

# Paw-sitively Connected

Great Path Academy at MCC



## Cabaret Night

The GPA Cabaret Night was a collaboration between the art, music, drama and culinary departments. Families came out to enjoy an evening of talent and entertainment, to raise funds for the spring trip to NYC and a show on Broadway. The GPA Community Commons was transformed into the "GPA Theater", much like Broadway has different theaters. Ceramics classes made the centerpieces for the tables and the 1A Graphic Arts class created the decorations. The students conceptualized, planned and designed the decorations as a class project. The theme was Broadway and the students began by brainstorming with concept maps. They then sketched the space and the room in their art journals and discussed what the focal points would be, exactly what was needed to transform the space. Each student created a project. Lauren Paul, a Graphic Art student enjoyed the fact that their art projects were utilized in such an authentic way. She stated, "it was really awesome and good. It came together really well." The NYC skyline idea came to them through their planning with the



Families and friends sat back and enjoyed the atmosphere and entertainment. It was a full house! More photos of the event on page 4.

class. Her favorite part of the project was painting the skyline.

The décor added to the ambiance and the focus of the evening was on the talent displayed by GPA students. Mr. Wolf, GPA Music instructor and coordinator of this event is a "big believer in independent performances, it is a

necessary part of growing as a musician." The GPA Cabaret will be built into the program and he anticipates it to be an annual event. His favorite part of the evening was "that they all pulled together, everyone was on board,

putting aside their own insecurities and striving towards a common goal." "I was delighted at the end product," he stated, "there were a few magic live performance moments."

Planning the evening was fun and hard work by all contributed to the success. Once the GPA

Commons was reserved for the event, everything followed.

The theme of Broadway was voted on by the students, although a close second choice was the theme of Disney.

The show was hosted by Rufino Medina and Latrice Lawson, who guided the audience through an evening of performances and snacks, provided by the culinary department. Rufino stated, "at first it was nerve-racking, but then I let myself be free and then it was fun," about being one of the hosts.

The show consisted of monologues, vocal solos, duets and full chorus songs, as well as jazz band instrumentals.

GPA looks forward to welcoming everyone back for more fun!



### Magnet Schools of America

#### National Award

Above and to the right, students at GPA celebrate during the all-school assembly, when student school leaders announce the award from the Magnet Schools of America, School of Distinction to GPA! "208 public magnet schools and programs located in 14 states are recognized for their commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, school diversity and integration, specialized teaching staffs, and parent and community engagement" through this program.

## Theater@GPA News

Once again, several GPA students will be participating in Hartford Stage's afterschool program Breakdancing Shakespeare.

This year's production is the battle-of-the-sexes comedy Taming of the Shrew. GPA students in the company are Alivia Caruso, Akeel Benjamin Bennett Sullivan, and Tyrell Hardnett. Performance dates are June 4 in the evening and June 5 during school.

Theatre@GPA is busily in rehearsal for our April production of the modern language adaptation of Antigo-

ne. Complimenting the powerful story of the conflicts between authority and morality, youth and age, our production also features music and dance. Music teacher Steven Wolf has created a cappella arrangements of pop songs thematically related to the play, and junior Talia Clarke is choreographing movement for the eight woman chorus.

Antigone will be performed on April 23 and 24 at 7:00 and April 25 at 2:00 in the

MCC auditorium.

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### Special points of interest:

- GPA's "A Second Cup of Coffee" for parents to gather and discuss our school community is here! The next meeting is April 28th, from 5 -6 pm.
- The GPA website is updated multiple times a week in order to get you the most accurate information about our school community available.





Tyrel H. being creative.



Artwork from Cabaret Night, now displayed in the GPA upstairs hallway.

Reminder! GALAPAGOS!!

We are still taking sign-ups for the March break 2016 trip to the Galapagos in South America. This is a truly ONCE IN A LIFETIME opportunity to see the location where Charles Darwin made observations about life that changed the entirety of scientific thought on species and evolution. See the lava lizards, seals, giant tortoises, and multitudes of life on this chain of volcanic islands. Do research with scientists at the Darwin Institute, and immerse in the local culture. Visit <http://www.explorica.com/Thurrott-8568> for information and to sign up! Remember, you can travel with your student and there will be ample time and opportunities for fund raising so don't miss out on this incredible adventure. Rates increase April 1!

## Unified Arts News

Small Business Management - We have just started the marketing section and am looking forward to designing marketing campaigns for their businesses. It is especially interesting to evaluate how social media is an integral part of marketing now.

Culinary 2- The chefs are finishing up sauces with tomato today and will begin sautéing and learning the art of plate design to prep them for the final exam.

Baking 1- Our bakers have started quickbreads which includes the muffin method and biscuits. The coffeecake muffins that the students made were out of this world.

Spanish II are working on design-

ing their dream house. Spanish III are beginning their interdisciplinary health project. Both levels just created skits in groups. Spanish II created a skit about purchasing clothing in a store. Spanish III performed a skit about a conversation between a doctor and patient to practice the command form.

Drawing students are exploring self-portraits as part of their Line Unit. They are working on multimedia Portraits using "selfies" as a way to study contour lines.

All of our Graphic Arts students are currently creating logo designs for the Teach for America's Connecticut "ROOTS" Youth Leadership Conference that will be held

on May 16th. One design will be the emblem used and printed on shirts for the conference.

\*Students are invited to attend the Logo Design workshop from Hartford Prints on March 17th from 4-7 PM at Hartford Prints on 42 Pratt St, Hartford. Please RSVP to Ms. Dyckman ASAP!



## Social Studies News

This month in Geography, students have been learning about the Great Lakes. We are exploring the need for fresh and clean water for the world. Students have been investigating ways to conserve water and make sure that it will be available to future generations.

In World History, students have been learning about Cuba. Students have been exploring Cuba through the Spanish-American War, as well as the Cuban Revolution. Students have been learning about the Cuban Missile Crisis and are comparing

nuclear programs of the 1960s to nuclear programs of today.

For the month of March, U.S. History students will be examining the effects of World War II on groups such as women, African Americans and Japanese Americans. We will also analyze the government's use of propaganda to rally support for the war. Finally, students will investigate Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb and debate the pros and cons of that decision.

Philosophy students are completing

Mitch Albom's Tuesday with Morrie; They have each selected a personal choice project to mark the completion of this reading.

Geography students are completing a Human Geography unit where students were introduced to the books Hungry Planet and Where the Children Sleep. Students focused on the use of primary source photographs to begin a deeper look at differences and inequalities around the world.

## English News

American Literature -- Students completed viewing 'The Social Network' and, in an essay, will compare the film's themes and characters to those of 'The Great Gatsby'. Students have particularly been focusing on how the American Dream has changed and morphed in the decades since Gatsby's publication. Next, we'll move on to a discussion of the Harlem Renaissance with particular focus on Zora Neale Hurston and her novel, 'Their Eyes Were Watching God'.

College Writing/Communications -- Students have been busy working on a persuasive group presentation in which they are analyzing key speeches from the

Civil Rights Movement. The presentations are centered on speeches by figures such as Malcolm X, Lyndon Baines Johnson and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students in English I are finishing their character development essays. They are about to start their next unit on the book 'Swallowing Stones' by Joyce McDonald. Students in English I Honors are completing their culminating creative project on 'Night' by Elie Wiesel. They will then start reading 'The Importance of Being Earnest' by Oscar Wilde.

English II Honors has developed greatly in the areas of dialogue and deepening understanding. In one of the recent classes students were able to connect

their cultural differences as a lens for the novel 'Joy Luck Club'. Students then reflected on how this activity deepened their understanding of the novel's characters. Students are now moving towards examining the author's writing style.

English II College Prep has mastered the concepts of diction and dialect in their latest assessment on 'A Lesson Before Dying'. Students completed rotations effectively which included writers workshop, close reading, and examining textual evidence. Students are now working on synthesizing the use of literary devices to reveal authors purpose in the text.



Lauren Paul, creating the GPA Cabaret world.

## Science News

**Biology:** Students in Biology are learning about cells through the lens of human health and disease. We are working to establish the basic structures and functions that allow cells to be considered living and how they interact. This core understanding is then being utilized to understand diseases and how they impact our cells.

**Physical Science:** Physical science students have been reviewing key concepts of science, especially those we have covered since the beginning of the year, to help them prepare for the CAPT. Once the test has been administered we will expand on the reviewed material and learn about basic

## Math News

In Precalculus, students are using exponential functions and their inverses, logarithmic functions, to solve problems involving radioactive decay, population growth, and student loan interest. In geometry students have gained proficiency in the basic vocabulary of proofs and have been proving some of the foundational theorems for the field including the vertical angles theorem, alternate interior angles theorem, corresponding angles theorem, and triangle sum theorem.

## Student Spotlight— Honor Roll!

During the most recent all-school assembly, GAP held the Blazer ceremony for the newest Allies. In addition, many students were recognized for their academic achievements. **High Honors Seniors:** Caruso Alivia, Danvers Javante, Hartley Lauren, D'Olco Nataly, Polinski Hannah, Escobar Karina, Kuerbitz Suzette, Baranoski Madison, Reid Kay-Kaniele, Allinson Anastasia, Lilley Philip, Peoples Lauren, Shouldice Kelly, Johnson Joseph, Sanchez Chelsea, Mendoza Marvin, Caceres Carmilla, Stapleton Tayshia, Smith Matthew **High Honors Juniors:**

organic chemistry.

**Forensics:** The forensics class recently completed a unit on DNA fingerprinting and has moved into a new unit on latent prints which covers fingerprints to tire tracks and everything in between. While we learn about these types of evidence and the techniques used to analyze them, we are also working on developing, and writing a crime drama which will be used to highlight the evidence and investigative techniques students learn throughout the course.

In Anatomy and Physiology, students recently completed their first organ dissection on the sheep

This is in preparation for the end of the year mural in which they will represent their proofs through everyday objects and include mathematical notes that guide the proof of their results.

Mr. Hoffman's Algebra class is finishing up with linear equations, just in time for Spring Break. The College Prep math class has made serious progress on the Aleks progress, with one student finishing 85% of all of the work they must

do for the entire year. As the third quarter is closing, it is time to get any late assignments in, or come get make up work to do over break.

In Algebra II, we are moving along with our exploration of functions! This year we have covered many types of functions and are beginning to explore rational and square root functions. We are also preparing for the SAT's!! In Statistics we've have fun rolling dice and exploring probability.

brain. Though it was quite odoriferous, most everyone was able to put that aside and spend class time on identification of brain structures and their functions, making comparisons to a human brain (very similar in structure!). As we move through our studies of body systems, we are completing a short unit on blood and its identification and differences in individuals, and working on the cardiovascular system, preparing for a heart dissection. Anyone with a big heart willing to donate to our dissection needs would be greatly appreciated - that's science teacher humor!!!

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To the left: Dr. Zotos speaks with Lydia Pynn about her script for the Allies program being adopted by the ADL (Anti-defamation League) as a model for other schools. Congratulations, Lydia!



Join the Great Path Academy Team!!!

**What is Grit 'N Wit -** Grit 'N Wit tests participants with physical and mental challenges over 3+ miles. **What do I get for participating-** T-shirt, swag bag, and the satisfaction of knowing you're supporting a great cause. A portion of proceeds benefits the Friends of Jaelyn Foundation, committed to improving the quality of life for children and families battling pediatric brain tumors. Finishers receive a pair of Grit 'N Wit sunglasses. **When is Grit 'N Wit -** April 25, 2015 from 9:00AM - 12:00PM. **Where is Grit 'N Wit held-** Keney Park in Hartford (on the same side of the park as the Pond House). Enter 3 Coventry Street, Hartford, CT 06112 into your GPS. Parking for Grit 'N Wit is located at the lot at 3 Coventry Street, Hartford, CT 06112, which is directly across the street from the park and registration area. **How much-** \$36.50 with promo code, "Great Path Academy"

**Team Name: "Great Path Academy" when you sign up!**

For more details visit [www.gritnwitrun.com](http://www.gritnwitrun.com) or email Ms. Thurrott [thurw001@hartfordschools.org](mailto:thurw001@hartfordschools.org)



Students on honor roll are announced at the all-school assembly.



Darko Yaw Owusu, Kaminski John, Berry Destiny, Pasqualini Sarah, Santana Magan, Rivera Micaela, Lys Nancy, Pynn Lydia, Arroyo Destiny, Hill Aaron, Pardo Adelina, Whitford Mattea, Montgomery Paige, Paul Lauren, Robertson Gabriella, Billingsley Mark, Logan Micaela, Tann Dymonic, Melakian Angelique, Adams Gregory, Hamilton Richard, Clarke Talia, McCall Kailah, Stewart Reinaldo **High Honors Sophomores:** Osorio Cristian, Duffey Alyssa, Harris Jadea, Wolfe Ellen, Nguyen Nhan, Hewett Eleanor, Avila Karen, Asante Giftly, Castillo Brenda, Tedeschi Myia, Silvester Joshua, Gadson Keenan, Emond Jenna, Smith

Medovich Brendan **High Honors Freshmen:** Guilmain Marissa, Le Quyen, Powers Timothy, Salmon MonCherie, Pinnock Jacinda, DelVaglio Aliza, Lumpkin Asia, McDonald Teeah, Akomeah Shawn, Davis Taylor, Gilbert Cameron, Mtawali Rehema, Nutter Imani, DeJesus Ariana, Cotton Michael, Smith Joseph **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!**



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**Respect,  
Responsibility and Safety**

We're on the web!

[www.greatpathacademy.org](http://www.greatpathacademy.org)



A photo collage from GPA's Cabaret Night.



To the left and right—GPA Allies, staff and families celebrated during the GPA Ally Breakfast.



## AFTTM— Academic Family Teacher Team Meetings



Above, GPA Allies feast during a celebration!

In order to offer families a more interactive and empowering version of the age-old “parent teacher conferences”, Great Path Academy is implementing content-based AFTTM’s (Academic Family Teacher Team Meetings). Great Path Academy aims to shift the mindset and paradigm of how families and instructors at school work together to support the success of the students. The English and Social Studies Departments have already held one and the Math Department is holding one in early March, as well. The concept is based upon the Academic Parent-Teacher Teams of the Creighton School District. Maria Paredes, the Director of Community Education at Creighton School District in Arizona, has developed this new model for parent engagement that is attracting national attention and resulting in positive outcomes in her district.

### “Structure:

The structure diverges from the usual parent–teacher conference schedule where teachers hold 15-minute individual conferences at the beginning and end of the school year. Instead, parents of children in the entire class come together three times over the school year to analyze data together as a team.

### Presenting the Data:

During team meetings, the teachers provide data on aggregate classroom performance. Each parent receives a folder containing his or her child’s academic data and

is able to understand the child’s performance in relation to the rest of the class on standards for reading and math. Over the course of the year the data also depict how a child is progressing in relation to these standards. Teachers present the data in creative and concrete ways. For example, some teachers make a linear achievement line designating where the “average” child might score at different points in the year and ask parents to chart where their own child falls. Other teachers have parents color bar graphs to represent areas their child has mastered.

### Setting Goals:

The teacher then helps parents set 60-day goals for their child based on his or her academic scores. For example, if the standard is for 1st graders to learn 120 high-frequency words by the end of second quarter, children working ahead of the curve might have a goal of mastering all 120 by the end of November, whereas a child behind the curve might have a goal of 75.

### Demonstrating how parents can support learning:

After families set goals for their children, the teacher models different ways parents can support their child’s learning at home. Parents are then given an opportunity to practice these activities with other parents. Team meetings end with an opportunity for parents to network and socialize with other parents and families. One-on-one parent–teacher meetings are held once a year, or more regularly if requested, to also give parents a formal opportunity to meet with teachers on an individual basis.

### Positive results:

Other schools that have implemented this system have seen the following benefits.

- Improved social networks for families
- Increased teacher participation
- Increased father involvement
- High attendance
- Improved efficiency and time use
- Parents are empowered”

(source: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/academic-parent-teacher-teams-reorganizing-parent-teacher-teams-around-data>)

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

Thank you to the following donors to the PBIS Gotcha Cart this month:  
**Mrs. Spencer and Kallie Ohlund**

We appreciate the support for helping to recognize GPA Student Cougars for being Responsible, Respectful and Safe!  
If interested, donations can be made to Ms. Canty—please email [cants001@hartfordschools.org](mailto:cants001@hartfordschools.org) or call (860) 512-3723.