

Reflections



WINTER 2015

Published for the residents of the Croton-Harmon School District



A FORWARD PATH: *The Croton-Harmon School District continues to recognize the ways our schools are progressing as we journey on a forward path this academic year. We invite the community to join us in ensuring the future of our district is as bright as our present.*

Digital Literacy Comes Alive

From getting a first look at Google Cardboard with its yet-to-be-released program to educating one another on how to navigate the Internet safely, Croton-Harmon students are at the cutting edge of utilizing and speaking about technology every day.

The district's Technology Committee, made up of administrators, teachers, community members, a student and a Board of Education member, has released a technology vision statement for the district that helps guide the limitless amount of opportunities for

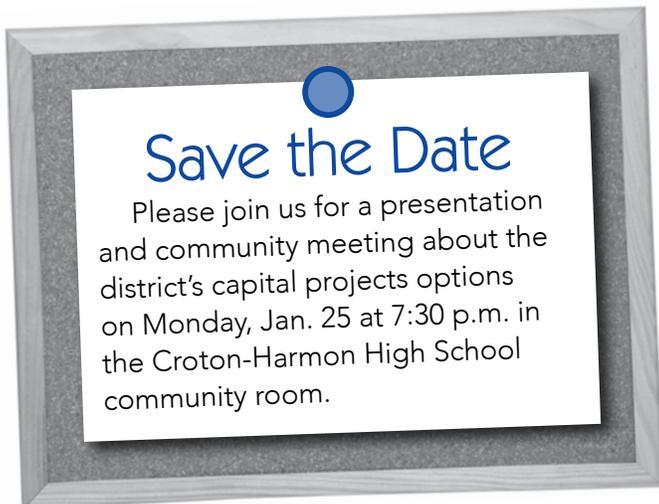
technology to fit into education in the Croton-Harmon schools: "We envision an educational environment which utilizes technology to prepare students to be lifelong learners and productive, responsible members of their community and active participants in a changing, information-based, global society."

STAYING SMART AND SAFE ONLINE

At Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School, students are taking the responsibility of technology very seriously.

Sixth-grade Media and Communications students have already learned about topics like phishing and online grooming in Johanna Mustacchi's classroom, and recently heard presentations prepared by eighth-grade students on subjects including cyberbullying and sexting. Through these presentations, students learned that there are many types of cyberbullying and took time to identify the adults in their lives whom they would alert immediately if they were a

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For more news about our schools, check out the district homepage at www.croton-harmonschools.org.

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witness to or a target of cyberbullying.

“[I] and a lot of my friends have phones and social media accounts that allow us to talk to each other,” eighth-grader Elan Roth said. “And not always the nicest things are said over those accounts.”

Students also explored the real-life consequences and legal ramifications of poor judgment with technology by engaging in mock cyber-court cases. They debated questions about whether a teenager who shared a “sext” from an ex-girlfriend should become a registered sex offender and face jail time.

TECHNOLOGY OF THE FUTURE

Students at all three

schools participated in the Hour of Code in December, a global initiative organized by the nonprofit code.org based on the belief that students in every school should have the opportunity to learn computer science.

Croton-Harmon High School teacher Eileen Pike, whose students participated in the initiative this year, said most of the juniors and seniors in her trigonometry class had not tried any sort of coding before.

“The students picked from a list of introductory programs that consist of drag-and-drop commands,” she said. “As they went through each level, more commands were added and the tasks became more



complicated and involved.”

Students at Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School and PVC also excitedly shared their progress and tips with one another as they navigated challenges with fun themes like “Frozen” and “Star Wars” during their Hour of Code. The district has continued to expand student access to computer science education with the addition of the Computer Science I and II courses at the high school this year.

“Computer science is a growing field with many career opportunities, and we are proud to be able to offer our students an introduction to these skills,” said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Deborah

O’Connell.

PVC students had access to another piece of new technology in November when Google’s new Expeditions Pioneer Program visited the school. The Expeditions applications, which will eventually be available through smartphone app stores, are currently being piloted at schools across the globe. At PVC, students utilized the technology to visit foreign destinations like the Great Wall of China and the Palace of Versailles.

“This is authentic learning at its best,” said Croton-Harmon Director of Technology Deborah August. “Through these virtual journeys, students are



A Note from Superintendent of Schools DR. EDWARD R. FUHRMAN, JR.

As I wrote in a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo last June, I know that all parents and community members within Croton-Harmon are aware of the changes in public education that have occurred over the past several years. These changes have altered how districts across New York

State operate, the material that we teach our students, the ways in which we teach our children, and how our educators are evaluated.

As a small community, Croton-Harmon residents have always shared a strong connection with our school district and have never shied away from fighting for

what's best for our students. The 2014-15 school year was no exception. I am proud of the Croton-Harmon community and the individual parents, teachers, residents and even students who made their voices heard by our legislators regarding these shifts in education. You made an impact! And

I know you will continue to influence change on a number of challenges that we still face.

Please refer to my full letter on the district website, www.chufsd.org, for additional information about grassroots advocacy opportunities this school year.

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exploring new destinations with a 360-degree view and traveling through the 21st century without ever leaving their desks."

Students excitedly identified landmarks as they explored the various scenes, even reaching out to try and touch works of art in museums and walk through famous athletic stadiums across the globe.

Administrators and teachers also had the opportunity to test out the program while offering students information and

answering their questions as they embarked on the expeditions.

"It really has an interdisciplinary application," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Edward Fuhrman, who said he can see the 200-plus expeditions offered by Google apply to every area of learning. "Our students are so visual, and this comes so naturally to them. It makes them want to do more and to see more; it really creates a dialogue and a dynamic learning experience."

Volunteers Wanted

The district is pleased to announce the establishment of the Croton-Harmon Schools Volunteer Program.

Volunteers have always been an important and valuable asset in our schools, and the new program provides a framework for the greater community to become a part of this volunteer work.

We are looking for community members who are willing to make a commitment to support the educational process in our classrooms anywhere from kindergarten through high school. Volunteers donate time to help

students, teachers and staff. They interface with the district's volunteer coordinator, Ana Maria Strattner. School volunteers can serve as guest speakers in classes, readers for students, mentors for internship and research programs, and in a myriad of other roles.

Please visit the district website, www.chufsd.org, to access a survey we are asking potential volunteers to complete. We plan to use the survey to gauge interest in volunteering and to map out the next steps to link potential volunteers with our schools.

Dr. Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Superintendent

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Recognizing Distinguished *Graduates*

Two graduates of Croton-Harmon High School were inducted into the school's Hall of Distinguished Graduates on Nov. 23. Benjamin Holzer (Class of '96), whose work in the political and public policy field includes a stint in the Obama White House, and Loren Stillman (Class of '98), an accomplished saxophonist and composer, addressed the entire student body and visited classrooms to discuss their careers and accomplishments.

"We are so happy to have our graduates come back and give us an opportunity to thank them," said CHHS Principal Alan Capasso.

"We have chosen people who have distinguished themselves in various fields and we feel this is an important part of our community. They have contributed in their fields and we want to recognize them and have our students benefit from their experiences."

The school's Building Planning Council, made up of administrators, teachers, students and a Board of Education member, organized the special occasion.

Holzer said he enjoyed his time



back in Croton-on-Hudson and noted, "The students are super impressive, as are the faculty."

Stillman noted that CHHS has grown by 80 percent since he graduated in 1998 and he "had an amazing day with the students."

eSchool Data

Parents of Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School and Croton-Harmon High School students now have access to students' grades via the newly launched eSchoolData Parent Portal.

The rollout of the Parent Portal, which can be accessed at www.chufsd.org/studentsparents/eschooldata_parent_portal,

follows the district's transition to a standards-based grading system at PVC this school year.

Login and navigation instructions for the Parent Portal, along with a number of webinars, are available for viewing on the district website, www.chufsd.org.

