



PHS senior one of 300 Gates Scholars

Poughkeepsie High School's Marvin Juarez Espinoza is one of 300 Gates Scholars in the United States this year. He is the first PHS student to receive a Gates Scholarship since the program began in 2017 and plans to attend Ithaca College and major in music education and violin performance.

The scholarship's aim is to help bright, minority student leaders grow and complete their education without having to worry about finances. It covers the full cost of attendance for items not already covered by financial aid or expected family contribution. The program wants to help 3,000 students complete college. "To me it means having the pressure lifted off my shoulders - I don't have to worry about how I am going to pay for college. It helped me commit to the school I wanted because the price was scary," Juarez Espinoza said.

Getting the scholarship involved an intense application process including having to write several essays on topics that included how his community shaped him, something he learned from a teacher and what leadership means and how you show it. "It was validating to see everything that I was stressed out about and that I worked for is getting me somewhere," he said.

Upon completing college, Juarez Espinoza ideally wants to find a job in a high school or elementary school. "My biggest goal is to spread the knowledge I gain and give back all the wisdom and advice I got. Music brings so much joy to my life and I just want to share it," he said.

He shared that growing up and attending Poughkeepsie schools from at least kindergarten has helped him because of the diversity.

"Being around people like me meant I could turn to a classmate and talk to them. I knew I had people supporting me."

He also appreciates all his teachers.

"They have to deal with the stigma (of teaching in Poughkeepsie) all the time. They work so hard to make sure we succeed. They may have to work twice as hard."

Juarez Espinoza started playing violin in fourth grade at Clinton Elementary School, switched instruments and then picked it back up during the pandemic, during which time he would practice for four hours a day. Last year he said he decided to pursue music as a career.

For him, the toughest part of obtaining the scholarship was managing all his school work, practice and the various application deadlines.

He had this advice for juniors:

"Stay on top of the application deadlines so you don't miss them," he said. And, he encouraged them to apply for all the scholarships they are eligible for. "I applied on a whim. I didn't expect to get this far so it never hurts to try."

In addition to the scholarship itself, Gates Scholars have access to an app with which they can connect with each other, online support including career services, mentoring, leadership development, wellness and a summer institute at which they can network with each other.



PHS senior Marvin Juarez Espinoza plays the timpani in class.



"Being awarded The Gates Scholarship is not an easy feat", shared Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools. "While serving the students in the Atlanta Public Schools, I was responsible for the district's college readiness initiative, Project GRAD. The criteria used to select recipients for this scholarship's predecessor, The Gates Millennium Scholarship, was very involved and seeks students that have stellar academic records and a high commitment to post-secondary participation and success."

Unity Day draws crowd



Clockwise from top: Students play a fishing derby game at Unity Day at the PHS Track & Field; a young girl waves during a pony ride; attendees view and collect prizes donated by schools, businesses and community organizations at the prize truck.

Rain didn't damper the fun at Poughkeepsie City School District's Community Schools Unity Day this past Saturday.

Hundreds turned out and had a fabulous time, despite the rain.

"People came in the rain and stayed. People look forward to these events," said Natasha Brown, executive director of community schools.

"This shows our families want to be involved with the school district and will come out to support it."

The goal of the event is celebrate parent and community engagement throughout the Poughkeepsie City School District and expand family access to the school and community support network available. This year's event drew nearly double the number of community-based partners.

"We had 61 partners compared to about 35 last year," Brown said.

One new partner, Poughkeepsie Nissan, gave away coupons for free oil changes.

Bringing together all the volunteer organizations, vendors and entertainment providers took a lot of planning and work, which fell to the Community Schools staff.

"Julie Maserjian, Parent Empowerment Center manager, coordinated all aspects of the event and all the staff stepped up - each had a different responsibility," Brown said.

Working together, they got numerous baskets donated to give away as prizes.

Every PCSD school, the Administration Building and Community Schools Department all created and donated a basket or gift cards for the giveaway.

The following businesses and organizations donated prizes as well: The Grind, Pastry Garden, Chakra Bowls, First Independent Realty, Automotive & Truck Center, Children's Museum, Rossi's,

Emiliano's, City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Marc Nelson, City of Poughkeepsie Fire Department, Poughkeepsie Public Schools Teacher Association, United Healthcare Workers 1199, Poughkeepsie Library District, Dress for Success, SplashDown Beach. Plus, the New York State Laborers' Health & Safety Trust Fund donated eight bicycles to be given away.

City Councilmember Nedra Paterson Thompson who bought all the ice cream for the event also donated 200 kites which were distributed to attendees in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month. Brown also thanked the City of Poughkeepsie for its participation.

"We appreciate the broad support of our business and nonprofit community partners to make this event a meaningful and rewarding experience for attendees. By coming together like this, we demonstrate to our students and families that they are important to us, we care and are here for them," Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser said.

In August, Community Schools will host Bridges to Poughkeepsie, an event designed to welcome all new kindergarten through eighth grade families and their students to the district.



Show highlights variety of talent at PHS



Poughkeepsie High School's auditorium echoed with applause and cheers as more than 15 acts took the stage for Culture Shock's annual, "PHS Got Talent" show Friday, May 19.

Individuals and groups sang, danced, read poetry and rapped to close the day out, with many audience members remaining after the last bell to see the last six performers.

When Allysha Anderson began singing the first notes of "Nobody's Suppose to Be Here" by Deborah Cox the phones came out with lights on as students screamed out encouragement. Her performance earned her second place.

The most energetic performance may have come from a dance group featuring Mary Prindle, Naiya Garvin, Nevaeh Barrington and Trinity Majors. The group performed multiple dances to different songs and incorporated several outfit changes. They took first place in the competition.

Third place went to singer and poet Joey Roach.

Whatever the performance, the audience was supportive. When one

performer started to tear up while reading a poem, shouts of encouragement urged her on.

Sophomore Olivia Arnfield, vice president of Culture Shock, said that putting the show together took a lot of time.

"We stayed after school all week to make sure everybody had lyrics, music, dances down and sounded



Clockwise from top left: Shanese Brown sings; Nevaeh Barrington, Naiya Garvin, Mary Prindle and Trinity Majors dance; Deja Johnson sings; MCs Jalasia Weldon and Autumn Bland announce the next performer; Isaiah Clark and Angelica Jacinto sing a duet; Maelia Vasquez sings.

good and that we had good communication," she said. The 15 members of the group were behind the scenes acting as the stage crew and coordinating the acts, making sure everything they needed was on stage when it was their turn. "Next year we'll have more time for students to prepare," member Hennessy Ortiz, also a sophomore, said.



At left, Aida Hernandez performs a traditional dance. Above, Maven Frederick recites a poem about her grandfather

The group said the show came together with just one week of rehearsals. Next year, Arnfield and club adviser Brittany Anderson said they'd like to get at least two weeks. Kudos to all the performers who had the courage to share their talents with the PHS community: Caniya Williams, Allysha Anderson, Robmarie Lugo-Alicieda, Dayiana Moore, Daniel Johnson, Joey Roach, Aida Hernandez, Maelia Vasquez, Maven Frederick, Shanese Brown, Deja Johnson, Raheem Webb, Angelica Jacinto and Isaiah Clark; Mary Prindle, Naiya Garvin, Nevaeh Barrington and Trinity Majors; and Yhanasha Jackson. We also want to give a round of applause to all the members of Culture Shock who made it all happen.



Art takes over high school lobby

On Thursday, May 25, student artwork will take over the lobby of Poughkeepsie High School for a student-run art show from 3-5 p.m. and the public is invited to attend.

There will be ceramics, drawings, paintings, mixed media, creative crafts, student performances, a photo booth, Tarot card readings, face painting and items from the garden on display. Plus, parent and student crafts and knit items are being sold along with hot dogs and lemonade.

"They run the whole show," Heather Duncan-Carter, art department chair, said, gesturing to a class full of students. "That's the whole point - for them to be successful in setting up and working a show."

The show incorporates pieces from all teachers and all projects from students in grades 9-12, she said.

Art awards will be announced at 4 p.m.

CALENDAR REMINDERS

Half-day Friday, May 26 — Students attend a.m. only!
Schools are closed Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day!
Enjoy the long weekend!