Great Path Academy Students Move from “Bystanders to Allies”

Partnering with the Anti-Defamation League, Great Path Academy students and staff begin the school year with participation in trainings for “Names Can Really Hurt Us” in order to continue to support the growth of a positive school culture. As the Anti-Defamation League website states, “It is a call to action for everyone. Together our goal is to inform students, families, educators and the public on what can be done about bullying and cyberbullying.”

The Great Path Academy Allies are a group of 18 students, grades 10-12, who underwent a rigorous acceptance process in order to become an Ally. Once interviews were completed in the spring of last year and six hours of training were completed, Great Path Academy students received their Ally blazers in a Blazer Ceremony which honored their choice to always stand up for the target of any negative behavior.

This September, during two afternoon three-hour-long summit on youth leadership and social and emotional intelligence on Children in partnership with the Born This Way Foundation, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, stated, “Schools are landscape within this context. The focus of the event was told below of Akeel with Lady Gaga’s mother).

The culminating event was a student-run, whole-school assembly on October 3rd, in which the students shared their experiences and stories, then broke out into their Advisory groups in order to turnkey the activities that they completed during training to their classes.

The “From Bystanders to Allies” and “Names Can Really Hurt Us” programs are two pieces to the overarching focus on a positive school climate that is taking place at Great Path Academy. As a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school, Great Path Academy has made great strides in making it “cool” to do the right thing in the past three years. “This is powerful stuff.”- Ja-vante D. stated, as she undertook the training. Many other students agreed and appreciated the positive message that the program sends.

GPA Student Participates in “Youth, Civics and Positive School Climate Summit”

Akeel Benjamin, a senior at Great Path Academy, was selected by the ADL to participate as a panel respondent for the “Youth, Civics and Positive School Climate Summit”. This event took place at the State Capitol and was held by the Commission on Children in partnership with the Born This Way Foundation, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Education and the CT Regional Office of the ADL.

As stated in the event’s press release, “it was a morning-long summit on youth leadership and social and emotional intelligence and supports. This is an outgrowth of bullying-prevention work done by the Commission on Children and its partners. Youth from across Connecticut, along with superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and academic experts attended this event.

Closing remarks were delivered by Cynthia Germanotta, who co-founded the Born This Way Foundation in 2011 with her daughter, Lady Gaga” (photo below of Akeel with Lady Gaga’s mother).

The focus of the event was told through the perspective and the voices of youth and their own experiences of what they have done or what they hope that the adults do in order to create a safe emotional learning environment for all students. Akeel felt the strength in this attention to students, “it was not just youth listening, but giving in sight. The whole event was youth-led and that was really cool.” Many experts weighed in on the effect of the educational landscape within this context. Dr. Brackett, the Director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, stated, “Schools are built around too many rules and not enough feelings.”
Unified Arts News

Gym: We will be saying goodbye to student teacher Dennis Machado on 11/17. Immediately following on 11/20 we will be welcoming a new student teacher Alex Clark who is studying at CCSU.

Spanish: Students have just finished creating a personal ad in SP II to describe their likes, dislikes, personality and physical appearance and that of their ideal love interest. Spanish I students have learned how to greet and introduce themselves to each other. Also students articulated telling time and the date. Students will be creating a children's short story using chapter "para enipezar"

Tech:

English/ Social Studies News

In Civics, we are wrapping up our first unit "Why Government" by applying our studies of the purposes of government to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Students will also connect related events to the unit, namely President Obama's recent address to the United Nations.

In Mr. Buder's classes, we are finishing up our unit on "Ancient Religions in a Modern World" and we will be going into early exploration of the world. Students have been completing their current events projects and sharing them. Students have been discussing the Ebola crisis and other world events. Students have been making connections to their current events and the impact they have on their own lives. In U.S. History this month we will be focusing on our nations shift in Imperialism, as seen through the Spanish-American War. The students will be creating magazines that illustrate both the causes and effects of the War. We will end the Unit by investigating the United States involvement in World War I.

Culinary: Students have been learning about safe food handling and proper hygiene and steps you should follow while being in the kitchen. They will be moving into Nutrition unit shortly.

Personal Finance: The students have been learning about steps and ways they could start budgeting and what they should do in the budgeting process. They are now discussing loans and the pros and cons of it.

Empty bowls at MCC is October 25th, from 11–3 pm. GPA students are making and contributing bowls to the charity event, which raises money for Foodshare.

GPA’s 2014-15 Student Council

Congratulations to the members of our student council!

Student Council Elections were just held recently and the members, voted on by the school community are:

Arroyo, Destiny; Asante, Gifty; Avila, Karen; Clarke, Talia; Danvers, Javante; Diaz, Tatiana; Dukes, Tamia, Faith, Jayleah, Filigrana, Kaitlyn, Hamilton, Ricky, Hawley, Treonna, McCalop, Azaria, Medina, Rufino, Pardo, Adelina, Richardson, Forest, Rivera, Mikaela, Rivera, Tiana, Warburton, Natalia, Whitford, Mattea.

The 2014-15 GPA Student Council is currently planning out their calendar for the school year. The first event they plan will be a day to Honor the powerful "Names Can Really Hurt Us" program (see above for details) with a dress down day, date and details to be announced. Students will be dressing in orange to support anti-bullying efforts. Kaitlyn and Treonna spoke of their meetings and how the student council discussed making this year as fun as possible, with school activities that involve all grade levels more community-centered events.
Chemistry: We are learning about matter and its different types. We learned that matter can be classified into substances and mixtures. In class, we are investigating methods to separate ingredients of different types of mixtures based on their physical properties. We have applied the techniques of filtration, evaporation and chromatography to separate homogeneous and heterogeneous mixtures.

We are looking forward to celebrate National Chemistry Week by incorporating different activities during the week of October 18th through the 25th.

Biology: Students have just completed their first unit on sustainability which sets the stage for the remainder of our topics throughout this course. Next we will be learning about sustainability issues surrounding how to feed the quickly growing global population, but we will do so through the lens of genetics. Specifically, students will learn about basic monohybrid and dihybrid crosses seen in Mendelian genetics and they will apply their knowledge to looking at genetically modified foods. Students will debate the usefulness, health risks, and trade-offs associated with GMO's and GMO labeling.

Genetics: Students are wrapping up their first unit which reviewed Mendelian genetics, went deeper into non-Mendelian traits, and showed them how to relate probability and calculations using fractions to predictions about breeding pairs. We will be moving into a unit that looks at the structure and function of DNA, RNA, and proteins and how their interdependence connects to phenotypes.

Physical Science: Students are currently working to understand the Periodic Table of Elements and the information that it can provide them. They are creating their own versions of the table and using the information to create models of atoms for the first 18 elements. Soon we will be shifting to study the properties of the elements and how those relate to information given by their placement in the Periodic Table.

Anatomy & Physiology: We are currently learning the proper use of our microscopes in preparation for our studies of cells and tissues. The students will begin investigating the structures of the body systems and how they function upon completion of our present work with the microscope.

Mr. Hoffman’s Algebra classes have recently finished up their units on patterns and are moving into the dreaded world of Algebraic Equations. However, with Mr. Hoffman as their guide, these students will make it through the dark forest of letters and numbers unscathed and stronger than ever before! In College Prep math we have been focusing on financial math, by teaching kids how to calculate different pay rates, employee benefits, and loans. These college prep students will also be prepared for life!

In Geometry, students have been studying transformations on a plane and how artists and architects use these transformations to create more aesthetically pleasing works using both rotational and reflective symmetries. In Pre-calculus, students have been learning the "driver's license" characteristics that can be used to describe and classify any curve.

In Ms. Kondratuk’s Statistics class, we are currently analyzing data and how to represent it correctly with histograms, dot plots, frequency tables, stem plots and box and whisker plots. In Algebra II, we will begin to explore inverse functions and explore functions using technology.

Students of the Month—September

We would like to honor and recognize the following students for their positive contributions of Respect, Responsibility and Safety to the GPA community. Congratulations to: Angela Zorrilla - 12th, Matthew Smith - 12th, Jasmine Cruz - 11th, Marcel Mitchell - 11th, Jadae Harris - 10th, Keenan Gadson - 10th, Jacinda Pinnock - 9th and Timothy Powers - 9th (photos below and to the right) Wear your “On a Great Path” shirts with pride!

Coming soon (next month): Staff Member of the Month! We will use this space to not only highlight the students who represent Great Path Academy, but also the staff that students and staff vote on that are recognized through our “Staff Gotcha Paws”, an extension of the Student gotcha paw system for our staff members—students, parents and fellow staff members can fill out the staff gotcha paws and submit them—they are available in the GPA main office.
Ten Great Path Academy students and two staff members attended the Connecticut Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League’s 2014 Greater Hartford Torch of Liberty Award Reception on October 7th, 2014. The Great Path Academy students were invited in order to assist with the ushering of guests and attendees, as a result of Great Path Academy’s partnership with the Anti-Defamation League. The event honored Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph. D., C.E.O. of the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translation-al Science at UConn and Max Javit, the ADL National Commissioner. Max Javit, one of the honorees, came to Great Path Academy to witness the “Names Can Really Hurt Us” assembly in action in the school community. Upon experiencing the Great Path Academy school-wide assembly, he was proud of the program implementation. “Out of all the programs that I’ve been to, Great Path Academy demonstrated the program the best.” The students in the beginning, took turns greeting people, then became official guests, mingling, networking, and spreading the word on the GPA Ally program and the “Names Can Really Hurt Us” assembly and how it has positively affected the Great Path Academy school community. “I teared up during one speech,” Rufino M., a GPA student from Farmington, recalled. There were stories of discrimination, prejudice, violence and hate shared by the speakers. The awards were handed out, the person who was handing out the awards discussed their achievements and what they did in order to achieve their goals. Words in the speeches resonated with the students watching. “I don’t want to be tolerated, I want to be celebrated, but I will accept being understood,” Cato T. Laurencin stated in his speech, as he accepted the Torch of Liberty. This experience was a “life-changing experience which raised our awareness,” Jadea H., a GPA student from Hartford. Rufino agreed, “It was a great experience to have, all of the important people that we met. We met the CEO of Cigna, a representative from UConn…they were talking to us—they said they were honored to meet us!”

Thank you to the following donors to the PBIS Gotcha Cart: Walmart Manchester location, Dunkin Donuts Newington Corporate Office for 100 hot or cold drink vouchers, Mrs. Kliman, Mrs. Vousden, Mrs. P.-D., Mr. Buder. We appreciate the support for helping to recognize GPA Student Cougars for being Responsible, Respectful and Safe! If interested, donations can be made to Ms. Canty—please email cants001@hartfordschools.org or call (860) 512-3723.