

Paterson Post

February 15, 2018

Valedictorian Returns to Eastside

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Journalism I

In January, the Eastside Campus Media Center held a college fair and mentoring session. Students who had graduated from various high schools throughout the city visited to share their college experiences with Eastside's current seniors. The college students who attended the session hailed from a myriad of colleges and universities, from William Paterson University to Virginia Tech. The seniors were attentive and asked fantastic questions.

Akilah Thomas, School of Information Technology (SOIT) valedictorian for the Class of 2017 was among the visitors. She spoke about her transition from high school to college, stating that it was relatively easy because she participated in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). "The hours in EOP were very long compared to an actual school day, but taught time management, which is the most important thing to master in college," said Akilah.

Even though Akilah appeared to have experienced the ideal high school life, there were things she wished she might have done differently. For example, as she attended a technology focused on math and problem solving, Akilah wished she had spent more time focusing on complex subjects like mathematics. On the other hand, she maintained her 4.0 GPA throughout high school by making sure all her work was on time, studying with peers who were equally motivated, and asking for help when she needed it.

Akilah wholeheartedly embraces college life because there is so much freedom. However, she admitted that she misses her friends. On the topic of friendship, her advice would be to "Not let failed friendships get to you because, in life, you'll lose and gain friends, but through it all, you should remain focused on you."

When deciding to attend college, Akilah quotes Benjamin Franklin who once said, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." For example, Akilah noted that interest on her educational investment would eventually pay dividends, "as soon as you can start working in your field of study." She went on to add, "Make sure to apply for financial aid, and network. It is definitely important to establish contacts in order to link yourself with those people who can further your career."

She also spoke about failing a test, "It's only one test. All the greats learn from failure. Pick yourself up and try better on the next one, because the biggest failure in life is to quit."

Akilah is studying computer science and aims to be a computer programmer, but is open to experiencing different jobs along the way. According to Akilah, her best advice is, "Your biggest competition is yourself. You can do what you think -- you can't if you don't believe in yourself."

Reading with the Secretary of State at School 21

School 21 played host to a very special visitor, none other than New Jersey's brand new Secretary of State, Ms. Tahesha Way. Ms. Way spent much of her time at School 21 in Ms. Beamon's 4th grade class reading a book of quotations from the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King in honor of Black History Month. Two lucky students, Josue Huitron, and Kavon Roberts were engaged to read along with the Secretary of State and they did a great job!



Flu Prevention is the Best Medicine!

It is Flu Season and we must all take precautions to prevent catching or spreading the flu. District staff and children are advised to take the following steps to help prevent the transmission of infections such as influenza:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- Wash hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing;
- Stay home if you are sick; keep your child at home if they are sick, especially with a fever.

Return to school only when you or your child are fever-free, without the aid of any fever reducing medications.

If you have not received a flu shot, it is not too late. Flu shots are available at the Paterson Division of Health at (973)-321-1277. For additional information on the flu, you can visit this [web page at the New Jersey Department of Health](#).

"It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all -- in which case, you fail by default." — J.K. Rowling, writer

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