

# Waterbury Public Schools News Update

June 2008

## Teacher of the Year Awards



Twenty six teachers received building level Teacher of the Year honors at a ceremony June 3 at Crosby High School. Wallace Middle School teacher Seth Danner was named Waterbury Teacher of the year during the ceremony.

- see page 3 for more information and photos of the event!

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## Maloney's Jessica Haxhi Wins National Awards



**New York, NY – Ms. Jessica Haxhi**, teacher at Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School in Waterbury, Connecticut, has been selected as the 2008 Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher Award recipient in

the Japanese Language Category.

The Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher Award recognizes exceptional teachers who further mutual understanding between Americans and Japanese. The award is presented annually to two pre-college teachers in two categories, Humanities and Japanese Language, and consists of a certificate of recognition, a \$2,500 monetary award, and \$5,000 in project funds.

The Award is named in honor of Mr. Elgin Heinz, a pioneer in educating

- see page 8 for more information

## State Black History Essay Contest Winners Named

State Comptroller Nancy Wyman today announced the results of her eighth annual Little Known Black History Fact Essay Contest.

The event is open to high school juniors and seeks to explore facts about black history that are not well known. It is sponsored by the Office of the State Comptroller with the support of New Alliance Bank, Bank of America and People's Bank. Winners receive U.S. Savings Bonds of between \$1,000 and \$100.

"The research and writing by these students is not only educational for them

and for all of us, but is a tribute to a very important part of American heritage," Wyman said. "I am delighted to honor them."

This year's judges were Dorsey Kendrick, President of Gateway Community Technical College; Charles Tisdale, Exec. Dir., Action Bridgeport Community Development Agency; Henry Hartie, of the Hartford Human Relations Commission; Yvette Melendez, Chief of Staff, Connecticut University System and Karin Edwards, Three Rivers Community Technical College.

Comptroller Wyman will present the awards to the winners and their families at events scheduled in the coming weeks.

Among this year's winners are:

**Shanna Allison/ Waterbury Magnet Arts School**, who wrote about *In Dahomey*, the first musical on Broadway written by and starring African-Americans.

The 1903 production by Bert Williams and George Walker follows the story of a group of African-Americans who find a pot of gold and use their fortune to travel to Africa. The show, Shanna wrote, was a significant move "away from the degrading minstrel stereotypes and closer to actual characterizations of African-Americans."

**Kristin Miller/Waterbury Arts Magnet School**, who wrote about Patricia Bath, an eye surgeon who in 1988 became the first African-American woman to receive a patent for a medical invention; a laser device used to remove cataracts.

**Paulo Oliveira/John F. Kennedy High School, Waterbury**, whose essay was about Daniel Hale Williams, a surgeon who in 1893 performed the first open-chest cavity operation.



## Catch It Before We Are Famous

Waterbury Arts Magnet School's Visual Art Department presents *Images in Time* featuring seniors excelling in photography. *Images in Time* is a student run photography show portraying many different styles of photography. Show dates are May 30th through June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. *Images in Time* can be viewed at the Palace Theatre, 100 East Main St., Waterbury, CT 06706.

*Images in Time* is an exhibit featuring both traditional black

and white silver gelatin prints, and digital color images. April Duquette and Lauren Kunkel have worked to put together a senior photography show not only as part of an independent study, but also because of their deep interest in the field of photography. The gallery will be open during all Palace Theatre events between the dates of May 30, 2008 and June 8, 2008. This includes "Air Supply", "Bowzer's Original Doo-Wop Party", "Lyrics Cabaret",

and "Moving Out."

This gallery is a first time event for both the Palace Theatre and the Waterbury Arts Magnet School. Never before has this new school collaborated with the Palace Theatre with an art show. The exhibit features the work April Duquette and Lauren Kunkel have created during their high school careers, and also includes works by their fellow classmates.

## Teacher of the Year (continued)

### Teacher of Year Program Awards Presentation:

#### Barnard School – Maureen McCasland

Maureen's teaching experience includes 8 years in Adult Education, 12 years at Hopeville, and 5 years in her current position as transitional grade 1 teacher at Barnard. She is a gifted educator who consis-



tently provides her students with outstanding instruction. Over 90% of her students are promoted to grade 2, despite the fact that they entered the transitional grade one below the standard grade one academic level. In addition, Maureen has partnered with her colleagues to develop a home-school reading initiative which provides students with a series of books for a home literacy library. She has also helped her students in many other ways, including buying weekly snacks and purchasing photo packages for students whose families cannot afford them.

#### Bucks Hill School – Christopher Chieppo

Chris is a dedicated second grade teacher whose innovative learning style makes learning fun for his students. He has presented a workshop on reciprocal teaching at the summer institute for Reading First, and



another on vocabulary development for the staff at Bucks Hill School. He also served as a mentor for a beginning teacher. A great role model, he inspires his fellow teachers and cares about all students. Principal Ann Begley writes that he always gives 500%. One of his greatest moments as a teacher came just a few weeks ago when he received a letter from a former student thanking him for being such a great teacher.

#### Bucks Hill Pre-K Annex – Heather Burke

For the last 15 years, Heather Burke has been a positive influence on the Pre-School Program. She is a dedicated employee who adapts to many changes, whether in one building or another. Heather is an effective co-teacher, which is seen in both her innovative teaching strategies and her ability to rise above insurmountable



challenges. She embraces children regardless of their needs, and this has resulted in many parents requesting her to be their child's teacher. Heather is a resource to all that work with her and can be seen starting each day with a smiling face and positive attitude.

#### Bunker Hill School – Jill Murphy-Gilmore

Jill's qualifications are numerous and varied. She has been a BEST cooperating teacher and mentor at Bunker Hill for the past seven years and has suc-

cessfully prepared six student teachers for certification, three of which were later hired by Waterbury. She has mentored



eight second grade teachers through their BEST portfolios with all of them passing and several receiving a grade of 3. She always goes above and beyond to assist colleagues and students. She has helped students from many different backgrounds, including Brazil, Somalia and Myanmar, become successful in her mainstream class. No child is ever left behind in her class!

#### Carrington – Julio Garcia, Jr.

Julio is someone who truly inspires and motivates his students. He makes his lessons fun, educational and encompassing of all his students' needs. He is patient, understanding, confident and caring. He also cares about helping his colleagues. He has helped grade level partners with data collection and Excel spreadsheets. He has also demonstrated his great skills as a chef, once coming to school at 6:30 in the morning to make delicious blueberry pancakes and sausages for the faculty and staff. He is a quite person with tremendous power to inspire and motivate.



*Jill Murphy-Gilmore has been a BEST cooperating teacher and mentor at Bunker Hill for the past 7 years*

## Teacher of the Year (continued)

### Chase School – Annette Cas-sullo

Annette is a dedicated teacher with 35 years experience. She possesses a wealth of knowl- edge in reading and is ready



and willing to assist teachers and students who seek her guid- ance. An integral part of the first grade team, she makes learning a fun and rewarding experience for her students. She regularly goes above and be- yond what is expected and re- quired of her. She is truly an asset to Chase School.

### Wendell Cross – Krista Hol- ley

As a teacher, Krista feels it is her responsibility to address the needs of the whole student. To Krista, students are more than just brains that that need to be fed information. They are chil-



dren who need to be nurtured. To accomplish that goal, she seeks to create a nurturing learning environment. She not only teaches them reading and math, she also seeks to encour- age them to grow as responsible students.

### Driggs School – Joy DeVivo

Joy DeVivo has spent her entire career as a teacher at Driggs

School - 37 years in total. She has taught both second and third grade, and has served as the leader of the Data Team for the past four years. She is the first to volunteer to help other staff with a new form or bar graphs for the Data Driven Decision Making Team. Joy writes that just recently a for- mer student came to visit her at Driggs. That student is now the



director of a Baptist elementary school in Beirut, Lebanon. She explains that her father once advised her to find a job that she would pay to do, and she feels that teaching is that job for her.

### Generali School – Lenore Gagain

A fourth grade teacher, Lenore has established a positive learn- ing environment in her class- room at Generali School. She provides her students with many opportunities to succeed and makes learning fun and



easy. Her students say she is a good teacher who loves kids, a good person, and “awesome.” She served as an administrative intern this year and will make a wonderful administrator in the future.

### Gilmartin School – Carolyn LaCapra

Carolyn has the outstanding ability to analyze an individual student’s learning style and incorporates that style into the



curriculum for successful learn- ing. She is not judgmental and treats students, peers and par- ents with respect and kindness. She sets an example of peaceful mediation through her actions.

Over the many years Carolyn has been at Gilmartin, she has extended her kindness and sup- port to after school and special occasion activities. Many stu- dents have celebrated their fifth year of elementary school with the graduation ceremony she supervises.

### Kingsbury School – Nicole Dean

Nicole is an amazing kindergar- ten teacher who goes beyond the call of duty. She is consis- tent with her reading groups



and centers and differentiates her instruction to meet all of her students’ needs. Her classroom management is structured and provides a positive learning environment for students. She has high expectations which encourages her students to suc- ceed.

**Lenore Gagain’s  
students at  
Generali School  
say she is  
“awesome”**

**Maloney Magnet – Rosanne Stango**

Rosanne is the ultimate professional and a dedicated teacher. She always has a positive attitude. No matter how difficult a student might be, she never resorts to a negative word. She can always find the positive in



any situation, and always with a sense of humor. She teaches to every child on every level and finds something positive in every child and nurtures that. She is also a wonderful colleague who is always willing to share and collaborate.

**Regan School – Marilyn Baker**

Marilyn is a third grade teacher with 32 years experience. She was chosen the teacher of the year for Regan school because she is a highly, dedicated professional. She has taught at



Regan School for the past fifteen years. Mrs. Baker is always willing to lend a helping hand. She is a kind and passionate teacher. She has excellent rapport with parents, teachers and her students. Mrs. Baker can be described as a model teacher. She is loved by everyone.

**Rotella Magnet – Catherine Molaskey**

Cathy is Rotella's good will ambassador. She brings an obvious sense of joy to her

profession. As a Physical Education teacher, she motivates her students to achieve their personal best. Through her infectious, warm-hearted ap-



proach, she conveys to students that the goal of living a healthy life-style is a reachable one for every person, regardless of his or her own innate ability. She also uses every opportunity to integrate the fine arts into her daily instruction and frequently co-teaches with visiting artists.

**Sprague School – Joan Lattanzio**

Joan demonstrates dedication and devotion to each and every student in her class. She offers each the lifelong strategies they will need to succeed. Many of her students have said she is the one person who made a difference in their lives because she taught them to never to give up



and that learning new skills takes time. She helps make every student feel successful.

**Walsh School – Dolores Rodriguez**

Dolores goes above and beyond



in her dedication to the Walsh School community. She has participated in numerous after school activities, including the Walsh School Community Day. Her students have shown outstanding growth and achievement.

**Washington School – Justine LeVasseur-Burke**

Justine is a special education resource teacher at Washington School and a coach for Special Olympics. She feels that teaching is a challenging but rewarding profession. She tries to



provide her students with a nurturing, safe environment.

**Woodrow Wilson School - Betzaida (Betsy) Vega**

Betsy has been a teacher in the Waterbury Public Schools for over 21 years and 11 years at Walsh School. Her colleagues have nominated her for this prestigious honor based on many factors, some of these include: volunteering for each and every family/ student event including the contributing time and money. She is a valued member of the EIP team and a contributor to our welcoming committee. Betsy is known for welcoming new teachers and students to the school. She works well with her students, and is concerned about the academic and emotional well being. She is willing to help students, parents, and staff, in any area.



*Rosanne Stango is the ultimate professional. She always finds the positive in any situation.*

## Teacher of Year (continued)

### North End Middle School –

#### Catherine Leogrande

Catherine is currently a member of the Blue House team at North End, where she teaches Grade 7 language arts. Last summer she participated in a special training for teachers in Poland and Israel on the Holo-



caust and has also participated in graduate level history classes in Italy. She says she firmly believes not only that all children can learn, but that all children truly want to learn.

### West Side Middle School – Norma Napomiceno

Norma continuously creates stellar lesson plans, performs daily instruction in her classroom and uses data from all math assessments to help students succeed. She is a grade six mathematics teacher and a member of the math data team. Norma also dedicates time to support the WTA. She has been a member of the Executive Board for 20 years and has served as corresponding, recording and financial secretary. She is truly dedicated to teaching and her fellow teachers.



### Wallace Middle School – Seth Danner

Seth teaches fundamental math, Advanced Algebra and Robotics to his 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. He is team leader of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade staff members, and has organized fundraising activities, field trips and other activities. He is a regional instructor for Texas Instruments and has helped develop the mathematics cur-



riculum for the city. He has coached the Wallace soccer team and has started a Wallace hiking club. He spends countless hours after school on various activities for the students and the school.

### Crosby High School – Rosemarie Carvalho

A teacher for over 30 years, Rosemarie is always contributing to the activities of the school. A founder of the Crosby Knitters Club, she and her students have been featured in national publications. The club has knitted hundreds of scarves, mittens and shawls for those less fortunate. For the past seven years, she has also



coordinated the Crosby Relay for Life Team and has raised close to \$35,000 through her efforts. She speaks and teaches French and Spanish, and also speaks Portuguese.

### Kennedy High School – Frank Purcaro

A social studies teacher, Frank believes teaching means educat-



ing the whole student, both academically and by building their confidence, character and leadership abilities. He feels teaching must also mean being a positive role model for students, as a professional in the classroom and as a responsible citizen in the community. He prefers a hands-on approach to teaching and learning and tries to make History and Social Studies an exciting part of his students' educational experience.

### Waterbury Arts Magnet School – Adam Ciarleglio

Adam is a math teacher at WAMS. This nomination for Teacher of the Year comes not only from his peers, but from his students. It is common for students to tell their peers who are having difficulties in math to "go see Mr. C. He can teach anybody math." Mr. Ciarleglio (char—leg—lee—oh) regularly helps students with math on his own time, even meeting with students preparing for the AP Calculus exam during school vacations. His passion for mathematics is infectious, resulting in success for his students. This is why Adam Ciarleglio (char—leg—lee—oh) is the WAMS Teacher of the Year.

### Wilby High School - Deborah Dunn

Department Chair for Special Education at Wilby, Deborah has worked 32 years in Waterbury, 29 years at Wilby.

**Rosemarie  
Carvalho has  
received  
national  
recognition for  
her Crosby  
Knitters Club**

### Two Wilby Students Win Exchange Club Awards

- Leslie Pinto was a "Youth of the Year", earning a \$500 scholarship for academic excellence & service to the community.
- Vikaash Ramnath received the "Accepting the Challenge of Excellence" (ACE) Award (a plaque, plus a \$1,000 scholarship) for being the student who showed the most dramatic improvement during all 4 years of High School.

### CHET Award Winners

Two Carrington School ESL students were first place winners in the CHET College Savings Challenge. Both are students in Carol McGrath's class.

Gustavo Xara won first place for first grade boys. His entry said, "After college I want to be an astronaut."

Kevin Vo won first place for second grade boys. He wants to be a comic book illustrator.

They were honored by Denise L. Nappier, Treasurer, at the State Capitol. Both boys received \$100 awards. Their entries, photos, and awards are displayed in the Carrington School foyer.

## Inside Story Headline



This past April students in Bob Shagen-sky's fourth grade class at Chase School studied an integrated unit on volcanoes. Students had the opportunity to read selected non-fiction texts, explore children's websites and watch several videos about these amazing landforms as part of studying the science curriculum (changes in the earth's surface). The culminating activity: build a papier mache volcano and make it "erupt" using the information they learned.



## Teacher of Year (continued)

Debbie goes out of her way to help each and every student and does so with such a thoughtful purpose. In 2005, she created the Wilby memorial garden, which she maintains with her

students. This place serves as a quiet spot to reflect and remember those that have touched the hearts of the Wilby family.

### Enlightenment School – Susan Boyce

Susan is an extremely dedicated teacher who works with each student to assure that he or she reaches full potential academically as well as socially. She is a nurturing role model who helps all students feel safe and secure at school. She is well-respected by her peers and has

fulfilled the vision of the school through coordination of teachers, parents, students and the community.



## Jessica Haxhi Receives National Award

American pre-collegiate students about Asia. Born in China in 1913, he spent forty years teaching in San Francisco's public schools. Mr. Heinz served as Education Director for the Japan Society in 1960, and is nationally known for his many curriculum guides on Asia.

An independent national selection committee, consisting of leaders in the fields of Japanese language and cultural education in the United States, selected Ms. Haxhi based on her outstanding long-term commitment to teaching about Japan and the Japanese language as well as her national leadership in this area.

**Ms. Jessica Haxhi** currently teaches grades 3-5 and Pre-kindergarten classes at Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School in Waterbury, Connecticut. In the summers, she teaches a K-8 world languages methodology course for Southern Connecticut State University and the Connecticut Department of Education.

Jessica first went to Japan to learn Japanese in 1988, as a junior at Duke University. She attended Kansai Gaidai University in Osaka for a semester abroad program. She was lucky to have made some Japanese friends while still in the U.S. through her childhood hobby – flying radio-controlled model airplanes. On weekends, these friends and many others helped her to travel to model airplane events all over central Japan and to practice her Japanese.

After graduating from college in 1990, Jessica returned to Japan on the JET Program to teach in Osaka for one year. After returning home, she found a job in an ESL program for Japanese college students and

eventually as a part-time teacher of Japanese at the high school level.

When Jessica applied for a position as an elementary school teacher of Japanese in 1994, she wasn't really sure that she could teach Japanese to young children. Their enthusiasm and ability was overwhelming and she fell in love with the age level. The Japanese Language and Culture Program is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year and serves all 550 children in the school. Jessica's close friend and colleague, Kazumi Yamashita (a former JALEX assistant), teaches grades K-2 and their constant collaboration has been a key to the success and longevity of the program.

Jessica especially enjoys discussing advocacy for Japanese programs and early language learning in general. Some of the advocacy initiatives she enjoys are a yearly pen pal program with an elementary school in Osaka, a twice-yearly "Lunch with the Sensei's" with parents at a local Japanese restaurant, the sending of "interactive homework" for children to show parents what they have learned, maintaining an extensive website, a video-based project with each grade level that parents can view at home, and trying to keep lessons meaningful and fun for all students.

Jessica is the past president of the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers

and she worked on the writing committees for the national Japanese standards and the Connecticut World Languages Framework. She has been a demonstration teacher for world language methods' institutes at Concordia College and the National Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University. Jessica was the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award winner for Connecticut in 2002. She is currently serving on the Board of the Directors of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Jessica plans to use the grant award to purchase Ipods for her classroom. She has recently begun to use small-group instruction in her upper-grade classes. Students in small groups are given meaningful, language-rich tasks to complete during the class while she works with one group doing conversation practice. Ipods will allow some of the small groups to be engaged in listening, viewing, and voice-recording tasks with a tool that students find very exciting!

**The United States-Japan Foundation (USJF)** is an independent private foundation dedicated to strengthening cooperation and understanding between the United States and Japan. It is governed by a board of prominent Japanese and American private citizens and is the only private American grant-making foundation dedicated to the mutual interests of the American and Japanese people. More information can be found on the Foundation's web site at [www.us-jf.org](http://www.us-jf.org).

## WAMS Chorus Competes Successfully

The Waterbury Arts Magnet School High School Chorus was awarded a rating of "Superior" at the Music in the Park Festival at Six Flags Park in Agawam, Massachusetts on May 30, 2008. In addition, junior Norris Person was awarded Best Accompanist for the Festival, and junior soprano Jianna Miller was awarded Best Soloist. The WAMS ensemble performed medleys from "West Side Story" and "Les Misérables".



### Connecticut High School Seniors to be Part of National 12<sup>th</sup> Grade State Reading and Mathematics Assessment

Students in about 100 Connecticut high schools will take part in a new 12<sup>th</sup> grade state-level mathematics and reading pilot program for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) next year. NAEP, a program of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest nationally representative assessment of what American students know and are able to do in a variety of subjects. The results from NAEP are called The Nation's Report Card because they report the educational progress of students across the nation.

While state-level results for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been reported since 1990, only national data has been available to measure the progress of our nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Starting with the 2009 administration of NAEP, however, Connecticut will be among the first 11 states that will have state-level data collected for high school seniors. The educational performance of 12<sup>th</sup> graders has been the topic of much media

and policy attention and the results from this pilot will provide an additional indicator of academic achievement for Connecticut's seniors. The assessment will not report individual student test scores, but rather show how a representative sample of Connecticut's seniors performs academically compared to those in other states. Approximately 6,000 students will be selected to participate in Connecticut.

"Connecticut was one of the first states to take part in state-level NAEP for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades; this student performance data has been helpful to us in improving instruction," said state education commissioner Mark K. McQuillan.

"There are many indications that NAEP is moving toward state-level Grade 12 assessments for all states in the future, and I believe that it is important for us to be a part of this effort from the beginning. The assessment will provide us with important data to consider as we move forward with

our high school reform efforts and will serve as a component of our baseline against which we will measure our progress in improving the high school experience and raising standards of performance for Connecticut high school students."

In 2009, NAEP will be administered to a representative sample of students in over 19,000 schools. Over one million students nationwide will be tested in Grades 4, 8, and 12 on their knowledge of mathematics, reading, and science.

The schools and students that participate in the test represent other schools and students in their state and across the country. Students will be randomly selected to participate in one subject, and participation will take about 90 minutes. Students will be asked to respond to multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. NAEP does not report individual or school scores, but provides results at the state and national levels for major demographic groups.

For information on NAEP in Connecticut please contact Tom Murphy at [thomas.murphy@ct.gov](mailto:thomas.murphy@ct.gov) or 860.713.6525, or NAEP State Coordinator Renee Savoie at 860.713.6858 or [renee.savoie@ct.gov](mailto:renee.savoie@ct.gov)

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*Smaller Learning Community Program Mentors enjoyed an appreciation luncheon and a tour of the Wilby High School Art Show*

