Dear Parents, Alumni, and Friends,

In this, our 51st year, we hope you enjoy the Spring Newsletter. Every year I stress that these newsletters focus only on our students and their activities through the year. This is not to put down our wonderfully supportive parents, but to stress that my goal as Head of the School is to ensure that our students get the best education from the best teachers. That is the job I undertook on York’s first day in 1969, and I have never veered from that focus.

I must acknowledge our graduating class of 2019 and the College Guidance Department. Last June, we graduated 57 seniors. Out of that class, all but three got into their first-choice college, and the remaining three got into their second choice. None of them had to consider attending their third choice. Quite exceptional, and a tribute to the students’ hard work and to the excellent guidance they received. We teach College Guidance as a class to our 11th grade, and our record of success shows how the process of completing the “Common Application” by the end of the Junior Year serves the students so well and relieves much of the tension in the fall of the Senior Year since virtually all the major work is done.

This year, we moved fully into our upgraded portal of Canvas. It has served to create real-time communication between the faculty, their students, and parents. It effectively is an open grade book. We also launched the York Prep Writing Center, which is dedicated to helping our students across subjects with their writing. It is staffed every day at lunch and after school, as well as select periods throughout the day, and it has been a great success so far. New events and clubs are added each year, and this spring, Girls Softball will return to York. I hope you see all that is new and thriving in the pages that follow.

Our faculty-student ratio is now 1 to 4, and we continue to expand the academic offerings to our students. By next year, Advanced Placement courses will be offered in every subject, and our Scholars Program continues to attract students who look for extra challenge. Well after the classes and Jump Start have ended at the end of each school day, there are students and teachers working together on academics. I am extremely proud of our faculty as they motivate and challenge, and, most importantly, see each student as an individual.

Every year, our school evolves in exciting ways, but the constant I most cherish is that we are a community of kindness. There is no finer quality than great character.

So I should get out of the way and let you read this newsletter. I do not want to finish, however, without thanking our parents. I cannot express how much we appreciate the fact that you put your trust in us. We enjoy your presence at the International Dinner, at our performances (athletic or performing arts), and our conferences. We are not a school of galas or auctions or balls. We want to work with you as a team for the benefit of your child. We want to help our students become ethical and empathetic, and to instill values that will last. Let us continue to collaborate.

Sincerely,

Ronald Stewart                                                                                                 Jeremy Clarke
Head                                                                                                                  Deputy Head

2 Spring 2020
CLASS OF 2019 COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

American University
Arizona State University
Boston University
Brandeis University
Chapman University
Clarkson College
Coastal Carolina University
College of Charleston*
Columbia College of Chicago
Curry College
Bard College
Brooklyn College
Emory University
Eugene Lang
Florida A & M University
George Washington University*
High Point University
Ithaca College
Juilliard School
Lafayette College
Lynn University
Maastricht University, NL
Muhlenberg College*
New York University*
Marist College
Penn State University
Rochester Institute Technology
Roger Williams University
Sarah Lawrence University
Savannah College of Art and Design
Skidmore College*
Smith College
St. Lawrence University
Syracuse University
SUNY Binghamton
SUNY Buffalo State
Temple University
University of Arizona
University of California, LA
University of Miami
University of Rhode Island
University of St. Andrews
University of Southern California
Ursinus College
Vassar College
Wake Forest University
Washington University

* Multiple Students

CLASS OF 2020 EARLY DECISION APPLICATIONS

Babson College
Chapman*
Cornell
Lehigh
Mt. Holyoke
Muhlenberg
Northeastern*
NYU – Tisch

RPI*
Skidmore
Syracuse*
Tulane*
UVA
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One of the newest additions to York Prep is the Writing Center, located on the 2nd floor. The Writing Center serves as a resource for Upper School students to develop their writing process as they receive one-on-one instruction from a York faculty member. Students may find time in their daily schedule and make an appointment for help with a variety of assignments. Junior Chris Rupp states, “The Writing Center is an integral part of my writing and editing process.” Senior Scarlett Sinclair adds, “Visiting and working with teachers on my writing made the college essay process less stressful.”

If you’re an Upper School student who needs help with an English essay, finds yourself struggling with the perennial History research paper, or wants to publish a short story, visit us, and we’ll get you on your way.

Over the summer of 2019, all members of the York Prep faculty read Guide to the Writing Revolution by Judith Hochman. When teachers returned for faculty orientation in August, they discussed applications of the techniques introduced in the guide and collaborated in content area groups to explore methods of implementation. The program provides teachers with a highly structured three-step process of writing well-organized paragraphs and essays. It places emphasis on proper sentence construction, prewriting through outlining, and proofreading/editing. The vast majority of our students benefit from clear structure, feedback, and defined expectations. The Writing Revolution is the only writing program supported by research that has been proven to improve clarity, quality, and sophistication of students’ writing. As we approach the midpoint of the school year, there are examples from all corners of the school that provide proof that the program has been a huge success.

The York Prep Cheer Dancers pride themselves in being infused with school spirit. Two years strong, Cheer has been supporting the York Prep Basketball Team to their championships. With the Dance Team’s fun routines and lively chants, the games have become quite exciting!

Senior Phoebe Unger says, “Being in Cheer at York boosted my confidence, and I became part of an amazing family I will never forget.” Her classmate Sway Dolan adds, “Starting cheer has been an amazing experience, and watching the York community grow from it has been inspiring.”

Choreographer/Coach: Fiona Hutchison

York News 5
York Prep Upper School Scholars Program

The Scholars Program fosters genuine intellectual curiosity and cultivates a strong sense of inquisitive thinking, making a York Prep student into a York Prep Scholar. The aim of this program is to allow students to excavate new interests that may be dormant inside them and to hone their curiosity about a variety of fields and topics.

All classes are independently taught once a week for a semester by members of the faculty who draw on their own intellectual passions and specialties from both inside and outside of the classroom. In this way, students discover how a person’s passion for a particular topic can spark someone else’s enthusiasm and enrich their love of learning.

In their senior year, students get the opportunity to pursue their own passions and satisfy their curiosity in a yearlong capstone project of original research. Ultimately, students develop an understanding of how truly connected one’s passion and one’s learning can be.

A taste of some of the courses offered Fall 2019:

Grades 9 and 10-
Art History: The Spanish Brush – World Language Teacher Ms. Julie Sarasohn
History: Lincoln’s Greatest Speeches – History Teacher Mr. Michael Roper

Grade 11-
History: Sanctioned Theft: Land and Law in the United States – History Teacher Mr. Sam Gordon
English: Advanced Poetry Workshop – English Teacher Ms. Leah Umansky
Science: Neuroplasticity – Science Teacher Mr. Mark Hertko
Congratulations to the faculty and students who worked on the 2019 edition of Genesis for receiving the top rank of REALM First Class in the 2019 National Council of Teachers English Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) Program. Over 300 schools applied nationwide, and Genesis is the only publication from a school in New York City that was recognized as REALM First Class!

Genesis is an exceptional collection of writing and art made possible the dedicated staff every year. We congratulate and thank the 2019 Genesis staff for receiving this high honor:

Sophia Graham, Co-Editor-in-Chief
Cecilia Cuddy, Co-Editor-in-Chief
Hayley Canell, Art Editor
Kaia Seldman, Assistant Art Editor
Leah Umansky, Chief Editor and Faculty Literary Advisor
Christina Cox, Co-Faculty Literary Advisor
Emily-Greta Tabourin, Faculty Advisor or Arts and Photography
Eliza Eckstein, Assistant Editor
Nia Moore, Assistant Editor
Jenna Saevitzon, Junior Editor
Henry Felsman
Brooke Leon
Madeleine Rubler
Sophie Bigar-Vann
Nicholas Spillum
Jack Flesher
Nia Moore
Safeerah Moteen
Nicole Rashkover
Leila Robb
Graziana Rutigliano
Jenna Saevitzon
Rehannah Baksh
Molly Robb
Jocelyn Rowland
Mi-En Kim
Charles Manzano
Emily Singh

Our editors for the 2019-2020 school year were:
Co-Editors in Chief: Juniors Jenna Saevitzon and Eliza Eckstein
Junior Editor: 8th grader Emily Singh
Art Editor: Sophomore Kaia Seldman
Assistant Art Editors: Juniors Isabel Veyssi and Ming Robinson

Awards from last year’s issue were:
Best poem: “Weary Peppers” by Rehannah Baksh
Best Prose: “My Father’s Face” by Jack Flesher
Best Digital Art: “Watchful Eyes,” by Kaia Seldman
Best Studio Art: “Seated Skeleton,” by Johnson Li
Cover Art: Maya Fuchs-Bortolami

We have already received many fantastic submissions for Genesis’ next issue, which will be published in April 2020, and we look forward to receiving many more! We highly encourage students in grades 6 through 12 to join the Genesis Club on Wednesdays at lunch in Room 325 and to submit art or literary work to the magazine.

Genesis is York Prep’s award-winning 6-12 grade literary and art magazine, featuring poetry, short fiction, creative non-fiction, photography, and studio art. The incredible number of student submissions and Genesis Club participants are a testament to York students’ strong literary voice and artistic talent, which we are proud to present on an annual basis.

Literary Faculty Advisors: Leah Umansky and Cristina Cox
Photography Advisor: Emily Tabourin
VISIT US ON THE WEB

By: Janet Bloom

We invite you to visit and explore our website!

This fall, we launched our new and improved York Prep website, which has been designed to provide you with an optimal online experience from your desktop, tablet, or smart phone.

In addition to the clean and modern design, the new menu makes the site easy to navigate and delivers content in a quick and accessible format. In order to present more colorful insight into the York Prep experience, we have added an Alumni section and expanded our Academics, Arts, and Student Life sections. Each page of the website has been enhanced with new photos and videos.

As always, you can check the website to find the school calendar, learn more about the admissions process, apply online, read about the different academic departments, see sample course descriptions, learn about student clubs, find information about upcoming athletic games, and more.

We hope that you find our site helpful, and we are open to receiving your feedback.

Check back soon for more enhancements, including updated student artwork, news posts, student stories, and videos.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

By: Emily Mercado

It doesn’t seem possible that we are already in the third quarter! My name is Mrs. Mercado and I am the new librarian here at York Prep. Although this marks my first year here, I am now halfway through my 15th school year as a librarian. I’ve worked at every grade level (K-12), but grades 6-12 are surely my favorite. I’ve enjoyed every moment getting to know your children this year, and I look forward to many more years to come!

The library has been very busy this year, hosting classes across all disciplines for course-specific research skills lessons, 6th and 7th grade library skills classes, and students coming in for extra help and quiet study. The beginning of this school year also brought the addition of four beanbag chairs for the students, which have proven to be quite popular! Future additions to the library will include new nonfiction books to support our curriculum and an expanded collection that covers LGBTQ+ issues.

I am happy to say that the library has been the center of our students’ academic day. There isn’t a free seat most days (before and after school included). I’m looking forward to seeing what the new semester brings!

AFFINITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB

Advisors: Elizabeth Aiello and Sam Gordon

In October, the Affinity and Social Justice Club held a celebration of Latinx culture in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. We enjoyed a student and faculty-made lunch of rice and beans, empanadas, piña coladas, and more while we watched the film The Book of Life. Our club’s goal is to highlight and celebrate the many identities and cultures we bring to York Prep while discussing and learning about issues relevant to our school community and beyond. This year we plan to see films together as a club, host discussions between students and staff, and send members to the Diversity Awareness Initiative for Students (DAIS) conference in May. We encourage anyone who wants to come join us on Thursdays at lunch in Room 405!
**Ambassadors Club**

The York Prep Ambassadors Club is a wonderful way for York students to help the Admissions Office engage prospective families. Our Ambassadors conduct tours of the school, answer questions, and discuss their own personal York journeys. We select students who have good interpersonal skills and enjoy meeting new people.

Aside from individual tours for every prospective family, we have a multitude of Admissions events. In October and November, there are parent/student open houses in which families tour the school. Afterward, parents and students are separated. Parents go to the chapel and listen to Mr. Stewart, the deans, and a panel of students. Two or three seniors sit on the panel and host a Q & A for the parents. Meanwhile, the prospective students end their tours in the library for snacks and a discussion with the Ambassadors.

In January, we host an Admissions Fair at which parents and students have an opportunity to meet all the heads of York departments. York Ambassadors help by chatting with families and making them feel welcome, and it is always a very festive evening. In February, we host our Accepted Student Re-Visit Days, when accepted students are invited to sit in on classes taught by York faculty and then enjoy a luncheon at the Christian Science Reading Room. At lunch, Ambassadors sit at each table, facilitating conversation and answering questions.

Participation in the Ambassadors Club demonstrates pride in one’s school and is a great practice for meeting new people and public speaking.

**Art Students Visit Poster House**

On September 25, 2019, art teacher Shoshana Spencer took her sophomore digital art class, along with Gary Schwartz’s sophomore printmaking class, to the Poster House in Chelsea. This brand new museum opened last June, and it is dedicated entirely to poster art. The group had the pleasure of viewing two exhibits. The first featured early advertisements and posters by Moravian born artist Alphonse Mucha (1860 - 1939), one of the most celebrated graphic designers of the Art Nouveau movement. The second exhibit featured experimental posters by the commercial graphic design agency Cyan, which was founded soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The Poster House Education Director, Samantha Hirsch, led both tours. Following the exhibitions, students participated in a contemporary poster design workshop in the museum’s education lab.
Asian Appreciation Club

In the Asian Appreciation Club, students learn traditions celebrated throughout Asia. For example, students experience how to celebrate the Chinese mid-autumn festival by trying different flavored moon cakes and other foods. They also learn how the festival is celebrated in several eastern Asian countries outside of China. We also introduce the club to the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages, showing the similarity between them. The club takes part in enjoyable hands-on activities while learning about aspects of Asian culture, such as music, calligraphy, and artwork.

ASL Club

How much do members enjoy ASL Club? Says senior Matthew La Fronz, “I wish I took ASL!”

Throughout the school year, students in the American Sign Language Club learn basic signs and conversational signs in order to communicate with the Deaf. Students learn about the Deaf community and its culture. The ASL Club watches controversial films on cochlear implants and the development of new technology for the Deaf. Discussions in the ASL Club also include Deaf identity and preserving ASL within the Deaf community. The club meets biweekly with world language instructors Mr. Christian Abreu and Ms. Irini Samolis. Students of all ages take part in engaging ASL games that enable them to practice their new signing skills or enhance previous skills. Senior Benjamin Lindenbaum, our president, is a fourth-year ASL student who organizes each meeting based on the students’ interests. The club officers’ goals are to organize activities within the club and coordinate group gatherings among the Deaf community throughout New York City.

All ASL Club members continually pursue their common goal of spreading the joy of American Sign Language throughout York Prep. However, each member has his or her own reason for being there. As junior Isabel Veyssi states, “I come for the entertainment!”
Halloween was a record-breaking success this year, with over 80 students from all grades entertaining the rest of the community with a Halloween dance. The costume contest featured fantastic appearances by Freddie Mercury, a Starbucks barista, the twins from The Shining, the Michelin Man, Prince, and Scooby-Doo! As always, the day was fun and spooky, with lots of candy and laughs enjoyed by all.

Harry Potter Club

Harry Potter Club meets every Thursday at lunchtime. Alejandro Roca Antelo-Suarez (8th Grade), the Kobus siblings Greta (11th Grade), Audra (11th Grade) and Emily (10th Grade), Smith Pingree (9th grade), Zach Fisher (7th grade), Ms. Elizabeth Gambal from the front desk and science teacher Mr. Michael Ward meet as a community with a shared passion to discuss the day-to-day on-goings of the magical world. We have also been joined by special guests, Spanish teacher Ms. Julie Sarasohn and science teacher Ms. Carolyn Pierce.

We discuss our thoughts and feelings about the different characters, make comparisons between the books and the movies, and debate decisions made throughout the series. Ms. Gambal stated, “Harry Potter Club has been so much fun. It’s wonderful interacting with students who love the series as much as I did as a kid. I love hearing their perspectives.”
International Dinner was a tremendous success! Our performers were seniors Sariah Johnson, Liza Beinus, and JessieJean Newman-Getzler; juniors Hannah Sher and Ben Warshavsky; sophomore Elena Giddins; and 7th grader Sophia Martinez.

Sophia Martinez opened the evening with a dance piece to a Coldplay song, followed by an original song written and performed by Elena Giddins. JessieJean Newman-Getzler then sang a song from the musical *Waitress*, after which Sariah Johnson and Liza Beinus performed a duet from *Les Miserables*. Hannah Sher then offered a rendition of "It's a Man's World," followed by Sariah Johnson once again, singing a song called "Stranger Town" from an original musical that she is writing. Liza Beinus rounded out the evening with a performance of "Climb Every Mountain," before everyone returned to the stage, assisted by Ben Warshavsky on guitar, to perform the closing number, "Home" by Phillip Phillips.

Of course, as the title of the event makes clear, a vital ingredient was the widely varied, painstakingly prepared, and eagerly consumed array of delectable dishes provided by our dedicated York Prep parents.

All in all, a wonderfully diverse and exciting showcase and a thoroughly enjoyable evening!
Open Studio

York Prep offers Open Art Studio as a club Monday through Thursday from 3:15 to 4:00 p.m. Any student may drop by the Art Room to work on art class projects that they have not been able to complete during regularly scheduled art class time or to delve further into an art medium of their choosing. This is an opportunity for budding young artists to work independently in a relaxed environment.

Out Loud

Out Loud is an opportunity for York Prep singers, writers, and songwriters to share their passions with others. As the club enters its eighth year, students continue to develop their talents and practice performing in a small, supportive community. Out Loud performs every year before midwinter break in Room 405 ("the Chapel"). Leading up to the midwinter showcase, the club meets on Mondays during lunch.

This year, student work may focus on topics like political change, climate protests, or graduation. We have a variety of students who have never performed in front of anyone before, who are now allowing themselves to step outside their comfort zone and share their creativity with others. Out Loud is a safe space that allows me to share my artistic endeavors without judgment. From the time I joined the club as a shy 9th grader, to this moment in my senior year, Out Loud has helped me become more comfortable sharing my music with others and digging deeper into this art form that I am interested in pursuing in college. I am thankful for this wonderful experience and for inclusion in such a supportive community. If you have any questions about Out Loud, or if you are interested in joining, please speak to Phoebe Unger, senior McKayla Martin, or English teacher Mr. Ethan Pennington.
This play is about tender love in all its wonder, magic, and heartache, and that's not an easy sell in today's culture. Love requires courage to open one's heart to the world; it requires an analog intimacy that is currently too often dulled by its digital counterpart. And therein lies the daring part: to produce, via John Cariani's play, on stage and in our student performers and tech crew, a tenderness that we felt was there, but feared might be too beaten down as a result of this divisive and insensitive time in which we live.

But we were surprised by the capacity of our students to embrace such profound emotions. Indeed, we had students on stage playing a married couple opining over their lost love after dedicating a life to raising children; it was both painful and heartwarming, and not once did anyone question that relationship. These were no longer students at York, but characters in a play. This is a tribute to our students because each of them accomplished that on stage: shedding their cultural armor and inviting us in.

They are a wondrous band of artists and individuals, our students, your children. Kudos to you. They are bright, curious, and courageous, and they grew up just a little bit, right before our eyes, on stage. We couldn’t be prouder. And here’s the kicker! We even dared to open with a tender, lyrical dance! A three and a half minute wisp of grace fusing modern and ballet performed by our very own York Prep Dancers.

The audiences seemed to love it, and by “audiences,” we mean the Middle School, Upper School, and adults of all ages. We appear to have crossed all generational gaps. If that doesn’t speak volumes about the need, and capacity, of our youth to relate to one another, I’m not sure what does. Thank you for your support.

"Almost, Maine really let all the actors shine. There were no leads per se; we all got to be leads in our scene. I felt as though I grew so much." — Leila Robb, Junior (Marcie)

"I was surprised at how well it turned out! It worked great, a lot of people were involved, and, honestly, it was the most fun I’ve ever had on stage!" — David Scheuer, Junior (Phil)

"This was my first performance with York, and even though it was hard work, I had a great time. What I loved most was how close as friends my scene partners, and I became while working on our scene together!" — Remi Young, Freshman (Villian)
School Trip to the Galapagos Islands

Headmaster: Ronald Stewart

Thirteen York Prep students and three lucky faculty members will embark on the trip of a lifetime when they travel to the fabled Galapagos Islands this Spring Break. The islands, made famous by Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution as put forth in his book *The Origin of Species*, have been a favorite location of Mr. Stewart’s since the 1980s. As a member of the Charles Darwin Foundation, Mr. Stewart has visited the islands 13 times, and he actively supports the archipelago’s preservation of its flora and fauna.

The York Prep group will spend seven nights in a highlands hotel on Santa Cruz Island, and they will be accompanied by a naturalist guide during all excursions. There will be many opportunities to explore the unique wildlife and vegetation the Galapagos is famously known for. Activities such as snorkeling with the sea life, kayaking, scenic bike rides through the jungle, and walking under lava tunnels, are just a few of the highlights the group can look forward to. No trip is complete without a visit to Tortuga Bay to visit the turquoise water, white sandy beach, giant cactus forests, and black volcanic rocks that make for beautiful scenery. Before leaving, the group will have a behind-the-scenes tour of the Charles Darwin Station, where our students will experience an in-depth presentation of current research studies.

We are looking forward to the photographs our travelers bring back from what surely will be a memorable trip for all.
**SUMMER CHANDLER**

Eighth grader student Summer Chandler, is a top student as well as a top tennis player. She was recently selected to participate in a qualifying United States Tennis Association (USTA) Player Development Camp. Junior players are selected for this prestigious camp on a national level, and many have gone on to be US OPEN wildcard players and Grand Slam winners. Summer recently won a regional high-ranking “Super Six” USTA tournament, and is ranked number three in the entire region.

While dedicating herself to the hard work and training it takes to become a rising tennis star, Summer remains an excellent student at York Prep. She attributes much of her academic success to the support she receives here at school. “When you can feel like it’s not just about your grades, you can do other things here,” she says. “When you have somebody behind you, supporting you throughout the way, you feel empowered, and you feel like you can do what you want to do.”

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**KAIDEEN STASKOWSKI**

York sophomore Kaiden Staskowski once asked Mr. Loo why he brings in ginger ale so frequently. Upon learning that ginger ale is useful for treating nausea, Kaiden took it upon himself to bring in several cans of ginger ale for other students. His timing was perfect, as it was on a day when Mr. Loo had run out of ginger ale and several students needed it. When Mr. Loo praised Kaiden for his act of kindness, he changed the subject and carried on as if he had done nothing out of the ordinary. Performing acts of kindness as if they are ordinary is in itself extraordinary. Kindness and humility look so different from much of what we see in everyday human behavior that they can easily pass by us undetected. It is only fair, then, that we take a moment to acknowledge them whenever we can.
EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

ETHAN KUSHNERIK

Congratulations Ethan, winner of the Junior Olympic Games 2020

By: Ronald Stewart, Headmaster

Ethan Kushnerik has been at York since 6th grade and is now in our 11th grade. In 2014, he was the World Men’s Youth Champion in epee, the weapon at which he excels. In many ways, it is the sword closest to the classic dueling weapon. Any part of the body that is touched scores a point, and there are no rules as to priority or right of way. It is the heaviest of the three swords (epee, saber, foil) used in Olympic competitions.

In 2016, Ethan won the Youth Men’s Pan American and was the North American Champion in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. In points, he has consistently been ranked number one in the USA in Men’s Youth Epee. He is now a “cadet” fencer, which is the category for the under 17s. As the youngest member of the USA Cadet Team, he and his team won the World Cup in Klagenfurt, Austria, in October of 2018.

Proud as we are of Ethan’s athletic success, we should add that this elite fencer, who dedicates hours every night to honing his skills and has an exhausting schedule of national and international competitions, is also consistently on the Honor Roll and an exceptional student. He is also, one should note, a remarkably modest young man.

Ethan has just been named as a potential competitor/participant of the 2020 USA Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

JOHNSON (ZHONGXIN) LI

Interviewer: Emily-Greta Tabourin

Given our proximity to the Juilliard School, we are occasionally fortunate to have a student join us who is simultaneously pursuing his music studies a few blocks away. One such musical prodigy walks around the halls of York Prep modestly, smiling, and gently joking with his 11th grade classmates, yet never giving a sign that two years ago, at the age of fourteen, he performed at Swire Symphony Under the Stars with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra before an audience of more than 20,000 people.

Born in Hong Kong in 2003, Johnson (Zhongxin) Li started playing the piano at the age of four. At seven, he started studying under Eleanor Wong at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. He has performed around the globe with orchestras such as the Philharmonia Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, China Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, Guangzhou Symphony, and Shenzhen Symphony.

At age ten, Johnson performed with Lang Lang at Carnegie Hall and was praised in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. At twelve, he performed at the Global Citizen Awards ceremony in New York City, which was attended by Former Vice President Joseph Biden, Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and Former Colombian President Juan Emanuel Santos. At thirteen, he performed Beethoven’s first piano concerto with the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach.

When Johnson is not practicing piano, he spends time in the art room working on his oil painting. Karl Hartman, Chair of the Art Department, cites “Johnson’s skillful drawing ability” and his “quick grasp of subtle color and value variations.” In addition to painting, Johnson is possessed with a keen photographic eye. He submitted photographs to last year’s Evening of the Arts that included two of the most talked about pieces in the entire show.

This past November, Johnson performed in a recital at Juilliard’s Morse Hall, where he played Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 15 in D Major, as well as Brahms’ Piano Sonata No. 1 in C Major. The moment Johnson lifted his hands from the piano, the audience was on its feet and the applause was thunderous. We are fortunate to have such a fine musician in our midst, and we will follow his musical career with great interest in the years to come.
**Barrett Reese (Rowing)**

"I can’t today, sorry, I have Crew." This is a phrase with which friends of Barrett Reese, York Prep junior, are very familiar.

Barrett dreamed of rowing since she was introduced to the sport as a young camper in New Hampshire. She would watch the older girls on the water, and "when I was old enough and allowed in a boat, as soon as I began rowing, I knew I was hooked."

In her first year of rowing, her boat won the New York State Championships in Saratoga, New York. The next year, she joined an all-girls club called City Island Rowing, which has raced and medaled in many regattas, including the Henley Regatta in Canada.

This past October, Barrett was invited by her coach to compete with select teammates at the Head of the Charles Regatta in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which is the country’s most prestigious regatta. Her team competed against the nation’s top rowing clubs before approximately 250,000 spectators.

Barrett says that rowing takes hard work, dedication, and focus. “Yes,” she sighs, “there are times when I detest going on the water when it’s freezing cold and raining, missing out on time with my friends, and being so exhausted at times I don’t think I can take it. Then why do I still do it? There’s something about carving elegant lines in the deep blue water, working in unison with your teammates while surrounded by the beauty of the river banks, that keeps me going. I love rowing and plan on being recruited to a college team.”

**Philip Winter**

Philip Winter, who entered York as a freshman and is currently a junior, is a student of many talents. He has been active in many student clubs, sports teams, and theatrical productions, and outside of York he is a seasoned historical costume designer and constructor, whose work has been exhibited throughout the country. He also volunteers at numerous museums by participating in living history demonstrations and even at times in battle reenactments.

Philip’s special interest lies in the reproduction of historical garments in the period from 1770 to 1780, specifically the American Revolution. Recently, he has been hand sewing and replicating uniforms that would have been worn by child soldiers on all sides of the conflict, as he puts it, “to bring their story to life.” It’s time consuming work. “A single coat can roughly take anywhere from one to two weeks of work when fully hand sewn,” he states. “A full uniform can take over a month.”

Currently, he is constructing a musician’s coat that would have been worn by a drummer from the 21st Regiment of Foot during the Burgoyne Campaign around Fort Ticonderoga. Another project is a Fusilier Coat from Regiment von Knyphausen in the style likely worn at the Battle of Trenton. The coat has been exhibited throughout the United States in numerous museums through the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

Not surprisingly, his favorite subject at York is “by far history.” Once he graduates, he aspires to attend his dream college of Wimbledon UAL in London with a major in Costume Design. “After that, I will hopefully get work in the movie and TV business, ideally for Netflix making and designing historical costumes en masse.”
SWAY DOLAN

Few students have the ability to combine their athletic ability with outstanding academics. One such student is senior Sway Dolan. Sway, who entered York in the 6th grade, is a competitive cheerleader with the Central Jersey Allstars. She and her teammates have won numerous national championships, but her most prestigious award is for winning two consecutive years at the World’s Cheerleading Championships. The first was the 2017 Bronze Worlds All Girls Bombshells and then came the 2018 Bronze Worlds Coed Team Gunz.

Outside of competitive cheerleading, she boasts an impressive 6 years on either the Headmaster’s List or the Honor Roll. She is a key member of the York Prep Cheer Team. As team captain, she exemplifies what a student with school spirit, a sense of community, and personal dedication can truly become. We are proud to call Sway one of our own.

TEDDY FITZSIMONS

This past November, Teddy Fitzsimons won two medals during the Team USA qualifying races for the Youth Olympics in Skeleton (part of the Bobsled Federation and the oldest of the sliding sports). He then moved on to earn a spot on the Youth Olympics Bobsledding Team. He will be competing in the Youth Olympics in Lausanne, Switzerland in January.

Teddy’s first experience with the sport took place during a visit to Lake Placid three years ago. Prior to that, he was an undefeated wrestler in his weight class at Buckley for a number of years. He also won awards as a top gymnast in Middle School, and was one of the fastest runners on the Buckley Track Team.

However, his ability to qualify for the Team USA extends beyond his natural athletic ability. He also attributes this feat to hard work and discipline. He has dedicated his time to train physically, and at the same time, he has even devoted himself to working on his one-of-a-kind sled. During the qualifying finals, Teddy raced on a new sled he re-engineered himself. Skeleton is a sport that requires a combination of athletics and engineering. Athletes must fine-tune their sleds so that they work in synch with both their physiques and the tracks that they race on. The sleds must also accommodate their steering styles.

Teddy has worked incredibly hard to get in shape, keep up with school work, and redesign his new sled, all with strength and determination.
Here’s the buzzzzzzz from the rooftop.

It was a brutal winter, with only one hive surviving the frigid temperatures, but it is the same hive that survived the previous winter (a first!). This fall, the beekeepers welcomed the following newcomers: seniors Jillian Foster, Sofia Mann, and David Reichberg, freshman Harlan Auerbach, and 6th graders Shyli Farber and Haroun Prospere. They joined veteran beekeepers senior Will Bowen, junior Dylan Berman, and sophomores Logan Kim and Trevor Kim.

This fall was spent cleaning up the abandoned hives and maintaining the remaining one. Students learned about basic hive maintenance and the many roles that workers, drones, and queens play. This spring will be very buzzzzzzy when we welcome three new hives (yes, they come in packages), and the beekeepers will work to ensure that there is a consistent water source on the roof. Before there is a bloom in the spring, the students will also need to ensure that the bees have enough food (sugar water) and to manipulate the frames, so the bees have room to build comb and cap the honey.

Come vizzzzzit us on the roof this spring!
CAT MUSCULAR SYSTEM DISSECTION

Science Department Chair: Joanna Domenicali-Shah

During the fall semester this year, the 12th-grade Anatomy and Physiology class learned about the muscular system, and in order to supplement lectures on the musculature of the body, they dissected and examined the musculature of cats. Students learned to identify different muscle groups, and they compared the muscles of a quadrupedal animal (which walks on four legs) to a bipedal animal (which goes about on two). The dissection engaged and interested the students, as it helped them to understand visually and kinesthetically the material discussed in class and the textbook. The feline subjects were ethically sourced from a scientific facility, and in-class discussion included respecting the animals and learning as much as is possible from this unique opportunity.

CERAMICS CLUB

Advisor: Gary Schwartz

A new club offering this year is Ceramics, which meets every Thursday at lunch in the Art Room, 515. Students can come in and create hand built designs of their choice. They must commit to two weekly meetings in order to allow for drying and glazing. However, they do not have to participate for the whole year, only when the mud strikes them (pun intended). Pieces created so far are pattern dinner plates and shot glasses. Very eclectic to be sure!

Come in and pinch a pot or coil a snake. Materials are provided.
The Backgammon and Games Club is a weekly opportunity for students and teachers to decompress and enjoy a relaxing lunch break while engaging in friendly competition. This year’s Games Club offers a variety of games, including Backgammon, Chess, Checkers, Dominos, The Game of Life, Monopoly, Tic-Tac-Toe, and Yahtzee, among others. To date, the following students have attended Club meetings: senior Abraham Cohen, juniors Mika Koryakov, Sam Hort, and David Scheuer, and sophomore Jack Sabbagh. Sam and Mr. Preston enjoy “trash-talking” between weekly rounds of Yahtzee competition, while Abraham and Jack enjoy playing Backgammon. Join us on Mondays during lunch for some “chill time” in Room 208.
**Chess Club**

Freshman Jonathan Farnsworth: “What I love most about chess is learning how to get better.”

Senior Edward Zeltner: “What I love most about chess is getting to play against others.”

Junior Mika Korvyakov: “What I love most about chess is devouring the souls of the innocent.”

Chess Club meets every Wednesday at noon in Room 207 to play and learn “the game of kings.” Chess is a game that can drastically improve one’s rational thinking and creativity. There is no luck in the game of chess—only good moves and bad moves. After falling in love with the game at an early age, I feel blessed, privileged, and honored to be able to teach this beautiful game for a living. I find meaning in every day, knowing that I wake up to an opportunity of helping children love and see the game the way that I do.

Our membership also includes 8th grader Nicholas Belladonna Papajohn, sophomore David Piermatteo, and junior Max Buckner.

Also, junior Sam Hort, who says, “What I love most about chess is beating Mika.”
Coffee Talk

Coffee Talk is a forum designed to share important topics regarding the developmental, psychological, social, and emotional health of adolescents with the parents in our community. It is facilitated by our school counselors, Ms. Evelyn Rowe-Cosentino and Ms. Lizzy Aiello. They meet with parents of students in grades 6 through 10. Our topics have included: “The Transition to Middle School”, “The Social-Emotional Life of Tweens”, “There’s an Adolescent in My House, Now What?”, “Transitioning To High School”, and “High School Socialization: Navigating Peers, Parties, Dating, Social Media, Limit Setting and More.”

Coffee Talks meet on select Fridays. Our counselors work closely with the Parents Association to decide topics of interest and arrange dates with parents. Attendance so far has ranged from 6 to 10 parents. Recently, parents have requested more talks in the spring, and the counselors are currently exploring this possibility. Topics will be determined, and the dates announced.

Community Service Club

Advisors: Jordan Brodsky, Hali Dorfman, and Pamela Stanley

York Prep values its commitment to community service and views it as an integral part of the school’s educational philosophy. The Community Service Club serves to foster compassion, reflection, and collaboration among its members. Through volunteerism, charity work, and fundraising, our students give of themselves and gain a fuller understanding of what it means to be a part of a larger community. As a result, members of the club develop into individuals who believe that giving to those in need is a life-long responsibility. This fall, the club held its first big fundraising event. The students raffled off prizes in the lobby twice a day for a week to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The prize winners were then announced at a teacher vs. student basketball game at lunch. The students worked very hard to plan and carry out this fundraiser, and they raised an admirable amount of money for the foundation.

Costa Rica 2020!

Advisor: Victoria Pevzner

All Upper School students are invited to join an incredible York Prep trip to Costa Rica, June 6 –12, 2020. We will be able to take up to 15 students that are enrolled in Spanish or have some previous knowledge of the Spanish language. The purpose of the trip is to explore the cultural and biological diversity of this beautiful country. Students will visit a farm where they will plant, harvest, and make sugarcane juice. We will visit a school where students can converse with local peers. Additionally, everyone on the trip will get a chance to share stories in Spanish and learn local recipes by taking a homemade cooking lesson. Travelers can also look forward to zip-lining through the treetop canopy, visiting a local hot spring, and hiking the beautiful Arenal Volcano. Please join us on this unique journey! If you have any questions or want to sign up, contact SeñoraPevzner at vpevzner@yorkprep.org.

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York Prep Dance Department

Fiona Hutchison and Lance Martin continue to collaborate in their third year of running the York Prep Dance Company. For the entire school year, they train dancers and choreograph dances that are performed at pep rallies and sometimes at the opening of the Drama Department’s fall production. They oversee an all-inclusive dance company and encourage that some, if not most, of the pieces, be student-driven.

Junior Nicole Rashkover says, “I really love how the Dance Department has allowed me to branch out. I do not have dance training, but I have always felt embraced and encouraged by the dance department teachers and all of my fellow dancers. Dance has allowed me to try something new and find a new passion of mine.”

Our youngest students also feel at home in the company. “I like the group and all the different ages,” says 6th grader Gabrielle Bolt. Another 6th grader, Ellise Dickinson, adds, “I like our company so much because I love to dance, and it was another opportunity to dance and express myself.”

The Doctor Who Club

York Prep’s Doctor Who Club continues to explore both “time and relative dimension in space” every Monday at lunch in Room 226. Under the direction of the club’s president senior Will Bowen, the small but dedicated collection of Whovians screen both classic and contemporary episodes of the iconic British television series, surrounded by a growing collection of Gallifreyan memorabilia that includes autographed photos, posters, and collectible figures. Among visits with William Shakespeare, Robespierre, Queen Elizabeth I, and Winston Churchill, Doctor Who is right at home in Doctor K’s history classroom.

Drama Club

The Drama Club is a great place for making new friends, portraying a character, or just simply being yourself. There are two opportunities to perform on stage or work behind the scenes in the Drama Club. One is the play in the fall, and the other is musical in the spring.

“John and Fiona have provided me the tools and the experience to become a better actress,” says junior Louise Wade. Nicole Rashkover, also in 11th grade, states, “Being in drama has taught me how to be a professional and that hard work really does pay off.”
ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS THREE:  
THE YORK PREP DRAMA CLUB’S PRODUCTION OF CHICAGO: THE MUSICAL

Bruce Springsteen makes a keen analogy about having a great band. He claims ordinary bands are like the equation $1 + 1 = 2$. In other words, nothing special; they add up to what they are. But a great band, a special band, is like the equation $1 + 1 = 3$: together they create something more than the sum of their parts. The “band members” of the York Prep Drama Club ebb and flow just like a musical group. Students graduate, new students enroll, and the chemistry of the department fluctuates. So the group’s expression of itself is a bit of a mystery. In the case of the performing arts department, it is a mystery that doesn’t unfold and presents itself until the opening night, say, of a major production. Such was the case with York Prep’s production of Chicago: The Musical. It revealed what had been brewing for a few years in the Drama Club: a seemingly perfect assembly of actors, singers, dancers, and brilliant musical direction by Thomas Hodges that appeared to give us in the Drama Department a rare unbalanced equation. In other words, not just a show, but a true theatrical event. Or, as The Boss might say, “$1 + 1 = 3$.”

“Chicago: The Musical it was a professional setting, with amazing energy and fantastic crew; I really felt like I was on Broadway!” — Rehannah Baksh, 11th grade played June, one of the Merry Murderesses!

“I was in Chicago, and I really enjoyed it because everyone in it was so good, and I feel so privileged to be on stage with my talented peers!” — Louise Wade, 11th grade

“I really loved Chicago because it incorporated a lot of different people and types of talents. There were dancers, singers, actors, and more who all came together to put on a beautiful performance!” — Nicole Rashkover, 11th grade

“I really enjoyed Chicago. It was my first year at York, and the drama program made me feel so welcome. I loved dancing with my friends!” — Dan Guarino, 11th grade

“Being in Chicago was an amazing experience. I had never been in a musical before, and I wasn’t planning on doing any extracurricular activities for a little while. But when I saw the Chicago posters, I just couldn’t resist!” — Hannah Sher, 11th grade

“I really loved being part of the tech crew in Chicago. It was my fourth time being a part of the crew, and the cast put on a great show.” — Emily Murphy, 11th grade

“You can’t believe how many light cues we had in that show! It was exhilarating, challenging, and I would do it all again!” — Sara Jane Mahoney, 12th grade

“That was a ton of fun! I was nervous, but everyone was so supportive. In hindsight it was just a blur, but at the time it was exciting!” — Will Miller, 7th grade

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS CLUB

The Dungeons and Dragons Club is a place for strategy and creativity. Students develop unique characters by assigning them skills and personality traits that, with luck, will allow them to survive an unknown quest in the realm of fantasy. The quests are wholly fabricated in the imaginations of sophomores Molly Robb, Wesley Eaves, and Harrison Metrick. Club membership includes players ranging from those with no experience to experts. The only requirement to join is that players must be willing to explore the unknown and risk being hobbled by goblins.
FIELD DAY

As former resident camp directors, Headmaster Mr. Ronald Stewart and Head of College Guidance Mrs. Jayme Stewart know the importance of having favorable weather conditions on any given day, especially when that day is a Color War break, or even more importantly, York Prep’s annual Field Day. On September 26, the Stewarts somehow managed to plan a beautiful day for York Prep students and faculty with bright sunshine and perfect weather!

Members of the Student Government Organization woke to the sounds of reveille in the early morning hours as they prepared to board the first bus to Tibbets Brook Park in Yonkers. They set up the fields with games, oversaw the expansion of our two giant inflatables, and stocked the canteen with sandwiches and snacks for all.

The schedule was packed with activities: nature walks, obstacle courses, basketball games, and Ultimate Twister to name a few. Students and staff spent the day enjoying one another’s company, while making new friends and creating meaningful York Prep memories. However, the day would not have been complete without an afternoon snack and a little competition. The familiar sound of Mister Softee’s arrival filled the air, and the hot afternoon sun gave way to a cold and much needed ice cream treat. We enjoyed chocolate dips, rainbow sprinkles, and ear to ear smiles as we celebrated being part of Panther Nation together before going to battle against one another in our annual and time honored faculty vs student softball game. Despite math teacher Mr. Brian Shure’s competitive drive, the students won the game, but without twists, sprains, or even pulled hamstrings.

Field Day really brings out the best in all of us. We have the opportunity to step out of the classroom and enjoy each other as a community. Throughout the shorter days and colder weather, the amazing memories of this year’s event still linger in our minds. We now turn our sights to fall 2020 and another celebration of what makes York such a special place to learn and grow together.
German Conversation Club

York Prep truly has something for everyone. Once again this year, the school has provided a German conversational class to interested students. Instructor and native German speaker Luisa Menzen meets with students every Thursday during lunch. Ms. Menzen focuses on teaching the students conversational skills and current events. For example, she provides newspaper articles, and the students discuss them in German. Although most of the attendees have some understanding of German, beginners are welcome. Club members include seniors Daniel Neustadter, Aditya Mazumdar, and Aidan Torma-Rookley, and juniors Dennis Hierzer, Mika Korvyakov, and Philip Winter.

Guitar and Ukulele Club

The Guitar and Ukulele Club started the year strongly with a great mix of students of varying skill levels and musical interests. We kicked off with a review of basic concepts and techniques and learned several hits from the '90s and 2000s. In addition, we covered scales, harmony, and general music theory concepts in order for the students to understand songwriting, jamming, and playing songs by ear. Students are encouraged to join us regardless of musical experience. The door is always open to visitors, future ukulele and guitar masters, and listeners. We meet in Room 100 every Thursday at noon. See you there!
Hiking Club

Date: Saturday, November 9, 2019. Time: 10:00 a.m. Place: Van Cortlandt Park. Temperature: 30 degrees. Five intrepid members of the York Prep Hiking Club joined English teacher Dr. Sarah Davis in the Bronx for a mere “walk in the park.” Despite the cold, the sun was shining, and the park was full of high school students from across the city who had gathered for a track meet. Seventh-grader Tristan Leonard was already familiar with the terrain since he lives nearby and has visited this park many times before. He regaled the club with the history of the park, as well as his passion for researching abandoned New York City subway stations.

Ninth-grader Jonathan Farnsworth stated, “It was really fun to talk to other people outside of the school setting.” To avoid being trampled by student runners, our hikers opted for a quiet forest path that led to the Van Cortlandt family burial ground. While the Hiking Club will offer more opportunities this year to leave the city to view the fall and spring foliage, hikers are also excited to explore historically rich areas within the city limits, like the Greenwood Cemetery or the Brooklyn Bridge. Our members include freshman Smith Pingree and sophomores Logan Kim and Trevor Kim.

Hyde Park on the Hudson

By: Eliza Eckstein, Junior

Last May, history teacher Mr. Sam Gordon’s 10th-grade class went with history teacher Mr. Michael Roper to Hyde Park to visit the home of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt. Students took a guided tour through the property, visiting their home, library, and graves. At the gravesite, we read quotations by Franklin and Eleanor before playing “Hail to the Chief.” All in all, the FDR trip was one of my favorite field trips ever. The group of people who went were amazing, and I learned so much from Mr. Roper. I had been aware that he knew a lot about FDR, but I didn’t realize that he knows practically everything about him. The park ranger was also excellent, and I’m glad we were able to get a full tour of the property. It was a great experience, and I’m really glad I went.
The Knitting and Crochet Club

Advisors: Julie Sarasohn and Coty Cockrell

The Knitting and Crochet Club is a new old club: it was once a York Prep tradition, but then it disappeared. The club has now been revived by avid 8th-grade knitters Alejandro Roca Antelo-Suarez, Miles De La Torre, and Sophia Olshaker, and equally avid senior Lorraine Stoller. All of the club members know how to knit, so this semester we are learning to crochet. Knitting is the process of making items with yarn using two needles, and crochet is the same process, but it uses one hooked needle. Mr. Cockrell, our new music teacher, has brought his expertise to the club and encouraged our members to crochet for the community.

He has proposed the idea of crocheting a blanket made of squares, to which each member can contribute a variety of pieces. After completing the project, we will raffle off the blanket to raise money for one of the community service clubs at York. Knitting and Crochet meets every Monday during lunch and is organized by Mr. Cockrell and world language teacher Ms. Julie Sarasohn.

Math Club

Advisors: Stacy Povshko, Dianna Ryerson, and Rene Shaw

York Prep’s Math Club is a fun and competitive activity that is open to Middle and Upper School students. Club members gather in Room 206 on Wednesdays at lunch for everything from nonograms and logic puzzles to national math competition problems. Math Club is a safe space for students to hang out, work hard, and collaborate on solving challenging problems. 2019-2020 club regulars are 9th grader Zach Manzano and 8th graders, Jack Scher and Emily Singh. When asked what the best part of the math club is, Zach responded, “Puzzles. Any kind of puzzles.” He then added, “Oh yeah, this just happened!” as he finished untangling a rope puzzle. For students thinking of joining Math Club, Jack Scher encourages everyone to come to try it out. He says, “Math Club. Just do it!”

Model UN

Advisors: Brendan Buckley and Lillian Kennedy

The York Prep Model UN club is not only a great club for helping students understand pressing world issues and learn ways in which they can diplomatically tackle them, but it allows students to expand their overall knowledge about the world, global politics, and the dynamics within which the international community examines such issues. Students partake in Model UN conferences throughout the period of their club membership, the most important and largest of these being the ILMUNC conference in Philadelphia.

At this conference, students put on their diplomatic hats and discuss various global challenges and potential solutions, along with young adults from many different parts of the world. In Model UN, York Prep students develop skills in international affairs and politics, but more importantly, it helps enable their generation to approach global issues through alliances, negotiations, and a common desire for the betterment of our world.
If It’s Monday, It’s Question and Answer Period in Constitutional Law

H ave you ever had to give an oral presentation in front of class? Of course, you have, but in history teacher Mr. Roper’s 11th-grade Constitutional Law class, this concept is taken to an entirely different level. Every Monday, one student in his class stands at the “presidential podium” in Room 309 and attempts to answer questions thrown at him by three other students. These questions are taken directly from our homework.

Although it was his first time, Alex answered most of the questions accurately. Of the many question and answer sessions, we’ve had this year, one of the most notable ones occurred on October 21, when Headmaster Mr. Ronald Stewart came to observe the class! During this session, Mr. Stewart challenged our classmate Matthew Gatan on his answer to each question. Despite being nervous, Matthew responded proficiently, with thoughtful and accurate answers. This impressed both Mr. Stewart and Mr. Roper, which made this question and answer session one of the most entertaining yet.

This assignment can be nerve-wrecking, but it’s a great experience not only for the person answering the questions but also for everyone in the room. If it’s Monday, it’s Q and A period, and if it’s Q and A period, everyone is excited.

Mr. Roper’s Adult History Class

E very year during the spring semester, parents of York Prep students can take advantage of a unique learning opportunity. For the past fifteen years, Upper School history teacher Mr. Michael Roper has offered a series of evening classes on a historical theme. The classes meet four times, from February through May, on the first Wednesday of each month.

Mr. Roper chooses the subjects based on his own passions. For instance, two years ago, he lectured on four of Lincoln’s most renowned speeches. Last year, the topic was Harry S Truman, our 33rd president. During the summer of 1962, Mr. Roper happened to meet the former President in front of the Carlyle Hotel and then joined him on a morning walk down Madison Avenue. In Mr. Roper’s estimation, Truman was a remarkable man who became President because of his sound character.

Last spring’s class proceeded in chronological fashion, beginning with Truman’s upbringing on the family farm in Independence, Missouri. Mr. Roper pointed out that the “sissy boy” with glasses became a voracious reader. In Sunday school, he was smitten with a classmate named Elizabeth “Bess” Wallace, who would one day become his wife. Mr. Roper also addressed Truman’s real “education”: the experiences that shaped him into a unique individual and great President. For example, while working at the Clinton Drug Store, a young Truman came to understand the phoniness in people when he saw the men who would drop by for a quick drink of whiskey before attending Sunday church services. Yet not even his honesty would stand in the way of his patriotism. When the country entered World War I, Truman cheated on the eye exam (memorizing the chart) to join the effort and achieved the rank of captain.

In later classes, Mr. Roper traced Truman’s rise from county judge to Senator to unlikely vice president to President. He went on to recount Truman’s many notable decisions in his two terms as President. Among those: dropping the first atomic bomb in order to save thousands of American lives and end the war, launching the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe, racially integrating the U.S. armed services, and entering the Korean conflict. But the class is hardly a recitation of achievements. Instead, it is the man behind those presidential decisions that comes alive through Mr. Roper’s animated retelling.

This year’s class promises to be equally captivating. The topic will be the great dissents to constitutional Supreme Court rulings. Some of Mr. Roper’s choices include Justice Harlin in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Justice Brandeis in *Olmstead v. U.S.*, Justice Black in *Betts v. Brady* and Justice Douglas in *Hirabayashi v. the U.S.* What makes these compelling subjects for the class? Mr. Roper simply quotes Justice Benjamin Cardozo, who wrote, “The dissenter speaks to the future.”
THE SOUND OF MUSIC: CLASSES, TRIPS, AND CLUBS

Music Director: Coty Cockrell

The brand new music lab has created a buzz in the Music Department! There are ten iMac computer stations, each one equipped with studio-grade headphones, a MIDI keyboard, and a suite of music technology software. Students have been creating their own beats, collaborating on projects, scoring films, and even creating music for the Dance Department. We are eager to explore further interdisciplinary collaborations in the coming months.

In November, the 6th-grade class took a field trip to the Apple Store to participate in a hands-on, digital music creation workshop. Apple’s workshop leaders walked the students through the steps for creating music on iPads, and at the end of the workshop, students were able to share their work with the class.

There are several music clubs at York Prep, with interests ranging from singing show tunes to creating digital music. Our Cabaret Club is focused on learning what it takes to put on a show with singing and engaging storytelling. We learn basic vocal exercises, workshop specific songs, and develop the storytelling aspects of our songs through acting. The Digital Music Club teaches the creation of music in a Digital Audio Workspace (DAW). Our brand new music lab is equipped with various programs such as Garage Band and Sibelius, with more programs slated to be added in the coming weeks. Finally, our Songwriting Club is open to any aspiring songwriters who wish to develop their craft. Students can share songs that they are working on, get help with trouble spots, or collaborate with other students at every level of the creative process.

NO ONE DOES ANCIENT EGYPT LIKE THE MET

History Teacher: Eric Tull

The entire York Prep 7th Grade, along with history teachers Mr. Eric Tull and Ms. Lillian Kennedy, and world language teacher Ms. Emily-Greta Tabourin, traveled 5,000 miles east and 10,000 years back in time on the morning of Monday, October 7. We visited the Ancient Egyptian Art section of New York’s Metropolitan Museum for the culmination the students’ study of ancient Egypt. We saw portions of an actual tomb, a temple of worship, and an embalmed mummy. There were stone tools and weapons, jewelry, pottery, statues, carvings, and paintings. Students wrote observations and artistic opinions about various artifacts, and they had the opportunity to sketch them as well. The students were enthusiastically engaged and offered thoughtful responses to what they saw. The fact that we walked through Central Park on a brisk, non-rainy autumn day only added to their enjoyment.
CONSTITUTIONAL LAW CLASS VISITS THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By: Dylan Berman, Junior

Students of history teacher Mr. Michael Roper's Constitutional Law class take excursions throughout the year to the New York Historical Society (NYHS), where they attend conferences covering a range of intriguing topics. Convincing The Court: An Evening with Neal Katyal was a thought-provoking conference about Neal Katyal, who broke the record, previously set by then Supreme Court Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall, for the number of cases argued before the United States Supreme Court by a minority lawyer with nearly 40 cases. Religious Liberty and the American Constitution was a discussion at NYHS covering Engel v. Vitale, a case about a prayer composed by the New York State Board of Regents, which was to be recited at the beginning of the school day. The court ruled that this was unconstitutional, despite the fact that the prayer was not tied to a particular religion.

Philip Bobbit, a top constitutional theorist, and Bret Stephens, a Pulitzer Prize-winning op-ed columnist for the New York Times, presented Fight for Liberty: Defending Democracy, declaring that democracy is under attack around the world. They put forth the notion that each generation is called upon to stand up for democratic principles, and that the process of achieving freedom is ongoing. As an example, perhaps the most famous case in American history, Brown v. Board of Education, was the topic of a discussion in mid-December, which demonstrated how Thurgood Marshall proved that segregated schools, although “separate”, were certainly not “equal”, and that furthermore, by targeting certain children to receive a lower quality of education, the children’s right to potential property was being violated.

Plaintiff-In-Chief, moderated by Ken Auletta, who writes and profiles for the New Yorker, displayed how Donald J. Trump “has veered from tradition by sidestepping the law”. Lastly, Black Women and The Nineteenth Amendment discussed amendment, which finally gave women the right to vote and prohibited restricting the right to vote on the basis of sex. Certainly, the New York Historical Society looks at many unique and fascinating subjects.

ONE-OFF WEDNESDAY IN SIXTH GRADE MATH CLASS

Math Teacher: Michael Morrissey

Life is so busy these days. Computers were supposed to simplify life, but our schedules seem more packed than ever. If you want to have fun, you have to deliberately plan it into your week. That is exactly what happens every Wednesday in Mr. Michael Morrissey’s 6th grade math class.

The first two class meetings of the week are regular old math lessons. But on Wednesdays, Mr. Morrissey challenges himself and the class to do something special. He calls it “One-Off Wednesday.” The lessons are always surprises and tend to be experimental. They incorporate elements of play, variety, debate, and competition.

His inspiration came from the 80/20 principle, which states that 20% of your effort often gives you 80% of your results. Google implemented that policy, and one of their fun side projects became the now-ubiquitous Gmail.

Some One-Off Wednesdays bring math lessons directly into the real world. When the class was studying percentages, they read an article on how the stock market works and picked out their own stocks to follow. And follow them they did—with curiosity, enthusiasm, and just plain glee. Some Hump Day activities are games, such as Trashketball. In teams, students gain one point for correct math work and one point for tossing crumpled up paper successfully into the garbage can. On one occasion, instead of graphing points on a coordinate plane, the class competed in a variation of the classic Battleship board game. Some events involve teams, but some aren’t competitions at all. Some are just for fun.

Sarah Somerville, an eager participant in the class, nicely sums it up (so to speak): “One-Off Wednesday is a day in math class where you kind of take whatever you learn and put it in a fun activity.”
Parents’ Association

The Parents' Association (PA) at York Preparatory School exists to strengthen the sense of community at York among all of our students, parents, school administrators, and faculty. Our Grade Reps help to host parent gatherings within their grades, 6th through 12th. This year our Grade Reps choose to go to the Vanguard Wine Bar, Vin Sur Vingt, and party rooms at a number of family residential buildings. It was great to meet and chat with our new and returning families.

The PA, through its Grade Reps and various committees, maintains awareness within our community. In order to fulfill the needs and interests of York Prep families, the PA sponsors speakers. We just completed a two-year program in 2018 with Hallways Parent Workshops. These hands-on workshops enabled parents to face the challenges of helping their teens navigate the increasingly complex landscape that they live in. NYC PIA – Parents in Action – is available to all grades, and with the help of a PIA facilitator, they will guide each group through the challenges that arise within their grades. In September, we rolled out a new Cyber Civics program for our 6th through 9th graders with the help of Ms. Kathryn Maggiotto. This program helps each student with digital literacy skills needed to navigate the online world successfully.

We want to thank Ms. Evelyn Rowe-Cosentino for hosting a series of Coffee Morning talks (see “Coffee Talk” article in this newsletter).

In November, we hosted our Annual International Dinner event. Each year we surpass the previous year’s musical entertainment and an array of foods from around the world (see ”International Dinner”). What a fabulous night was had by all who attended.

We got to say a special thank you to all of our amazing staff, administration, and faculty at York by hosting a holiday breakfast on Thursday, December 12.

Keep your eyes open for our 2020 Events: Special Speaker Nights, an Afternoon Tea Event with the Stewarts in April, community service events, and the end of year Appreciation Luncheon for our amazing and dedicated faculty, administration, and staff.

The Parents Association is open to all parents who would like to help strengthen the community at York Prep. Please feel free to reach out to your grade representatives or Barbara Murphy, barbaramurphy8@aol.com

Peer Tutoring

Advisors: Ethan Pennington and Charles Kaczynski

Perhaps as much as any club at York Prep, the Peer Tutoring program embodies the spirit and the mission of the school. Students have the opportunity to become the teachers and help each other fortify skills in vital academic areas. With Canvas, our online learning platform, teachers can track which students are working together, and students have an immediate way of communicating how their work with classmates is going. They can also access a variety of graphic organizers to help each other with everything from planning essays to time management tools.

Eighth-grader Emily Singh explains, “The best part of peer tutoring is seeing the students I work with succeeding on their quizzes and tests.” Sophomore Christian Pappas speaks to the value of peer tutoring to the school as a whole: “The concept of peer tutoring is of great importance in the school community. Guiding students who need additional support binds us together.” Indeed it does. If students are interested in participating in the program, they can message history teacher Dr. Charles Kaczynski or English teacher Mr. Ethan Pennington on Canvas.
Photography Club

With every grade represented this year, the most impressive thing about the York Prep Photography Club is the genuinely supportive, respectful, and inspiring environment that the students themselves create each week, which is conducive to creative exploration and internal growth. The unique prerequisite is that students shoot with their cell phones. With the complexity of a DSLR in the future, students work hard to develop a photographic eye that is critical for this art form. In the weekly workshop, students show and discuss their photos in a relaxed setting, where the emphasis is placed on positive critique, an invaluable skill for group work or individual development. Since anyone rarely takes a brilliant shot the first time around, students learn from re-examining, re-shooting, and reflecting on their work during the weekly meetings, skills that they can, in turn, apply to academic subjects. Photo Club students are serious about their commitment to developing as photographers and artists. They shoot all over the city as well as on their travels during vacations. They submit work to Genesis, as well as to photography competitions, and participate in York’s annual Spring Art Show, where their photos are blown up and exhibited for the entire school community to admire.
THE PODCAST CLUB

Advisors: Julie Sarasohn and Michael Morrissey

The Podcast Club is a brand-new club at York Prep, and the five founding members have already set goals, plans, and dreams for the future. The club aims to create a podcast that is worthy of entering a contest such as last year’s NPR Podcast Challenge for Middle School and High School students. So far, members have listened to a variety of podcasts in order to analyze different podcasting styles. They have also recorded their own session, in which the topic of conversation focused on consumerism and major corporations. This initial recording session allowed the members to test out a specific style of podcasting. Additionally, the group intends to learn about editing and sound mixing so they can create a cohesive podcast that can be published on the cloud.

Freshman Rome Kadi is in the process of starting his own sports podcast. He has begun designing a website and has created a logo. Rome, along with three other 9th grade students, Paul Petretta, Evan Young, and Christopher Vullo, are all mentoring our one 6th grade student, Jayden Sample. Evan says that he wants to apply what he learns in the Podcast Club at home so he can create his own podcast together with his grandfather. The group meets every Wednesday during lunch and is open to any Middle School or Upper School student who has enthusiasm for this new medium. The club’s two advisors are world language teacher Ms. Julie Sarasohn and math teacher Mr. Michael Morrissey.

ROBOTICS CLUB

Advisor: Casey Snepar

The Robotics Club, advised by coding teacher Mr. Casey Snepar, is offered to students during lunch period this year. In the first semester, club members built and programmed robots using the LEGO Mindstorms Education EV3 Robotics Set. Several of their robots were displayed throughout the library, including a robotic arm and a car. Club members then used LEGO’s ready-built programs to complete several tasks and challenges with the robots they’d constructed.

In the second semester, Mr. Snepar intends to introduce Arduino to the club members. According to Arduino.com, Arduino is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software. Mr. Snepar wants to use Arduino to facilitate the creation of a variety of physical computing projects, and it will be a fun way to learn about basic electronics.

Initially, the club’s purpose has been to provide a fun way to learn about robotics and physical computing. Ultimately, Mr. Snepar plans to add competitive opportunities to the club, so that students can compete in robotics competitions around the city.
Set Building Club

The Set Building Club met daily throughout the fall semester in the Art Room. Students worked diligently on set pieces for the York Prep December play by John Cariani, Almost, Maine. Seventh-grader Ari Matlin and sophomore Miranda Catus are pictured here working on a porch column and a snowbank. Ari said, “It’s a fun club to be in, and I am learning some woodworking skills. You don’t have to have skills, but you learn a lot.” All set pieces were taken down to the Marjorie S. Dean Little Theatre of the West Side YMCA Theatre to be installed for the fall show. Every season of every school year, the student carpenters of the Set Building Club construct stage scenery that impresses, delights, and enhances each performance.

Shakespeare Club

How many characters can you name from Hamlet? Twelfth Night? Henry the Sixth, Part 3? You can advance one space for every correct name when you land on the title of a play by the immortal bard in a board game called, of course, “Shakespeare.” The goal is to arrive at the Globe Theatre before your opponents, while picking instruction cards featuring quotes to identify and avoiding pitfalls such as the Forest of Arden and Macbeth’s castle. Sound intimidating? As any member of the Shakespeare Club can tell you, you don’t need any knowledge of the playwright or his work to play, enjoy, and even win the game.

They will also tell you that the club is more than board games. We are currently laughing our way through a reading of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and we have plans to see one of the Shakespeare productions currently running in our fair city. But reading the plays is the most fun. Besides immersing ourselves in the work of the greatest artist ever to paint with the English language, we can be whoever we want to be (or not to be): heroes, villains, lovers, clowns; women can play men and vice versa; old (like guess who) can play young, also vice versa, and so on. This year, our members include freshman Bernard Silver and junior Johnson Li, but our numbers have included 8th graders and Upper Schoolers of all ages. We invite all who are willing to be convinced that Shakespeare can be lively and entertaining—students, teachers, and beyond—to join us any Thursday at lunchtime in Room 514.

And now, if you’ll excuse me, I have to get back to the playing board: “The game’s afoot!”
She’s the First is new to York Prep, however well known around the world. This organization provides the means to books and educational materials, and offers merit-based scholarships, to girls in low-income countries. She’s the First had its first successful fundraiser October, with many more to come. Students in the club are very excited about playing a part in helping young girls everywhere get an education.

“This club has been so impactful in many ways. Not only is it teaching me leadership in a group setting, it is expanding my views on how education can be implemented locally and globally,” says junior Rehannah Baksh.

“Her’s the First is important to me because I get to help other women have a great education and have wonderful futures. Knowing my ancestors and other women were not educated breaks my heart and to help prevent that is a blessing.”

“This club is important because everyone deserves an equal opportunity to learn about the world they live in, regardless of their gender,” states junior Samson Lachman.

Junior Leila Robb, who helped initiate the club, concludes, “All over the world, girls are unable to access an education. When one girl loses out on an education, the world loses an invaluable asset.”

Sketchbook Club

Sketchbook Club’s devoted core members meet every Thursday at noon in the Art Room. For our most recent project, I asked students to alter a photograph with drawn elements. They cut out part of an image, glued it onto a page in their sketchbook, and drew an abstract design in the blank space around it that was connected to the original photo. On a weekly basis, we explore different art techniques and drawing activities on the pages of our handmade sketchbooks, using all types of materials. If the material fits in a sketchbook, it fits in this club!
A Historic Moment: Superbowl XVI!

History Teacher: Eric Tull

Yes, you read the title of this article correctly. In February of each year, the York Prep Pantherdome hosts the Annual York Prep Social Studies Superbowl. 2020 marks the 16th celebration of that tradition, hence, “Superbowl XVI.” The four Upper School classes knock heads together, answering questions about history, geography, government, and current events. The doughty contestants are chosen by their SGO representatives, and the questions are written and posed by history teacher Mr. Michael Roper. Winners are presented with bestselling books on a variety of history-related topics, and they also earn bragging rights for an entire calendar year. Mr. Roper is ably assisted by History Department Chair Ms. Heather Marshall and the entire history team, while the officiating is covered by our ever-reliable physical education coaches.

In York Superbowl's history, this epic battle has been won by senior, junior, sophomore, and even freshmen classes. As I write this in December 2019, I realize that you who are reading it in February 2020 have an advantage over me: I’m still in the dark, but by now, you know who are the champions of York Prep's Superbowl XVI!

The Legend: York Prep’s Yearbook

Advisors: Emily Mercado, Shoshana Spencer, and Wendy Jin

The Yearbook Club is in full swing, and the 2020 Legend is coming together nicely! We have been working hard on taking photographs of everything that is happening here at York, including our athletic teams and clubs. Each senior has a page in in the yearbook on which to create a photographic collage, and parents of seniors have been invited to purchase a page in The Legend, a longstanding tradition at York Prep. The Yearbook Club meets regularly to work on putting the book together, which comes to full fruition in May. Keep your eyes open for more information!
Lincoln's Words Live at York

By: David Piermatteo, Sophomore

The Lincoln Scholars Program with history teacher Mr. Michael Roper delved into the four great speeches of Abraham Lincoln. The first was his Cooper Union Address, which he delivered on a snowy night in Manhattan on February 27, 1860. In the speech, he addressed the issue of slavery by citing the fact that almost to a man, those who signed the U.S. Constitution in 1787 voted to prohibit the extension of slavery into the territories.

On March 4, 1861, on the East Front of the U.S. Capitol, Lincoln took an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. In this First Inaugural Address, the last phrase is most memorialized: “Let us follow the better angels of our nature.” In the fall of 1863, after the summer conflict at Gettysburg, Lincoln was asked to come to that battlefield to say a few appropriate words. He begins his speech with words from the Declaration of Independence, “all men are created equal,” and he ends it with a reflection on the first three words of the Constitution (“We the People”) with his words, “government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

However, our Scholars course ended with reflections on Abraham Lincoln’s greatest speech, his Second Inaugural, given on March 4, 1865. In this address, he gives to the nation the very purpose of the civil conflict as he sees it: until the blood of the white soldier was equal to the blood of the black slave, the justice of God would not be done. This was necessary so the nation could be redeemed from its sin of slavery. The words that echo through our history are those of the last paragraph of this speech: “With malice toward none, with charity for all . . . Let us bind up the nation’s wounds.”

The Paw

Advisors: Hilary Hersh and Emma Giebler

The Paw, York Prep’s official student newspaper, is off to a great start this year. So far, our small group of intrepid reporters and artists have been doing a splendid job.

The fall issue includes a broad variety of articles, from the serious to the seriously fun, all related to York Prep and its neighborhood. For example, the cover story is about teenage vaping, which has been generating concern around the country because of recent injuries related to the practice. On the other end of the spectrum is an article all about ice cream, with a review of Van Leeuwen, a new local ice cream parlor.

Club members join The Paw for different reasons. Some want to write. Others want to learn more about the school. A few are even thinking ahead about a possible career in journalism. Rome Kadi, who is in 9th grade and has been on the staff for three years, said, “I joined The Paw because of my aspirations of being a sports writer and a sports broadcaster.”

He and others enjoy the freedom they have to design the publication from A to Z: from thinking of the story ideas to researching, writing, and editing the articles. “It’s a lot of fun because you can write stories about so many things,” Rome said. Our fall issue also included teacher features, a story about Dewey the dog, a piece on neighborhood pizzerias, and an article about York’s new Writing Center.

Other Paw reporters include senior Anders Pryor, junior Julia Frischling, 8th grader Emily Singh, and 6th grader Jayden Sample. This year, we even have a resident artist: 8th grader Owen Barbagallo.

We meet on most Mondays during lunch, and we are happy to have reporters, artists, and even humor writers. Anyone interested in joining our club for the spring issue is more than welcome!
Trains and Ships Club

Trains and Ships meets on the first Tuesday of each month. The club discusses larger locomotives and ships, how they were built, how they were used, and where they are now. The club is capably led by its president, Junior Max Lachman, and interest has been kindled among additional members of the faculty to take the group on a visit to the New York City Transit Museum.

A Walk Back into History

With our guide, history teacher, Mr. Michael Roper, we began our tour of historic Gramercy by exiting Grand Central Terminal and heading south on Park Avenue up Murray Hill to the site of the Murray’s home. During the American Revolution, British General William Howe stopped at Mrs. Murrays’ house as he proceeded west across Manhattan Island to prevent General George Washington from escaping the grip of his army. His delay with Mrs. Murray allowed American Major Aaron Burr to lead Washington’s troops northward along what is now Broadway, to avoid being cut off by the British, and to fight another day.

We then visited the site of President Chester A. Arthur’s townhouse, the home of eminent actor Edwin Booth, and the residence of Samuel Tilden, the first man to run for president who won the popular vote but not the electoral vote. Moving on to Union Square, where New York City honors the great liberators, we stood in front of the statues of President Abraham Lincoln, the French military advisor Marquis de Lafayette, General George Washington, and Mahatma Gandhi, who freed India through non-violence, saying, “I will die for my beliefs, but I will never kill for them.”

One of our stops was the famous Strand Book Store, which claims to have 18 miles of books, and another was Cooper Union, where in 1860 “hick lawyer” Abe Lincoln delivered the address which he said would make him president. Our final destination was McSorley’s Old Ale House, which opened its doors in 1854. A unique feature of McSorley’s is the turkey wishbones hanging from the light tubing above the bar, which were originally placed there by young men who left in 1917 to fight in the Great War but never returned.

Mr. Roper often says, “I cannot bring you back in time, but I can bring you to a place where an important event happened.”

The Weeksville Heritage Center in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

Students from English teacher Dr. Sarah Davis’ 11th-grade class and her 1619 Project Scholars class visited the Weeksville Heritage Center in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn on Tuesday, November 19. Weeksville is the preserved site of a free African-American community from the 19th century. Junior, Lola Cabigeos, exclaimed, “I never knew that place existed, and I’ve lived in Bed Stuy my whole life!” On tour, Dr. Davis, world language teacher Ms. Victoria Pevzner, and the students watched a video from the 1960s that taught the history of Weeksville through the excavation of artifacts and the collection of oral histories from residents.

Everyone agreed that the best part of the visit was able to explore three original houses from Weeksville, each preserved to represent a different decade: the 1860’s, the 1900’s, and the 1930’s. Junior Julia Frischling commented, “By going through the houses, I felt as if I was being transported through the ages of time.” 11th grader Emily Murphy remarked that “the most interesting part for me was when we got to read one of the original newspapers” (printed right in Weeksville in the 19th century). Her classmate Safeerah Moteen shared how she “learned that New York was full of black abolitionists who had a range of jobs and owned homes in the 19th century.” The trip was a great reminder of the living history that surrounds us in New York City.
**Weightlifting Club**

The Weightlifting Club at York Prep is an initiative aimed at teaching students how to safely and properly utilize weight training for the maintenance of general health, strength, and well-being. Seniors Aidan Torma-Rookley and Frankie Fowlkes, who are both passionate about bodybuilding, sparked the initial interest. The club currently meets Mondays in the weight room at lunch with registered nurse Mr. Richard Loo and science teacher Ms. Carolyn Pierce, who welcome anyone with interest in learning more about strength training.

**Will the Dreamers Be Awakened?**

*By: Daniel Guarino and Leo Benichou, Juniors*

A three student panel in history teacher Mr. Michael Roper’s Constitutional Law class had the opportunity to interview Tomas Vega, a DACA Dreamer who has been living in the United States since 1988. Tomas was born in Mexico City, as were his parents and one older sister, and the family then traveled to San Diego. His younger siblings were born on U.S. soil, and therefore they are citizens by virtue of the 14th Amendment. His older sister is also a Dreamer.

Mr. Roper knows Tomas through his grandnephew, and they met six years ago when Vega moved to New York. It was Vega’s second time visiting us at York Prep. There is currently an important case, *the Department of Homeland Security v. Regents University of California* in the Supreme Court regarding his status in the United States. The case will decide whether he will be deported back to Mexico or gain a path to citizenship.

Tomas faced discrimination when he went to an English speaking school in California when he was eight years old. Fellow students often bullied him for being an illegal immigrant and for not being able to speak English. His Latino peers even bullied him. His family struggled financially to keep him in school, and he earned a scholarship to California State University-San Marcos. By earning a scholarship, Tom went above and beyond the requirement of having a GED to remain in the United States. Every day before going to his college classes, he went around the streets of San Diego collecting tin cans in order to recycle them to pay for his education. He received a Bachelor’s Degree in political science, graduating after two years. Afterward, he went on to get his Masters in political science at San Diego State University.

He currently works as a paralegal for American Express. *Homeland Security v. The Regents University* will be a landmark case, as it will decide the fate of current and future Dreamers. The constant fear that haunts Tomas is being deported to a country that he is not familiar with. At the end of his visit to the class, the class presented him with a fifteen star U.S. flag – the original ‘Star-Spangled Banner.’ Hopefully, Tomas will soon be as totally ‘free’ as he is certainly ‘brave’!

**WYRK**

*By: Wells Labbé, Sophomore*

**WYRK is the school’s news and skit club. Think John Oliver, except with a lower budget and much less political. The club allows students to explore their skills in filmmaking and scriptwriting, as well as learn the basics of comedy. As sophomore Wesley Groves puts it, “WYRK is a community where York Prep students come together and work to make a show to put a smile on people’s faces.” While primarily run by 10th Graders, WYRK is open to all grades, so stop by and check it out because you might learn something!**
RIGHT HERE IN BROOKLYN: THE LARGEST BATTLE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By: Philip Winter, Junior

To most everyday New Yorkers, the Battle of Long Island, which occurred August 27, 1776, has been lost to memory, like the thousands of unknown citizen patriots who gave their lives in this epic battle in order to found a nation under the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

On Saturday, May 18, history teacher Mr. Michael Roper, along with two students, then-sophomores Ben Warshavsky and Philip Winter, took a tour of Brooklyn to visit scattered historical markers around what is now a bustling city.

In 1776, there was no Brooklyn as we know it, but instead a swath of farmland that was part of Long Island. Yet, during the American Revolution, it would host the largest battle of the entire eight-year war. In late August of 1776, British Major General Howe, along with Generals Clinton and Cornwallis, landed with 32,000 British and Hessian troops on Gravesend Beach. After Howe had suffered devastating casualties at the Battle of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts, he was not keen on attacking the Americans in their fortified position on Brooklyn Heights. So the British devised a three-pronged attack, which effectively lured the Americans out of their fortifications, in order to then flank them. The plan was successful.

On this tour specifically, we visited the gravesites of the some 250 men from the 1st Maryland, who bravely fended off some 2,000 British troops. Thanks to their courage, the rest of the American army was able to flee back across Gowanus Creek, and into the safety of their earthen fortifications on the Heights. In honor of the Marylanders, Ben wore a historically correct hunting shirt hand-sewn by Philip based on what the Marylanders would have worn on that fateful day.

We also visited the crypt at Fort Green Park, where 11,000 fallen American Captives on British prison ships had been laid to rest. Our final destination was at the bottom of Brooklyn Heights on the East River, where nine thousand American troops fled the British on the night of August 29, 1776, in the dead of night under a thick fog on boats rowed by whalers from New England. This decision by Washington to evacuate Brooklyn saved the American forces, enabling them to fight another day and eventually win the war.
The following year, Wise addressed the shortcomings he saw in the formation of American rabbis, specifically those trained at the Reform Judaism Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. “The one thing they do not get [at Hebrew Union College],” Wise lamented in his diary, “is inspiration; they get information and what may pass for an education, but there is no single inspiring force, and what young men who are training for the ministry need above all else is [the] force of an illuminating and contagious personality.”

His desire to “drill a few choice spirits in the principles of Liberal Judaism” and bridge the divisions between adherents of Conservative, Orthodox, and Reform Judaism shared a common root with his promotion of women’s suffrage, his leadership in the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), his support for organized labor, and his leadership in the American Zionist movement. This desire to reach across racial, religious, and class divides and address societal problems, to revitalize the American rabbinate, and to uplift members of the American Jewish community were the founding principles of the Jewish Institute of Religion. It would, however, take almost a decade for his dream to come to fruition.

In the summer of 1920, Wise, along with other leading figures of the Free Synagogue, established the Summer School for Rabbis and Rabbinical Students as part of a larger initiative “to provide first-hand exposure to the problems plaguing New York’s Jewish community” and “to shape a new kind of American rabbinate for twentieth-century American Jewry.” This inaugural program attracted 14 rabbis and 8 students, the latter hailing from states as distant as Iowa and Texas. That fall, the Free Synagogue created a special committee to expand on the work of the summer program and to create a seminary that brought European Talmudic scholars and American social scientists together in New York City to prepare rabbis to support their congregants as they faced myriad social and spiritual challenges in chaotic urban America. In February 1922, after the demolition of six buildings, construction began on a five-story structure at 40 West 68th Street. Although work progressed throughout the spring and summer, the building was not complete as classes began on October 6, forcing the students to meet temporarily for classes at Temple Israel on West 91st Street.

Along with the desire to form a more socially conscious rabbinate, the Jewish Institute of Religion also exhibited the Zionism of its founder. In 1922, during a visit to the Near East, Sir Wyndham Deedes, the Civil Secretary of the Mandate Government of Palestine, presented Rabbi Stephen S. Wise with a stone from Jerusalem’s “Wailing Wall.” Wise planned to embed the stone in a “foundational wall” of the new Synagogue House at 40 West 68th Street. It arrived in New York City the following year and soon graced the lobby at 40 West 68th Street. Later the stone was relocated and infixed in the facade of the Stephen S. Wise Free Synagogue at 30 West 68th Street.

In addition to the Jewish Institute of Religion, the building at 40 West 68th Street also housed the Child Adoption Agency of the Free Synagogue. Established by Louise Waterman Wise, Wise’s wife, the agency “identified, located and gained custody of thousands of Jewish orphans, and placed them with Jewish families across the United States.” The former office of the adoption agency is now room 318 of York Preparatory School.
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

**SPRING 2019 BASEBALL TEAM: TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS!**

The 2018-19 edition of the York Prep Baseball Team started off a bit slow but responded with a long winning streak that culminated in a 10-3 record and an ISAL Tournament championship. York was represented admirably by a group of ten students that deserve high praise for their athletic growth and commitment to the team. They were selfless in their pursuit of success and motivated to leave an example for future Panther clubs to follow.

**Boys Middle School Basketball**

This year the Boys Middle School Basketball team is very excited about their season. The coaches have been fielding questions about the season since the first day of school. The 15-player roster is dominated by 8th graders, who have claimed most of the starting spots. There are many talented 7th graders excited to challenge them for these positions. Although the team lost their first game, they are looking forward to the rest of their season, including the third annual York Prep Invitational.

**Boys Junior Varsity Basketball**

This year, the JV Boys season was full of highs and lows. The season felt like a marathon at times, but overall the team improved each game. The goal was to win the championship, and we came within reach, but unfortunately we lost to a very good Brooklyn Friends team in the playoffs. The team left everything on the court and each individual improved over the season. The most important thing is that most of the team will be back next year to fight for the championship again with this experience behind them. The coaching staff is very proud of the whole team and we will be ready to attack next season.

**Boys Varsity Basketball**

*Congratulations to the Boys Varsity Basketball Team for finishing number one in north division*

The Varsity Boys Basketball team is off to a strong start this year, winning our first three games. Our goal as a team this season is to win the league and make an appearance in the state tournament. All fourteen players on the roster have committed to showing up every day and becoming the hardest working team in New York City. Our senior captains, Nicky Romeo and Frankie Fowlkes, are eager to live out their last year at York as champions, helping us to hang a banner in the Pantherdome. Frankie leads the team in rebounds, sophomore Nikko Barnes leads in points and steals, freshman Shane Fisher leads in assists, and sophomore Nate Doldron has the most blocks. Junior Steven Feldman is near the top in every statistical category, and sophomore Benny Mermelstein has provided lockdown defense and timely shooting. With heavy contributions from underclassmen, the long-term future is bright for York Prep basketball.
Boys Varsity Soccer

Coaches: Nicholas Turi and Mick Ward

Bill Shankley OBE, former manager of Liverpool FC famously quipped, “Some people think that soccer is a matter of life and death. I don’t like that attitude. I can assure you; it is much more serious than that!” It was somewhere within this context that the Boys’ Varsity Soccer season kicked off. Preseason began on Riverside and 70th two weeks before the beginning of the academic school year and, unconventionally, a week and a half before the arrival of our new head coach, Mick Ward. Coach Nick Turi, another new addition to York soccer, led the rigorous pre-season program. Coach Turi commended the commitment of freshman Harrison Vail and sophomore Eamon Hall: “Harrison and Eamon went from strength to strength as the season progressed. This has to be attributed to their dedication to practice, and their effort at practice set the bar for everyone else to match.”

The York boys had an exciting start to the season, with a win against Steiner. The team was down 0-1 at half time, but they came out in the second half full of life. They went on to win the game 5-2, which set the expectation for the rest of the season: Never. Give. Up. This magnificent performance was followed by another fantastic 5-1 win against Garden and a 5-0 win over BWL. The number 5 is a lucky one for this particular team.

York faced a new challenge when senior captain Ben Lindenbaum suffered a fractured wrist, ruling him out for the rest of the season. However, against arguably two of the best teams in the league, Leman and Brooklyn Friends, the York Boys displayed their best performances, thanks to goal machine senior Michael Tamir and junior co-captain Daniel Guarino. However, few could argue that the standout moment of the season was Cassius Goldsmith scoring against BWL. Cassius started the season as a goalie and transitioned to a striker during the season. He had been trying and trying in practice to score a goal without much success, but Cassius persisted and eventually scored a goal Messi would be proud of!

Coach Ward and Coach Turi would like to share a few messages of gratitude: to all players for their commitment and hard work, to all parents and guardians for their ongoing support, and to our seniors, who have now sadly played their final game in the York jersey. Thank you for your leadership and dedication! The entire school looks forward to a bright, bright future of soccer at York Prep.
GIRLS MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Coach: Jordan Valentzas

When asked what it’s like to have a Middle School Basketball Team with only five players, physical education teacher Jessica Fazio had a ready answer: “We have a lot of time outs, and you end up with five girls who are very strong, especially in the cardio department.” They not only have strong hearts but big hearts: this “happy few” are brimming with enthusiasm for the game and support for each other. This year’s squad is a healthy mix of veterans and newcomers who have come together admirably as a team. The season shows promise, and the eyes of York are looking forward to seeing what these girls can accomplish on the court.

GIRLS VARSITY BASKETBALL

Coaches: Jessica Fazio and Jennifer Ramirez

Congratulations to the Girls Varsity Basketball Team for finishing number one in north division

At the end of last October, the York Prep Girls Varsity Basketball Team began their season with a rocky start. Since then, they have improved with every game, and they continue to gel as a team. In spite of injuries, the Lady Panthers have continually operated as a full unit, always keeping an eye on the light at the end of the tunnel. They are optimistic that they will enjoy a successful season. As senior team member Sophia Friedmann says, “We got this!”

GIRLS VARSITY SOCCER

Coaches: Jordan Valentzas and Casey Snepar

The Girls’ Varsity Soccer Team’s season consisted of six games this fall at Randall’s Island. From the first game to the last, the team demonstrated growth through their hard work, determination, and motivation. Physical education teacher Ms. Jordan Valentzas said, “The team that stepped on the field at the beginning of the season was very different from the team that finished.” She further explained, “Every member of the team came with a unique set of skills and experiences and, despite this, everyone displayed tremendous improvement over the course of the season.” The soccer team was supportive of one another and willing to help each other grow not only individually but also as a unit. Junior Emily Murphy said, “This year we grew as a new and improved team. My favorite part of the season was our games, because we never gave up and had fun.” Freshman Amoya Evans said that she enjoyed bonding with other students outside of her grade. Eighth grader Mircia Cortez stated, “Even though we had such a small group, we worked hard. I couldn’t ask for a better team.” Highlights of the season include Emily Murphy’s incredible saves in net, junior Jenna Saevitzon’s fierce defensive tackles and stops, and Mircia Cortez’, junior Natalie Mason’s and junior Leah Lichstein’s unbelievable goals. Coach Valentzas and coding teacher Mr. Casey Snepar were extremely proud of the team and all that they accomplished this season.
Middle School Cross Country
Coach: Lesley Brown

York Prep’s Middle School Cross Country team enjoyed a triumphant fall season as we practiced each day after school in Central Park. The team put in a vigorous effort to run several miles a day, and members alternated in leading their warm-up and cool-down activities. Most members of the team also participated in our weekly 3K meets with other independent middle schools from across all five boroughs at Van Cortlandt Park.

This year we welcomed all new students to the team. With the exception of 8th grader Grey Raphaely, all members are in 7th grade: Ryder Christiansen, Sofia Conetta, Jabar Holmberg, Josh Nierenberg, and Meagan Scott, who will certainly make a good showing in Girls’ Varsity Basketball this season!

York Prep took high places in its contests on October 17, with Josh Nierenberg coming in first place on Junior Varsity with a time of 13:53. This is particularly impressive as he came in ahead of all high schoolers competing in the race! At the same competition, Sofia Conetta and Meagan Scott placed second and third in the JV run. Everyone worked hard and visibly improved after each meet.

The entire team made great strides by the end of the season, and we are very excited for the spring season of track and field ahead of us!

High School Cross Country 2019
Coach: Joyce Perley

York Prep’s High School Cross Country Team experienced a successful fall season, beginning in the summer heat of August during pre-season workouts along the paths of Central Park. We had runners participate in both Junior Varsity (1.8 miles) and Varsity (3.1 miles) races during our weekly meets at Van Cortlandt Park.

The team was a combination of depth and experience, with a core group of veterans including 10th graders William van der Rhoer, Mark Tillinghast, and Samuel Carrigan; 9th grader Samson Murchison; and 11th graders Mason Wischhover and Mimi Isle. They welcomed talented new faces in 10th grader John Dickinson and 9th graders Zachary Singer and Ben Sher. Later in the season, we also welcomed 10th graders Trevor Kim and Logan Kim to complete one of our biggest teams in recent years.

York Prep consistently took several high places in the JV races, and the highlight was Samson Murchison winning the first place. In the Varsity races, William van der Rhoer consistently placed near the top, earning as close as third overall, and he improved his time each race.

By the end of the season, progress was evident for the entire team as everyone was able to appreciate the benefits of his training and to experience improved performances.

Girls Middle School Volleyball
Coaches: Jessica Fazio and Nicole Michael

The Middle School Girls Volleyball Team had a small turnout at the beginning, but they soon picked up momentum until they numbered a total of eight girls. The team included our two veteran 8th graders Arly Massene and Emily Singh, and 8th grade newcomers JT Sheeler and Nicole DiRaimondo. Katherine Carr, Sophia Martinez, Sarah Somerville, and Olivia Terrell made up our 7th grade squad. Each girl on the team brought enthusiasm and a willingness to learn and play in every practice and every game. This attitude certainly paid off as they kept improving throughout the season, especially when it came down to their serving. Coaches Fazio and Michael could not be more proud of the girls and what they accomplished this year.

Athletic Department
GSRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Coach: Colin Horn

The York Prep Girls’ Volleyball Team had a great season in 2019. After losing two key players, the girls worked incredibly hard throughout their summer preseason to prepare themselves for the challenges ahead. Senior captains Sophie Hinds and Sophia Friedmann used their leadership skills to organize the team and keep everyone working hard. The addition of several new players, including juniors Greta Kobus (middle), Hannah Sher (setter), and freshman Valeriya Vinnichenko, helped round out the returning lineup. Returning players junior Lola Cabigeos and senior Alanna Preudhomme-Slaughter also claimed starting roles. They were joined by sophomore libero and captain, Olivia Kieffer. Although not everyone started, everyone played, and our serving specialists junior Avery Zabar and senior Melanie Fleming played key roles in the team’s success. While four of our girls will be graduating this year, we have a great group of new players ready to take their places next season while we fight for a spot in the I.S.A.L. playoffs.

YORK PREP MIDDLE SCHOOL SPRING TRACK 2019

Coaches: Russ Josephs and Jessica Fazio

Team motto: ‘The will to win is nothing if you have not the will to prepare.’ Wise words from the great Juma Ikangaa. Well, this team prepared, and this team won. Skip the freezing meets in Red Hook, the cold spring practices in Central Park, and coaches who made you run up hills, down trails, and around sheep meadows when you would rather be doing something else. Fast forward to the championship meet at Pelham Bay Park on May 7, 2019:
• Gold Medal in the Boys’ 4x100
• Gold Medal in the Boys’ 100m
• Gold Medal in the Boys’ 200m
• Silver Medal in the Girls’ Long Jump

Proof that Hard Work + Perseverance = Success, at least in the track world.

The York Prep Middle School Track Team, Spring 2019

Eighth Grade: Cassius Goldsmith, Jacob Hume (MVP), Samson Murchison, Andrew Shaz (Captain), Amy Yu (MVP).
Seventh Grade: Jack Jamison, Nicholas Belladonna-Papajohn, Jesse Rosenberg, Leo Schaffer (Coach’s Award), Owen Sondey, Alejandro Antelo-Suarez, and Max Wagenheim

Coach Josephs and Coach Fazio salute you: Per ardua ad astral.
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Swim Club Fall 2019

The Swim Club returned to the water at Asphalt Green on Friday afternoons in the fall. Returning 7th graders Cameron Chinquee, Meagan Scott, and Tristan Leonard welcomed several 6th graders that included Jayden Sample, Dylan Rivera-Thomas, Ashton Vital-Ricketts, Ellise Dickinson, and Haroun Prospere. The young swimmers took advantage of the time to playfully end the week and enjoy the company of friends. With two lanes reserved in the Olympic-size pool, there were plenty of opportunities to race down the lane, practice with different strokes, and enjoy jumping in at the deep end of 16 feet!

Varisty Tennis Team

The Varsity Girls and Boys Tennis Teams served up a series of competitive matches throughout the Spring 2019 season. Summer Chandler, a 7th grader [now in 8th] who played the first singles slot, was undefeated throughout the entire season. Later that spring, Summer competed internationally in the French Open. Girls Team members included experienced second singles player Vera Kozlova, current junior Avery Zabar, and rookie sophomore Ava Ellis. The Boys Team maintained a solid group of dedicated members, including current juniors Chris Rupp and Zain Sundaram, seniors Nick Spillum and Edward Zeltner, and rookie sophomore Mark Tillinghast. Head Coach Kalyn Higgins and Assistant Coach Wendy Jin faithfully traveled across the boroughs to lead and support the teams to both losses and notable victories.
**Varsity Golf**

York Prep’s 2019 Golf Team, which consisted of current juniors Jack Haddad, Steven Feldman, Alex Mishan, and Ralph Tawil, competed strongly in each and every match. The team was young, and had limited golf experience, but each member was willing to learn throughout the year the little things that made him a better golfer. The boys steadily improved with every match and practice, which is exactly what a coach wants to see. Jack Haddad has continually practiced during the off-season and is eager to get back, and the rest of the team is also looking forward to the spring and returning to the course.

**Varsity Winter Track 2019-2020**

The Varsity Winter Track team began practices in early November to prepare for competitions throughout the winter months at two impressive indoor facilities: the New Balance Track and Field Center at the Armory in Washington Heights and the Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex on Staten Island. Two returning 10th graders, Ava Ellis and Mark Tillinghast, have welcomed classmates Logan Kim and Trevor Kim, along with 9th graders Chris Vullo, Samson Murchison, and Ben Sher. This small group of committed athletes face colder temperatures and shorter daylight hours to train in Central Park. The team is focusing on the shorter distance events such as the 55m and the 300m, and, as of this writing, everyone is looking forward to the opening meet on December 5.