

# THE COMMUNICATOR

March 8, 2011

Dedicated to Informative Excellence

Issue 2 Spring 2011

## New Company Takes Over Cafeteria Operations, Former Employees Lose Jobs

By Muhammad Jalloh

The BCC cafeteria is undergoing a lot of changes, and in a way that will affect all those involved--employees, students, and other members of the college community. According to reports, from this March onward, Healthy Choices will replace CulinArt as the new cafeteria vendor. This may lead to new menu items, and change in the variety, types and quality of foods available to the college community, as well as some perks for the college. There is also another side to this new development: the current staff at the cafeteria will not be able to keep their jobs and may have to go without any prospects for a job, either at the college or with CulinArt, their employer and operator of BCC's food vending services.

While there have been whispers (both from officials and others) since last semester about the possibility of a new food vendor for the college, they have remained only rumors at most; that is, until the last week of February. Officers of the UNITE HERE (Union of Needletrades, Textiles and Industrial Employees, and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees) Local 100 union informed us that the current employees of the BCC cafeteria may be laid off by the end of February and that February 25th is the last day that CulinArt will be handling food services at the college.

According to Ian Mikusko, UNITE HERE's research analyst, they had already met with BCC's Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance, Ms. Mary Coleman, and President Carolyn Williams on February 17th to solicit their support in helping to put pressure on the new vendor to retain the employees so that they can keep their jobs and benefits. He pointed out, "They said that they can't do anything about it, but they actually meant that they won't." He also noted that SVP Coleman said that all she can do for them right now is to have these employees send in applications with the possibility of getting to work in other capacities as employees of the college as these jobs become available.

For Carmen Ovalle, a cashier who has worked at the cafeteria for 15 years, their impending layoff is like a fog at the end of the tunnel. "I have been here for years and know what students like. I have spent the best of my years here. It's not CulinArt that does the work; it's we who do the work," she said, as a cloud of tears rained down her cheeks. "I have no options; I have to start from zero," she added. And for Victor Bonet who works at the cafeteria's pizza station and has been working with the cafeteria for 12 years, the layoff would mean having to start over again looking for a job in these unstable economic times. "I feel I have been here forever," he said. Shafiqur Rahman, UNITE HERE Local 100's lead organizer, pointed out that, "It's standard in the food service industry that even



CulinArt employees at BCC cafeteria. L-R: Victor Bonet, Carmen Ovalle, Mary Torres, and Victor Benitez.

Photo: UNITE HERE

when companies change, the employees stay" and are rehired by the incoming food company.

If the layoff comes to pass, it will affect all current employees of CulinArt at BCC. Ms. Precious Gilliard, the cafeteria manager under CulinArt, noted that, "None of the employees has a solidified position. None of us (including the manager and assistant manager) was offered anything [with CulinArt]." The only exception will be chef Bradslay Johnson, who will be retained by the company. As for the prospects of the cafeteria employees under CulinArt being offered employment by the incoming company, she says, "According to what I heard, the new company doesn't want the union." Asked whether CulinArt was at fault for not informing the employees on time that they would be losing their jobs as the company's contract with BCC to operate the cafeteria was ending soon, she noted that CulinArt District Manager Ed Murray first told them in October of last year that bids for operating the cafeteria were ongoing but that the company doesn't know if they will win the bid to renew their contract with the college or not. On December 23rd, he came back again to tell the employees that a new company will be taking over the operations of the college cafeteria from the Spring 2011 semester onwards.

However, when we spoke to Ms. Nneamaka Okorie, SGA Executive Secretary and Vice Chair of the BCC, Inc.'s Auxiliary Committee (which is in charge of reviewing activities and contracts of entities that do business on the college's campus) she pointed out that there were discrepancies in the story told by the union and employees. She said that calls for bids for operating the cafeteria went out at the beginning of the Fall 2010 semester, but that CulinArt, which has been operating

the college cafeteria for the last 18 years, made it known that it was not interested in placing a bid, which, if won, would have made it possible for it to renew its contract to continue offering food catering services to the college community. Fifteen companies applied to participate in the bids; three were approved after the committee reviewed their offers, their proposed benefits to the college community, and the quality of their services. After the bids in early December, Healthy Choices emerged as the new food vendor for the college.

Ms. Okorie also pointed out that as part of Healthy Choices' contract with the college it will hire

and train BCC students to work at the cafeteria. The college will also receive \$20,000 worth of free food and snacks annually for its events.

In a bid to garner support from the college to help put pressure on the BCC administration to have the new company retain the cafeteria employees under CulinArt, the UNITE HERE Local 100 union got a resolution passed by the BCC chapter of the PSC (Professional Staff Congress) on February 17th. They also attended the February 25th meeting of the Student Government Association to plead the case of the employees and get support from the students. Manny Lopez, Assistant Director of the Office of Student Life, noted that there were attempts at misleading the students and portraying the college in a bad light with the mischievous phrase referring to the employees as the "cafeteria workers of Bronx Community College," which appears on both the PSC resolution and the flyers being used by the UNITE HERE union. He pointed out that the workers at the cafeteria were hired by CulinArt and not contracted employees of BCC and that the college is therefore not responsible for them. At the meeting, the SGA senators voted to draft a resolution supporting the laid off employees, while omitting the misleading statement found in the aforementioned materials.

As for the employees, unless they are offered positions at other locations by CulinArt or if Healthy Choices' (the new food vendor's) terms of contract with the college change to retain them, February 25th was to be their last day working at the cafeteria and the start of a future of job uncertainty in economic times as troubled as ours.

## Broncos Post Record-Breaking Season

By Charlotte Witherspoon

The Broncos have put a fantastic cap on a banner year, bringing home their first CUNY Championship since 1991 and the first CUNYAC regular season title in BCC history. They beat Kingsborough 85-75 to clinch the title and closed the season with an 82-100 loss to Sullivan County Community College.

This season brought more than team trophies, as sophomore Frederick Simpson has snagged CUNYAC Player of the Year and an All-American nomination. Coming to us from Grace Dodge High School, Simpson has only been playing basketball since the ninth grade, yet his stellar performance has the recruiters from four-year schools buzzing. Ever modest, he said, "It just seems like basketball to me." One shouldn't be fooled by his soft-spoken nature off the court; Simpson, Daquan Seymour and Chris Davis are a nearly unbeatable trio on a formidable team.

Athletic director Eric Mercado credits the team's whirlwind season to Head Coach Shannon McKinnon. A security guard at Montefiore Hospital by day, McKinnon has proven to be a miracle worker by night. In his first year as head coach, he doubled the team's winning record and secured the Broncos' place as a force to be reckoned with. Not one to rest on his laurels, McKinnon has led the team to its best season yet and will not stop until the Broncos win the NJCAA National Championship.

The record season was not without its setbacks. Daniel Odiase's dismissal on conduct grounds was a major blow to the roster. An outraged Coach McKinnon claims that, "[Odiase] was unjustly kicked off," and notes that Odiase was penalized for an act that was preempted by an assistant coach. The lack of school support of the basketball program is similarly disheartening. Games are sparsely attended and the team only started to garner recognition when it broke its losing streak. McKinnon said, "I think we shouldn't have lost [against Sullivan]; it hurt. What hurts more is that we're an afterthought."

The team's biggest obstacle went far beyond three-point shots and double-doubles, as the loss of beloved Assistant Coach Troy Truesdale sent shockwaves through the athletic department. Just days after Truesdale's wake, the Broncos posted a 94-74 win against Queensborough, a true testament to their resilience as a team and dedication to the game. Simpson said, "We did it for him. We had to keep going."

Despite the crushing loss to Sullivan and a season riddled with adversity, the team and coaching staff remain undeterred. While the freshman-heavy roster does not guarantee a similarly dazzling performance in the 2011-2012 season, the team refuses to settle for anything less than first place. No one is more passionate about the Broncos winning a national title than McKinnon, who said, "This school needs a national championship. We're going to get to the regionals every year, but I want to win."

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## The Communicator Editorial Policy and Disclaimer

*The Communicator* urges students to submit articles and editorials to the newspaper.

We also encourage students to respond to the articles and editorials found in this newspaper.

The views expressed in by-lined articles and in published letters are solely those of the writer, and they do not necessarily represent the view of *The Communicator*.

We reserve the right to edit any article or letter submitted due to space considerations.

We reserve the right to refuse publication to any article or letter due to space considerations as well as those articles or letters deemed inappropriate because of profane language, non-verification problems, or slander.

No article or letter will be published unless the author submits his or her name, email address, and telephone number.

Please submit all articles and letters to the following email address:  
rowanandrewdavid@aol.com.

### Notes:

Submissions should be in Word 2003. Later versions of Word will not be accepted.

JPEGs must be submitted as email attachments and should not be embedded in the Word copy.

### Deadlines

**April issue: March 30**

**May issue: April 29**

Please note that *The Communicator* reserves the right to refuse publication of any submission due to space considerations or if the submission is deemed inappropriate because of profane language, verification problems, and/or slander.

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BCC community.

*The Communicator* is looking for  
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## Study Smarter, Not Harder!

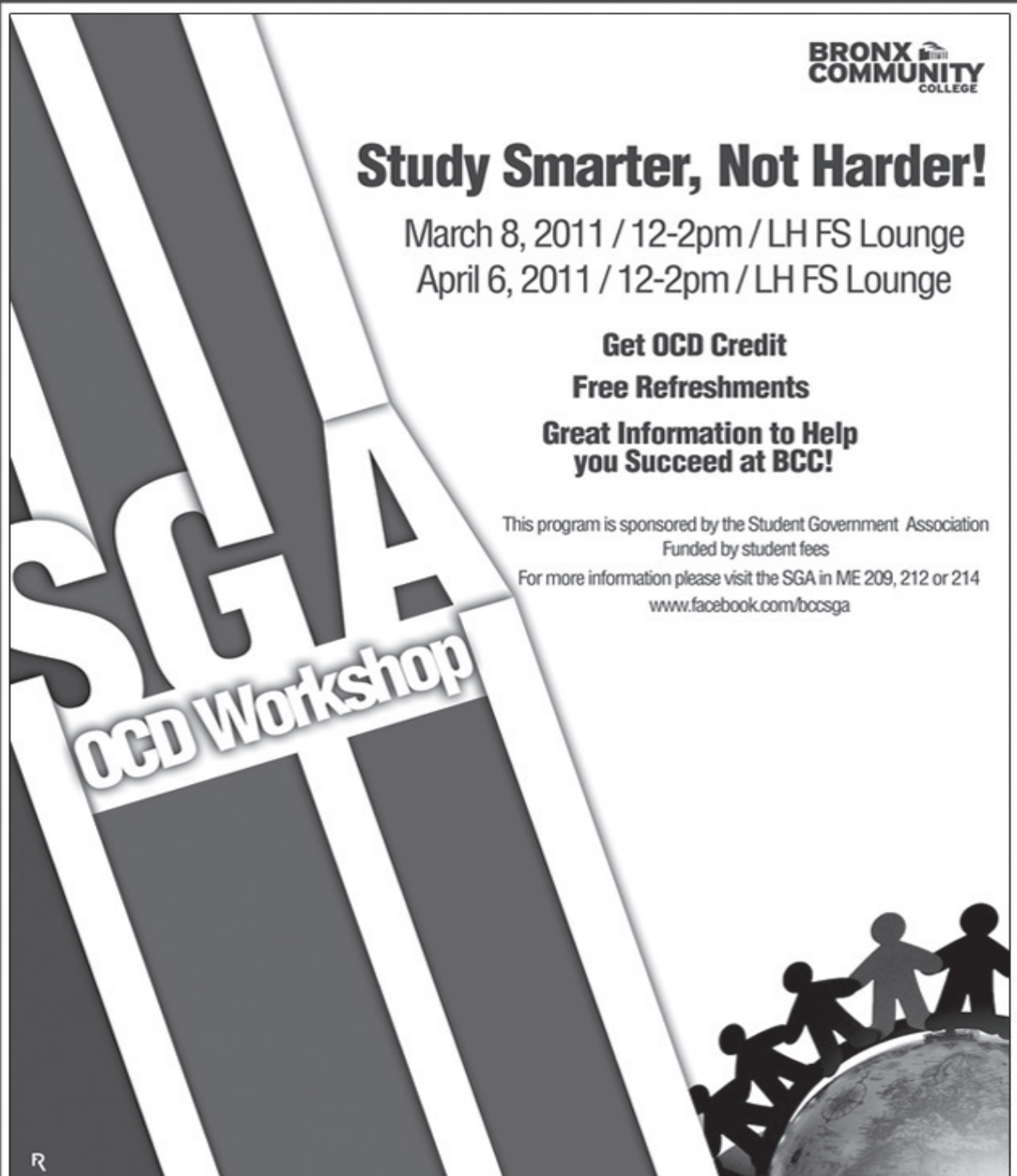
March 8, 2011 / 12-2pm / LH FS Lounge

April 6, 2011 / 12-2pm / LH FS Lounge

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# Campus News

## Stop and Smell the Roses

By Kenneth Brown

**Y**ou still have time to join a club if you haven't yet. There is a list of BCC clubs to join, for anyone to view at the Student Life office located on the second floor of Meister Hall.

A few semesters ago, the only thing I had on my mind was trying to get to class on time, staying as focused as possible, and passing my test so I can make it to my other courses. When I got to my next class courses I just repeated the same process. My social life was at a zero. If you weren't in my class I probably didn't know you, because I was walking through the campus with blinders on. However, things changed for me one semester.

One semester while walking through Meister Hall I ran into a professor who always had his door open and would offer advice or direction to anyone in need. This professor happened to give me some advice that has and will affect a lot of decisions I make. Professor Brown told me about the club he facilitates, the Alpha Beta Gamma Society. School hadn't started at the time and I was on campus to register. Elections for the club had not started and after talking with Professor Brown, I wanted to be a part of his club. Almost every day until the first day of the club meeting I stopped by his office to gather more information.

When the day finally came for elections, I was hyped for the president position. When it came time for me to account for the position, I was kind of ready. I can't remember the last time I put myself out for anything that challenged me. As I stated earlier, I was like a zombie student. This was a big deal for me. Though I tried to convince myself that it didn't matter whether I got the position or not, and that the fact that I was willing to break out of my shell was what really mattered, it did matter, a little. You see, I always felt I had leadership skills but I never placed myself in a position to exercise them. It's like treasure that stays buried: it has value, but no one can benefit from it.

We held elections and I barely made it to the president spot. The Alpha Beta Gamma and Business Clubs have a lot of sharp members and any one of them has the potential to be the president or leader of any organization. I am pretty fortunate to have been voted in.

The first stage is not the final stage. Which means just because you got what you asked for, doesn't conclude the story. Now you have to make it work and keep making it work until you step down or get voted out. Since both clubs were combined, I had to focus on their business, academic and honors aspects.

This is where my on the job training comes in, as being a leader in this case required me to work outside the nine-to-five. Effective leaders are always thinking of ways to create something new or to enhance what is already in progress. Effective leaders need to have an effective team or, if necessary, work alone. They have to take chances. In some cases, the person bringing you in is a good mentor and will walk with you until you get the hang of things, and in others you have to figure things out on your own. Sometimes you have the support of your members

and sometimes you may feel that all the work and effort you do is in vain. Sometimes when there is success, you will get no applause; however, if something goes wrong, even slightly, someone will bring out the megaphone. Sometimes you can go through a long process setting up an appointment and the group is not interested or the speaker doesn't show up. You may place an order for refreshments and have them not come in on time or be different from what was ordered.

The Bronx Community College Club Counsel consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and an IOC officer. The reason the clubs are set up like this is because each of these cabinet members have a separate function and will work in harmony to benefit the club. Teamwork is definitely required to have an effective club, though you should always be prepared to handle any job necessary alone, in case the appointed person is absent. I would recommend having every office filled for these very reasons.

Respect for new members should never be taken lightly. Since this is not a school requirement or a paying job, it should be considered a privilege that someone even showed up to your club meeting. Always welcome all new members with great respect. I believe it is important to find out what they expect to see or experience. I have found that whenever a new member is greeted by the older members it has a lasting effect on them and can possibly increase their chances of returning. Make sure the new members are aware that all suggestions are welcome and that anyone can express any ideas they feel will bring out the best in the club. After all it is their club, too. Since the new member is actually shopping around, give them reasons to want to stay. Be polite, respectful, concerned, and tell them a little about yourself and what your club is looking forward to in the future. Each member should show respect for the other members at all times. New candidates for membership take in everything and if they don't feel comfortable, they won't show up again. If your membership decreases, your budget will decrease, and the amount of things you will be able to do as a club will be limited. A new member could become a close friend, a help for a class you may be having a rough time in, a connection for a job, or an important resource. The world we live in is smaller than we think. You never know in life where you will meet anyone again, so it's always a good practice to treat everyone with the respect that you would want them to give to you.

The president of the club should not be on an ego trip. He or she was elected by the members to serve the members; they didn't get there by themselves. Everyone's opinions should be taken into consideration. The vice president and president should work close together. (It would be even better if they could establish a friendship.) The vice president should know as much as the president and feel free to express their feelings to the president. Before either the president or the vice president addresses the members, they should have already spoken to one another about their concerns (neither one should get any

surprises while the other is addressing the members). The secretary should take what is called the minutes, which means that they are responsible for documenting what took place in each meeting, so that anyone wanting to review the clubs activities will be able to do so. This will also help in having a starting point when the following meetings take place, and the following semester, when new club members begin their journey. They, at least, have some ideas on how club business was conducted. The treasurer's responsibility is to be informed about the budget. How much is had and what is the plan of its use. All budget requests must be signed by the president and the treasurer. It's the president's responsibility to account for the budget before a counsel. The IOC Representative's job is to go to the monthly IOC (Inter-Organizational Council) meeting, where they'll meet with representatives from other clubs, learn about clubs across the campus, and inform the club's cabinet about any new information concerning the club.

The facility adviser's responsibility to Bronx Community College and their members is to uphold high standards for their clubs. A club is an extension of its adviser. If a club is successful and gets recognition then that looks good for the adviser and for the college. If a club does poorly, and has no events, no speaker, no trips, no refreshments and no mission statement that will give the club meaning, then what does that say about the adviser? Some advisers feel that the club may be taking up too much of their time. If the students can attend the club meetings and worry about not falling behind in their studies, and they look to you for guidance, is an hour every Thursday too much to ask? Some advisers take on a club just so they can say they have something extra under their belts besides teaching. Can't you sacrifice a little bit of your time and knowledge to the students when you are not getting paid for it? I have seen firsthand facility advisers who go the extra mile and I have seen those who don't show the slightest bit of concern for their club. They are not hidden; the club knows who they can go to for answers and who to avoid. However, it's never too late to dust off an old project and bring new ideas to it. There's nothing like walking down the school halls when everyone is complementing you for a job well done. If you are not sure where your next step should be, then an adviser can always talk to another club adviser to share their thoughts and possibly get some advice. In fact, there should be a regular meeting consisting of club faculty advisers, just to keep everyone on their toes.

Before I joined a club, I was rushing to class and rushing to get off campus, and by doing so I missed a lot of experiences, learning and growing opportunities. Try not to let that happen to you. Don't walk with blinders; life has so much to offer. There's an old saying that goes, "Stop and smell the roses," and Bronx Community College has plenty to smell.

### College Recognizes National TRiO Day

Bronx Community College will commemorate National TRiO Day with a Career Fair coordinated by the Upward Bound and Talent Search Programs for participating students and families on Saturday, March 12, 2011 on the BCC campus in the Gould Memorial Library Auditorium from 10 am to 3 pm.

The professional speaker panel will be comprised of TRiO alumni and other invited guests, who will share their career choice and personal experiences that led them to where they are today. Panel presentations will begin at 11 am.

Every year on the last Saturday of February, high school and college students, teachers, members of Congress, local officials, TRiO program staff, participants, alumni, and others celebrate the positive impact of the federal TRiO Programs in our communities, throughout the nation. National TRiO Day is a day of celebration, reflection and action around increased access to higher education for disadvantaged students.

The Upward Bound and Talent Search programs target eligible area high school students from low-income families and/or first-generation college students, whose parents did not earn a four-year degree, the opportunity to participate in academic classes, tutoring, counseling, workshops, college/cultural trip and a myriad of educational services on the Bronx Community College campus. Both programs help students identify their academic strengths and assist them in enrolling and graduating from post-secondary educational programs. Currently, TRiO programs at BCC provide services to more than 690 students from the Bronx, New York.

For more information about Career Day, contact the Upward Bound and Talent Search office at (718) 289-5855.

### Men's Health Awareness Day

Philosophy Hall, Room 11

Thursday, March 17, 2011

11am – 3pm

Free HIV testing - No Needles/Results in 20 minutes  
Cholesterol, Diabetes, Hypertension Screening  
Health Insurance Enrollment  
Free and Low Cost Medical Care  
Nicotine Replacement Therapy

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Black Male Initiative (BMI)

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REFRESHMENTS & GIVEAWAYS

# Campus News

## All Animal Lovers Unite and Fight For Those That Do Not Have a Voice of Their Own

The Animal Advocates of BCC a motivated and passionate group dedicated to supporting the rights and humane treatment of animals is looking to further expand its membership.

Our goal this spring semester is to educate our fellow students on what they can do to get involved and prevent the unethical treatment of animals. We are looking to expand our club in order to coordinate larger fundraising events on campus and touch more area shelters by committing to a few hours each month of volunteer work. We need members that will be proactive about our cause and further contribute to the club's goals with their own innovative ideas. We are looking for animal lovers to join us in hopes of reaching even more animals that need our help! Just a few hours of your time can make a real difference for even one animal.

Just contact us and let us know how you'd like to help. Email us at [ANIMALADVOCATESOFBCC@YAHOO.COM](mailto:ANIMALADVOCATESOFBCC@YAHOO.COM).

# BCC

## FREE SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

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THE BCC SHUTTLE BUS ONLY FOLLOWS THIS  
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Service to & from campus every 20 minutes. Stops include #4 subway stations:  
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[www.twitter.com/bccstudentlife](http://www.twitter.com/bccstudentlife)

### 2011 Big Apple Job Fair

Date:  
Friday, April 8, 2011

Time:  
11:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Job Fair (No entry after 4:00 p.m.)

Place:  
Hall 1E (Note New Space!)  
The Jacob Javits Center  
11th Avenue @ 35th Street  
Manhattan

#### WHO MAY ATTEND THE FAIR

This fair is exclusively for CUNY students graduating this year from degree programs or applying for internships advertised by participating employers, and for recent CUNY degree program graduates.

(No one accompanying CUNY students/graduates or seeking entry because they offer services, or want to observe, or speak with recruiters will be admitted.)

#### ALL MAJORS - ALL DEGREE TYPES INVITED

#### Graduating CUNY Students

Visit your college Career Services office for assistance preparing for the fair. On April 8th, show your updated résumé and current CUNY college ID to gain admission to the fair.

#### CUNY Alumni

Present your résumé to gain admission on April 8th.

#### HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE FAIR:

- Prepare for the fair by researching the employers that will be there. Starting March 21, check the "Search Participating Employers" page on this site on a periodic basis for updated information on registered employers and the types of jobs they will be recruiting for at the fair.
- Only students dressed in appropriate business attire will be admitted: Men — suit, sports jacket, tie; Women — suit, dress, skirt and jacket. No casual attire.
- See an advisor in your college Career Services office for assistance in polishing your résumé. Bring about 25 copies to give to employers.
- Notify your college Career Services office as soon as possible if you will need accessibility accommodations (e.g. interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing students) at the fair.
- Make sure to put your e-mail address on your résumé. If you don't have an e-mail address appropriate for employers, create one now and use it on your résumé.
- To take maximum advantage of the fair, arrive early. Remember, admission is not guaranteed if the venue becomes full to capacity.
- To maximize your opportunities for success, be prepared to spend at least two hours at the fair.
- Present yourself positively when you meet with employers! This is when the research you did starts to pay off. Let the recruiter know you understand the organization's business and briefly explain how your skills and knowledge can benefit the organization's goals.
- (Due to increased security concerns, backpacks, briefcases and carry-alls will be subject to search at the fair. Participants are strongly advised not to bring them to the Javits Center. Use folders or large envelopes for your résumés.)

#### TIPS FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

- Have a job-search plan and keep good records of your contacts and resources.
- Your résumé is your marketing tool. Revise your résumé and make sure that you target it to the position you are applying for. Avoid using a résumé that is too general.
- Whenever you send out your résumé, be sure to send it with a personalized cover letter that is well written, brief and effectively highlights the strengths you have that are essential for the position you are applying for.
- Don't limit yourself to one single job-search approach; use different methods and resources such as directories, newspapers, online postings, etc. Also remember that networking is an effective job-search technique. Use your support systems, including family contacts, friends, past and present internships and employment contacts, etc.
- Thoroughly research an organization before you go for an interview or plan to see its rep at a job fair.
- In the interview, always stress your skills, accomplishments and strengths as they relate to the job you are interviewing for. Have a 30-second to two minute-long pitch about yourself containing the most relevant information you want the interviewer to know.
- Be flexible and have reasonable expectations about the type of organization, position, and salary you are willing to pursue. If you see the possibility that a full-time job opportunity might eventually open for you at a particular organization, you might want to consider taking a temporary or part-time position with that employer in the meantime.
- Relocation should also be an option you fully consider. You may be able to get exactly the kind of job you want by being willing to move. That would give you the kind of work experience you want on your résumé, which in turn could open more doors for you in the future.
- Learn how to deal with rejection in your search and how to learn from it. If you get rejected for a job, use the experience to prepare yourself better next time. Avoid feeling sorry for yourself or blaming others. You should always ask yourself: How can I improve for the next time?
- Contact your college's Career Services office to get additional information.

## This year an amazing 858 transfer students finished college at Monroe. Maybe it's time you made the move.



Maybe it's all the exciting in-demand degrees. Or the professors who actually work in their fields. Perhaps it's the fully-furnished dorms equipped with WiFi, a computer lounge and fitness center. Or the classes that meet around your schedule. Whatever the reason, hundreds of motivated, career-minded students are taking their credits and turning them into marketable Associate or Bachelor's Degrees at Monroe College. Transferring to Monroe means:

- Generous transfer credit policy
- Additional credit for military or academy training
- Exciting degrees, in demand right now
- Professors who also work in their fields
- Unique Bronx & New Rochelle campuses
- Fully furnished apartment-like dorms
- Online & on campus class options
- Day, evening & weekend classes
- One-on-one financial aid & assistance

#### Associate, Bachelor's, Master's and Online Degree Programs:

Accounting	Health Services Administration*	Public Health
Baking & Pastry	Hospitality Management*	Registered Nurse
Business Management*	Information Technology*	MBA in Business Management*
Criminal Justice*	Medical Administration*	MS In Criminal Justice
Culinary Arts	Medical Assisting	
Early Childhood Education	Pharmacy Technician	

\* Programs also available Online.

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## Campus News

# Career & Transfer Services

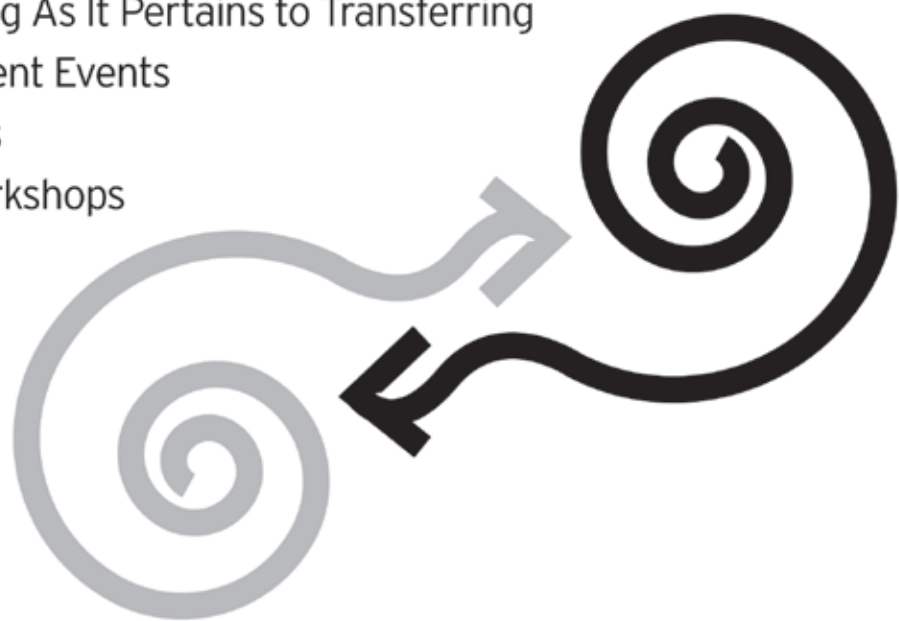
Career and Transfer Services provides quality services that assist students with career development and transferring to four-year colleges.

### Career Services:

- Career Exploration and Counseling
- Resume Writing
- Interview Preparation
- Dress for Success
- Free Online Career and Personality Assessments
- Workshops
- Internship and Employment Opportunities
- Career and Internship Fairs
- Employment Recruitment Events
- Cooperative Work Experience Course
- Optimal Resume
- Resource Library and Computer Lab

### Transfer Services:

- Transfer Planning and Advisement
- Researching and Selecting an Appropriate Major for Transfer
- Finding Academic Opportunities at Four-year Colleges
- Assistance Completing Transfer Applications
- Assistance with Admissions Essays
- Academic Planning As It Pertains to Transferring
- College Recruitment Events
- College Field Trips
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# Artist of the Month

## Enter My Mind

By P.O.E.T.

Growing up you would have thought  
That baseball was our favorite sport  
Because my best friends  
Had a few strikes against them  
Everyone was pitching  
And the stickup kids tried to catch you coming home slipping  
So shit wasn't safe...  
Even though the fiends were on base  
But we had faith...  
Just not like you're used to  
But around here it's the usual  
They couldn't care less about how we're living  
Little homie once told me the gun was his religion  
It makes sense...  
Since it's always court and never church when they're calling for a witness  
But we're forced to live this way so we won't pray for forgiveness  
We ain't ask for none of this  
I was once told life was a punishment  
The answer was lost but I swear that I've found it  
I now see that some get high so they can fly... forget that they're grounded  
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change  
And help them understand that my flaws make me who I am  
I think with my heart when I speak my mind,  
So at times my emotions get the best of me  
And when they do I hope you don't think less of me  
Cause I mean what I say & I say what I think is right  
I've always been that way  
A young JFK  
They tell me to be careful... Sometimes I feel like I really oughta  
Cause NYC could be my Dealey Plaza  
But I toss caution to the wind to block the offense from the wind  
Cause life ain't always what it seems  
We've been living a nicotine dream,  
I'm scared it'll turn my heart black  
I always been a little different  
I was told the eyes are windows,  
Although mine are tinted  
And my soul is vintage  
The world rests at the base of my neck  
Burden weighing heavy on my chest  
And it don't feel right... cause broken dreams don't heal right  
Regardless I still write  
Cause words are the weapons I use as protection  
From the demons, yeah I seen them in my own eyes  
Was once a victim of my own lies  
But I'm thankful because some died  
And were victims their whole lives  
We live in an age of deceit,  
beware of the lessons they teach.  
We're born with our consciousness open,  
sadly we're conditioned to close it.  
But I'm claustrophobic.  
I gave my mind space & seceded from that mindstate  
Ignorance is malignant & I refuse to let that tumor grow  
Although, I used to live in that place within my mind,  
Took a trip back, afraid of what I might find  
Because it's been so long since I've been home, I was out throwing stones.  
I blacked out & forgot I once lived in a glass house.  
See I was zoned out  
But I remembered it was I that shattered my own house  
Cause they're no more than false and fragile systems of beliefs  
In which bind us confine us, don't allow us to grow  
I learned to live life like water and allow it to flow  
The search for knowledge and understanding is infinite  
But see, what beliefs do, is deceive you  
And because of deceit you believe that the journey is complete  
As I stood among the shards of broken pieces  
I realized people build walls around their beliefs  
Afraid to have them stand out  
But these ain't stones... these are gems that I toss at your glass house



## Artist of the Month

By Beatriz Ramirez

Ibrahim Siddiq, aka P.O.E.T., is not your average spoken word artist; he is more of an activist and philosopher rooted in poetry. P.O.E.T. is an acronym for Putting Out Eternal Thoughts. He believes thought is creative energy and that the world is the way it is because of our collective thoughts about it.

After seeing and being inspired by P.O.E.T.'s powerful performances, Beatriz asked the spoken word artist questions about his art and goals.

**Beatriz: What inspires you to write?**

**P.O.E.T.:** Life is my inspiration; it's my muse. Life is art, in of itself, which is extremely inspiring.

**B: Where or when do you find yourself writing most?**

**P:** There's no telling when and where I'll write. I hardly ever sit down and start writing because I never force it. It has to just come, all my writing is stream of consciousness ... it can be anywhere, on the train, in class, or in the shower. (*laughs*) The shower is the funniest because when I'm there and a set of lines pop into my head, I'll repeat it over and over to remember it, and I won't leave the shower since it's inspiring. I think it has something to do with the water, because I'm always in my most creative mood when it's raining outside. Again, it ties into life being my inspiration. Water and life go hand in hand.

**B: You've just released your sophomore album entitled "Nerd at the Cool Table"; it is more of a musical album compared to your first. What brought about that kind of shift?**

**P:** The reason for my first album being more spoken word based, and the most recent album being more musical is that between the two projects I've grown as an artist. I've always had an adoration for music and knew I wanted to make the transition eventually, but I had to first see where I wanted to go with it ... as I grew I went from just writing poetry to writing music, incorporating the two, and since then I have moved on to other forms of art, including acting and photography. As I said before, "Life is art" - I just want to generate from it.

**B: Who are your influences?**

**P:** I have a few different influences, some are artists and some are not, but they all influence my art. Bob Marley, Joe Budden, John Mayer, William Cooper, Malcolm X, Tupac, those are just a few.

**B: It's clear that you have a message (or several) in your writing. Who is it for? Is this your target audience? Can you sum up the message?**

**P:** I have a lot of messages within my work but one general message, or more so, a goal, I wish to accomplish is to serve as light for the world's potential ... Picture a dark room, now when you flip the switch, the light doesn't create the objects within that room, but merely makes you aware of its [sic] presence. I wish to show others that they are destined for greatest; they just have to discover it within themselves. Also, most people don't care to take a stand or help others unless it directly affects them. I want to show people that we are all connected and whatever they do, or don't do, affects others.

**B: What are your goals for your present album?**

**P:** I have three main goals for my current album: First, I wish to express the meaning behind the album, it is entitled "Nerd at the Cool Table" and the meaning behind it is: to stand out, be comfortable with yourself, and never compromise who you are to fit in with the crowd. My second goal is to show the versatility of poetry. It's the basis of most music. Poetry is like water, it flows and is able to adapt to anything. My last goal is to simply establish myself as an artist.

**B: Is there another album in the works? What should we expect from it?**

**P:** There is another album in the works, as well as many other projects. The next album is entitled "Vintage Soul." Essentially, it'll be a classic soulful album, but nothing like you've heard before. I can't really say what to expect because I'm constantly growing as an artist and at times I don't even know what to expect from myself. So I guess we'll all be surprised. (*laughs*)

**B: Where do you see yourself in five years?**

**P:** I only plan life in terms of the projects I intend to finish. Other than that, I just flow with it. All I want to do in life is create art and help others. I live for that! So if I can be doing that in another 5 years, that'll be pretty great! (*smiles from ear to ear*)

To hear his album and learn more about him, check out P.O.E.T. at [www.poet.bandcamp.com](http://www.poet.bandcamp.com), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/FreedumbMovement](http://www.facebook.com/FreedumbMovement), or on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/FreedumbMovement](http://www.youtube.com/FreedumbMovement) (several more videos will be posted shortly). You may also contact him through e-mail at [FreedumbMovement@gmail.com](mailto:FreedumbMovement@gmail.com).

# Writer of the Month

## Still Standing: Harlem Landmarks

By Sandra Murphy

On a sunny, bright, and cool day the sky is blue and the clouds have vanished; nature's artistic palette is defiant and needs no help in translation, improvement or style. Neighbors are waking up from an exhausted week of hustle and bustle, people are greeting each other with the usual salutations of "good morning, how are you today, what's up, hey brother/sister, my man, what's happening?" This exuberant place of civility and brotherhood is the place of peculiar, extraordinary people called Harlemites. Harlem, New York, where Black culture was born out of necessity, leaves you with a fierce feeling of wanting to declare the culture and the Black legacy that the ancestors left behind and embracing their historical victory is a blessing.

When you wipe the sleep out of your eyes and clear your throat, you are ready to start your daily journey of taking care of business inside and outside of the Harlem area. It may be going to work, school, working out, socializing or monopolizing that street corner (territorial identity). Whatever the case may be, your journey includes interacting with the indigenous folks on the block and dealing with a strong sense of black solidarity, whether you like it or not. Your daily expedition requires you to nod and tip your hat to say hello to the past, present, and future. The Harlem landmarks are the ancestors that demand our attention and acknowledgement of their presence. The old buildings, ruinous streets (blocks) consume themselves with some of the unlikeable conditions, and are filled with the true accounts of American history that is ignored and washed away to the history books pertaining to the profound African American legacy. Gazing at the architecture of these old buildings you feel the loyalty and camaraderie for these beautiful structures that are taken for granted by their ungrateful residents (the love for history can get lost in life's responsibilities). The dilapidated, run-down brownstones and townhouses are now used as garbage dumps, laced with graffiti and other undesirable and detrimental elements that have devalued homes, properties, and neighborhoods. Tenements that were neglected and abused have stood the test of time, hardship, and struggle. The soul of Harlem's architectural history and its noteworthy landmarks were built by the blood, sweat and labor of Black hands.

That pride is the glue that has held this community together since its inception in the early 1900s. Harlem has a reputation of beauty and architecture that surpasses mere mortals. The mysterious veil and secret beauty of Harlem landmarks hovers, embraces, and holds you close to its heart and spirit. When you take the journey through Harlem on this clear day or any other (rain or shine), you might glance across your street depending on where you live and what area of the 'hood' you live in, and see the mighty structure of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. It is a church, that if it could speak, it would shout "Hallelujah!" The roots of Abyssinian Baptist Church (137th Street between 7th and Lenox Avenues) are enthroned by free Ethiopian seamen who were denied equal seating in a church they attended (the First Baptist Church). They decided to create their home of worship, Abyssinian (Ethiopian derivative). From 1908-1936, Abyssinian was headed by Adam Clayton Powell Sr. Upon his death, his son, one of Harlem's most revered political figures, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (congressman and Chairman of Education and Labor Committee), succeeded him as Abyssinian's most flamboyant minister and political activist. This magnificent church is Gothic and Tudor in style, with stained glass windows (a new and exciting architectural style of its time). The Abyssinian Baptist Church has held political influence in the Black community for decades. A young German theologian by the name of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was one of many known for his assassination plot against Adolf Hitler attended Abyssinian stated, "This experience gave [him] insights about the power of the black church and its struggle for social justice" (Harris 2). Abyssinian remains an important religious site in Harlem for refuge and solace. Another great testament to the spiritual component of Harlem's Black community is the Mother Zion Church. The history of this landmark has a tough and proud connection to the Black folks in Harlem and their perseverance to survive against all odds. During the years of the Underground Railroad, Mother Zion Church helped to eradicate the horrors of slavery and was declared the "Freedom Church" for its extensive role in the railroad's network. With its glorious neo-Gothic design completed in 1925, this church continues its tradition of social activism and community outreach.

After hearing a raucous sermon delivered by a fiery pastor to redeem your soul from damnation (the

Powell Pastors), you cannot help but reflect back on the night before when your soul was the least of your worries. It was Saturday night when you swayed, booty-popped, and lindy-hopped (both men and women) at the most famous nightclubs in Harlem: the Savoy Manor, Renaissance Ballroom, and Small's Paradise. The exotic nightlife of Harlem provided an escape from the harsh struggles of the working week. The Savoy Manor was originally owned by Chicago gangster Al Capone and was located on 140 & 141 Street and Lenox Avenue (now known as Malcolm X Boulevard). It opened its doors on March 12, 1926, mainly to white customers. The white marble staircase and its pink exterior, with a foyer befitting royalty, gave the most timid dancer the opportunity to break loose and dance until the wee hours of the morning. Nicknamed the "Home of the Happy Feet" it had the best dancers in the nation. The "Lindy Hop" dance craze (1940's) originated at the Savoy. Dancing trends were a part of Harlem's pomp and circumstance period. The ballroom was enormous, 250x50ft with two bandstands and a disappearing stage. Four thousand people could be entertained at one showing" (Lewis, 170). Harlemites jubilation when "Stompin' at the Savoy," was all the body needed. The Savoy was converted into an apartment complex in the early 1960s (Delano Village, now the Savoy Manor). A plaque was placed on its site in recognition of this dancing testimonial. The Renaissance Ballroom was another cream of Harlem's crop of dancing entertainment. This Ballroom was a spectacular social emporium for dance contests, galas, sponsored by Fisk, Howard, and other prestigious colleges and universities. On any given night, there were fashion shows, club nights, and Black elite social parties. Not only was there revelry for the famous at the ballroom, sporting games were also a tremendous contributor to the Renaissance's fame. The Harlem Renaissance basketball team played exhibition games right on the dance floor. Hoops were erected to entertain the enthusiastic crowd.

Competition was stiff on the night club scene. Small's Paradise was another happening hangout that opened its fabulous doors around 1926. During the prohibition era, it was the very first authentic bootleg nightclub of its kind in Harlem. Small's was founded by an ex-slave's grandson, Edward Small, who showcased an elaborate dance floor of Charleston dancing waiters while balancing whiskey on their serving trays. "Ed Small's paradise with its steep prices and dancing waiters was the most prestigious night club owned by an Afro American" (Lewis, 209). In the mid 60s, Wilt Chamberlain, the noted basketball player, bought Small's and subsequently closed its doors in 1986. Small's was a legendary night spot for jazz musicians to jam every Sunday evening for 20 plus years. Small's has taken on a new look, and is now called the Thurgood Marshall Academy, educating Harlem's up-and-coming scholars.

After you danced and jammed to the musical giants that grooved, smooth talked through song lyrics, clapping and snapping their fingers and jitterbuggin', you are craving a late night snack. Heading straight to the home of Wells Chicken and Waffles restaurant, your taste buds are salivating and yearning for a delicious midnight fiesta. Since 1938, Wells: Home of Chicken and Waffles (located on 132nd Street and 7th Avenue) served Harlem partygoers regardless of the time (they are better known for late night patronage). The legendary stories of this breakfast and dinner combination supposedly started with Thomas Jefferson's exploits to France and bringing back the waffle iron. Others claim slaves would wring a chicken's neck, fry it up for breakfast and add the cake (waffle) with homemade maple syrup, slabs of whipped butter, all natural ingredients, presto magic—the chicken and its waffle was born. Wells Chicken and Waffles has many imposters; however, the duplication will never ever replace the true essence of good Southern down home fried chicken and its perks. Wells' restaurant has disappeared, but the chicken, and waffles late night snack is still being digested by Harlem's connoisseurs of fine cuisine.

Eating yourself to oblivion can take its toll on the most energetic lover of late night frivolity. Luckily for the faint at heart, just up the street stands the splendid and magnificent Hotel Theresa. In 1912 the building was purchased by Gustavus Sidenberg, a Jewish stock broker of Prussian descent, and built by brothers George and Edward Blum. It was a thirteen-story (considered one of the tallest buildings in Harlem) lavish development. Anointed the "Black Waldorf Astoria," the Hotel Theresa was named after Sidenberg's two wives, who were both named Theresa. The Hotel Theresa entertained the greatest luminaries past and present, Fidel Castro, John

F. Kennedy, and Nikita Khrushchev all stayed at the neo-classically designed hotel. In its heyday (1930s – 60s), Harlem was bold and adventurous, and the Hotel Theresa was at the center of it all. "The Theresa Hotel on Seventh Avenue was the only nice New York hotel that Blacks were allowed to visit or hold functions" (Graham, 261). In 1972, this magnificent structure was rehabilitated into business offices.

When you venture outside the Theresa's enclave of sumptuousness, directly across the street on 125th between 7th and 8th Avenues (Frederick Douglass Boulevard) you are faced with the exuberance and exhilaration of the Apollo Theater. The Apollo is the ultimate landmark of Harlem's existence and musical pride.

In the beginning, the Apollo Theatre was named the Apollo Hall, and was founded by Civil War General Edward Ferrero in 1878 as a dance and ballroom hall. After Ferrero's demise, the architect George Keiste gave the building a new look, and it became Harlem's first vaudeville house. For 30 years the shows were produced by Jules Hurtig and Harry Seamon. After numerous management changes, the Apollo became the "showcase for black entertainers" (White, Norval, 528), and the home of musical magic. In 1934, Schiffman and Brecher became the managers of this musical landmark that booked legends such as Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Jackie Wilson, Marvin Gaye, Sam Cooke, Miles Davis, The Temptations, and Little Stevie Wonder. You cannot forget the unknowns that were discovered at the Apollo including: Ella Fitzgerald, James Brown, Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five, also showcasing the infamous Motown Revue, Diana Ross and The Supremes.

While shouting and screaming with glee for your favorite entertainer at the Apollo, life could not get any better than experiencing ultimate live entertainment. Keeping yourself updated and informed about Harlem's political activities and social events was dominated and dictated by Harlem's premier paper since 1909 – the *Amsterdam News*. The building is located at 2340 8th Avenue on 125th Street in Harlem. Many notable writers graced the pages of the paper with insightful articles of their time including W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, and Marcus Garvey. Presently, the *Amsterdam News* is owned by Elinor Tatum (of the Black-owned Tatum Publishing empire) and is still publishing its paper every Thursday.

Walking along 7th Avenue and up towards 145th street towards Convent Avenue, you enter into what Harlem calls "Sugar Hill." It is a name given to this section of Harlem for its prominent residents that contributed to art, literature, music, and politics. These were individuals who were liberating the people through their remarkable cultural contributions. The evening is still fresh and lively; Harlem is energetic with the sweet succulent smell of Sugar Hill's creative talents and the indigenous people that White America accepted and acknowledged. These were the Blacks that "made it." One reason for this euphoric feeling of living the good life is the spectacular and impressive Strivers Row Townhouses. Located on 138th and 139th Streets between 7th and 8th Avenues these row houses were built originally for whites. Fortunately, for the Black community in the 1940s, they were allowed to live on Strivers' Row (an expression used for Blacks' striving to succeed in an antagonistic society) and enjoy the American Dream for themselves and their families. Originally called the "King Model Houses," the name was changed between 1891-1893 to Strivers' Row. It was redesigned by McKim, Mead & White in the very popular Neoclassical Renaissance style. Not to be outdone, John Jacob Astor bought land on 130th Street and Lenox Avenue (named after James Lenox, philanthropist, bibliophile and founder of the New York Public Library's Lenox Collection) for his friends visiting him in the country. At this time, Harlem was considered suburbia, and Astor entertained like a king. Astor facilitated all of his rich and affluent associates at the Astor Row Houses with its Savannah, Georgia façade style, wooden porches, (this classic structure was very new to builders in Manhattan at that time), and quaint side yards. Today, the Row houses are owned by the New York Savings Bank. Competing with Strivers' Row and the Astor Row houses was the most unique housing complex in Harlem (1927), called the Dunbar Houses, appropriately named after the noted African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906). In the "Valley of Harlem" (an expression used for the Harlem Renaissance period) there are five acres of housing called the "Dunbar," with its Florentine palazzo design located at 147-148th

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# Writer of the Month

Continued on from Page 7

## Still Standing: Harlem Landmarks

Street between 7 and 8th Avenues, owned by John D. Rockefeller Sr., designed by architect Andrew J. Thomas, and the first cooperative housing built for people of African heritage. The Dunbar had a supervised nursery, laundry room, and a bank positioned in the interior of the housing complex. Next door for the “divas” of Harlem, was the Madame C.J. Walker Beauty Shoppe (Madame Walker was the first African American female millionaire in America). The Dunbar housed many well-known personalities, but the most famous was Matthew Henson (1866-1955). Henson was the first African American along with Robert Peary to explore the North Pole and plant the American flag. Fortunately for Harlem, the Dunbar is still standing with many historic memories that have become legends in the era of great buildings.

Walking up Convent Avenue, 145th – 155th St. between Convent and St. Nicholas Avenues you are quickly bombarded with Black history that is mind boggling and extraordinary. The iconic literary giants of the Harlem Renaissance dominate this area of Harlem’s yesteryear. Their stories are compassionate, intellectual, and academic. These were the minds of Harlem’s best and the brightest and considered “The New Negro Movement.” James Weldon Johnson called this a time of “Flowering Negro Literature” (Johnson, 165). Up on the “Hill” the townhouses are lined perfectly with the unique building of shift stone (a stone used in Ancient Egypt) to enhance its magnificent architecture. These are buildings where notable authors lived and worked such as: James Baldwin and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as the poet Langston Hughes (Langston Hughes also lived at 20 East 127th Street, between Park & Madison Avenues). Malcolm Little, aka Malcolm X (the political activist), Redd Fox (comedian) “working side by side at Jimmie’s Chicken Joint, 427 St. Nicholas Avenue when they were both young men, trying to make ends meet” (Boyd, Personal Interview). “Across the street Ralph Ellison was putting his finishing touches on the *Invisible Man* (1952), his address was 749 St. Nicholas Avenue, was one of Sugar Hill’s award-winning novelists” (Boyd, Personal Interview). Ellison wrote his insightful novel about the Black plight in his basement apartment. 749 St. Nicholas Avenue can still hear his typewriter clicking in the darkness. 500 St. Nicholas Avenue became the residence of “who’s who” in the Black community. Residing in this apartment building you definitely arrived in the social circles of the Harlem elite. This apartment building landmark now, but it is not as prestigious as it used to be; however, 500 St. Nicholas Avenue is still the “prima donna” of housing on Sugar Hill.

When you leave the “Hill” and walk further up towards Hamilton Heights, (145th and Convent Avenue towards Amsterdam and 155th Street), you enter into Harlem’s country living (dating back since early 1800s). The Heights was named after Alexander Hamilton (the first Secretary of Treasury in the United States) who owned a 32 acre country home called Hamilton Grange in 1772 (the Grange was named after Hamilton’s grandfather’s house in Scotland). On his death, the Episcopal Church bought Hamilton’s house in 1804 and relocated the building to 287 Convent Avenue, hence Hamilton Heights was born. The Hamilton Grange has had its share of troubles and moves; however, 287 is still its “home sweet home” in Harlem. Further up the hill, where 10 St. Nicholas Avenue intersects with 150th Street you cannot help but stop and stare at the splendor of James and Ruth Bailey’s house. The Barnum and Bailey Circus business manger built and lived in this luxurious mansion in 1888. The mansion has stained glass windows designed by a cousin of Louis Comfort Tiffany. The Bailey’s “rockface granite mansion, with its Dutch gable and corner tower was styled for a king” (White, Norval, 517). The architecture resembles a medieval castle, the last of the Victorian relics in Harlem. The Bailey House is a masterpiece of so many different styles and façades. Bailey was the impresario of the “Greatest Show on Earth” and his Harlem St. Nick’s Avenue mansion is a reflection of J.B. (affectionately called) and his imagination. Margaret Blake, a black woman who owned the mansion for several years (turning it into the M. Marshall Blake funeral home), sold it in 2009 for \$1.4 million. You would be remiss if you bypass the memorable and most important contribution of Harlem’s Heights; the Harlem River Houses, New York City Housing Authority’s first projects built for African American families. The houses are located at 151st and West 153rd Street, between Macombs Place and Harlem River Drive. It was NYC’s first federally funded, federally owned, and federally built housing project spearheaded by an African American architect, John Louis Wilson in 1935. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal social program implemented this housing project with funding from the Public Works Administration (PWA). The housing project comprised of a child care and health center and community room. Rent was \$21.00 per month with 11,000 new residents (of whom only 12 are left). The Harlem River Housing Projects is a success story of how a community took charge of their lives and built a landmark that was a prototype for all to emulate in architectural archives. Mr. John Louis Wilson, we are still talking about your vision.

Heading back into the valley (145th and 7th Avenue) you must stop by the *Amsterdam News* Headquarters. One of the many historic churches on Sugar Hill is the Faith Temple Church, 1763 Amsterdam Avenue located at the top of Sugar Hill. It was the only church that dared to eulogize the funeral services of beloved brother Malcolm X. On February 27, 1965 Faith Temple took the plunge and bid a fond farewell to Malcolm X. Prior to this momentous moment in Harlem, the Faith Temple was originally a community synagogue from the 1930s through the 1940s. The community of Harlem praises this landmark for the courageous stance it took during the turbulent 60s. The death of Malcolm brought Faith Temple and its synagogue, black and white Harlemites together, if only for a short time. There are many synagogues built in Harlem that are now churches - The Mt. Olivet Baptist Church has that distinction. Located at 201 Lenox Avenue (Malcolm X Boulevard) it was originally Temple Israel Synagogue, designed by Arnold Brunner in 1906-07. Brunner studied in Paris where he perfected the Classical Revival of Synagogues. In 1925, Temple Israel became the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, with a congregation of predominately African Americans. Looking at this prominent building from afar, you can see the Stars of David etched into the four enormous Romanesque columns. Mt. Olivet is a site to behold, and this Harlem landmark has held the community close to its heart for decades.

At the end of the day Harlem is weary, tired, and exhausted from the hustle and bustle of its week. However, the indigenous people and the neighborhoods are abuzz with excitement for the weekend. It could be dancing at the Savoy, jumpin’ and jivin’ at the Renny’s Ballroom, prayin’ at Abyssinian Baptist Church, and chillin’ at Hotel Theresa, educatin’ or reacquainting yourself with the Black literary geniuses. Whatever the case may be, Harlem speaks loud and clear about its precious landmarks. Bestowing on the Black culture and all cultures around the world that come to explore its exuberance and historical legacy, no matter what, these buildings are still here and standing strong with incomparable truth, knowledge, and history.

## You Are My Disappearing Act


By Latitia Collins

I once had your love when it was only me. Then another came and I disappeared into the dark. That other person sees you every day when you awaken, while I only see you or hear your voice when you call me or I call you. That little girl who used to visit you often and then you did what you did and I stopped visiting altogether. And although you say you are sorry, those wounds will never disperse from my memory; they will never fade away.

Then I hear of another who will take my place again and takes my twin’s place as well; this hurts me how I find out this way, although it shouldn’t surprise me ‘cause you’re not the same, when it was just me. Although I don’t complain, I just sit there or ponder and say, “Why put another in this circle? Does my twin ghost not have meaning even though he’s gone? Can’t you respect him by keeping your pride to yourself?”

I don’t know what else to say or even what more to write on this matter but I will say this: my squirt will only be my other and no other one that is coming will take her place. That is my promise and no other one will say I’m this or that, because they mean something, but it’s just another thing to block against seeing me everyday like you used to when I was small and work does matter and so does leaving another but you should never let that overshadow the one you had in the brighter beginning.

So you make me fade into the dark and one day when you realize that you did this and the events that made this occur, you will be ridden with hate but it will be too late. I’m light when I am me or with someone else when you’re here. I’m light too, but when you ignore me, lie to me, or do things that you have done before then you are nothing but darkness to me and only a disappearing act.



*The*


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# Outside the Quad

## Imagine By Dwight Peters

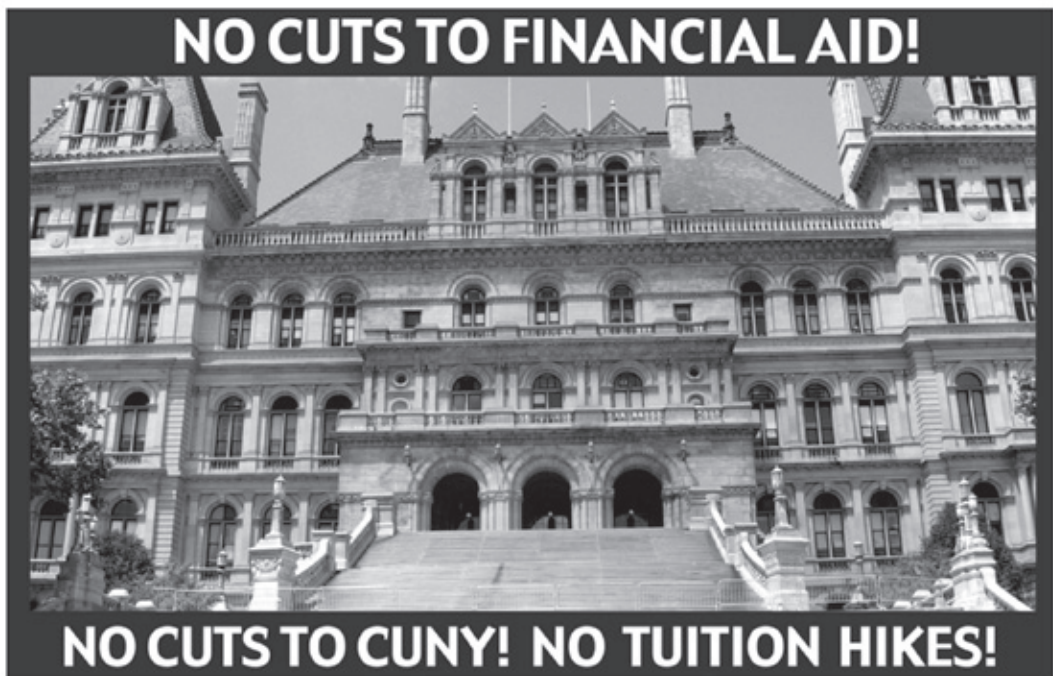
Imagine walking into the registrar's office and being told, "Your money is no good here, changes have been made to the nation's budget and we have enough to provide everybody with free tuition." Imagine. Imagine the chants throughout the world of "tax the rich" actually happening and creating so much capital that the deficit within our budget were closed. Imagine. Imagine the Stock Transfer Tax, a minimum tax of 5 cents on every stock traded on Wall Street, being applied. This would bring billions of dollars to New York. Imagine.

Young people throughout the world are standing up and demanding that their elected officials pass the appropriate tax laws that would require the rich to pay their share. Within New York, we see a large gap in wealth, as 1% of the population receives 44% of the state's wealth. We are broke as a state, yet Wall Street has just had a record-breaking year, with CEO's earning all-time high profits. The truth is that neither the country nor the state is broke; the gap between the rich and poor is just being increased.

CUNY was free from 1847 to 1976. People ask why I speak about the past, and it's because I am afraid for our future. We fought for our civil rights, the naysayers called us crazy, yet we got them. We fought for open admission, the naysayers called us crazy, yet we got it. We've fought for countless things, from women's rights to workers' rights, all throughout history. Let's step it up one notch. Let's fight for free, quality higher education.

The economic crisis was not brought by you or me making bad business decisions, nor was it because of our greed, so should we have to be the ones that suffer? The Stock Transfer Tax and an extension of the millionaire's tax would help us finance our public entities, instead of cutting their funding. We are facing the closures of schools and hospitals. We blame the teachers for failing our students, we blame the students for failing, but who is really to blame? Education is an investment in this country and in countries throughout the world. Yet, governments refuse to participate in it

Education is a right. If you can barely afford your own education, imagine how difficult it will be for your children when they reach your age. Imagine. Demand free tuition. Demand a fair opportunity. Demand that we use progressive taxes to rectify our nation's problem. It's only right that the wealthiest of the country pull their weight; we have been sacrificing long enough.



## **NYPIRG / USS / PSC Student/Faculty Higher Education Action Day**

————— **SAVE THE DATE** —————  
**Tuesday, March 15, 2011, Albany, NY**



For more info and to sign up for the  
**March 15 Albany Action Day**  
call

**Dwight Peters**  
**dwight.peters86@gmail.com**  
**(646) 428-5471**

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# Outside the Quad



## Global Perspectives

SPRING 2011

2155 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453  
718.289.5100 www.bcc.cuny.edu

**BRONX**  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE

International initiatives represent an important component of the educational experience at Bronx Community College. Our vision is to graduate students who are prepared to live within, profit from, and contribute to a 21st century global environment marked by diversity, change, and expanded opportunities for learning and growth. Our co-curricular activities offer students and faculty unique opportunities to expand upon classroom instruction. By reinforcing global learning through interdisciplinary and creative activities, we help to prepare our students for an internationally complex environment. This year, many academic departments and BCC centers have continued to work together to produce programming that engages all segments of the College community. The themes that are listed offer the framework for the academic year's global activities, which should serve as an important co-curricular resource for both students and faculty. We hope that you will support and enjoy these events this spring.

### Themes

- GA** Global Awareness, Tolerance and Understanding
- GE** Globalization and the Economy
- GW** Global Women
- GH** Global Health
- IC** International Culture
- IS** International Students
- LE** Literacy and Education
- SE** Sustainability and the Environment

### FEBRUARY

Thursday, 2/24

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR • IS

Meister Hall Lobby/12-2 p.m.  
Please join us every last Thursday of each month to make friends, get involved, and start the weekend. The coffee is free!

Coordinated by Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn, Director, International Students Office

### MARCH

Tuesday, 3/1

UNITED NATIONS PATHWAYS VIDEOCONFERENCE SERIES • GA BY INVITATION ONLY

This semester's Fairleigh Dickinson University United Nations Pathways Videoconference series is organized by FDU's Office of Global Learning. BCC students will participate in the College's videoconference facility. The session will be moderated by H. E. Ambassador Ahmad Kamal of the Ambassador's Club at the United Nations. Coordinated by Ms. Barbara Schaefer-Peleg, National Center for Educational Alliances, and Professor Andrew Rowan, National Center for Educational Alliances and Department of English

Thursday, 3/3

GLOBAL FILM SERIES: PERSEPOLIS • GW (OCD)

Meister Hall, Schwendler Auditorium/12-2 p.m.  
**A FILM BY MARJANE SATRAPI AND VINCENT PARONNAUD (96 MINUTES)**  
*Persepolis* is the poignant story of a young girl in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. This animated film follows the young girl as she comes of age against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution and ends with Marjane as a 24-year-old expatriate. The title is a reference to the historic city of Persepolis. Moderated by Dr. Kate Culklin, Department of History, who also coordinates the film series.

Tuesday, 3/8

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: VOICES OF WOMEN • GW (OCD)

Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center, Playhouse/12-2 p.m.  
The College's observance of Women's History Month begins with a celebration of the creative voices of women and their poetry as well as the unveiling of the nominees for the 2011 Women's Virtual Hall of Fame (WVHF). Voices of Women will feature a multicultural mix of poets celebrating the lives and achievements of women around the world. Members of BCC's Speech, Drama and Debate Team will introduce a QuickTime video produced by students from the Media Tech Film Society that introduces the nine nominees for election to the 2011 WVHF. Coordinated by Dr. Tamar Rothenberg, Department of History; Professor Gloria Rodriguez, Department of Social Sciences; Professor Ellen Mareneck, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences; Ms. Barbara Schaefer-Peleg, National Center for Educational Alliances; Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life; and Professor Andrew Rowan, National Center for Educational Alliances and Department of English

Tuesday, 3/15

WOMEN SPEAK ON GLOBAL CITIZENRY AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THEIR HOMELANDS: AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, INDIA, AND PAKISTAN • GW (OCD)

Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center, Playhouse/2-4 p.m.  
Ms. Shayma Daneshjo (UNICEF), Dr. Elhum Haghighat-Sordellini (Lehman College), Dr. Vrunda Prabhu (Bronx Community College), Dr. Farnosh Saeedi (Bronx Community College), and Ms. Sehba Sarwar (Voices Breaking Boundaries) will discuss the status of women in their homelands. They will also discuss how the status intersects with their roles as global citizens and professionals involved in areas such as art, scholarship, community activism, and diplomacy. Coordinated by Dr. Sandra Tarlin, Department of English; Dr. Farnosh Saeedi, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology; and Dr. Vrunda Prabhu, Department of Mathematics

Thursday, 3/17

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD SCARCITY WORLDWIDE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS • SE (OCD)

Meister Hall, Schwendler Auditorium/12-2 p.m.  
Environmental degradation has upset the balance of planet Earth. Deforestation, soil erosion and flooding,

among other causes, have compromised the natural resources that provide food to people. As a result, there are countries where scarcity of food violates the primary human rights of existence—such as nourishment and health—and causes starvation, the proliferation of lethal diseases, and death. The panel will explore the issue of food scarcity—from the biological and nursing perspectives—and offer suggestions at the governmental and grassroots levels to help alleviate this problem. Coordinated by Dr. Marcia Jones, Professor Catherine Mhewe, and Dr. Claudette Gordon, Department of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences; and Dr. Claudio Mazzatenta, Department of Biology and Medical Laboratory Technology

Thursday, 3/24

SGA "GO GREEN" WORKSHOP • SE (OCD) Begrish Hall 228/12-2 p.m.

BCC's Student Government Association will educate the student body about how to practice sustainability on campus and in everyday life. This event is sponsored by the Student Government Association. Coordinated by Mr. William Murray and Ms. Julissa Lora, Student Government Association

Thursday, 3/31

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN • GW (OCD) Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center, Playhouse/12-2 p.m.

BCC marks the end of Women's History Month with the induction of the 2011 members into the Women's Virtual Hall of Fame. Members of the Speech, Drama and Debate team will also be featured as they bring to life dramatic and enduring speeches by a dynamic group of women whose achievements have had long-lasting and widespread impact across the globe. Coordinated by Dr. Tamar Rothenberg, Department of History; Professor Gloria Rodriguez, Department of Social Sciences; Professor Ellen Mareneck, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences; Ms. Barbara Schaefer-Peleg, National Center for Educational Alliances; Professor Andrew Rowan, National Center for Educational Alliances and Department of English; and Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life

Thursday, 3/31

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR • IS

Meister Hall Lobby/12-2 p.m.  
Please join us every last Thursday of each month to make friends, get involved, and start the weekend. The coffee is free!

Coordinated by Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn, Director, International Students Office

### APRIL

Friday-Friday, 4/1-29

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT: AFRICAN TRANSITIONS, 1980-2010 • IC

Bliss Hall, Hall of Fame Art Gallery/Times TBD  
This exhibit focuses on images of Africa produced since the close of the major revolutionary movements in the 1980s. It will include works by African and American photographers who have traveled and documented "change" in African countries over the last 30 years. The exhibit is about the social, political, economic, technological, and health care upheavals that have come with African independence—and that have shaped the identity and circumstances in various African countries today. Curated by Professor Mary Jo Mazella Ben-Nun, Department of Music and Art, and Mr. Eugene Adams, Office of Collaborative Programs

Tuesday, 4/5

A DISCUSSION OF BUSINESS ETHICS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: US CORPORATIONS AND THE CONTRACTING OF OVERSEAS MANUFACTURERS • GE (OCD)

Location and Time TBD  
This session will address some of the ethical issues regarding the outsourcing of certain manufacturing tasks to foreign countries. We will look at the reasons for this shift to offshore manufacturing, the impact on both the US and overseas workers, and issues regarding workplace conditions. Coordinated by Professor Clarence Perkins, Department of Business and Information Systems; Dr. John Asimakopoulou, Department of Social Sciences; and Professor Zuwang Shen, Library and Learning Resources Center

Thursday, 4/7

GLOBAL FILM SERIES: FOR THE NEXT 7 GENERATIONS • GW (OCD)

Meister Hall, Schwendler Auditorium/12-2 p.m.  
**A FILM BY CAROLE HART (85 MINUTES)**  
In 2004, thirteen indigenous grandmothers from around the world, moved by their concern for our

planet, came together at a historic gathering. They decided to form an alliance: The International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers. *For the Next 7 Generations* follows what happens when these wise women unite. Facing a world in crisis, they share with us their visions of healing and a call for change now, before it's too late. This film series is coordinated by Dr. Kate Culklin. Sponsored by the Office of Student Life. Moderated by Professor Gloria Rodriguez, Department of Social Sciences

Monday, 4/11

CTE MEET THE AUTHOR SERIES: DR. MARK MATHABANE • GA (OCD)

Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center, Playhouse/12-2 p.m.

Dr. Mathabane attributes his own survival and success in life to embracing the spirit of "Ubuntu," which enabled him to overcome deep-seated prejudices and fears of others. He uses vivid examples from his own life growing up in a segregated ghetto in South Africa to challenge, inspire and empower students to grapple with the complexities of what it means to be human and to become better global citizens. Cosponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Center for Tolerance and Understanding, and the Office of Student Life. Coordinated by Dr. Harriet Shenkman, Center for Teaching Excellence, and Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life

Tuesday, 4/12

UNITED NATIONS PATHWAYS VIDEOCONFERENCE SERIES • GA

BY INVITATION ONLY  
This semester's Fairleigh Dickinson University United Nations Pathways Videoconference series is organized by FDU's Office of Global Learning. BCC students will participate in the College's videoconference facility. The session will be moderated by H. E. Ambassador Ahmad Kamal of the Ambassador's Club at the United Nations. Coordinated by Ms. Barbara Schaefer-Peleg, National Center for Educational Alliances, and Professor Andrew Rowan, National Center for Educational Alliances and Department of English

Thursday, 4/14

EARTH DAY AND GREEN FESTIVAL • SE (OCD)

Colston Hall, Lower Level; Meister Hall, Lobby, Patio and Schwendler Auditorium; and Roscoe C. Brown Jr. Student Center, Playhouse/All Day  
Guest speakers offer views about local and global environmental issues. Demonstrations and training will be offered on how to incorporate practical, energy-saving practices into everyday life. Students will also learn how to incorporate tasty organic foods into their menus. Cosponsored by the BCC Garden Club and the Office of Student Life. Coordinated by Mr. Luis Torres, Center for Sustainable Energy; Dr. Tamar Rothenberg, Department of History; Dr. Claudio Mazzatenta, Department of Biology and Medical Laboratory Technology; Dr. Farnosh Saeedi, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Technology; Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life; Dr. Luis Montenegro, Department of Physics; and Professor Charmaine Aleong, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Wellness

Thursday, 4/14

EARTH DAY FILM: THE COVE • SE (OCD)

A FILM BY LOUIE PSIHUYOS (90 MINUTES)

Meister Hall, Schwendler Auditorium/12-2 p.m.  
Using state-of-the-art equipment, a group of activists (led by renowned dolphin trainer Ric O'Barry) infiltrate a cove near Taiji, Japan. Both a shocking instance of animal abuse and a serious threat to human health are exposed. Coordinated by Dr. Claudio Mazzatenta, Department of Biology and Medical Laboratory Technology; Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life; Mr. Luis Torres, Center for Sustainable Energy; and Dr. Julie Bolt, Department of English

Thursday, 4/28

GLOBAL LEARNING CONNECTIONS: HEALTH, NUTRITION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD/CHILDHOOD EDUCATION • LE (OCD)

Colston Hall, 4th Floor/12-2 p.m.  
Department of Education and Reading faculty will facilitate reading students in preparing, presenting and displaying projects on the global impact of poor health and malnutrition on the development and education of young children. Coordinated and facilitated by Dr. Joan Wilson, Professor Diane D'Alessio, and Professor Georgene Osborne, Department of Education and Reading

Thursday, 4/28

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR • IS

Meister Hall Lobby/12-2 p.m.  
Please join us every last Thursday of each month to make friends, get involved, and start the weekend. The coffee is free!

Coordinated by Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn, Director, International Students Office

### MAY

Tuesday, 5/3

Multicultural Week  
FILM AND TALK BACK SESSION: FAGBUG • GA (OCD)

A FILM BY ERIN DAVIES (83 MINUTES)

Colston Hall, Lower Level/12-4 p.m.  
On the 11th Annual National Day of Silence, Erin Davies was victim to a hate crime in Albany, NY. Because she was sporting a rainbow sticker on her VW Beetle, her car was vandalized. The words "fag" and "u r gay" were placed on the car. Despite initial shock and embarrassment, she embraced what happened and left the graffiti on the car. She then took her car, now known worldwide as the "fagbug," on a 58-day trip around the United States and Canada. Erin's mission is to raise awareness about hate crimes and homophobia, to give a voice for those who are silent, and to inspire others to take a stand against bullies. Coordinated by Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life, and Mr. William Murray, Student Government Association

Wednesday, 5/4

Multicultural Week  
RELIGION, NON-RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY: A DISCUSSION TO FOSTER CAMPUS TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING • GA (OCD)

Colston Hall, Lower Level/10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Student leaders and faculty will host a campus-wide discussion to examine the ways we express our faith, non-faith and spirituality at BCC. Cosponsored by the Center for Tolerance and Understanding, the Office of Student Life, the Department of Social Sciences, the Campus Ministry, the Secular Humanist Club, the Muslim Students Association (MSA), the Christian Club, and the Truth Club

Thursday, 5/5

SGA BBQ & GLOBAL MUSIC FEST

Gould Residence Hall Patio and Lawn (Rain Location: Colston Hall, Lower Level)/10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Enjoy the annual end-of-semester BBQ and listen to a rich variety of music from around the globe. Coordinated by Ms. Melissa Kirk, Office of Student Life, and the Student Government Association

Thursday, 5/5

WOMEN'S GLOBAL FILM: UP THE YANGTZE • GW (OCD)

Meister Hall, Schwendler Auditorium/12-2 p.m.  
**A FILM BY YUNG CHANG (93 MINUTES)**  
*Up the Yangtze* explores lives transformed by the biggest hydroelectric dam in history, a hotly contested symbol of the Chinese economic miracle. China's massive Three Gorges Dam is altering the landscape and the lives of people living along the fabled Yangtze River. The Yu family desperately seeks a reprieve by sending their 16-year-old daughter to work in the cruise ship industry that has sprung up to give tourists a last glimpse of the legendary river valley. This film series is coordinated by Dr. Kate Culklin, Department of History. Moderated by Dr. Tamar Rothenberg, Department of History

Tuesday, 5/10

SGA "GO GREEN" WORKSHOP • SE (OCD)

Loew Hall, Room 200/2-4 p.m.  
BCC's Student Government Association will educate the student body about how to practice sustainability on campus and in everyday life. This event is sponsored by the Student Government Association. Coordinated by Mr. William Murray and Ms. Julissa Lora, Student Government Association

Thursday, 5/26

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR • IS

Meister Hall Lobby/12-2 p.m.  
Please join us every last Thursday of each month to make friends, get involved, and start the weekend. The coffee is free!

Coordinated by Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn, Director, International Students Office

# Poetry Corner

## The Dead of Winter

By William Murray (December 26, 2010)

don't wither  
in the windward blizzard  
like green figs from the tree  
like leaves of the vineyard  
I fear the sky will roll  
like dead sea scrolls  
and the stars collapse  
inward  
to black holes  
you just never know  
when the light  
through the clouds  
equals the light reflected  
off the snow  
how not to disappear  
until the driven flakes  
of crystal  
clear

## Poverty 101

By Shelton Watson

Step into my realm  
Come away from the sun  
Enter the gloomy clouds  
Of "Poverty 101."

I'm a thousand miles away  
From smelling an inch of wealth  
I could only vision the day  
Success is actually dealt.

Come down to my level  
For one day - consider us equal  
Taste this poverty for yourself  
As if you y'all are poor people

It doesn't feel so nice  
To live this type of life  
Yet, I must be happy, quiet and obey your law.

And I ask you this:  
How could I do such a thing  
If poverty is all I ever saw?

A constructed system  
Designed to keep me behind  
And then you send me to jail  
When this poverty causes me to lose my mind.

Surviving off what I would call "needles & thread" ...

Equivalent feelings of a person who lies dead ...

It is this accepted poverty to why I could never see  
myself ever getting ahead ...

Poverty ... 101!

## Cause and Effect

By Lakisha Leonti

Some are not really causes  
But just symptoms  
And we misdiagnose  
A sickness  
For a symptom  
Of the real sickness

The cause  
And the effect  
Are often interchanged

For instance  
Is poverty the cause  
Of crime  
Or is poverty  
Only the symptom  
Of it?

For instance  
Is ignorance  
The cause of poverty  
Or is it simply  
An effect of poverty?

Or is poverty  
Nothing but an effect  
Of ignorance?

Or is poverty  
Just an effect  
Of an oppression  
Of the rich  
Taking much  
From the poor  
Who get poorer  
Everyday  
Because there  
Are no reforms  
Coming  
To solve  
His poverty  
His ignorance  
His having to commit a crime  
To survive  
His poverty  
His ignorance  
His being a crime  
Of  
Society itself  
That never cared  
And wanted him  
Who never  
Instituted the much  
Promised reforms?

And so you doubt  
The cause and effect  
The effect from cause  
And if you did not mind so  
Well

They may always be  
Interchanged  
And mistaken  
For the symptoms  
The conditions  
That always  
Are  
there deceiving.

## Your Presence

Robelkys Vargas

I love with you the intensity of every starry night,  
In every second of my existence,  
In every heartbeat that is inside my body  
I love you in every kiss of your colorful lips,  
In every brush of the wind.

With your presence the strength of the wind  
becomes softer and subtle,  
Stars acquire more light in their distant space from  
the earth  
Your presence incite that every particle of my body  
shudders,  
Desiring to feel the brush of your skin,  
Your lips, your glance.

When I look at you I feel the love that burns in your  
eyes,  
Which are the mirror to your soul,  
I feel that the world knees down before my feet  
I want to embrace you  
And stay by your side for the rest of my life  
And that nobody could move us apart

You're the sun that lights up my soul every morning  
You're the moon that makes me company every  
night  
At the moment I gaze at every structure of the sky,  
Every moment of my life

**JOIN  
A  
CLUB**

Mark your calendars! The New York International Auto Show will return to the Jacob Javits Convention Center from April 22-May 1, 2011. Combined in one venue, you will see some of the hottest and newest cars and trucks you have ever seen. That includes more sneak peeks, more brand new '11 & '12 production models and more concept vehicles than ever before.

2011 Show Information:	
<b>Location</b>	Jacob Javits Convention Center 11th ave between 34 & 40 Streets
<b>Public Show Dates</b>	Friday April 22nd through Sunday May 1st <b>NEW HOURS! Monday – Saturday: 10am – 10pm</b> (Sundays: 10am - 7pm)
<b>Special Public Sneak Preview</b>	Friday April 22nd 10am - 10pm
<b>Official Opening Day</b>	Saturday April 23rd Festivities begin at 8:30am SHOW FLOOR OPENS AT 10am
<b>Press Preview</b> <i>Credentials required</i>	Wednesday April 20th & Thursday April 21st
<b>Dealer Preview</b> <i>Credentials required</i>	Thursday April 21st from 4-10 pm By invitation only

Note: all information is subject to change

# A SPRING POETRY READING AND WORKSHOP

## BY PUBLISHED POETS & WRITERS FROM



Featuring BCC Alumni  
C. D. Grant & Gary Johnston, Founders  
with  
Layding Kaliba  
Nikki Williams  
David Mills  
Sandra Maria Esteves  
Brenda Connor-Bey



BLIND BEGGAR PRESS was created by Gary Johnston and C.D. Grant in 1977 out of workshops and readings they had done as students at BCC. After over 30 years, the company has survived and expanded.

***Poetry Reading & Discussion***  
***Tuesday, March 22, Noon - 2 pm***  
***Hall of Fame Playhouse***

An Open Discussion with Q&A  
will follow the Reading.

***Writer's Workshop***  
***Tuesday, March 29, Noon - 2 pm***  
***Colston Hall, Lower Level***

Led by C.D. Grant, Gary Johnston and  
Brenda Connor-Bey, 2008 Poet Laureate  
of Greenburgh, New York.

**Co-sponsored by the BCC Office of Student Life**  
***Seating is limited. Please register online at***  
***<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bbppoetryworkshop>***

**GET OCD CREDIT FOR THESE PROGRAMS!**

***For more information visit: [www.facebook.com/bccstudentlife](http://www.facebook.com/bccstudentlife)***

This program is made possible by a grant from the Bronx Council on the Arts with funding from the New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Program. BLIND BEGGAR PRESS, INC. is a non-profit publisher registered with New York State and the federal government. [www.blindbeggarpress.org](http://www.blindbeggarpress.org)

# Outside the Quad

## The World's Longest Running Dictator to Be Overthrown?

By Mikhail Shevchenko

As tensions escalate in Libya, a country ruled by the beleaguered dictatorship of Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, violence is spreading like wildfire as the civil uprisings make their way closer to the country's capital of Tripoli. Libya borders Tunisia to its west and Egypt to its east. These two countries are of note because their revolutions are the catalysts that sparked the numerous protests currently going on in the Arab world. As the popular uprisings continue to gain momentum, Gaddafi is determined to face the opposition head-on using the country's military. His approach is quickly making the situation in Libya the most violent of the uprisings currently taking place around the world.

Colonel Gaddafi, the self-proclaimed Brotherly Leader and Guide of the Revolution, has ruled Libya for the last forty-two years. The "revolution" to which his title alludes is a bloodless coup that deposed Libya's former monarch King Idris I. Idris was the first and only monarch that Libya had since the country declared independence on December 24, 1951. On September 1, 1969 Gaddafi, a young military captain at the time, led a successful military coup d'état against the monarchy. After the deposition and subsequent exile of King Idris I, Gaddafi was promoted to the rank of colonel and became the de facto head of the new Libyan government.

Libya has the highest Human Development Index (HDI) of any African country and its gross domestic product is the fourth highest in Africa. This is due to numerous factors. Libya is a major exporter of petroleum and is a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, or as it is commonly referred, OPEC. It boasts the largest proven oil reserves in Africa, followed by Nigeria and Algeria, respectively. The petroleum industry accounts for nearly all of Libya's export revenue and more than half of its GDP. Nationalization of the petroleum industry along with a relatively low population in comparison to its geographic area has allowed for the creation of numerous social services, including public housing and education. Despite Libya's progressive social programs, the general unemployment rate hovers at around 10%.

The insurrectionist movement in Libya has proven to be the most bloody and violent of all of the ongoing protests in the Middle East and North Africa. This is a stark contrast to the military coup that saw Gaddafi usurp power from Libya's former monarch. While the casualties in Egypt are estimated to be between three and four hundred, the death toll in Libya is swelling to numbers nearing four figures. Many speculate how much more time Gaddafi has to remain in power as the protest movements slowly close in around him. February 17<sup>th</sup> brought some of the bloodiest fighting since the unrest began. Shootouts in the capital occurred as protesters attempted to converge on what is quickly becoming Gaddafi's last stronghold in the country. The area around the city of Benghazi, where the protest movement started, is already considering itself independent and free of the totalitarian clutches of the Gaddafi regime. With a slew of ministers and military officials already defecting and siding with the protest movement, one can only speculate how long it will take to topple the regime of one of the most polarizing military dictatorships in the region.

## Empowering Lives in The Bronx and South Africa: The Partnership is Growing

By Dr. Andrea Parmegiani

Dear students and colleagues,

I am writing from Durban, South Africa, where I have just spent a week strengthening a long-standing project with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. We started exactly a year ago with students from both institutions taking the time to think about all the challenges they had to overcome in order to get to university. With the help of their professors, students turned these thoughts into personal essays that were exchanged by email so that BCC students could be inspired by the personal essays written by UKZN students, and vice-versa.

Last fall, students taking English 02 with me, RDL 02 with Professor Georgene Osborne, and OCD with Professor Monique Fortune, chose six essays from BCC and six from South Africa to be published in an anthology entitled *Transforming Lives through Education: Stories of Empowerment from BCC and UKZN*. The students themselves edited this anthology and presented it at the learning community showcase last December.

Each of the twelve stories of empowerment included in this anthology is very different from each other, as the events that shaped each student's life are quite unique. Yet, all the stories send a similar message to the reader: while the challenges that come our way may be very strong, we, as human beings, have the power to transform our lives for the better by tapping into our inner strength and the support of our communities. It is not surprising that when we shared these stories in class, students felt even more inspired to use education as a tool for personal empowerment.

The BCC students whose stories have been published in the anthology are: Frank Ulloa, Christopher Blake, Taj Dyer, Lewis Nduka, Kervin Bravo, Reimy Gomez. The UKZN students are Gugu Mhlabane, Nompumelelo Buthelezi, Lulama, Nosipho Ngcobo, Noxolo Mnguni, and Snenhlanhla Zondo

This week we held an award ceremony at UKZN to celebrate all the twenty-five students who took part in this project on the South African end. Each of these students received a flashcard with a BCC ribbon, which was donated by the Center for Teaching Excellence. Gugu Mhlabane, whose story is published in this issue of *The Communicator*, gave a reading which moved the audience deeply.

The ceremony was attended by Professor Rosemary Wildsmith, head of the school of Language, Literature and Linguistics of UKZN, Professor Leonora Jackson, director of the Access Humanity Program, and Dr. Veena Lutchman, who supervised the writing process of the UKZN students involved in the project.

After the ceremony, I met with a new group of students who have just started UKZN. With their instructor, Ms. Drew Woodrooffe, I ran a workshop on writing narratives of empowerment. In about a month, we will receive new stories. In the meantime, I invite you to read Gugu's story "I Never Thought Life Would Take Me This Far."

## I Never Thought Life Would Take Me This Far

By Gugu Mhlabane

My name is Gugulethu Sherif Mhlabane, and I am 19 years old. I come from a very disadvantaged family background. I live in an extended family with my mother, uncles, aunts, cousins and cousins' cousins.

Being the first and last born of teenage parents was very difficult for me as I was growing up. I never had time to spend with my parents as they were busy doing their school work. Every morning I had to stay with uGogo (my grandmother) while my mother was in school. My grandmother and I would go from house to house selling vegetables for a living.

Luckily, two years later my Dad got a job as a Soldier with the South African National Defence Force and things started going smoothly for us. My mother finished high school and my grandmother continued to take good care of me while she was working on part time jobs.

Things started getting rough when my parents separated. My father left us. I got no more attention, money, food from him. In June the very same year I had more problems at home. My cousin Tshepo started suffering from headaches and saying that he had pains in his spinal cord for about a week. He was diagnosed as being mentally ill. He began doing very strange things around the house. I could not cope with school because I was writing my mid-term exams and I was so depressed because Tshepo had to stop attending school. He was doing grade 11 before his illness, but after his illness, he couldn't even write his name anymore. But with God and his grace I did manage to pass.

On 14 June, it was Friday; I went to visit Tshepo at the hospital. He was really ill. He lay still with his eyes closed. They told us that he had TB Meningitis and he could not survive, and if he survived he would sit on a wheelchair. After he died, I felt like I did not belong to this world again. He was like a brother to me, but I did not allow his death to stop me. I knew that I had to accept what happened, move on, and focus on my studies and my life.

At school, I had a big problem with Math. When I finished high school, I passed all my subjects with good grades, but I did not pass maths, so I did not meet the minimum requirements for going to university. I had to stay at home for the whole year. I would lock myself in my room for days without eating or doing anything. My Mom thought I wanted to commit suicide because I had the lowest self-esteem ever in my life.

Luckily, I applied to UKZN and I was accepted into a program for exceptional students from disadvantaged schools. Today I am in University, away from home, and, enjoying my studies. I never thought life would take me this far.

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