

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

Together, We are the Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District

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## District fellows speak at state event



"Some of the most powerful parts of the MBK Stand and Deliver Conference was the fact that each fellow was brave enough to share different parts of their life no matter how personal it was, and how MBK has changed them as a person."

— Keenan Wood

On Feb. 17, 2023, Poughkeepsie My Brother's Keeper (MBK) fellows Keenan Wood, Jameel Richardson Jr, and mentor and PHS school counselor Jason Conrad traveled to Albany for the MBK Stand and Deliver Leadership Showcase to deliver a TED-style talk on what they are learning and living in MBK.

Established in 2018, the My Brother's Keeper Fellows Program provides rising 12th-grade high school students with opportunities to gain authentic leadership experiences and develop service

projects beneficial to the schools they attend and the communities they live in. MBK fellows are provided with authentic leadership opportunities in government, education, and business. Both Keenan Wood and Jameel Richardson Jr. are the fifth cohort of young men of color who represent the Poughkeepsie City School District as MBK fellows.

As part of the Stand and Deliver Leadership Showcase, fellows from across the state prepared a 90-second speech on the topic: "Living and Learning: My MBK Story" briefly detailing what they are learning and living in MBK.

"The audience (primarily composed of MBK mentors) were very supportive and even told the fellows who were nervous that it was completely natural, and that there was nothing to be fearful about," Wood said.

The My Brother's Keeper Fellows Program is one of [six grant programs](#) the New York State Department of Education offers communities throughout New York State. The [New York State My Brother's Keeper Community Network](#) includes more than 20 member communities that have joined the growing initiative to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. The Poughkeepsie City School District is a recipient of The MBK [Fellows Program](#) and [Family and Community Engagement Program](#). Wood said the cooperation between the fellows, mentors, and other speakers was "really impactful."

He described an exercise in which when someone exclaimed "2 claps" after someone said something interesting or knowledgeable, the audience would respond by clapping twice, pointing at the speaker, and saying "BAM!" in unison (implying that they either support, acknowledge, or agree with what was said). "Overall, this conference was a really impactful experience and I had a great time hearing what my fellow brothers and other speakers in the program had to say!"

### PCSD receives three-year MBK Fellows grant

Under the leadership of Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement, and Elena Rosado,



PHS counselor Jason Conrad and MBK Fellows Jameel Richardson Jr. and Keenan Wood at the Stand and Deliver Leadership Showcase.

special projects assistant, the district was recently awarded a three year MBK Fellows grant to support the leadership development of Poughkeepsie City School District's 12<sup>th</sup> grade young men of color. The \$47,600 over the next three years will provide continued programming and support to provide two young men of color the opportunity to participate in the New York State MBK Fellows Program. In addition to the Stand and Deliver Leadership Showcase, the Fellows Program has provided a college essay master class, mastermind book study, leadership workshops and other opportunities. For a full list of program highlights click [here](#).



Some Warring Elementary School fourth graders take the stage to portray famous African Americans for a skit.

## Warring honors Black History

Warring Elementary School students, faculty and the wider community enjoyed a Black History Month celebration dedicated to legendary African American figures complete with skits, musical performances and readings Friday, Feb. 24, 2023.

Early Learning Center Principal Nadine Elting-Dargan hosted the ceremony and introduced her nephew, Anthony, who spoke about Carter G. Woodson, a scholar who was dedicated to celebrating the historic contributions of African Americans, which led to Negro History Week and eventually evolved

into Black History Month.

"He thought it would be very imperative for us to have a month – so he fought very hard for that," Elting said of Woodson. "This individual is the reason why we're sitting here today."

Fourth grader Kiara Calender presented about the courageous journey Ruby Bridges took in 1960 to become the first African American student to attend an all-white school in Louisiana, where she was heckled and spit at. "Despite the anger and all the chaos, Ruby remained calm," Calender said. "She never cowered in fear, she never ran away; instead she held her head high and kept marching to change the course of history."

During a skit honoring famous African Americans throughout history, fourth grader Ivy Dalbo portrayed Mae Jemison, who was the first African American woman to travel into space in 1992. Dalbo enjoyed learning all about Jemison's life.

"It was really fun to do," Dalbo said. "I would do it again if I could."

The ceremony closed out with everyone in attendance singing the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome."

Warring's fifth graders worked on numerous art projects celebrating Black History Month, including one where students had to list 20 influential African American figures, such as Rosa Parks and Jesse Owens, on a silhouette.

Alvaro Morales chose to focus on poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou, someone he felt is not as celebrated as Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Even through all the discrimination and everything, she still passed through," Morales said. "She might not be the best known person, but people need to know about her."



Warring fourth grader Kiara Calender reads about the life of Ruby Bridges.





PMS' Sister 2 Sister members serve baked goods to a crowd of students and staff.

## Sister 2 Sister bake sale teaches skills

Sister 2 Sister held its fourth successful bake sale in February, helping to teach students important lessons. The Sister 2 Sister program supports students through many phases of growth and changes during their middle school years. It helps young ladies master skills in areas such as friendship, self-image and leadership skills. Students enjoy and have fun interacting with their peers in group settings. Sister 2 Sister promotes self-esteem, creating a positive self-image, handling peer pressure, health and fitness, planning for the future and becoming a positive role model.

"We had a great turn out at the bake sale. I am so proud of our young ladies," Simone Stewart, PMS social worker said.

## Students tour Dominican University

Thirty-one Poughkeepsie High School students toured Dominican University in Orangeburg, NY, last month. Led by Kelly Semexant, college readiness and workforce education counselor; Nashon Anderson and Stacey Lee, the 26 10th grade English Honors students and five seniors who applied to Dominican attended an admissions presentation and question and answer session afterward. The college is located just outside New York City.

"The students asked amazing questions and were praised by the Dominican University representatives," Semexant said, adding that for many students it was their first time on a college campus.

Students then split up and did campus tours with guides. After the tour, students ate lunch while hearing from the athletics department.

Three seniors were able to speak directly with the athletics recruiter and the track coach. One senior was able to meet with an admissions rep and submit her application. She received her acceptance letter to Dominican last week.

Semexant has a series of college tours coming up, including SUNY New Paltz, March 8; St. John's University, March 13; Monroe College, March 23; St. Thomas Aquinas College, April 25 and the SUNY College Fair at SUNY New Paltz, April 27. There are also smaller tours scheduled for select groups, including a June 2 tour of DCC for first generation college bound students and one for PMS seventh grade honors students to Vassar College May 12 and select eighth graders to St. Thomas Aquinas on June 6.



On Friday, Feb. 17, 2023, 31 PHS students took a tour of Dominican University in Orangeburg, New York.