.

PHS Black History Month Assembly

By Lixangelys Ruiz '20

On February 27, the African American Assembly took place at the Passaic High School. This fun and educational event was ran by Ms. Kellam, an English teacher here in our school.

It concluded Black History Month with a musical bang.

Kashim Cook, president of the African American Club, explains, "our club is based on what you can bring and what you can give. It doesn't matter the color of your skin or ethnicity, or if your skin was the color of green. We accept all kinds and anyone who wants to enter the club, is always welcomed!"

Ms. Kellam describes the assembly stating that it "highlighted famous African Americans throughout time who had a profound impact on society.

Several students participated in a production and a preparation for the show."

Chiane Anderson sang a piece entitled "Feeling Good" and "Lift Every Voice." Anderson said, "It was an amazing experience. I loved being able to express African American culture in a positive way."

Gabriel Champion, who also performed a musical number "Amazing Grace," stated "It was amazing, from the African dancing, to the gospel music. It was an atmosphere of spirituality and wonderful peace."

Jonathan Portilla performed "Heal the World" and Diamonique Dotson "His Eyes on the Sparrow" wowed the crowd.

The PHS African American Club meets every Wednesday after school. Please see Ms. Kellam for details.

TEAM:

- Ciara Flores
- Diamonique Dotson
- Emalani Bonilla
- Dashani Hendley
- Chiane Anderson
- Kashim Cooks
- Elisa Matos
- Noemi Robinson
- Jocelyn Pimental
- Jonathan Portilla
- Amelia Reynoso
- Giavanna Perez
- Michelle Alonso
- Yari Cepeda
- Victoria Camilo
- Alfonso Perez
- Leysha Sanchez
- Sandy Sanchez
- Passaic High School Choir
- Passaic High School Band
- Cheer Team



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'Chicago!' prepping for a fabulous night

By Lixangelys Ruiz '20

It is that time of the school year again! The musical is finally here! Join us on our road to "Chicago!" The frisky musical will take place in Passaic High School's auditorium on June 7 through June 9. Remember to get your tickets. We are sure you think that last year's musical was great, but just wait until you see this one!

To prepare for the show, the cast members practice for very long hours. They are taught and guided by the team of Mr. Rusca (director), Mrs. Gauthier (choir teacher), Ms. Merced (cheer coach), Mr. Anderson (drama teacher), Rick Delancy (choreographer and costume), and Jennifer Sanchez (choreographer).

Being in the musical has taught us a lot about embracing our roles as performers and about the ins and outs of musical theatre. This experience is helping us shape our growing professional habits and it is constantly challenging us to do the best we can and become the best we know we can be. When you love what you do, it stops feeling like we have to do it. We learn about what we love because we want to.

Comments from Our Cast:

"Everyday when we practice, I find something new to discover that I never really explored in my entire life." – Vincent Sposato

"It's a unique experience that brings people together for an amazing and unforgettable feeling." – Nickole Carranza

"I can honestly say that I have never done anything like this. This is such an amazing experience and we have grown so close, just like a family, that those long hours are something that I have grown to love." – Elisa Matos

"This is what I enjoy doing! This is what I look forward to each day! I've enjoyed every moment being in the play, even the tough ones!" - Edwin Nava

"I definitely love the challenges of the musical because it made me realize things that I didn't know I was capable of. But most of all I love the environment. I'm so grateful for getting to know all the member's unique personalities and for having a staff that will give their all to help us do our best and be successful." – Maria Gabriela

'Chicago' Main Roles:

Jessica Sanchez as Roxie Hart
Maria Gabriela as Velma Kelly

Bruce Ransom as Billy Flynn
Darjah White as Matron "Mama" Morton

Gabriel Champion as Mary Sunshine
Pablo Palafox as Amos Hart

PHS Spring Sports Highlights

Passiac Indians Boys Volleyball

By Armando Martinez '19 and D'yani Moreno '19

Captains: Ariel Aguilar and Eddy Pena

Coaches: Coach Delcarmen, Coach Khalaf, and Coach Muñoz

Senior Players: Luis Barrera, Christian Calixto, Bryan Gomez, Alex Ramos, and George Sanchez
Spring Record as of 5-15-2018: 17-3



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDDY PENA

Boys Volleyball has had an incredible comeback season.

Highlights of the Season:

Eddy Pena, junior member of the Varsity Volleyball team, said: "A word I would use to describe this year's volleyball season for the boys would be *unbelievable*. From finishing our season last year, with only six wins and 19 losses, not being ranked and losing the first game in county's to having a current record of 17 wins and three losses, ranked 2 for county's, ranked 20th place for states, and going to county finals for the first time in 10 years."

"We have truly worked hard for all the success we've been achieving this season – not only

the players, but our head coach Omar Munoz as well. Every single day he makes practice plans so we know what we are practicing, and helps us better ourselves by sending us articles and videos.

"We wouldn't be where we are at right now without each other, so I want to give a shout out to the entire team: sophomores Ivan Ramos, Fernando Paredes, and Anthony Lorrenzo, who proved all you need is some hard work and dedication to be varsity members. Juniors Michael Baca, Bryan Aquino, Joseph Vasquez, and Juan Rodriguez, who prove

whether you are a beginner or not, you still have a role on the team that matters.

"As a junior captain myself, along with Ariel Aguilar, we try to set a positive and respectful example of how we should be and act to receive the most respect.

"Last but not least, a shout out goes to seniors Luis Barrera, George Sanchez, Christian Calixto, Bryan Gomez, and Alex Ramos. Their leadership and veteran skills contributed to the successful team that we are now."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISBERMA PERALTA

Athletes United encourages athletes to participate in community events.

Athletes United

By Armando Martinez '19 and Lisberma Peralta Aquino '20

Athletes United is a new organization that has been created by a group of athletes that attend Passaic High School, who aspire to demonstrate how they can be building blocks to a better place in their community.

Current members of Athletes United strive to teach not only themselves, but others on how to become leaders in the classroom and their community.

To have students excel in their academics like they do in sports, and extracurricular activities, Athletes United wants to offer tutoring, to help those students get on the path of academic success. They want to show unity between the various sports teams at Passaic High School, by appreciating and supporting all the athletes at their tournaments or games equally.

Passaic High School has 14 sports teams, and all of them should get the same amount of love, because every player puts in their hard work. A family environment among sports would not only bring unity, but a sense of harmony among the students at PHS.

One of the organization's originators, Mariano McGaskey, the

star quarterback/running back of the Passaic Indian Football team, had a lot to say about the need for Athletes United. He said, "Athletes are supposed to be a family so they can change the direction their city for the better, but how can we do that if we aren't on the same page? We can change the environment around us, but we need all of us to do it."

The organization aims to participate in more city events such as parades, community service, fundraisers and even school field days in order to represent the athletic teams from Passaic High School, and to demonstrate that there's more in them than just their sport abilities.

This past Earth Day, on April 22, members of Athletes United joined other residents of Passaic to help clean the Christopher Columbus Park, and it was a great turn out! As benevolent as this community-building action was, they didn't stop there. The next Sunday, April 29, they were at City Hall for the Celebration of Children, where they took their younger siblings to spend a joyous day alongside so many others.

Even though this a new organization, there is no denying the impact it will have Passaic High School, and the residents of the city.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOEL VARGAS

Passaic Indians Baseball Team

By Armando Martinez '19

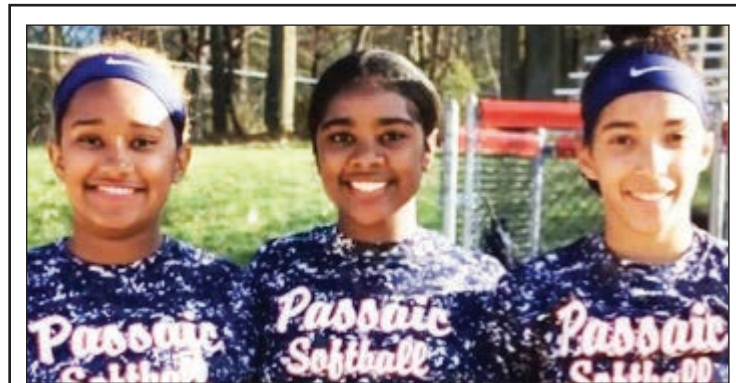
Captains: Steven Reyes, Lenny

Rodriguez, and Jhericson Taveras
Coaches: Pete Diaz and Kervin Rivera

Senior Players: Nestor Bonifacio, Angel Cespedes, William Lara, Jorge Liranzo, Julio Rafael,

Steven Reyes, Lenny Rodriguez, Sammy Rodriguez, Jhericson Taveras, William Vasquez, and Ian Velez

Spring Record as of 5-15-2018: 11-12



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHANELLY DIAZ

Passaic Indians Softball Team

By Armando Martinez '19

Captains: Maria Acosta, Chanelly Diaz, Daines Urena

Coaches: Kaitlin Vinciguerra and Kracie Neurouter

Senior Players: Maria Acosta, Yetty Marte, and Daines Urena

Spring Record as of 5-15-2018: 9-18

Highlight of the Season: *Highest Batting Average*

• Yetty Marte- 0.387 (Most runs batted in)

• Marianna De Jesus (DJ)- 0.353

• Daniela Ureña- 0.345
Highest Fielding Percentage

• Chanelly Diaz- 0.925

Spring Track

Passaic Indians Track Teams

By Armando Martinez '19

PHOTO COURTESY OF D'YANI DONALDSON

It's been 20 years since the PHS Girls Spring Track team qualified to go to the Penn Relays event in Philadelphia. Both the boys and girls teams raced against teams from all over the country and got to experience the fun of running on a famous track.

Captains:

Boys: Carlos Pichardo, Luis Peralta,

Girls: Manuela Caraballo, Michelle Contreras,

Ashley Ramirez, Rodricka Clayton, Bintu N'doye

Coaches: Hector Rivera, Michael Bravo

Senior Players: Carlos Pichardo,



What a great start to the 2018 Spring Track season. Luis Peralta keeps breaking records. On April 12, he won the Dominican National 800 meters Championship. Two weeks later he competed in the 4x400 meters with the team of Nick Ortiz, Angel de los Santos and Carlos Pichardo. On May 8 and 9, the team competed in the Passaic County Track Championships. Once again Luis Peralta showed why he is an All American by winning 400 meters, 800 meters race and anchoring both relays the 4x400 and 4x800. Other outstanding student athletes that are having a phenomenal seasons are seniors Leo Bravo, Mark Rodriguez, Jerry Olvera, Angel de los Santos, sophomore Enrique Rodriguez, and freshman Anthony Nina.

BOYS TRACK PHOTO COURTESY OF COACH BRAVO

Cheerleaders at Nationals for First Time!

By Samantha Reyes '19

This past cheerleading season was another successful one for our very own Passaic Indian Cheerleaders. The co-ed group has gone through some hardships but strong friendships and a supporting cheerleading staff battles that heavily.

The team, entering as back to back Big North champions, placed second in the Bash for Cash Cheer and Dance Extreme National Competition in Atlantic City, New Jersey on March 17 to end an amazing season. This is the first time in PHS history that the team was able to attend a national competition.

“Second place at a first time National championship is great news to me” said head coach, Angelina Merced, “as the head coach for the last five years, I am super proud of where we came from and where we are going. As one of the songs from our award winning routine says, ‘started from the bottom now we’re here’ could not be more than the truth.”

Merced empowered and put needed tough love on her cheerleaders through difficult situations and hard times. Assistant Manager Hayleys De Los Santos, stated that the team started from a new foundation all the way to national champions and winning Big North once again.

“It took a lot of hard work and dedication. It’s gone from early to late night practices. The school had basically become our new home. We always kept our grades up because we had a good support group with exceptional coaches” DeLosSantos said.

DeLosSantos also mentions being graced with such an important position as assistant manager, who gets to see amateur cheerleaders grow to near professional college level.

Cheerleading isn’t all about cartwheels, basket tosses or even perfecting a cupie, the value of friendship is strong through every team member. Despite some people not recognizing cheerleading as a sport, it is just as competitive and physically challenging as any other sport.

“I took over this team with only 12 cheer-



leaders. I am proud and honored to say we competed this year with 35 cheerleaders, 15 of which are males - the most on a high school team in New Jersey. I am the current coach of the year for a third consecutive time and very happy with my cheer family!” said Merced.

Seniors: Nathalia Severino, Bruce Ransom, Nicole Rosario, Angel Feliz, Reynaldo

DeLaCruz, Brandon Velez, Chelsea Ceron, Lenny Rodriguez, Mena Concepcion, Jennifer Pimentel, Genesis DeLosSantos, Erika Fabian, Lorryanne Mendez, Ke’ara Benitez, Sebastian Plasencia, Wilda Taveras

Captains: Nathalia Severino, Nicole Rosario, Chelsea Ceron, Angel Feliz, Wilda Tavares, Erika Fabian

Coaches: Ms. Merced and Mr. Pena



Top left: Cheerleaders practice at the beach.
PHOTO BY MS. ANGELINA MERCED

Top right: Cheerleaders demonstrate careful balancing.
PHOTO BY CAROLINA DEDIOS

Left: 2018 PHS cheerleaders.
PHOTO BY MR. MARIO PEÑA

Below left: girl team members.
Below right: boy team members.
PHOTOS BY MR. MARIO PEÑA



PHOTO COURTESY OF D'YANI DONALDSON

Members of the PHS Girls Spring Track team.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISBERMA PERALTA

Passaic Indians Golf

Golf team members Prachi, Carolina, Isaac, Lisberma, and Wileily show some Passaic Pride. The team competed in two tournaments at Preakness Valley Golf course, on 5/10 and 5/17, lead by Coach Pratkano.

Passaic Indians Boys Tennis

Coach: William Major
Highlights of the season: Win against Paterson Kennedy, first place Sunny Rawal. **Winning members:** Meehir Budla, Mueen Bunglawala, Karan Patel, Ayush Rana, Dhurv Rana, Meet Rana and Sunny Rawal
(NO PHOTO AVAILABLE)

Arm Me With Books, Not Guns

By Divya Rana '21

Across the country and beyond, tens of thousands of young people walked out of their school to demand action on gun control and violence. It only took one massacre to change the views of Americans and the issue of gun control has always been a problem but even more now than ever. Now there are discussions of arming teachers with guns, allowing officers the right to seize guns from mentally unstable people, issuing a universal background check, and even repealing or rewriting the Second Amendment.

The public is crying out for stricter gun laws and the President is ready to listen. Trump has embraced gun control and is

OPINION

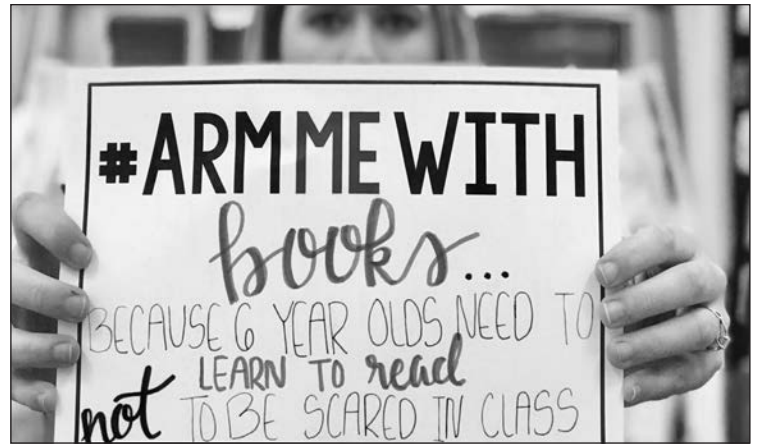
urging a group of lawmakers at the White House to resurrect a gun safety legislation that would expand background checks to weapons purchased at gun shows and on the Internet. He also wants to keep guns from mentally ill people, secure schools and restrict gun sales for some young adults by suggesting that law enforcement authorities should have the power to seize guns from mentally ill people or others who could present a danger without first going to court. He states "I like taking the guns early." (*New York Times*).

But the public protests that the government was nowhere to be seen when the school shootings were happening all over the United States.

Gun control has become a vast-

ly more important issue following the Florida school shooting massacre. Trump insists on arming teachers with guns in an attempt to provide a solution to school shootings. There have also been thoughts on repealing or rewriting the Second Amendment which protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms.

In the last dozen years, new organizations have been launched in an effort to combat the influence of the National Rifle Association, either in response to a specific mass shooting or the persistence of daily gun deaths in America's inner cities. An example of this is seen by liberal activists who have recently started a group called Guns Down after the 2016 Pulse nightclub massacre in Orlando in order to



LINDSEY PAULL / CINCINNATI REGISTER

When will students be able to go to school without the threat of an armed assailant?

promote a more aggressive political and policy campaign against firearms (*The Atlantic*).

Ideas pull the trigger but instinct loads the gun. How much more longer will the young adults of the United States have to wait until they can feel safe again?

How much more longer until a student can go to school without worrying about a threat of a school shooter? When will justice reign? When will the government act? These questions will continue to plague the public until an answer is received.

JELP! Review: Cuban Pete's

By Janessa Mejias '19

Welcome back to another edition of JELP!, where J is here to help.

The weather has been warmer lately and what does that mean? That means that it's time to go out and try some new places this summer!

Our newspaper team has made its way out side of our hometown of Passaic for all those who like to travel a bit. We made our way to Montclair and found an amazing Cuban restaurant that satisfies anyone and everyone's cravings!

Atmosphere: If you love loud Spanish music and busy settings,

you'll love it here. Walking in and getting a seat was a long wait but it was worth it as you were able to smell all the different kinds of food passing by, or you could enjoy the music they played, which consisted of a lot of salsa. They offer outdoor seating for warmer times along with many areas of indoor seating.

Food: Let's be honest, you're here to read about how good the food was, we all wondered the same thing. Our team made sure to get different foods and try many things. Pollo a la plancha, (Grilled Chicken), Pollo Cubano (Cuban Chicken), Tostones (Fried Plantains), Platanos Maduros, (Sweet

Plantains) and Pernil (Pork Shoulder). All entrees were served with a heaping plate of yellow or white rice and black beans. The food not only smelled incredible but it was worth the 35-45 minute wait.

Staff: The servers to the busboys treated everyone and the restaurant with their utmost respect. One cool thing we found quirky about the servers is how they wear little pins with flags on the collars of their shirts to let you know what country they are natively from. It was unique. They spoke Spanish and English so don't be afraid to try a Cuban restaurant for those purposes!

Rating: Five Stars

How secure is our Facebook data?

By Bryan Castro '19

When you think about Facebook, you think about posting pictures, watching videos, and sending messages. But one question no one seems to be asking is "How secure is our data?" Over the past weeks Facebook has been undergoing investigation due to data breach and the way the data was used. The compiled data of 87 million users, most of them from the United States, was gathered by Cambridge Analytica, which is being said to have helped elect President Donald Trump.

This allowed Facebook to target specific political ads to those whose information was gathered, which was consider a possible outcome of the election. This led



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Facebook faces criticism after the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

to users canceling their Facebook accounts worried that more of their information would be gathered and used for the wrong reasons.

Not only did this question the political election in November

2016, but also makes users wonder, "What other information is Facebook able to collect?"

Following the removal of some user accounts, they discovered that Facebook has access to users phone logs, text messages and browser history. With this information, Facebook was able to target explicit ads to the majority of its user. "We clearly stated that the users were granting us the right to use the data in broad scope, including selling and licensing the data," said Aleksandr Kogan, Cambridge Analytica founder. Facebook essentially allowed outside developers to gather users data in which that solely developer could've sold that data.

Cambridge Analytica closed its doors in May, after the scandal.

Review: Love, Simon

By Aleyshka Barbosa '19

If there ever comes a time when you have wanted to feel a roller coaster of emotions, not truly know what will happen next, the film, "Love, Simon," based on the novel by Becky Albertalli *Simon vs. the Homo Sapien Agenda*, truly gives an overall modernizing twist to the typical romance movies.

The movie is based on the life and daily struggles of Simon, as he goes day to day carrying his secret that has never surpassed his thoughts. Throughout the movie, the audience gets to meet all those people dear to Simon that make life worthwhile. Even so, Simon is emailing back and forth with an anonymous pen pal "Blue" who is the only one who truly knows his secret.

While Simon is trying to dis-

cover who Blue is, he is also trying to discover who he is and what the world will think of him if his secret were ever to come out. Although the movie does not focus intensely on many of the major issues that were introduced but never explained throughout the film, this movie brings light to topics that many never thought would be seen play out on a big screen.

From start to finish, the audience wanted to not only know who "Blue" was, but who Simon really was and when would he finally declare his secret without fear.

If you ever want to watch a movie on a relaxing Saturday to remind you of how precious life little moments can be all while trying to overcome the burdens everyday, "Love, Simon" should be at the top of your list.

Check us out online.



Visit hilltopstar.com

FILM REVIEW

New Avengers movie has 22 superheroes

By Brandon Cisneros '19

The highly anticipated movie, "Avengers: Infinity War," hit theaters April 27, 2018. Once again Marvel has won over the hearts of millions across the globe. It has accumulated an average of \$258.2 million in just its first weekend, beating the previous record of \$248 million set by "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

The movie continues the ongoing saga of the Avengers, a group of super heroes who help protect the world from evil. The Avengers come together to fight Thanos – their most powerful enemy yet. Thanos is on a mission to upset the balance of the universe and is collecting all six Infinity Stones. The fate of the

world remains uncertain and it is the Avengers' duty to stop Thanos and save the universe from his path of destruction.

This movie brings together about 22 different superheroes from the Marvel Universe some of which include the following: Captain America, Iron Man, Spiderman, Thor, The Black Panther and many more all fighting for the same reason.

This movie earns an 8.5/10 based on the amazing fighting and action scenes by all the characters. If you are not a hardcore fan, than it might be a little difficult for you to understand the overall purpose of the movie, however there is no doubt this is an amazing film and definitely one for the books.

Opinion: \$15 minimum wage will have a negative impact

By Melissa Reyes '21

The minimum wage, an enticing economic notion to low-income workers is an absolute failure on the already weakened economy of New Jersey. Murphy plans on increasing the minimum wage to \$15, and seems to be gradually increasing it as time passes. However, it will not affect poverty and will cause unemployment.

In New Jersey, the "Minimum wage increased from \$8.44 per hour to \$8.60, which is a 16-cent increase for the estimated 300,000 minimum-wage workers in New Jersey" (NJ.Com).

Murphy claims, "this is as high on the priority list as anything that we've got," which shows how he plans on acting on his campaign promise. It is alarming because it will damage our economy, with the intentions of improving it.

However research groups such as the Heritage Foundation and CATO, a libertarian think tank, argue that the minimum wage will damage the economy. CATO estimates a loss of 7 million jobs if the country were to have a \$15 minimum wage.

According to the Heritage Foundation, "businesses would respond to these higher labor costs by reducing employment of affected workers by over one-sixth, thus eliminating

approximately seven million full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs by 2021."

In other words, 7 millions jobs will be the cost of job loss if the country decides to raise it to 15. Think about the amount of jobs that will be lost, considering the fact that New Jersey has one of the highest taxes.

A study by Joseph Sabia "found no evidence that minimum wage increases were effective at reducing overall poverty rates or poverty rates among workers."

There is no sound evidence whatsoever that it will improve and help New Jerseyan workers.

New Jerseyans need to realize this when learning about Phil Murphy and his plan to raise the minimum wage. The minimum wage should be built up on facts rather than emotional appeal.

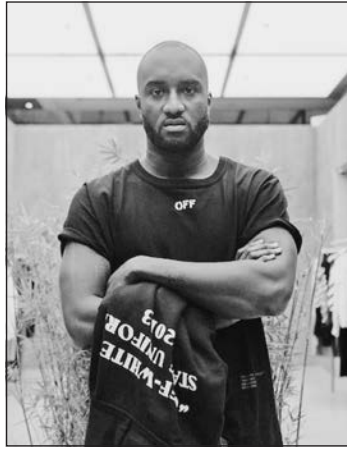
Ultimately as famous economist Thomas Sowell wrote "the real minimum wage is always zero, regardless of the laws, and that is the wage that many workers receive in the wake of the creation or escalation of a government-mandated minimum wage, because they lose their jobs or fail to find jobs when they enter the labor force. Making it illegal to pay less than a given amount does not make a worker's productivity worth that amount—and, if it is not, that worker is unlikely to be employed."

Men's luxury fashion styles become more mainstream

By Bryan Castro '19

The founder of off-White, designer of what is considered one of the best collaborations of 2017, DJ, and quote user Virgil Abloh has been announced as the creative director of Louis Vuitton. Designer Kim Jones, former creative director of Louis Vuitton has joined the House of Dior Homme.

Virgil has simultaneously changed high end fashion and mainstream streetwear with his "hyped designs" in which have merged both "cultures" together. With Louis Vuitton being one of the oldest most recognizable names in luxury fashion, with it's repeating LV pattern has saw an opportunity to market different type of menswear compared to past years. The addition of Virgil to Louis Vuitton is just a step into the right



KATIE MAK/SPARTAINSHIELD.ORG

Virgil Abloh

direction in which boundaries will be broken, which is due to his ability at creating clothing that is concurrently classic and trendy.

Kim Jones was hired as the menswear designer of Louis

Vuitton back in 2011. Seven years into the future and he has been announced the artistic director of Dior Homme. Jones, who was responsible for the high-hype of Louis Vuitton during the summer of 2017, gave the fashion its first glance of that that Virgil will integrate into the brand. Jones is considered one of the most respected designers of his generation, primarily due to his work at Louis Vuitton by bringing luxury to the next level. Dior believes he is capable of doing the same as creative director of Dior Homme.

With these new additions of creative directors to respectable notable luxury brands we are hoping to see breathtaking collaborations and collections for 2018. As for now, one could only dream of a Nike x Louis Vuitton collaboration and Kim



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Kim Jones, center, has been named artistic director of Dior Homme, after seven years as the menswear designer at Louis Vuitton.

Jones creating another iconic collaboration with Supreme.

We are all looking forward to see what Kim Jones and Vir-

gil Abloh have in stored for us with their first collections, at their respected fashion houses at Men's Fashion Week in June.

90th Academy Awards: Most talked about moments

By Armando Martinez '19

This year the Oscars, formally known as the Academy Awards, had its 90th ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, honoring the best films of 2017. It aired live on ABC on Sunday, March 4.

Comedian and late night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel hosted the award show for the second consecutive year, making him the first person to host back-to-back ceremonies since Billy Crystal in 1997 and 1998. The big winner of the night was "The Shape of Water," winning four awards, including the coveted Best Picture and Best Director for Guillermo del Toro. Even though it was the least-watched show in the Academy's history, with a United States viewership of 26.5 million, the night was still full of unforgettable moments that will go down in Oscar history.

Red Carpet Fail

Prior to the award ceremony commencing, the famous Oscar red-carpet coverage was in full swing, with various hosts from different TV channels. How-



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Tiffany Haddish and Maya Rudolph got comfy for their Oscar presentation.

ever as fabulous as the clothes may be, the E! show failed to hit the mark by allowing Ryan Seacrest to host. After a sexual harassment claim was made against Seacrest, NBCUniversal, E!'s parent company, opted to keep him as host of its red-carpet coverage. Viewers wondered if there would be an on-live confrontation between Seacrest and the Oscar nominees, but the ones who spoke with him only discussed fashion and film.

Honoring Moviegoers at the Oscars

There would be no Oscar ceremony, without the endless amount of money that moviegoers spend to watch the nominated films. To thank them, Kimmel enlisted a number of actors including Lupita Nyong'o, Gal Gadot, and Mark Hamill, to go to an advance screening of "A Wrinkle in Time," occurring down the street from the award ceremony. Most of the celebrities walked into the theater bearing snacks and treats, with



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During the Oscars, Jimmy Kimmel recruited several actors to bring snacks and goodies to an unsuspecting audience in a Los Angeles movie theater.

Ansel Elgort and Armie Hammer sporting hot dog cannons.

The Collab We Never Knew We Needed

Comedic actresses Tiffany Haddish and Maya Rudolph took the stage to present two awards with their high heels in hand. Haddish wore her iconic Alexander McQueen gown dress for the one-millionth time, with slippers, and Rudolph has been wearing her slippers since the Critics Choice Awards. Everything they said was hilarious,



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Ryan Seacrest remained on the red carpet.

but what stood out was their shot at the #OscarsSoWhite.

Review: 'Ready Player One'

By Bryan Castro '19

"Ready Player One" has not just captured the narrative, but also the feel for video games. The beginning of the movie introduces generations of video games into a world of virtual reality.

The film inaugurates a thrilling idea of virtual reality set in the year 2045, when it seems like we will be able to experience some technological advances such as a "physical virtual world."

The introduction of the OASIS in the movie, in which humans become their own avatars, breaking sexuality identification boundaries, gives into the nostalgia for the pop culture of the 1980s. It's overall message is that in our technological age, we need to spend more time outside of technology and step into the real world.

But let's face it, within the OASIS, the scenes in New York with King Kong smashing through roads and slashing into



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the frame, gives us the feel and love for the classic King Kong character. Who wants to live in the real world when you could experience this and other iconic video games/movie characters and escape world problems?

Virtual reality is essentially the future and whether we are able to

pursue a universe closer to our reality but also in films is up to us. "Ready Player One" is the movie I suggest people watch, because at the end of the day the movie is for those who have the feel for video games as much as the creator of the OASIS did.

Grade: B+

THE HILLTOP STAR

The Student Newspaper of Passaic High School

Staff Editors:

Aleyshka Barbosa
Brandon Cisneros
Armando Martinez
Janessa Mejias

Writers:

Bryan Castro
Dyani Moreno
Lisberma Peralta Aquino
Bianca Pottinger
Samira Pozo Robinson
Amber Ramirez

Divya Rana
Melissa Reyes
Samantha Reyes
Felicity Rivera
Lixangelys Ruiz
Yakelin Victoriano
Hernandez

Adviser:

Erica Sciametta
esciametta@passaicsschools.org

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. We look forward to working with you throughout this school year! Reach out to Ms. Sciametta or a newspaper staff member if you would like to join, contribute information, or respond to newspaper content.

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STRIVE ZERO FREE CHALLENGE 2018



PHOTOS BY PHOTO BY MS. JOSE

These students pledged to not receive any zeros in a class of choice during the second quarter and succeeded. As a result, their grades went up (some by two letter grades!) and STRIVE rewarded them with a Barnes and Noble gift card and STRIVE wristbands and buttons. Congratulations to Laura Gonzales, Britany Alvarado, Hector Falcon, Kimberly Lucero, (pictured); and Guadalupe De Gaona, Madeline Dominguez and Anthony Munoz!

Tenement Museum field trip

By Hilltop Star Staff

On Monday, April 9, Mr. Bravo, history teacher, took some students to the Tenement Museum in New York City.

According to the museum's website, The Tenement Museum preserves and interprets the history of immigration through the personal experiences of the generations of newcomers who settled in and built lives on Manhattan's Lower East Side, America's iconic immigrant neighborhood; forges emotional connections between visitors and immigrants past and present; and enhances appreciation for the profound role immigration has played and continues to play in shaping America's evolving national identity.

Students also had the opportunity to go on a food tour, in which they stopped by various shops and restaurants in the surrounding neighborhood and had a sample of the city's food.

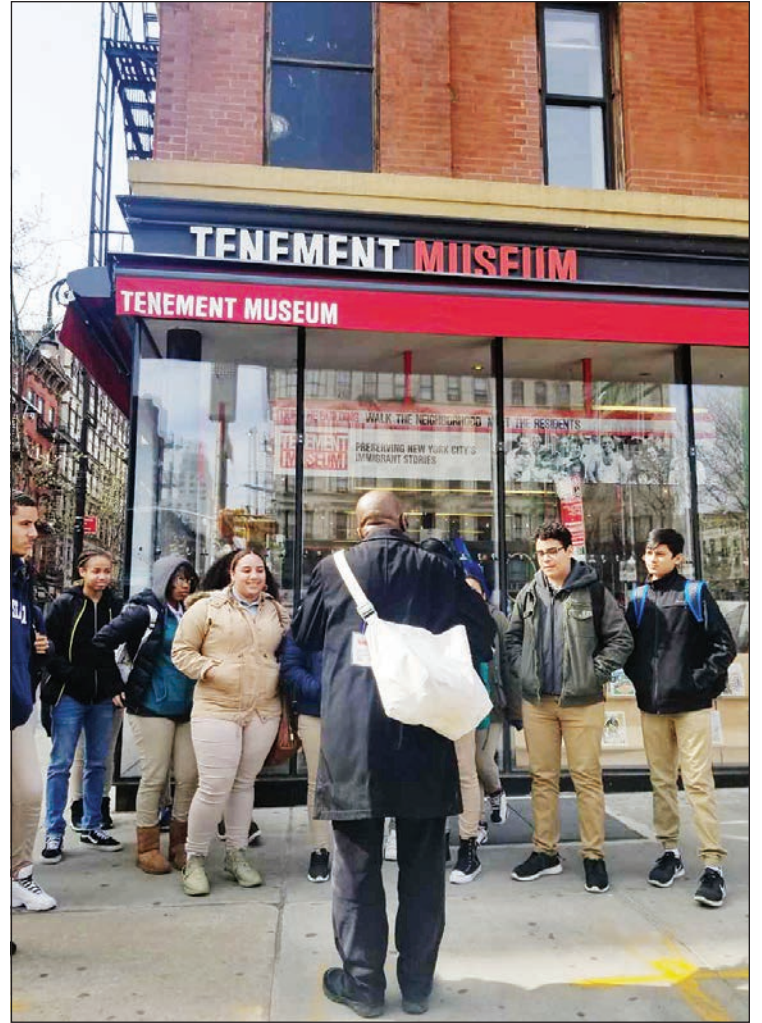


PHOTO BY MS. JOSE

PHS Special Olympics shows outstanding sportsmanship

By Divya Rana '21

The PHS Special Olympics is a sports organization for students that have disabilities. However, that does not stop them from competing in sports, having fun, and doing their best. There are typically two games, the Winter Games and the Summer Games. The student athletes have a large

arrange of events to choose from, some of which include the following: track and field, bocce, and so much more.

When the PHS Special Olympics team athletes participated in the North Area Bocce event, Ms. Ackerson-Baez was delighted to witness the outstanding sportsmanship her students displayed throughout the day regardless

of a win or lose outcome. She observed that Clifton and Passaic were able to maintain fair behavior and they continued to amaze her with their ability to put aside any resemblance of competitiveness for the greater good.

Special thanks to the girls basketball team, Coach Iturrino, Coach Kush and Coach

Dudek for their support at this event. They prepped breakfast and lunch for the athletes at the event and also were supportive enough to cheer on the athletes.

The day was a rough start overall but they managed to pull through and make it a great day. They will continue to practice and work hard to be more proficient in their game

so that they are prepared for the Summer Games in June.

Results:

- Passaic Unified - 4th place
- Passaic Ladies - 4th place
- Passaic Red - 4th place
- Passaic Blue - Bronze
- Passaic Throw - Silver
- Passaic Run - Gold
- Passaic White - Gold

College Fair 2018



PHOTOS BY MS. PINON



Students had the opportunity to explore college and career options on May 3, in the PHS gymnasium. Students visited multiple colleges and trade schools to ask questions to school representatives about majors, college life, and more. Our very own PHS guidance counselors set up the event.

POETRY CORNER

Hope By Samira Pozo-Robinson '20

Giving with pain.
 With so many obstacles to face.
 It is common to lose all hopes with moving on.
 But do we really lose hope?
 Do we really want to give up?
 Give it one more try.
 Give it one more chance.
 And somehow all hopes will come back.
 Given with everything we lose.
 There will be something better for us in return.
 I'm not saying to be hopeful nor to lose it.
 But rather for you to try one more time and then...
 Make all hopes come back even if it's not too much.
 Have hope,
 for HOPE gives you the STRENGTH to move FORWARD!