

# LINK TO YOU

VOLUME 3

Link Community School

WINTER 2004

## Link Hosts Symposium on the Challenges of Educating Boys

Urban schools are faced with specific challenges when it comes to educating boys and preparing them for success. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Link took the lead in grappling with the issue of educating boys by hosting a professional symposium for urban educators entitled, “*Boys Connecting with Success: Practical Strategies for Urban Educators.*” Over 35 teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors from a number of public, private, and charter schools in Newark and Manhattan came to Link to hear experts speak on the topic and to share their own experiences and practices with each other.

The event was organized by Fiona Thomas, Link’s Assistant Principal. The idea for the event grew out of Link faculty’s own professional development action research and portfolio-based inquiry goals. Their interest and desire to learn more about this topic led to a visit by Dr. Pedro Noguera to Link in the fall of 2003. Dr. Noguera, an expert on urban education and professor in the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, spoke to a core group of Link faculty and staff about the challenges of educating boys. The Link teachers and administrators felt the issue warranted continued exploration and discussion, which led to the idea of the symposium.

Dr. Noguera delivered the keynote address at the symposium, in which he focused on the underlying reasons why boys present special challenges for urban educators, and then suggested some methods for dealing with those difficulties. The morning continued with a very productive question and answer session with Dr. Noguera, and then ended with a workshop in which attendees broke up into small groups to discuss the issues raised earlier. In the afternoon, educators from three schools in the Newark area – Northstar Academy, St. Benedict’s Prep, and St. Philip’s Academy - delivered presentations outlining their own efforts in preparing boys for success. Finally, Link faculty led practical hands-on workshops in which they showcased and shared their own best practices in the areas of curriculum, character building, and discipline.

Link Spanish teacher and Director of Admissions Rose Mary Dumenigo will be putting many of the lessons from the Symposium into practice this summer through the Boys Summer Academy, a new program that aims to give boys from the Newark public schools who are between their 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade years a positive attitude towards their education through academic, athletic, and character-building lessons and activities. ■

## Supporters Celebrate Link at A Taste of Newark 2003!

Over 475 friends and families of Link delighted in A Taste of Newark 2003 held on November 5, featuring delicious foods from in and around Newark, a thrilling student performance and rousing auction. Led by event chairs Wendy Lacey and Mike Virzi, the event exceeded its stretch goal by raising over \$375,000 to support Link’s mission of educating Newark youngsters from economically disadvantaged families.

The event began with a tasting of some of the best food in Newark. Fourteen culinary establishments from



Link students perform in NJPAC’s Victoria Theatre at Link’s premier benefit event, A Taste of Newark.

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## Words of the Wise

Morning Assembly on Wednesdays began in a unique way this fall and winter. Link students started off the morning by teaching their classmates challenging vocabulary words in funny and creative ways. Words of the Wise, as the program is known, is an initiative of language arts teacher and Director of Curriculum Amanda Hayes designed to build students’ vocabularies. But the ones doing the teaching are not teachers; instead, students do the instructing.

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Teachers and administrators listen to a presentation by Dr. Pedro Noguera at the Boys Symposium at Link.



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## From the Desk of the Principal

Two statistics about young men recently caught my eye:

- By 2010, 59% of the students graduating from college will be women, while only 41% will be males receiving their bachelors.<sup>1</sup>
- According to a recent report from the Justice Policy Institute, young African-American men are more likely to be in jail – or otherwise involved with the courts – than to go to college.<sup>2</sup>

In February, Link hosted a symposium entitled “Boys Connecting with Success” to examine, understand, share, and ultimately develop more effective

<sup>1</sup> Kimmel, Michael. “What’s Up With Boys? The Current Debate About Boys’ Development, Boys’ Behavior, and Boys’ Achievement in School.” Presentation delivered at a conference by the Women’s Therapy Centre Institute and The New School, May 10, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Rosa. “Black Boys: The Litmus Test for ‘No Child Left Behind.’” Education Week, Vol. 22, Issue 9, October 30, 2002, pp. 40,43.

strategies to reverse these troubling trends. After a very stimulating day, I came away with a couple of reflections about boys and their achievement. First, the depth and severity of the problem needs to be recognized by our society in a larger way. Boys are dramatically underachieving girls and are seeking out educational opportunities in far fewer numbers. Second, the problem is complex. Schools, families, media, and our current cultural norms contribute to the depth of the problem. As a result, we need thoughtful solutions that deal with these causes in significant ways. We need to go beyond mentoring and tutoring to create programs that embrace the whole reality of boys. Through the development of our new boys summer program, Link is looking to create the beginnings of such a program. Stay tuned as we work to develop this exciting new program.

## Link Community Celebrates Kwanzaa and Black History Month

Link students, parents, and teachers as well as members of the larger Newark community gathered in the Link gymnasium twice this winter to celebrate important events. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, the Link community came together for Kwanzaa, a holiday that celebrates African-American family, community, and culture. Newark Councilwoman-at-Large Bessie Walker and representatives from the Newark Public Library spoke about the meaning and importance of celebrating Kwanzaa, while Link students introduced the Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles of the holiday, and lit the honorary candles. The evening continued with exciting performances by the African Dance elective, the Link Honor’s Choir, and a poetry reading by a group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. After a musical selection, sung by 8<sup>th</sup> grader Mahogany Moore, and a blessing of the harvest, everyone enjoyed the wonderful food prepared by Link parents.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Link community gathered again in the gymnasium, this time for the Annual Grandparents’ Day celebration. This event was designed to recognize Black



8<sup>th</sup> graders Brittany Bruce (left) and Marie White perform at Link’s Kwanzaa Celebration, while Frantz Lucien looks on.

History Month and to honor grandparents. Link students wrote poems to their grandparents, which were reprinted in a booklet and given to grandparents. The evening was once again marked by excellent student performances, including ones by the boys African dance elective, girls’ hip-hop elective, and musical theatre elective. Sarah Eustis’ history class also read a poem about the history and resilience of the Black community. ■

## Supporters Celebrate Link at A Taste of Newark 2003! (cont'd)

the Newark area generously donated their food to the delight of all guests. The evening concluded with a program in the Victoria Theater, where alumnus Terrance Farmer presented Chris Garavente, longtime supporter and trustee of Link and the evening's honorary guest, with an award. Current Link students then wowed the crowd with an exhilarating African dance performance, and Lauren Robinson-Brown, a member of Link's class of 1977, delivered a powerful reflection on her Link years.

Benefit Committee members Robin and Joe Aboyoun, Barbara Casulli, Patricia Devine Harms, Dianne Garrison, Carey Hamilton, Beth Pallone, Lori Perkins, Susan Pope, John Pratt, Sharon and Ed Reitz, and Stephen Richardson were instrumental in developing a successful event by sharing their talent, commitment and hard work. Link is grateful for the generosity and commitment of all who supported the event thereby enabling Link to continue to provide an outstanding middle school education to Newark youngsters. ■



*Guests at A Taste Of Newark 2003 sample delicious soul food from John's Place Restaurant.*



*Link alumnus Terrance Farmer '02 presents an award to Link trustee and A Taste Of Newark 2003 honorary guest Christopher Garavente.*

## Words of the Wise (cont'd)

Small groups of students volunteer each week to design and perform a skit that teaches their classmates the definition and usage of a word. By teaching the word in the context of skits, which are usually packed with humorous references to pop culture or poke gentle fun at Link faculty and staff, students more effectively convey the word's meaning, literally bringing the word to life.

For instance, for the word 'in sync,' students first performed a funny dance in which everyone danced out of time. After declaring that they were *not* in sync, the students then danced together to the beat, saying in unison, "Now we're in sync." Each week's word, along with a detailed definition, synonyms, and antonyms, is added to the wall in the gym for quick and easy reference.

An anonymous survey given to all Words of the Wise participants confirmed the popularity of the program. One student enjoyed participating in Words of the Wise because "I am teaching something in a fun way, and I get to perform in front of the school." Another student liked the fact that "I get to share with my classmates that I have confidence in myself."

After eight words had been taught, students took a quiz to test their knowledge of the new vocabulary, with points awarded to those communities whose members all received a perfect score.

So, if you stop by Link on a Wednesday morning at 8 am, you'll perhaps learn a new word, and you will definitely have a good laugh. ■

## WISH LIST

- Classic "Red Wallet" Art Portfolios (20x26x2) ([www.star-products.com](http://www.star-products.com))
- Cheerleading Instructional Video Tape ([www.cheerzone.com](http://www.cheerzone.com))
- 20 TI-83 Plus Graphing Calculators
- 4 35mm automatic cameras with flash and zoom function
- Salsa Instructional Videos
- Human Anatomy Models (skeleton, organs, etc.)
- Tall desk stool
- Time clock
- Carpenter/Contractor services
- Paper Shredder and Shredder Bags (Cross Cut, 8 – 12 sheets; e.g. Shredmaster CC85 Deluxe Personal- Staples Item # 808188-A4)
- Heavy Duty Paper Cutter (18" or 19"; Staples Item # 505289-A4, 3x19x19)
- 2 DVD Players
- Digital Camera batteries (CRV3)

**Thanks to...** **The Gray family** for donating baseball equipment, music cds, and a drying rack; **Shanahan's Stationery and Office Equipment** for donating 8 bookshelves; **John's Place Restaurant** for donating food for the recycling elective; **Church of St. Thomas the Apostle** in Bloomfield New Jersey for donating holiday gifts for Link families through their Giving Tree Project; **William and Theresa Lee** for donating equipment for the volleyball team; **UPC Graphics** for donating printing services for Link's Holiday Card; **NFL Properties** for donating a variety of sports apparel; **William and Sharon Machrone** for donating a state of the art computer, monitor, speakers, and accessories; **Sally and Bob Siebold** for making a contribution towards the Wish List; **Richard D. Quinn, IV** for donating the recycling bins used by students in the Recycling Elective Club.

## 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.



## Career Day 2004

Link students had the opportunity to learn about career fields from Link alumni and other Link supporters at Link's Third Annual Career Day, held on Tuesday, February 10th. Career Day 2004 was organized by the Link Alumni Association, and also benefited greatly from the efforts of the Junior League of Montclair-Newark, which provided volunteers, presenters, and refreshments. Eleven speakers, six of whom were Link alumni, shared their career insights and experiences with the Link student body.

Each student attended two thirty-minute presentations, with topics ranging from medicine and nursing to politics and law. Presenters talked about the different positions available within the career field and the educational and skill

requirements needed. Many organized interactive activities to illustrate the field. For instance, in the Business/Finance workshop run by Michael Carter, students took on the roles of players in the business world—investors, investment bankers, entrepreneurs—and acted out those roles using play money.

Students enjoyed the presentations immensely and learned a lot. Laneiqua Hargrove, Link seventh grader, said, "Before Career Day, I wanted to be an actress, but now I want to be a businesswoman and work on Wall Street or start my own business. Joy Mitchell, also in seventh grade, added, "I appreciate how [the presenters] came and told us about their careers even though they're really busy...I think we should have Career Day every year because it will influence other students like it influenced me.

Link is especially grateful to all the alumni and supporters who delivered presentations: Lauren Robinson Brown '89, Adrien Moncur '93, Patricia Stover Trawick '71, Malikata Young '89, Rhasheda Daniels '89, Devero McDougal '83, Laurie Roemmele-Roberts, Michael Carter, Gerville Gibbs, Eugene Crocker, Cheryl Reese. ■



*Link supporter Michael Carter, from Lehman Brothers in New York City, leads an activity in the Business/Finance Workshop during Career Day 2004.*

## Link Staff and Board Of Trustees Celebrate Their Partnership

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, the Link staff and Board of Trustees met for dinner at Pronto Cena Restaurant in Newark to create and strengthen relationships and to recognize their partnership in pursuing Link's mission. While it is the teachers who interact on a daily basis with the students and so are charged with the practical implementation of that mission, Link's existence would not be possible without the incredible commitment of the trustees. Adam Rohdie, Link trustee and Assistant Headmaster and Upper School Director of The Pingry School in Martinsville, New Jersey, delivered an inspiring speech thanking the faculty and staff for their hard work and recognizing the

strong bonds that exist between the staff and the trustees. Each staff member received a gift and personal note from a trustee as a symbol of that special bond. Rose Mary Dumenigo, Link Spanish teacher and Director of Admissions, said of the trustees, "Meeting the challenges of being a teacher everyday is difficult, but knowing that there are a group of people that support us and appreciate what we do helps keep us going." The evening was a perfect reminder and illustration of what makes Link Community School so special. Namely, that it is not just a school, but also a community of people committed to providing an outstanding middle school education for Newark youth. ■

### • ALUMNI NEWS •

On Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, Link alumni, parents, students, and friends watched the New Jersey Nets face the Boston Celtics at Continental Airlines Arena as part of a fundraiser organized by the Link Alumni Association. The fundraiser was designed to bring members of the Link community together as well as to raise funds for the Alumni Association's activities. Now in its second year, the Nets fundraiser was once again a big success.

### • SPOTLIGHT ON TRUSTEES •

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Link held its second Trustee Day giving Trustees the opportunity to bring guests to the school. Trustees and visitors attended morning meeting, visited some classes, toured the building, and had breakfast with Principal Bill Kurtz. A special thank you to Link Trustee Evelin Potts, General Manager, Human Resources, Sony Corporation, for chairing the event.

On February 13, 2004, Link was featured in the Ridgewood News. The article entitled "Villager 'links' to Newark School" provides an overview of Link Community School and highlights the efforts of some supporters from Ridgewood, including Sharon and Ed Reitz.

Congratulations to Adam Rohdie on being named Headmaster of Greenwich Country Day School in Greenwich Connecticut!

Congratulations to David Ferry on his new position with Empirical Research Partners in New York City!

# Student Life

## Link 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Design Their Own Community Service Projects

Every student at Link Community School knows that "Giving Back to Others" is a practical application of Link's core value of "Caring." From day one at Link, students are encouraged to take responsibility of making the Newark Community a better place.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade community service requirement was developed around the idea of student leadership and giving back to others. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grade community elects a student as a Community Service Leader, who then develops and submits a "Giving Back to Others" plan early in the school year. After their plan is approved, students contact organizations and arrange a service project. By the end of each year, the goal is to have each 8<sup>th</sup> grade community participate in its own service project.

The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are well on their way to achieving this goal. Students have approached Ms. Morgan, Director of Student Life, with service ideas ranging from fighting homelessness to planting flowers. In fact, one 8<sup>th</sup> grade community has already completed their "Giving Back to Others" Service Project. Community D, led by student Leora Mitchell, decided to volunteer at the Horizon School, a school for children with cerebral palsy located in Livingston, NJ. When the students learned that the Horizon School was hosting a Valentine's Day Dance, both they and Horizon's Service Coordinator Ms. Nancy Fagin thought that the dance would be an incredible opportunity for authentic social interaction between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

The dance took place on February 12<sup>th</sup> and the Link students were decked out in vivid pink and red, Valentine's Day inspired outfits. Ten minutes into the party, the Linkers accomplished their goal of making new friends. Tia Stafford, one of Link's premier dancers, maneuvered around her dance partner's wheel chair with grace and style. Her incredibly unbiased and warm attitude that day earned her a school wide Core Value Award.

Overall, Leora Mitchell did a wonderful job creating this service project. She and Community D set a good example for the other 8<sup>th</sup> grade communities and for the entire student body of what it means to "Give Back to Others." ■

## En Garde! Link Boys Explore the Sport of Fencing

The sound of shuffling feet, clanging metal, and aggressive shouts filled the Link gymnasium on a sunny afternoon in November. A group of twelve 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys, some of whom had never even heard of fencing, experienced the sport firsthand thanks to the generosity of Mr. Paul

Apostol and Mr. Edward Reitz. Mr. Apostol, a former US National Team and Olympic fencer and current coach of Ramapo High School's fencing team, led a two hour lesson for the boys. The lesson was a live auction item purchased by Mr. Reitz at Link's annual fundraiser, *A Taste of Newark 2003*. Mr. Reitz offered Link students the opportunity to enjoy the lesson.

The lesson began with footwork drills, which form the foundation of fencing. After the students had gotten the hang of advancing, retreating, and lunging, they suited up in protective gear and were given



Former Olympic fencer Paul Apostol leads a fencing lesson for a group of Link boys in the gymnasium.

a sabre, eager to learn how to attack and defend. It is uncommon for fencing students to move beyond basic footwork on their very first lesson, Mr. Apostol said, but he was so impressed with their enthusiasm and quick learning ability that he made an exception. After

practicing various attack and defense moves, students paired off and held mini bouts, switching partners from time to time.

When the final whistle blew, the boys reluctantly took off their equipment, wishing the lesson could continue. One seventh grader, Akin Shoyoye, said "Fencing is awesome! I hope to do it again sometime." The other boys shared Akin's excitement for the sport, and had a similar desire to try it again. Link is exploring the possibility of making additional lessons available to interested students. ■

## Salsa Tuesdays

On Tuesday afternoons, the sound of salsa music drifts out of Ms. Rose Mary Dumenigo's Spanish classroom. Within pairs of Link students step, turn, and twist in rhythm to the quick music, concentration written across their faces. Ms. Dumenigo calls out loud, and the girls quickly and gracefully perform a twist and change partners, resuming their intricate dance without missing a beat. Finally, the music ends and the dancers take a break, weary but satisfied and proud of their progress.

The idea for Salsa Tuesdays grew out of Ms. Dumenigo's trip to Havana, Cuba during the summer of 2003, where she studied different forms of dance. The trip was part of the Summer Faculty Fellowship Program, developed and funded by the Link Board of Trustees to give Link faculty the opportunity to pursue interests during the summer that would enrich them personally and professionally. Returning from Havana with a wealth of knowledge on Cuban dance, Ms. Dumenigo decided to share her love of salsa with the Link student body by

starting an after school salsa club. Open to all students, the club meets every Tuesday in the Spanish room. Students learn and practice various salsa dances and steps under the guidance of Ms. Dumenigo.

"We laugh a lot, and have a great time just dancing and having fun," said Ms. Dumenigo. "It's very laid back, which is great after a long day of classes. Another great thing is that we have discovered some very talented dancers, especially among the boys.

Angel Maldonado, an eighth grader who has been a regular at the salsa lessons, said, "What I like about Salsa Tuesdays is learning more about my cultural roots than just food and clothes." ■



8<sup>th</sup> graders Angel Maldonado and Tia Stafford practice their salsa steps after school.

# Development Talk.....

*Many thanks to all who supported A Taste of Newark 2003—event sponsors, friends, and alumni. The event was a tremendous success in raising both awareness of Link and much needed funds to further Link's important mission.*

*We gratefully acknowledge the following businesses and individuals that sponsored the event:*

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## 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.

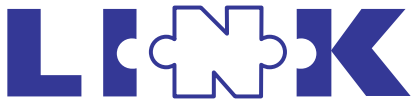


Link's **7th Annual A Taste of Newark** is scheduled for Wednesday, November 3, 2004 at the magnificent New Jersey Performing Arts Center, in Newark, New Jersey. Celebrate Link Community School's 34 year tradition of excellence while enjoying some of the finest food the City of Newark has to offer, a lively auction and thrilling student performance. For more information about A Taste of Newark 2004, please contact Ngozi Emenyonu, Associate Director of Development, at 973-642-5343 or ngozi.emenyonu@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.**

## 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 \$12,900. 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



*A special thank you to all the culinary establishments  
that provided delicious fare*

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