

# LINK TO YOU

VOLUME 3

Link Community School

SUMMER 2003

## Proud to be Link Graduates

Swaying in perfect timing to the beat of "Pomp and Circumstance," Link's Class of 2003 walked down the aisle, beaming with pride. They have worked hard for two years to reach this moment. And proud they should be. Each and every graduate received at least one acceptance to a private school. And an impressive 94% received at least two acceptances, providing students a real choice in pursuing their high school education.

Evidencing their pride in their accomplishments, students took leadership roles in the ceremony. Brooke Thorne and Keisha Mason welcomed guests, thanked family members and teachers, and pointed to Link's mission as a powerful force in their education. Spencer Greene delivered the student address, reflecting that, to him, "Link is Unity" and what he will remember most about Link is the community it built and the opportunities it provided all students. Additionally, the whole graduating class extended a special thank you to their families by reading a poem and presenting each one with a flower in honor of their support.

The students themselves were also honored. Every year three major awards are given to top students. This year, the Second Annual Alumni Award was presented to Tiffany Walker, for submitting the best entry in response to the question, "How can Link's core values be applied in the personal, academic, and career aspects of your future life?"; the Academic Excellence Award was given to Tye-Tanisha Edwards for maintaining the highest overall grade average throughout her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years at Link; and the Founder's Award was presented to Robert Welch for embodying school spirit, dedication, and leadership,



Graduate Kayyun Richardson (center) with teachers Lorraine McDonald (l) and Rosana Chanco.

along with good standing academically and behaviorally.

Students received much inspiration not only from the recognition of their peers, but also from some special remarks given by keynote speaker Cory Booker. Mr. Booker, a native of New Jersey, currently serves as the Director of "Newark Now," a new grassroots non-profit group serving Newark. An attorney and Rhodes Scholar, Mr. Booker served as a City Councilman representing the Central Ward prior to running for mayor of Newark. In addressing the students, Mr. Booker spoke fondly of two people in his life—his grandfather who told him time and time again to "stand up," and one of his clients when he was a young lawyer, who taught him "how to stand up." Mr. Booker urged the graduates to stand up for change, because "change will not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but will only happen when individuals with courage stand up for change."

Link Principal Bill Kurtz also provided words of wisdom when he spoke about service to others, relating a story of a man who donated one of his kidneys to a dialysis patient he did not know—a selfless act of service from one to another. He told the graduates "each of you has unique talents, gifts, and the ability to serve others. When you are called to serve others, say 'why not?' like the man who donated his kidney." "You have a beauty inside that will always shine brightly. I encourage you to shine that light in your new schools," he added.

To send off the graduates, Link's African Dancers comprised of 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and led by drummer Brother Jerome Hunter bid them a final farewell with a rousing performance. ■



Graduates (l to r) Chanel Morrison, Ivana Newby, Tye-Tanisha Edwards, Spencer Greene, and Aneres Moore.

## Link Community School Achieves Accreditation

After completing an intensive evaluation and engaging in a two year process, Link received notification in November 2002 of formal accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The decision to accredit Link Community School was made following a three and one-half day visit to the school in spring 2002 by a visiting team of educators from member schools of the Middle States Association appointed by the Commission on Secondary Schools.

During the visit, the Middle States team met and interviewed representatives of all the school's stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents and administrators, as well as representatives of the Link Board of Trustees. Team members also toured the school's facilities, studied the school's plans for school improvement and other documents related to the school's work, and observed

*(continued on page 5)*

## Link and Barclays Capital Pilot Mentorship Program is Huge Success

Building on an existing strong partnership, Link and Barclays Capital launched a pilot mentorship program this year. Under the direction of Traci Kaplan, Barclays' Manager of Human Resources, Maria Pilar Paradiso, Link's Director of Development, and Tanya Morgan, Link's Director of Student Life, 12 Link students were selected and then paired with Barclays staff from various business units within the bank, including Audit, Finance, Research, Corporate Communications, IT, Human Resources, Trading, Collateralized

*(continued on page 5)*



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## From the Desk of the Principal

As I look back on this past school year, I marvel at the success of our students. All 54 graduates were accepted to a private or magnet school of their choice and 94% were accepted into two or more schools. The average 8<sup>th</sup> grader grew 2.5 grade levels on his or her standardized tests this year. While these successes are impressive, they don't completely capture the heart and power of the Link experience – developing the character of outstanding young men and women. Tiffany Walker, the 2003 Alumni Award recipient best articulates this sentiment in her winning essay.

“Over the past two years, I have had the best experiences of my life. Link has been a great door opener. The six core values Honesty, Respect, Caring, Responsibility, Doing One's Best, and Following Directions have helped me conquer all my challenges. The educators at Link do

more than just teach, they guide, and throughout my years here they have guided me in all that I do with the help of the six core values. The core values represent the Link community. When you walk in those doors you feel the core values like you feel the ray of sunlight beaming against your skin – it's such a warm feeling. These core values will be with me the rest of my life and help me in my further schooling and career in many ways.”

This powerful experience called Link is possible due to the hard work and dedication of our faculty and staff, to whom I extend my thanks for their extraordinary work.

*Bill Kurtz*  
Bill Kurtz,  
Principal

## Linkers on the Air

On Tuesday, May 6, 2003 Link eighth graders Spencer Greene and Robert Welch broke into the entertainment industry. After selecting a play list, the two students hosted an hour segment of Ronda Hamilton's “Mid-Day Jazz” show on WBGO Jazz 88 FM. The opportunity came to them courtesy of the generosity of WBGO and Link trustee



*Link eighth grader Robert Welch talks on the air at WBGO while classmate Spencer Greene looks on.*

Christopher Garavente. WBGO donated the hosting hour as an auction item for A Taste of Newark 2002, which Mr. Garavente purchased. Then he offered two Link students the opportunity to use the item.

Spencer and Robert were chosen as recipients of the hosting hour opportunity because of their knowledge of and love for jazz music.

Spencer explained, “I got into jazz when I was young. My parents had me listening to different types of music.” Robert added, “I like jazz a lot and [hosting the show] helped me learn about jazz a lot more.” Spencer enjoyed “being inside of the studio and talking into the microphone with the headphones on as if I were a real radio host.” Robert was excited that they got to pick out their own songs and commented, “It was cool hearing myself and my favorite songs [on the air].”

WBGO host Ronda Hamilton commented that Spencer and Robert “were very prepared. They had taken time to learn about the music they were playing from teachers and from family members and they knew it well. They were very enthusiastic.”

Thanks again to WBGO and Mr. Garavente for a memorable experience! ■

## Where are we going next?

All members of Link's class of 2003 were admitted to a private high school. Even more impressively, 94% were admitted to two or more schools, enabling students to choose from among a selection of outstanding high schools.

### Private High School Acceptances

Bayley-Ellard Regional HS (4)  
 Benedictine Academy (13)  
 Berkshire School (1)  
 Bishop Francis Essex Catholic Regional HS (2)  
 Chapel Hill Chauncy Hall (1)  
 Delbarton School (2)  
 Episcopal School (1)  
 Hudson Catholic HS (3)  
 Immaculate Conception HS (22)  
 Kent School (1)  
 Lacordaire Academy (3)  
 Marist HS (31)  
 Marylawn of the Oranges Academy (9)  
 Morristown-Beard School (2)  
 Mother Seton Regional HS (5)  
 Mount Saint Dominic Academy (3)  
 Mount Saint Mary Academy (1)  
 Oratory Preparatory School (2)  
 Perkiomen School (2)  
 Pingry School (1)  
 Purnell School (1)  
 Roselle Catholic HS (8)  
 Saint Andrew's School (1)  
 Saint Benedict's Preparatory School (7)  
 Saint Dominic Academy (1)  
 Saint Mary of the Assumption HS (6)  
 Saint Patrick HS (10)  
 Saint Peter's Preparatory School (2)  
 Saint Vincent Academy (23)  
 Seton Hall Preparatory HS (3)  
 Stoneleigh Burnham School (1)  
 Union Catholic Regional HS (5)

### Public Magnet High School Acceptances

Science High School (1)  
 Arts High School (5)  
 University High School (1)

## WISH LIST



Our students, faculty and staff would love to acquire the following items in the coming months. If you wish to donate, please call the Development Office at (973) 642-5343.

- 33 copies of NightJohn by Gary Paulsen
- Hi8mm video tapes
- DVD player
- Color ink cartridges
- Channel 13 video series "Freedom: A History of US" based on the history textbooks by Joy Hakim
- 25 pairs of kneepads

**Thanks to Barclays Capital** for the donation of the digital camera and the eight 23-gallon recycling bins. The camera has revolutionized picture taking at Link and the bins have allowed Link's recycling program to really take off. **Thanks also to Liz Le Clair** for the donation of the overhead projector. Students and teachers have benefited from it immensely.

## CORE VALUES

Respect  
 Responsibility  
 Honesty  
 Caring  
 Doing One's Best  
 Following Directions

These core values are practiced by our community of students, faculty, and staff.



## Link Community School Achieves Accreditation (cont'd)

teaching and learning in classrooms. In its conclusion, the visiting team stated that it "felt the heart of Link Community School from the first moment the Team entered the building...The school demonstrated a commitment to taking a good hard look at itself, and how it is always striving to grow in order to provide the best middle school education possible is clear and, at times, astounding."

To be accredited by the Commission on Secondary Schools, a school must meet the Commission's standards for each major area of a school's work and activity. These areas include the school's educational program, learning media services, student services, student activities, facilities, school staff and administration, finance, school leadership and governance, and assessment of learning.

However, because Link Community School elected to use the *Accreditation for Growth* (AFG) process, the school was required to do more than meet the Commission's standards to be accredited. The AFG process requires that a school not only meet the Commission on Secondary School standards, but also organize a team of representative stakeholders from the school and community, to develop a school site plan that is consistent with the vision of the school's strategic plan.

"Link Community School is to be congratulated for having completed the rigorous and demanding accreditation review process successfully," said Dr. Joseph J. DeLucia, Executive Director of the Commission on Secondary Schools. "By meeting the standards of the Commission, and by having established a school site plan that focuses on improved student performance as the primary priority for school improvement efforts, Link Community School has joined a growing number of schools in the Middle States region that are committed to public accountability for their results. The Commission encourages the entire Link community to join in supporting the school as it seeks to achieve its goals over the next five years."

Link eagerly anticipates using this opportunity to continue to grow and provide our students the best middle school education available anywhere in the country. ■

## Link – Barclays Capital Pilot Mentorship Program is Huge Success (cont'd)

Finance, F/X, IBD/DCM, Operations and Sales. Each student was partnered with 4-5 mentors from a particular business area. The focus of the program has been to provide students opportunities for mentorship relationships and exposure to the many educational, cultural and sporting opportunities in and around New York City.

Following a kick-off dinner at Barclays Capital's new offices on Park Avenue, in New York City, where students met their mentors, groups went on a number of trips and participated in many activities. Outings included trips to the Museum of Natural History, the Hayden Planetarium and the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum; NY Knicks, NJ Nets, and NJ Metrostars games; a visit to the trading floor of Barclays Capital where students learned about the trading business; participation in Chelsea Piers Sports & Entertainment Complex's gymnastics and rock climbing, and Our Name is Mud's pottery painting; and seeing The Lion King, The Blue Man Group, and the Circus at Madison Square Garden.

Barclays mentors have shown tremendous commitment to Link students. Ms. Paradiso noted that "the true strength



Link eighth grader Syvad Young (center) with his mentors from Barclays Capital's Research department (l to r): Eric Rogers, Marc Snyder, Jason Marks, and Mark Pibl.

and value of this program is not just in the wonderful events and activities attended by our students, but in the caring and very meaningful one-on-one relationships that have developed between student and mentor. It is these relationships that provide positive support and encouragement to our students, who face a rigorous academic program, as well as adolescent challenges, and family struggles." This program has enabled 12 students to discover a world "next door" in New York City, one that was previously absent from their life experience. Thank you Barclays and mentors for sharing your time, talents and treasure with Link students. ■

## • ALUMNI NEWS •

### Career Day a Success

On Tuesday, March 11, 2003 Link Alumni hosted the second annual Career Day for Link students. As if they were in college, Link students had the opportunity to choose which classes to attend for the day, including options in law, journalism, medicine, business/finance, and education/social services. One student commented that "I learned that it is really important to attend college – you will get a better idea of what you want to be." Many thanks to alumni and special guests who led classes for this memorable event.

### New Alumni Association Officers Elected!

At the annual meeting of the full Link Alumni Association following Career Day, an outstanding slate of officers was elected to lead the Association for the 2003 term. *Congratulations to President Devero McDougal '83, Vice-President Patricia Stover-Trawick '71, Treasurer Venus Banks '96, and At-Large Members of the Alumni Executive Board Gayrleen Blemur '01, Kelly Bowser '02, Stephenia Christian '71, Gentae Kemp '02, Nicole Quallis '95, and Malikata Young '89.* Link is delighted to have these dedicated alumni on board.

## • SPOTLIGHT ON TRUSTEES •

The Link Community would like to extend a special welcome to our new board members. We are excited to have you join us and look forward to getting to know you during your terms as Link trustees.

**Joseph Aboyou**n is an attorney at Aboyou and Heller, LLC, in Fairfield, New Jersey.

**Adrian Bruce** is President, Link Parent Teacher Group, Newark, New Jersey.

**Michael Seergy** is a private investor and Professor of Management, Montclair State University, New Jersey.

**Arthur Stern** is CEO, Cogswell Realty Corp., Newark, New Jersey/New York, New York.

Mr. Aboyou is currently serving on the Benefit Committee for A Taste of Newark 2003 and Mr. Seergy and Mr. Stern are serving on the Benefit Committee for the second annual Link Golf Outing.

# Student Life

## Talent Explosion Hits Link Stage

This year's Talent Explosion Program, which took place on Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, was a huge success! Over forty students participated in the show, as did many faculty members and one parent.

Much work went into producing this event. After auditioning, students practiced every Monday for two months, and there was an intense schedule of dress rehearsals in the final week before the show. The students were up to the challenge, though. Ms. Morgan says, "I loved that the kids were so willing to stay late." Everyone also appreciated the immense support from parents and faculty members, who performed for the first time in Link's history. One faculty member, Ms. Gallop, played the piano, and four other teachers, Ms. Cleveland, Ms. Lynn, Ms. Morgan, and Mr. Silver, performed an African dance with Ms. Susan Greene, whose son, Spencer Greene, is a student at Link.

The show also involved a wide range of student performances, including singing, dancing, spoken word poetry, basketball dribbling, and acting. In addition to many individual performers, Link's Gospel Choir sang, and the Nia Team, who won Link's annual Motown Competition, performed their winning dance to "Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch." Eighth grader Shariay Simpson's performance of "I Will Always Love You" brought everyone to their feet.

The participating students had a great time. "It was fun, and everybody was energetic, which made it even better!" said eighth grader Shirlnika Salley. "It was



*Eighth graders Shirlnika Salley (l) and Samerrah Barron use the Link stage to dance during Link's Talent Explosion.*

exciting and fun to do, but when I was in front of everyone, I got a little scared," admitted eighth grader Kayyun Richardson. Ms. Morgan was pleased that boys were becoming increasingly

involved, and noted that she hoped to see that trend continue in the future.

The enormous success of this year's performance fills everyone with excitement and optimism about next year's show. ■

## Link Students Give Back to Their Community

"And when you succeed, what will you do?" "Give back to others!" Thus concludes Link's Call and Response, an interactive statement of why Link students want to get an education. "We want our students to know the importance of giving back to others," said Director of Student Life Ms. Tanya Morgan, who oversaw service projects for several eighth grade communities.



*Shirlnika Salley (l), a Link eighth grader, plays clapping games with New Community Extended Care Facility resident Marguerite Oliver.*

Community D spent two hours at New Community Extended Care Facility and Medical Day Care Center. Students Aishah Cross and Shirlnika Salley coordinated the project along with the center's Director of Activities/Volunteers Ms. Denise Baker-Bright. Students participated in board games and puzzles with the residents, and had conversation with them over the two-hour period.

Shirlnika Salley had the opportunity to interact in depth with one resident, Ms. Marguerite Oliver, and said that her favorite part of the day was "when we were dancing together." When asked what she learned from Ms. Oliver, Shirlnika enthusiastically shared her newfound insight that "even when you're old, you can still act young."

Community I visited the Horizon School in Livingston, New Jersey, a school for disabled youth, and helped them decorate for their basketball game, pep rally and prom. This project was coordinated by students Spencer Greene and Najeebah Marrow in conjunction with Nancy Fagan, High School Supervisor for the Horizon School.

Link eighth grader Keyontay Moody, who participated in the trip, was delighted to discover that the Horizon students "weren't that different from us," noting that many of them "liked the same music."

Ms. Morgan commented, "I was most

impressed with the student leaders who coordinated these outstanding projects. They really demonstrated the core values of caring and responsibility." Next year Ms. Morgan hopes to make community service a graduation requirement. ■

## Link and Pingry Students Engage in Lively Debate

The students of Ms. Tanya Morgan's Link 8<sup>th</sup> grade history class had successfully completed their studies of the Reconstruction and the Jim Crow Laws. They were now ready to make a connection to present day issues that affect the African American population. To provide another perspective on these issues, the Link class invited juniors and seniors from the Pingry School's American Dreams class to participate in a classroom discussion. The Pingry class was taught by Mr. Adam Rohdie, a Link trustee. The two classes discussed the issue of the constitutionality of affirmative action that is now before the United States Supreme Court.

Several former Linkers attend the Pingry School and one is expected to begin high school there in the fall of 2003. Due to the close ties between Pingry and Link, both Mr. Rohdie and Ms. Morgan believed this would be a great experience for all students to be exposed to diverse views. The students were quick to agree and participated in a lively and honest debate where they shared their experiences and views on affirmative action.

Mr. Rohdie noted that "a close connection between urban students and their suburban peers will foster a greater understanding of the needs of all people and will help to develop one of the most important characteristics for the growth of our society, empathy." Ms. Morgan was "most impressed with the honesty of the Pingry students to share their diverse views on such sensitive issues." She was also amazed that the Link students' responses were "so objective and thoughtful and they didn't simply give formulated answers." Ms. Morgan believes that interactions like these are so important because "people usually talk so theoretically about controversial issues and it means much more to come face to face with people who have different lives and different views and try to understand their points of view." ■

# Development Talk.....

## Link's 2nd Annual Golf Outing

Link's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Outing, will be held on Monday, July 28, 2003, at the renowned Metedeconk National Golf Course, in Jackson, New Jersey. Registration is scheduled for 9:00 am, at which time golfers will have an opportunity to use the driving range and have breakfast. A shotgun tee off is scheduled for 11:00 am with lunch on the turn. After a great afternoon of golf, all will gather for a lively auction, awards and reception. Tickets are \$600 for an individual and \$2,400 for a foursome. Proceeds benefit Link Community School. For more information about the Golf Outing, please contact Link's Director of Development Maria Pilar Paradiso at 973-642-5343 or [maria.paradiso@linkschool.org](mailto:maria.paradiso@linkschool.org). Supporters of Link's Inaugural Golf Outing in 2002 helped raise over \$40,000 to support an outstanding middle school education for Newark youngsters from economically disadvantaged families.

## Link Receives Major Awards from Foundations and Corporations

Link would like to extend a special thank you to the following foundations and corporations who have generously given to Link since February of the 2002-2003 fiscal year.\*

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Anonymous                           | Kensico Capital Management Corp**                     |
| Automatic Data Processing Corp.     | Northwestern Mutual Foundation                        |
| CIBC World Markets USA              | (matching gift)                                       |
| Deutsche Bank Foundation**          | Novartis Pharmaceutical Corp.                         |
| Education Through Music**           | The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation                     |
| Experian**                          | The New York Community Trust—                         |
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| Henri Consulting LLC                | Toyota Motor North America, Inc.** †                  |
| Hyde and Watson Foundation          | Toyota of Runnemede                                   |
| Independence Community Foundation** | The William H. and Judith C. Turner Family Foundation |

\* Gifts of \$2,000 or more are listed here.

\*\* Foundations and corporations joining Link for the first time.

† For school years 2003-04 and 2004-05.

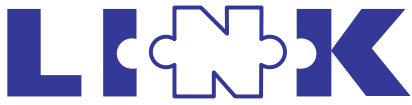
## Save the Date!

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual *A Taste of Newark* is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5, 2003, at the magnificent New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Five years ago, Link began a great tradition of celebrating the business, food, culture, and renaissance evident in the City of Newark — *A Taste of Newark*. Since then, this event has become the premier signature fall event in and around the City of Newark. Last year's participants helped Link sustain its mission of providing Newark students of all academic abilities a powerful and highly effective learning community focused on a rigorous college preparatory academic program and enduring core values. For more information about *A Taste of Newark*, please contact Ngozi Emenyeonu, Associate Director of Development, at 973-642-5343 or [ngozi.emenyeonu@linkschool.org](mailto:ngozi.emenyeonu@linkschool.org).



## Sponsor a Student

Because our students come from some of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Newark, 100 percent of Link students depend on outside support to make their education possible. An individual, a group, company, church or organization can sponsor the Link education of an individual student by underwriting the full or partial cost of the student's education. Sponsorship may be for one or two years, and can be made through a flexible installment payment option. The projected cost for 2003-2004 is \$12,257. The minimum partial sponsorship is \$1,000. Consider sponsoring a student today! Please contact the Development Office at 973-642-5343 for more details.



## Community School

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# LINK TO YOU

**Mission Statement:**

*Link Community School seeks to provide an outstanding independent middle school education for Newark adolescents of all academic abilities from economically disadvantaged families. Link endeavors to create a powerful learning community built on a collective commitment to excellence and enduring core values. By building a strong academic foundation and instilling life long values, Link aims to develop students who will be successful in higher education and responsible and resourceful citizens who give back to others.*



Link Community School was founded in 1969 by Sisters of St. Dominic Caldwell, NJ  
Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools