

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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PHS principal reveals valedictorian, salutatorian

Poughkeepsie High School's valedictorian and salutatorian are now official: Jaden Ababio is the valedictorian with a GPA of 100.059 followed closely by Hannah Raizman with a GPA of 100.044, Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron said.

Valedictorian

Ababio has spent about nine of her K-12 years in PCSD. The 17-year-old plans to attend Babson College in the fall.

An active member of the Air Force JROTC program for four years, Ababio has also been part of the National Honor Society for the past two years, served on student government and was on the wrestling team.

Outside of school, Ababio volunteers with the Family Partnership Lunch Box. She also enjoys reading.

"There's a lot of interesting things that I can explore in books that I may not have the time for in real life so it's a calming hobby," she said.

One lesson she took from her time at PHS was responsibility and ownership. "A lot of times you have to own up to mistakes or accept a certain grade or consequence. You can't always skate by everything in life and I think many experiences in PHS taught me that. Whether it be through grades or learning new things in my extracurriculars."

Ababio's favorite PHS memory is sitting at lunch with friends and walking to Dutchess Community College PIG/Economics.

She also enjoyed the diversity and the people from all over who came together.

"It was definitely a melting pot of experiences and cultures so to learn about that was enjoyable. Being aware of experiences other than your own is eye opening as well as important for any person."

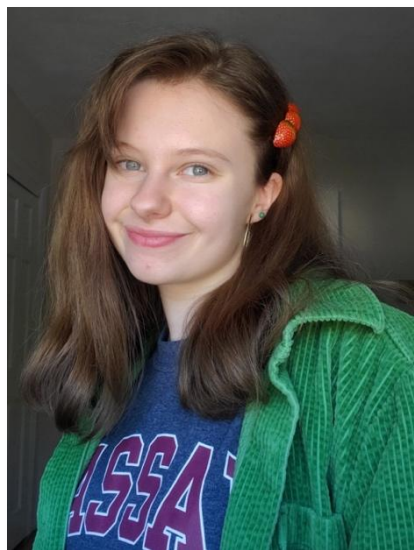
She'd like to see the community believe in Poughkeepsie High School's

students. "Often times they're spoken about in a negative light but there are a lot of positives in this school. If more credit and encouragement was given, I think the future generations might work harder and believe in themselves as well."

Well said, Jaden. And congratulations on all your accomplishments. We wish you the best of luck as you pursue your college career.



Jaden Ababio



Hannah Raizman

Salutatorian

Raizman, 17, said the opportunities afforded her at PHS helped her learn more than just the subjects taught in classrooms. "I was able to learn a lot about myself, leadership and collaborative teamwork through the crew team," said the coxswain for the crew team, which she participated in throughout her high school career.

"The diverse nature of the school has given me lots of different perspectives to enter life with. Importantly, my classes, especially AP Calculus with Mr. Davis, has taught me that the value of learning is more important than grades alone."

Raizman came to the district in eighth grade.

In addition to crew, Raizman participated in the Debate and Ethics Bowl the past two years, was president of the Pioneer Post this year, was on the Science Olympiad team (8-10th grade) and served as treasurer for the Gay-Straight Alliance/Gender-Sexuality Alliance in ninth grade. She volunteered on the eel project for the past two years and plans to



continue, was part of the National Honor Society (11-12), participated in the annual Hudson River cleanup and taught crew team members how to swim so they could pass the swim test.

Outside of school, Raizman said she likes to read and hike with friends.

Raizman will attend Vassar College pursuing history and education with the goal of becoming a high school social studies teacher.

Looking back on her PHS career, her fondest memories are from her crew boat going to nationals in 10th grade, the Ethics Bowl team moving into the semi-finals this year and every eel project meeting.

"I loved all of my teachers, and have learned important life lessons that extend beyond just the learning material," she said.

One thing she'd like to see change is more information being provided to students about the college application process and it starting earlier.

Congratulations, Hannah on your achievements, which you accomplished through hard work and taking advantage of all that was offered to you as a PHS student. We look forward to hearing of your future successes.

District to host first virtual graduation

Poughkeepsie High School's Class of 2020 may not be able to walk across the stage together as in a traditional graduation ceremony, but the 2020 PHS Commencement Celebration will be one for the memory sticks, promises Principal Kelleyann Royce-Girón.

Planned for July 8 at Overlook Drive-In in Poughkeepsie, the event will have all the pomp and circumstance of a traditional graduation ... but it will be largely on video.

All of the speeches and music - from students to staff to the keynote from PHS graduate Maurice Jeremiah Williams, the founder of S.A.V.E. - Striving Altogether Valiantly Everyday - are being pre-recorded. So are the students receiving their diplomas.

There will, however, be at least one live element.

"We'd like those who attend to bring their mortarboards (caps) with them and we'd like to confer them and have them move their tassel from right to left live at the event," Royce-Girón said.

Of course, there will be a video of senior memories.

Graduates are limited to one vehicle each, though whatever the capacity of the vehicle is would determine the actual number of attendees.

There are also a few surprises planned.

Plus, at the conclusion of the event, a link to the movie will be sent to every graduate so they can have their own viewing party and share it with loved ones.

The celebration was made possible through two donations: one from the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers Association and the other from the City of Poughkeepsie, Royce-Giron said.

Royce-Giron said the celebration is the culmination of the hard work of her team and volunteers who will be at the school after the close of the school year.

Staffers have volunteered to help with a Diploma Walk during which students will dress in their cap and gown and have their photos and video taken for the showing on the big screen. It also gives parents a chance to capture photos and see their child walk across the stage.

"We use a mantra that I heard consistently throughout the season from our basketball team, 'strong together.' For me, as principal and an alum, I feel like we're redefining what stronger together means."

Covid-19 birthed new traditions at PHS to celebrate graduates.

A Class of 2020 banner was hung outside the building, class signs were distributed to each graduate via a caravan of cars. Those will continue, said Royce-Giron who took the high school's helm Feb. 18, about a month before schools were ordered closed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

"I wish I had more time with them because I haven't been able to interact with, converse with and celebrate with these great individuals," she said.



Middle school staff deliver fun and supplies to more families



Above, the delivery team stands ready to deliver the kits. A closeup of the kits, at right, shows some of the items provided to the families.

A second round of Family Care Kits, containing games, materials for crafts, hygiene products and even some baking mixes for snacks were delivered to PMS families last week, thanks to the efforts of Poughkeepsie Middle School staff members. The kits were designed to give families something fun to do during isolation and provide needed supplies.

Eighth grade teacher Samantha Rosario organized the effort and bought the games, puzzles and craft supplies through funds received from Donor's Choose, French Teacher and Building Representative Kimberly Popken said. Bonnie Babcock from Krieger Elementary School donated hygiene products and Donna Palumbo was responsible for the baking items (cake mix, brownie mix, pancake mix and more).

Between them, there was enough to make 10 kits, which Popken, Michelle Bleakley, Selina Barrington, Kim Messick, Julie Hayen, Ken Behr, Heidi Murphy and Christia Besko delivered June 10.

The first round of kits were distributed earlier in the month.

Thank you to all the staff members who helped make life a little more pleasant for our families and for being champions of children.



"PIONEERS"
WE MISS YOU

Spring coaches recognize athletes

Though spring sports were canceled because of Covid-19, the coaches wanted to make sure the athletes knew they weren't forgotten.

They each made a short video which was edited together and released on the district's YouTube channel and website.

Coaches congratulated the seniors on the team and wished them well, welcomed those athletes who were returning or sought to join the team and cited memories from practices and prior events.

You can [watch the coaches' video](#) here.

Help us, help children: Take a few minutes to respond to Census 2020

The 2020 Census is now open—and its results have deep impacts on the Poughkeepsie City School District and the City of Poughkeepsie. Please make sure that you are COUNTED and that you are getting the word out about the census. As we engage in conversations with other members of our community, start your conversation with this "I'm Counted, Are You? If they are not, please direct them to PCSD [website](#) to learn more and to complete the Census.

