

LINK TO YOU

VOLUME 3

Link Community School

SUMMER 2004

Link Celebrates the Class of 2004!

The Link Class of 2004 received their diplomas in a touching ceremony held at Emmanuel Church of Christ on Friday, June 11th. The graduation ceremony was the culmination of two years of hard work, growth, and achievement for the Link 8th graders.

The graduates, preceded by the faculty and staff, processed into the church in perfect harmony, reflecting the strong sense of community that characterizes this group of young men and women. Community was a recurring theme throughout the evening. Graduates Angel Maldonado and Amberly Hernandez welcomed the guests in both English and Spanish, and thanked teachers and families for their love and support. All of the graduates expressed their thanks to their families by reading a poem and presenting them with a flower.

Leora Mitchell delivered the student address, in which she spoke about the importance of the Core Values in building community both within a school and in society. Leora said, "We quickly learned that we could do great things just by remembering the six core values that our community is centered around...and we wanted our community to share our ideas about a strong community with the whole city."

Mr. Modia Butler, Executive Director of Newark Now and former Director of Newark Do Something, was the guest speaker for the evening. In his speech, Mr. Butler echoed Leora's call for community. Having visited hundreds of schools throughout the country, Mr. Butler noted that what separates Link

from the others is the strong sense of community. He challenged the graduates to go forth from Link into their high schools and continue to be builders and nurturers of community. Mr. Butler also urged the graduates to "make things happen" and to "make a difference" in their high schools and larger communities.

As each group of graduates came forward, beaming with pride, to receive their diplomas, they were met by the thunderous applause of their teachers, family members, and peers. While all the graduates were honored for their tremendous accomplishments, some received special recognition. Individual awards were presented to students who demonstrated excellence in specific subject areas and who showed the greatest amount of effort throughout all of their subjects. In addition, three special awards were given out. The Academic Excellence Award, given to the student who maintains the highest overall grade average throughout his/her career at Link, was presented to Victoria Araromi. The Founder's Award was presented to Amberly Hernandez, for embodying school spirit, dedication, and leadership along with good standing academically and behaviorally. Finally, the Alumni Award was presented to Shanika Audige.

Fiona Thomas, Link's Assistant Principal, announced the students who had earned full or partial scholarships to high school, with the total scholarship amount for the Class of 2004 equaling

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Graduate Marie White smiles for the camera.



Frantz Lucien, James Harris, and Quadeer Porter.

Link Bids Farewell to Principal Bill Kurtz

Lured by the noise of a "fight" in the gym, Mr. Kurtz ran up the stairs, bursting through the doors of the gym, only to be greeted by a resounding SURPRISE by the entire student body, faculty, and staff. The surprise was planned as a way for the student body and staff to show their appreciation to Mr. Kurtz as he prepares to leave Link. Faculty and staff members Amanda Hayes and Fiona Thomas delivered heartfelt speeches about Mr. Kurtz's tremendous leadership, and 8th graders Shanika Audige and Quadeer Porter each reflected on their relationship with Mr. Kurtz over their two years at Link. They then presented Mr. Kurtz with a framed copy of Langston Hughes' poem "Dreams," one of his favorites, and a kente cloth, an icon of African cultural

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Link's Assistant Principal Receives Prestigious Award

Fiona Thomas, Link's Assistant Principal, was named this year's recipient of The Delbarton School Distinguished Educator Award. The award recognizes educators who "manifest qualities of personal and professional excellence which have had a significant impact on the lives of young people." Ms. Thomas was presented with the award at Delbarton on May 18th by Fr. Luke Travers, headmaster of the Morristown-based independent school.

Ms. Thomas has been associated with Link over the past eighteen years, and has had a variety of roles. Named

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From the Desk of the Principal

Link students have a long tradition of leadership. Preston Moore was the freshman class president of Delbarton this year, Tiffany Walker, the freshman class president of Morristown-Beard, and Antoine McMillian served in the same role at Immaculate Conception High School. And these students were just from the Link Class of 2003. Ashanti Hughes, class of 2002, has been freshman, sophomore, and junior class presidents at Purnell School. Afi Daitey, class of 2001 and Angelica Alton, class of 2000 have both been Presidents of the Newark NAACP Youth Chapter.

Link's powerful learning community centered on core values has a transforming impact on our students. Over their two years, Link students come to understand

who they truly are and the amazing possibilities for who they can become. Self confidence, character, and self awareness follow. It is because of this foundation that so many of our students are willing and able to accept the responsibility of leadership. I was very glad to be able to tell the Class of 2004 at graduation that they walk in the footsteps of leaders — and I know that they will walk in those footsteps with confidence.

As I depart Link after six inspiring years, I am content to leave knowing that we truly are building the next generation of leaders and that our students and alumni will spread the powerful impact of this little school in Newark to an ever increasing circle of communities.

Link Celebrates the Class of 2004! *(cont'd)*

\$1.2 million! Furthermore, she pointed out that every single member of the class had earned acceptance to at least one private high school of their choice, and 97% earned acceptance to two or more schools.

In addressing the graduates, Mr. Kurtz focused on the importance of leadership. Mr. Kurtz said, "You are walking in the tradition of leadership. I urge you to carry on that tradition. All of you can be leaders." Mr. Kurtz cited numerous examples of past Link graduates who assumed roles of leadership in their high schools and communities. He advised the graduates that "leading by what you do, not by what you say, is far more powerful." Mr. Kurtz ended his remarks with three important messages: Be a person of character; value your education; and serve others.

The powerful ceremony came to a close with the graduates reciting the Call and Response, followed by an exhilarating performance by the 7th grade African Dancers led by Brother Jerome Hunter. ■

Link's Assistant Principal Receives Prestigious Award *(cont'd)*

Assistant Principal in 2003, Ms. Thomas is responsible for the supervision, evaluation, and professional development of faculty and the placement of students in high schools that best match their abilities. As Director of Professional Development, she creates and implements programs and services to foster the faculty's professional growth and leadership. And as Director of Guidance, she assists students and their families through the process of selection, application, and admission to exceptional high schools.

When asked about the award, Ms. Thomas replied, "I feel honored to receive the award and I accept it on behalf of the whole faculty, because there are so many distinguished educators at Link, and what we accomplish, we accomplish together."

The entire Link community acknowledges the tremendous job Ms. Thomas has done and congratulates her on a much deserved award. ■

Where Are We Going Next?

All members of Link's class of 2004 were accepted to at least one private high school. 97% were accepted to two or more schools, giving students a real choice in their high school education.

Independent High Schools

Blair Academy (1)
Cushing Academy (1)
Delbarton School (1)
Lawrenceville School (1)
Morristown-Bear High School (2)
Newark Academy (1)
Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child (2)
The Pingry School (2)
The Rabun Gap School (1)
Seton Hall Prep (6)
St George's School (1)
The Taft School (1)
The Loomis Chafee School (1)

Catholic High Schools

Bayley-Ellard Regional High School (1)
Benedictine Academy (10)
Essex Catholic High School (8)
Hudson Catholic High School (4)
Immaculate Conception High School (21)
Lacordaire Academy (4)
Marist High School (38)
Marylawn of the Oranges (10)
Mt St Dominic Academy (3)
Roselle Catholic High School (1)
St Anthony High School (7)
St Benedict's Prep (11)
St Patrick High School (15)
St Peter's Prep (2)
St Vincent Academy (21)
Union Catholic Regional High School (2)

Magnet Public Schools

Arts High (1)
Newark Tech (3)
Science High (5)
Technology High (2)
University High (2)



Graduates Alexis Leonard, Serenity Mitchell, and Tanasia Gordon.



The graduates outside the church.



Teacher Amanda Hayes helps graduate Alexis Leonard with her cap.



Graduate Kiara Martinez.

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.

- Classic "Red Wallet" Art Portfolios (20x26x2) for transporting art work (www.star-products.com, Item No. 220H)
- Twenty TI-83 Plus Graphing Calculators
- 4 35mm automatic cameras with flash and zoom function
- Salsa Instructional Videos for Salsa Club
- Human Anatomy Models (skeleton, organs, etc.)
- Tall desk stool
- Carpenter/Contractor services
- Paper Shredder and Shredder Bags (Cross Cut, 8 – 12 sheets; e.g. Shredmaster CC85 Deluxe Personal- Staples Item # 808188-A4)
- 2 DVD Players
- VCR
- 33 copies of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (hardcover preferred; PermaBound company)
- Rug/throw pillows
- Large Portable Stereo with cd/dual cassette (detachable full range speakers with Mega Bass Sound, Digital Tuner, and Remote Control preferred; Sony)
- Musical instruments in good to excellent condition

Thanks to... **Kevin Bailey** for donating assorted music cd's; **Anonymous donor** for donating a heavy duty paper cutter; **Aboyoun & Heller** for donating a copy machine and a fax machine; **Sr. Ann Dominic** for donating Shop Rite gift certificates and art sketch books; **Gary Seymour and Kidfolio Studios** for photographer services; **Tracy Robinson** for donating two video cameras; **John Cooney and Bleakley, Dwyer, Schwartz, Cooney, and Finney** for donating 3-ringed binders; **Jean Gilmartin and NFL Properties** for donating assorted apparel and accessories; **Cheryl Reese** for donating 15 tickets to the circus; **Jonathan Gray** for donating baseball equipment.

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 Bids Farewell to Principal Bill Kurtz (cont'd)

heritage that is given to all Link graduates at graduation.

Mr. Kurtz, Link's Principal since 1998, will be leaving Link at the end of the school year to take on the head of school position at The Denver School of Science & Technology in Denver, Colorado. The Denver School, a new high school sponsored by the Gates Foundation, aims to be the leading school in Colorado for science, math, and technology and to serve under-represented groups of students.

Mr. Kurtz will be leaving behind a strong legacy of excellence at Link. During his tenure as Principal, Link has achieved outstanding results in many different areas. Mr. Kurtz has made the Core Values – six principles that include respect, doing one's best, and honesty – part of the fabric and culture of the school. The Core Values are instilled in the students from the moment they enter the building, and they guide every facet of the Link experience. In addition, Mr. Kurtz helped introduce Core Performance Standards to the Link curriculum, designed to ensure that students acquired proficiency in areas such as reading, writing, math, and communication.

Mr. Kurtz was instrumental in faculty development, including raising teacher salaries, helping start a faculty summer fellowship, and supporting graduate education for teachers. He has helped expand and strengthen the Board of Trustees, bringing on board a set of diverse and committed members who believe in the mission of Link. Under his leadership, Link has earned accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and has become a member of the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools. Mr. Kurtz also played a large role in the development of two Strategic Plans, designed to vault Link to the forefront of urban middle school education. The Strategic Plans set ambitious goals in areas such as Academics, Student Life, and Finance, many of which have already been accomplished.

While saddened by the news of his departure, Link has a tremendous amount to look forward to. The Board of Trustees has named Marnie G. McKoy as Link's new principal, a dynamic young leader who embraces Link's mission of excellent education for Newark middle school students. Marnie will be coming to Link from The Pingry School in Martinsville, New Jersey, where she served as Assistant Director of Admissions and English teacher. ■

• ALUMNI NEWS •

The Link Alumni Association is proud to announce that this year's winner of the Alumni Essay Contest is Shanika Audige. Now in its fourth year, the essay contest was founded by the Alumni Association to encourage Link 8th graders to reflect on their Link education and the impact it has had on their lives. This year, students were asked to write an essay answering the following question: "Imagine that you are campaigning to be the next Mayor of Newark. Write a campaign speech in which you discuss three problems you have noticed in the City of Newark and share your ideas for possible solutions utilizing Link's Core Values." The award, which consists of a plaque and a \$150 saving's bond, was presented to Shanika at graduation by Devero McDougal, Link alumnus of the class of 1983, current president of the Alumni Association, and Link Trustee. Congratulations to Shanika, and to the entire Link Class of 2004!

• SPOTLIGHT ON TRUSTEES •

Link bids farewell to outgoing trustees Nina Köprülü, Sr. M. Anne John O'Loughlin, O.P., and Evelin K. Potts. We thank them for their passionate service and commitment to Link and wish them well in future endeavors.

Link Graduates Reflect On Their Link Experience

As part of their preparation for graduation, Link 8th graders were asked to write short reflections about what Link has meant to them over the past two years. The reflections were then collected into a booklet and given to parents and friends at the Ring Ceremony, where the 8th graders received their Class Rings. The following are excerpts from some of the reflections.

"Link is like the real world – it teaches lessons, it builds you up, and it helps you learn how to love people as family. It also teaches you restraint and how to tolerate everyday problems. Link is a memory I would never forget!"

- Shadorah Howard

"Here at Link I experienced many things. I experienced what it is like to have teachers who care about you and who are willing to stay after and help, so you will learn and be able to succeed."

- James Harris

"When I first entered Link's doors I was scared. Scared of being picked on, bullied, or not being smart enough. I came to find out there was really nothing to fear. What was fear and worry soon became inspiration. The feeling to do something I've never done."

- Quadeer Porter

I never used to take my education seriously and never used to think about life outside of Newark. Link has widened my mind to bigger and better things to do with my life. Link has really matured me, and made me more aware of things."

-Jerome Brown

Student Life

Link Supporter Leads Entrepreneur Program for 8th graders

A store that sells desserts from all around the world. A microchip that takes the place of textbooks. A nightclub where teenagers can go to hang out, listen to and dance to music. These are just a few of the business ideas that 8th graders participating in the Link Entrepreneurship program came up with and designed.

The program was initiated by Mr. Eugene Crocker, a strong supporter of Link who also participated in the Friday Boys' Lunch program and Career Day. "I wanted to establish a program that helped relate the students' academic experience to real-life possibilities," Mr. Crocker said. "Additionally, the program was designed to reinforce the Link core values along with encouraging and rewarding constructive creativity, teamwork, and setting and achieving goals."

During their weekly meetings, students were divided into two or three person teams and had to come up with a business concept. They then had to develop the concept by determining basic marketing and pricing strategies, including creating a name and logo for their product. Students also watched videos in which well-known celebrities discussed their experiences and insights on business in terms that young teenagers could relate to.

The program culminated with the opportunity for the teams to present ("sell") their business concepts to the entire Link faculty and student body during morning assembly. Students and teachers then voted on their favorite concept, and the participants received awards including palm pilots and a subscription to Black Enterprise Magazine.

Mr. Crocker remarked, "The goal of the program is also for the students to consider long-term career paths and ways to give back to their communities. I am hoping that my founding and running the Program serves as real-life encouragement for them to give back."

Mr. Crocker plans to continue the program next year. ■

Linkers Visit Novartis to Learn About Careers in Science

Link Community School was invited to send students to visit Novartis Pharmaceuticals' East Hanover facility for its annual celebration of Take Your Children to Work Day. Among four programs invited to participate, Link's students were matched with employee mentors with whom they took part in activities, including job shadowing, tours, demonstrations and workshops. Linkers had the opportunity to meet with their mentors and talk about their roles at Novartis, from scientists to human resources personnel. Students learned that there is a vast array of professions and jobs available at one of the largest pharmaceuticals in the world.

The activities enabled students to explore many facets of Novartis' pharmaceutical work, from chemistry experiments to animal testing of drugs, from publishing/printing to recycling, from telecommunications to diversity. While



Link students observe a presentation on the "geese police" at Novartis Pharmaceutical's *Take Your Children To Work Day*.

reflecting on his visit to Novartis, 8th grader Edwin Amankwaah wrote, "I learned a lot from the chemistry presentations. It even motivated me to continue to pursue my dream as a medical scientist."

Link Community School is grateful for Novartis Pharmaceuticals' ongoing and strong support of the school. For years, Novartis has provided grant support, invaluable volunteer support for projects such as mailings, and possibilities for students' growth in programs like Take Your Children to Work Day. Novartis shares our commitment to provide Newark youngsters the very best science education and enables us to offer an

outstanding education to our students. Activities such as the ones planned at the Take Your Children to Work Day complement Link's science and technology curriculum as well as the overall mission and vision of the school. ■

Students and Mentors Discover Central Park

Led by a tour guide, Link students and their Barclays Capital mentors explored Central Park as they walked from the corner of 59th Street and 5th Avenue to Tavern on the Green where they had an end of the year dinner. This was the last of four events that brought together Link's 7th and 8th grade students and employees from Barclays Capital. Earlier in the spring and winter, students and mentors spent time together getting to know one another over dinner at Barclays Capital's offices, bowling, painting pottery, and exploring career options.

Now in its second year, the Barclays Capital-Link Mentorship Program aims to provide Link students an opportunity to explore and experience the arts, culture, and

the business world of New York City. Specifically, the program exposes Link students to the world of business (i.e. corporate structure, capital, finance, global markets, trade, technology) and personal finance. It also helps to develop a network of successful partnerships between Link students and Barclays employees that may lead to long-term mentorship and advice regarding higher education and career choices.

Barclays Capital provides important support for the school by sharing its resources with the school through an annual gift and the Mentorship Program. Link Community School is grateful for this ongoing partnership. ■

Development Talk.

Save the Date! Upcoming Special Events to Benefit Link!



The **3rd Annual Link Community School Golf Outing** is scheduled for Monday, July 26, 2004 at the renowned Metedeconk National Golf Course, in Jackson, New Jersey. A fun-filled day of golf ends with an awards ceremony, auction and reception. For more information about the Golf Outing, including sponsorship opportunities, please contact Maria Pilar Paradiso, Director of Development at 973-642-5343 or maria.paradiso@linkschool.org.



Link's **7th Annual A Taste of Newark** is scheduled for Wednesday, November 3, 2004 at the magnificent New Jersey Performing Arts Center, in Newark, New Jersey. Celebrate Link Community School's 35 year tradition of excellence while enjoying some of the finest food the City of Newark

has to offer, a lively auction and thrilling student performance. For more information about A Taste of Newark 2004, please contact Ngozi Emenyeonu, Associate Director of Development, at 973-642-5343 or ngozi.emenyeonu@linkschool.org.

Supporters of A Taste of Newark and the Golf Outing help 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.

Student Life *Continued*

Link 8th Grader Wins Poetry Contest

Link 8th grader Brittany Bruce won first place in *Newark Reads Poetry 2004: Voices of the City Young Poets Contest*. The poetry contest is sponsored by the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers University, Newark.

Brittany's poem "Loneliness is..." was selected from over 300 poems submitted by students who live or attend school in Newark. "Loneliness is..." compares the feeling to the features of a beach in winter, and was written after Brittany's grandmother passed away. Brittany turned in the poem as an English assignment, and was encouraged by English teacher Amanda Hayes to submit it to the contest.



Link 8th grader Brittany Bruce, winner of the *Newark Ready Poetry 2004: Voices of the City Young Poets Contest*.

"I write to get my feelings out," Brittany said. "I write poems so I'm not angry or sad. Writing it out helps me understand my feeling."

Brittany will be attending Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit, New Jersey in the fall.

Loneliness is...

Cold like wet sand,
Molding underneath your feet.
As blue as the serene ocean,
Calm current stirring silently in the vacant night.
It moves like a snail,
Sliding across the misty boardwalk,
Where life once used to play.
It feels like the firm grasp of air.
It's always there, but never close enough.
It smells like dry salt,
And the echoing winds sound all over.
It looks like an empty bottle,
Buried at the bottom of the ocean.
It tastes like poison.
You swallow it, and slowly start to crawl out
of your corner
And want to die.
Then you realize you weren't alone.
You just went unnoticed.

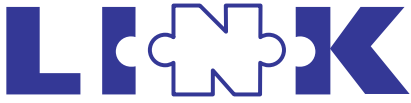
Loneliness is...

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 2004-2005 is \$14,200. Consider sponsoring a student today! Please contact the Development Office at 973-642-5343 for more details.

MOVING?

Let us know your new address!
Call 973-642-5343



Community School

120 Livingston Street
Newark, NJ 07103
www.linkschool.org
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Newark is our home.

Education is our work.

The world is our future.

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