

Paw-sitively Connected

Great Path Academy at MCC



Ranizha and Xavier lead the GPA staff in a discussion about how to best approach students when they are upset.

GPA Students Lead a Workshop for GPA Staff

Xavier and Ranizha, two GPA juniors, led a half-day training for the GPA staff on The Connecticut Center for Non-Violence Principles of Conflicts. The purpose of the training was to teach not only young individuals but also adults to decipher a conflict and any situation that might involve escalation of tempers or violence. Taken through these courses, each training teaches someone to analyze and interact with a situation. Ranizha said, "The training taught the staff ways to interact with the GPA students that wouldn't trigger someone who was upset."

This program teaches students and staff the steps to get out of a situation—the levels of conflict. The levels include: normal, pervasive and overt. The goal is never reach overt and also to avoid the pervasive step. The training deals with awareness, mindfulness. The professional development for the staff included discussing each others' values as an ice breaker, so that participants could feel connected. Some people stated that what they felt was important was the support that they got from one another, among other things.

Xavier stated, "It was very inter-

active and a positive decision that Ms. Niles made—it was a good idea to introduce this training." The students then led a presentation on types of conflicts and steps to take to de-escalate and calm each other down. Staff then role-played, acting out various scenarios as the students.

Showing this type of curriculum to everybody is an excellent idea, because, "not only does it teach us who we are internally, but we can also help to make a difference for our community to become safer, as a culture and supporting a level of comfort and respect", Xavier stated.

"It was sort of scary, because they are adults and I am a kid, but halfway through, the staff made me feel comfortable, so it was easier for me. I was really nervous about it before and I was so close to not doing it. At the end, I was proud, I wanted to do more, I couldn't wait to get into other trainings and teach other people," Ranizha stated.

Looking back, she thinks that, "I think they (the staff) really got the point that everyone has their days and the things that you do and say towards another person can really affect them, so you have to take caution."

The students were supported and led by Mr. Boyd, an ex-marine who is a part of the Blue Hills Civic Association. When Ranizha and Xavier met him, he taught them about the Civil Rights Movement and how to effect change with non-violent strategies. This mentality is key to teaching others about how to interact with each other.

The ending activity of the day consisted of a soda being shaken up, paired with a story of a student with negative things happening to and around them. The shaken bottle was passed around. The last person to end up with the bottle was asked if they wanted to open it. The bottle was meant to represent emotional turmoil that gets agitated by occurrences and conflicts that a student might potentially encounter during a day. No one wanted to open the bottle. (Below, Mr. Hoffman shakes and passes the bottle.)



The YMCA Collaborates With GPA Staff to Work With GPA Freshmen

Barry and Annette from the YMCA have begun a program with two of the freshmen Pre-Capstone classes here at GPA. The curriculum during the five week seminar for the youth as part of the Y-TIP program is as follows. The final week will have each youth to partake in a mock interview to explain what they learned from the sessions and how they can become more socially responsible moving forward.

Week 1: 40 Developmental Asset Surveys/Power of Communication

Week 2: Hygiene and Self-Respect (gender based groups)/Stress

Week 3: Perception vs Reality/The Image of "Me"

Week 4: Impacting My Community/Social Responsibility

Week 5: Program Review/Close Out Interviews

During the latest meeting, with the focus on the Power of Communication, students were asked to partner up with someone that they didn't know and list three

things about themselves that they respect about themselves. They were asked to listen carefully to what their partner stated and be able to explain why and how their choices tied into self-respect.

Phrases heard around the room consisted of "my health", "I start something and I always finish it", "I stay in shape", "my originality", and "my determination". Students explained the reasoning behind their choices to the group.

We are looking forward to the next four weeks of this program.

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Special points of interest:

- The magnet lottery deadline has been extended to Feb. 29th. If you know of anyone interested in GPA, please tell them to visit us during an open house or call the school for a visit and tour!
- If you have a sibling who is applying, they get sibling preference if their brother or sister will be in school at GPA with them. Call (860) 512-3756 to tell us and also make sure you apply!



Above- GPA Art students attend an MCC photo shop seminar.



Above- Madyson hollows out her creature using the "cut and scoop" method. Below- Imani adds details to her clay creature.



Unified Arts News

Health classes for the Spring semester got off to a good start last week! The first unit in Health is the pathogen unit. Emphasis is placed on healthy habits and disease prevention. Current topics include the highly publicized Zika Virus.

Personal Finance - This course is a semester long course which focuses around being financially savvy. We started with determining the difference between a need and a want in relation to budgeting. We will then start to discuss banking, loans and compete in a national budget challenge sponsored by H & R Block.

Culinary 2 - Our budding chefs have begun to learn cooking methods for chicken. they made Hun-

garian chicken, chicken pot pie and chicken parmesan. next they will learn how to break down an entire chicken and then braise or roast those pieces.

Baking 1 - We started Baking with quickbreads; after learning all about how leaveners work we started producing items. The students made either plain or cheddar cheese biscuits, next week we will begin a week of muffins.

Spanish I students are learning how to discuss, listen & write about their scheduling while conjugating ar verbs.

Spanish II students are working on the shopping unit and will be creating a skit in groups about a role play of a shopping trip and interac-

tions between customers and a salesperson.

Spanish III students have just finished their artist unit and created beautiful artwork in the style of Spanish-speaking painters. They will now begin the music unit in order to studies style of music such as tango, bachata, merengue, salsa and flamenco.

Spanish V students are beginning to read the novel "Cajas de Car-tón" and learning the subjunctive imperfect verb.

Drawing students attended a Photo-shop workshop with Maura O'Conner, graphic design professor at MCC, as part of their Self-Portrait unit. (photo to the left) They learned the basics of Photo-shop, (*cont. below*)

Social Studies News

In Modern World History, students have been learning about human rights issues around the globe. Students are looking into current events around the world, including ISIS and North Korea. Students have been discussing issues in the United States, such as the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. We will be looking at contemporary issues in America and will be using a global lens to view and discuss these issues. Students will be starting their unit project within the next few weeks

on a current event topic of their choice.

In U.S. History, we ended the first semester presenting our creative projects which illustrated the political, economic and social shifts that characterized the 1920's. Topics ranged from Prohibition to the Red Scare. Currently students are analyzing both the cause and effects of the Great Depression. Through primary source analysis we will discover how life dramatically changed for the individ-

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English News

English I students are finishing The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. They are examining how poetic devices reveal theme and writing claim statements to explore their understanding. Students will finish the unit with a choice-board project in which they have an opportunity to display their understanding of the unit concepts. Students in English I honors are reading Night by Elie Wiesel and analyzing his use of rhetorical devices. They are also participating in fish-bowl style discussions in order to prepare them for Socratic Seminar in tenth grade English.

In English II Honors, students have just completed their fourth Socratic Seminar where they examined the conflicts between mothers and daughters. Students critiqued and mimicked Amy Tan's style of writing by creating their very own folktales.

In English II College Prep, students are using inferences and their knowledge of characterization to create a zodiac chart for the main character of A Lesson Before Dying. Students are also collaborating with one another to help deepen their understanding of life in the pre-civil rights South.

(*Art news Cont. from above*)

including how to apply layers and filters in order to stylize photographs.

Ceramic students studied grotesques and gargoyle sculptures in architecture, then created their own ceramic creatures inspired by these fascinating historical art forms! (photos to the left)

Exploratory Art students studied the history of mosaics and created mosaic artworks inspired by the contemporary artist Isaiiah Zagar, founder and creator of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens.

Student's finished creations will be on display at our Cabaret Music and Art show!

Science News

Students in Chemistry are learning about atomic structure and writing electron configurations of elements of the periodic table. They will be applying their knowledge of the electron configuration to explain the phenomena of atomic emission spectrum and perform the flame test lab.

Biology students are wrapping up their study of cells and health with a major project that requires them to create a plan for reducing or eliminating the negative impacts of a particular disease. In developing this plan, the students must draw on their knowledge of cells, cell functions, homeostasis, and also how the disease impacts those systems. Additionally, they must do research into the economic, social, and environmental factors that are related to their disease, its prevention options, and treatments. Their research must then be used to determine their plan of

action and support it with statistical evidence.

Forensic science students are just beginning their course. They have jumped into the material and are debating the usefulness of different observation tools and techniques from both expert and novel sources. Students are learning that no form of evidence is totally infallible and that, in fact, there are many pitfalls presented by even expertly collected and assessed evidence.

Articulated Anatomy and Physiology just wrapped up their comprehensive exam, and both articulated and regular Anatomy and Physiology classes have begun to work on a unit in which they will be studying the nervous system. They have been provided with multiple sources of background information, from which, they will then apply basic nervous system anatomy and physiology concepts to understanding disease states.

Physical Science students are tinkering with balancing equations, calculating

molar mass, and learning mole to gram unit conversions. This expands upon their understanding of the Atoms, the Periodic Table of Elements, and Bonding in a way that will show them the application of that material to basic chemical reactions.

All 10th graders are being given additional CAPT preparation instruction and tools to help support them in achieving the state goal for science CAPT. Currently, we are still running after school Wednesday CAPT prep sessions, however, CAPT Saturday sessions have been cancelled due to low attendance. We plan to host CAPT Friday after school sessions through February instead, permission slips will be forthcoming. Additionally, all 10th graders have access to studyisland.com and all of the CAPT lessons through that website and the science teachers have begun posting CAPT assignments to a special edmodo.com page dedicate to CAPT prep. If you have any questions about this upcoming test (March 2016!!) please email Ms. Thurrott: thurw001@hartfordschools.org

Math News

Our Algebra classes at GPA have made it to the heart of algebra, $y = mx + b$, called slope intercept form. Students are learning how to graph lines, find their slope, and create equations. This is what Algebra is all about. College Prep Math class has multiple students moving up to a higher class due to their excellent completion and

hard work. Our Calculus Honors classes have delved into one of the hardest topics in our entire math curriculum called related rates. Students had to solve real life problems based on this unit, create a project, and teach it to the class. Even Assistant Principal Jacobson got in on the action, learning Calculus for the first time in a couple of years!

In Algebra II, we are coming up on the SAT (March 2nd). Students are practicing in class and after school.

I am proud of all the juniors who are working very hard this year! Keep it up! Pre-calculus students are working on graphing equations on a polar coordinate system using desmos to design a logo.

Student Spotlight— Owusu Darko and Gabi Roberston

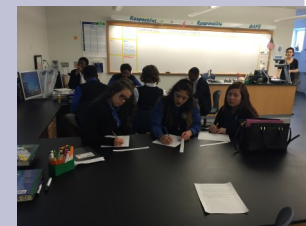
Owusu Darko, the Valedictorian for the Great Path Academy Class of 2016, has some words of advice for all high school students. "Don't blame others for your failure, take responsibility- basically, don't make excuses for the things that you didn't do that you should do." Owusu is a graduating senior who is looking at UConn, Cornell, Temple, and Quinnipiac. He has spent all four of his high school years as a Great Path Academy student. He has his eyes on his future- and has for quite some time. He has applied for five scholarships, and received two so

far. The Hartford promise, which will provide \$5,000 for four years and the Dr. Aaron Lewis scholarship, which provides him with \$1,500 are two scholarships that will make his dream a reality. He has also applied for the Ron Brown Scholarship, the Greater Hartford Alliance of Black Social Workers Scholarship, and Jacob L. and Lewis Fox Scholarship. In addition, due to his standing in the Great Path Academy rankings, he will be a recipient of the UConn Presidential Scholarship if he chooses to attend UConn. Owusu, among other important figures, was honored at a gala at The Hartford Club on January 17th, 2016.

Another student who is a shining star is senior Gabriella Robertson. Gabi has chosen to focus her Capstone project on school climate and culture, leading the Student Ambassadors and the GPA Allies. Her proposal for the GPA Allies has consisted of ways to offer support to current students here at GPA and also streamlining the application and interview process for students who are applying to become Allies. Gabi is an active member of the school community, participating in drama and musical pursuits, as well as helping to plan school events and participating in leadership roles through the student council.



Above and below— GPA students working hard in science classes.



Please join us for: GPA's 2nd Annual

Cabaret Night!

Singing, dancing and a variety of talented

entertainment will be the focus of the GPA

Cabaret Night!

February 25th and 26th

7 pm

GPA Community Commons

Tickets: \$5 students, \$10 adults



Above— Owusu and Gabi, graduating seniors.



**GREAT PATH
ACADEMY AT MCC**

A Middle College High School

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Manchester, CT
06040

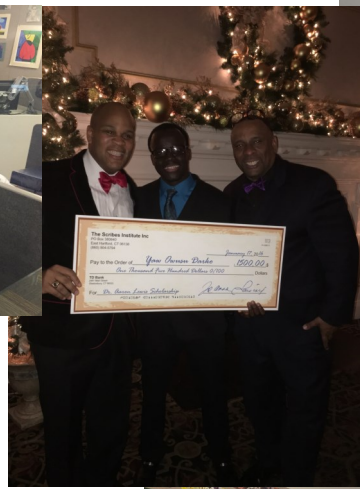
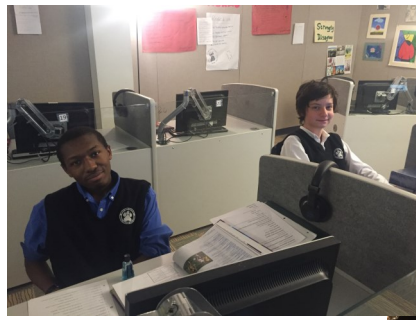
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**Respect,
Responsibility and Safety**

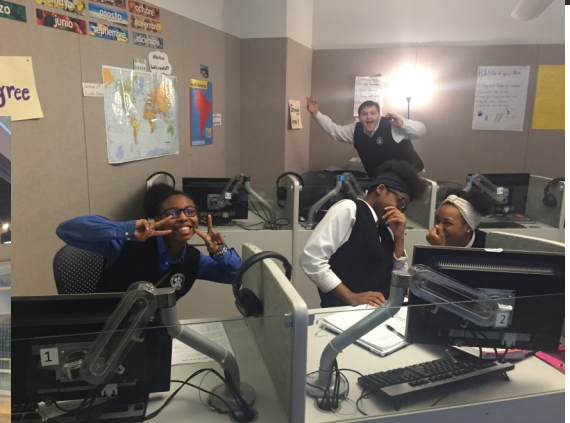
We're online!

www.greatpathacademy.org



In our school
community...

Community and classroom
photos.



Theater@GPA News and A GPA Senior's ASL College Class

Natalia, below, signing.



Theatre@GPA's spring musical, *Guys and Dolls* has begun rehearsals.

Cast in principal roles are junior Tim Powers and senior Amy Vasques as the romantic leads, Sky Masterson and Sarah Brown, while seniors Ricky Hamilton and Jasmine Cruz are featured as the comic leads, Nathan Detroit and Miss Adelaide.

Guys and Dolls is a classic 1950 musical comedy that mixes Broadway gamblers with Salvation Army missionaries. It features memorable songs such as "Luck Be a Lady", "If I Were A Bell", "Adelaide's Lament" and the show-stopping

"Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat."

Guys and Dolls is directed by Dr. Paul Zotos, with musical direction by Steven Wolf. Choreography duties are shared by seniors Talia Clarke and Adelina Pardo. Alivia Caruso (GPA '15), a costume design major at Stephens College, is creating the costumes.

Guys and Dolls opens Thursday, May 12 at 7:00pm. Additional performances are Fri. May 13 at 7:00 and Sat. May 14 at 1:00pm.

ASL Sign Language at MCC

Natalia Warburton is signing her life away. (Get it?) She has started a new college class at MCC. It is American Sign Language. The instructor is deaf-

"he is so funny and kind, we call him Mick, he makes you feel comfortable." The instructor says that it's not about perfection, it's about effort— he will repeat the signs as many times as they need. Natalia wanted to take ASL, because she wants to be an educator of the deaf in the future and "feels like she needs to be able to speak their language fluently and understand the background" if she wants to teach. This interested Natalia because when she was younger, she had a best friend whose sister was deaf. She learned how to communicate with her. She has lost some of her background knowledge and wants to get back into learning the language. We can't wait to hear more about your new class!

Great Path Academy @ MCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, political belief, veteran status, or sexual orientation. The following individual has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Susan Canty, Title IX Coordinator, cants001@hartfordschools.org.

*Thank you to the following donors to the PBIS Gotcha Cart this month:
Dunkin' Donuts for the donations of "any-size free beverage" vouchers, and the teachers and staff of GPA.
We appreciate the support for helping to recognize GPA Student Cougars for being Responsible, Respectful and Safe!
If interested, donations can be made to Ms. Canty— please email cants001@hartfordschools.org or call (860) 512-3723.*