

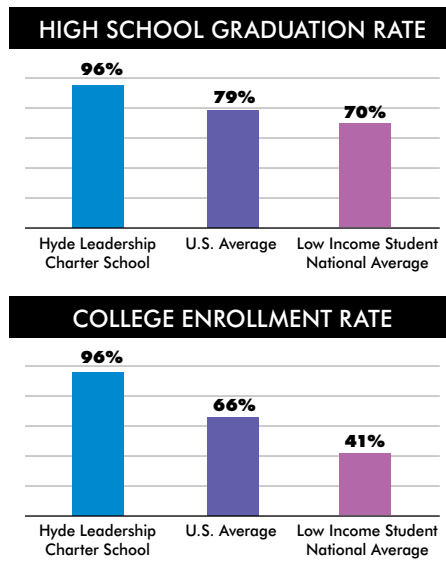
CHARACTER *matters*

Hyde's 2nd Graduating Class Looks Boldly into the Future

On June 28, 2014, on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, 54 Hyde Leadership Charter School seniors walked with confidence across the Symphony Space stage in front of family, friends, and teachers. They delivered speeches about courage, challenge, and personal growth. They smiled widely while receiving handshakes, words of encouragement, and certificates of achievement. Finally, in a single crowning moment following years of hard work, they turned their tassels, graduated from high school, and looked boldly into the future.

Hyde is proud to report on the exemplary performance of our Class of 2014, the second graduating class since our school was founded in 2006. With a 96% high school graduation rate and 96% college enrollment rate, Hyde's newly minted alumni have demonstrated yet again that hard work, strong character, united families, and dedicated teachers are a powerful force for achievement!

In addition to their incredible academic achievements, the Class of 2014



stands out for its dedication to the community through acts of volunteerism. Last year, the Class of 2014 worked with other Hyde high school students to complete 3,587 hours of community service, often collaborating with the school directly or through partner organizations in the South Bronx. Well done!

But we know that these 54 individuals are not Hyde's only success stories. Every day, our kindergarten through 12th grade families and teachers are working relentlessly to support students as they develop their unique potential, and discover their special gifts and talents. From elementary school fathers spending a full school day with their children, to middle school students learning how to flamenco dance, to high school seniors and librarians leading conferences abroad, Hyde Leadership Charter School is bursting with purpose and passion as it ventures into a new era under the leadership of Executive Director Tom Sturtevant.

As Tom indicates in his first message, our community is stronger than ever. For our Fall 2014 edition of *Character Matters* we are excited to highlight not only the achievements of our recent graduating class, but the individuals and supporters comprising our community who are pursuing dreams and persisting through life's challenges to achieve their best. Every. Single. Day. ■



Above, left to right: Saadiq Blair (LIU Post), Ely Gonzalez (New York City College of Technology), Malik Palmer (New York City College of Technology), Melissa Mena (Molloy College), Itea Davis (SUNY Cobleskill)

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A Message from Our Executive Director



I am thrilled to serve as the new Executive Director of Hyde Leadership Charter School. Hyde is important and distinctive as a New York City public school because we do whatever it takes to develop each student's unique potential. Hyde's education integrates core academic skills like critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, reading and writing with character strengths like being honest, being curious, acting upon one's conscience, being a brother's keeper, and having courage.

While our students are on individual paths, they all aim to be positive contributing members of their families, schools, businesses, and communities. Building on their gifts and passions, which we often refer to as "sparks," our students discover and develop their unique potential.

Community-based leadership inspires our students, families, teachers, and staff to create an even brighter future of equity, possibility, and achievement. Hunts Point is a community with tremendous strengths. Despite multiple obstacles, including unemployment, poverty, and environmental pollution, local organizations like the Hunts Point Alliance for Children and Hyde Leadership Charter School are collaborating to provide opportunities for kids and families that deserve and appreciate engaging initiatives. As I join the Hunts Point community as Hyde's Executive Director, I see our school as a critical partner in this empowering movement, and I am excited to contribute to this work.

Finally, in addition to our distinctive character development programs and the momentum building in our community, Hyde's Family-Based Character Education model demonstrates that academic achievement, strong character, and united families are far more powerful than any obstacles in their way. Hyde students are deepening their character, graduating from high school, pursuing college degrees, and succeeding in their lives as people of conscience, humility, and purpose.

I welcome you to join us in our efforts to strengthen the Hunts Point community and deepen the lives of our students, families, and teachers.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Sturtevant
Executive Director

Consider Making a Tax-Deductible Gift to the Hyde Leadership Charter School

You will be contributing to the excellence, character, and achievement we seek to inspire in our students, families, and teachers each and every day. Donations should be made payable to:

Hyde Leadership Charter School
Attn: Josh Williams, Development Office
830 Hunts Point Avenue
Bronx, NY 10474

Dreams Becoming Reality for Hyde Alumni

From the moment our kindergarteners don a navy blue Hyde sweater and practice their best “Hyde Stride” down the hallways of 730 Bryant Avenue, we start dreaming big dreams for them. We want our students to ascend to positions of power and influence, so they might one day help create a more just society. Though there have only been two graduating classes at Hyde thus far, some of our young alumni are already making these dreams a reality.

Last July, Ruth Tirado (Class of 2013) or “Ruthie” as she is affectionately known, participated in the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program at Yale University. This intensive program had this future doctor taking Organic Chemistry and shadowing medical professionals in the ER. As her former AP English teacher, I recently spoke to Ms. Tirado about this life-changing experience:

Mr. Fusco: What was the most challenging aspect of the program?

Ruth: Definitely the classes. They made it very clear before the start of the program that each class we chose to take would include a full semester's worth of material.

Mr. Fusco: What did you most enjoy about the experience?

Ruth: I personally enjoyed struggling through the classes with everyone else.



It was a pleasure to meet so many talented and intelligent men and women of color who were passionate about what kind of doctor they wanted to be. But that experience cuts very close with how much fun I had when I began shadowing the doctors.

Mr. Fusco: How did Hyde prepare you to excel beyond high school and in this program?

Ruth: Hyde itself was a unique experience that pushed me to pursue my interests and work hard to make them a reality. While I was at Hyde, people pushed me to work on my networking skills, which was something that was also emphasized in this program. Staying in contact and keeping up with key people can open a lot of doors and opportunities for you, and is a great skill to have in order to be a successful doctor.



Ruth has plans to continue pursuing internships that challenge and expose her to the world of medicine. Her ultimate goal is to be a doctor. Though I have always known “Ruthie” to be relentless when she is striving for something she wants, she has learned the valuable lesson that she is on a journey rather than a race. “Many of the mentors who were students at Yale School of Medicine had such a variety of experiences that included taking a few years off in between undergrad and med school to pursue other interests. I don’t have to become a doctor right away. But I know that one day I will be.” ■

Mark Fusco is the English Department Head at Hyde High School where he also teaches AP English and Film. This year is Mr. Fusco’s fifth year as a Hyde teacher.

Helping Our Students Thrive

Tom Sturtevant, Hyde’s new Executive Director, has kicked off the school year with a theme of encouragement, “Mission Possible.” This theme pushes students, families, and teachers to overcome obstacles in pursuit of Hyde’s mission of developing our individual and collective unique potential. Building on this theme, Tom introduced the Hyde staff and faculty to the research of Dr. Peter Benson, a youth development

pioneer, who focused on the science of thriving. Dr. Benson’s extensive research tells us that young people thrive when they know their special gifts and passions, which he calls their “Sparks.” When a young person is connected to adults who illuminate and nurture their sparks, it helps to give them energy, direction, and joy. As Dr. Benson puts it, “Helping young people discover their unique gifts provides the power to

change a young person’s life from one of just ‘surviving’ to ‘thriving.’” Hyde is a community where students discover what is possible for them and make connections between life-long success and academics, character, and family. The greatest gift we can give our students is to help them discover their purpose and passion, support them in their endeavors, and then watch them thrive. ■

It takes a whole village to raise a child. —Nigerian Proverb

Hyde students and faculty are pursuing their unique potential inside of the classroom and out, often taking advantage of opportunities through educational partners in our Hunts Point village. Check out the amazing sparks being nurtured in and around Hyde, demonstrating that communities rise together!

TALENTED HYDE TEACHER PUSHES DIGITAL LITERACY

When many of you who are reading this article were in school, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Ruby and Python meant little except a ruby was an expensive gemstone and a python a snake. Things certainly have changed! These days, almost every-



Left to right: Kudirat Alimi, Dajon Rudolph, and Felicia Mgbada

thing has become digital, which is why Hyde is so fortunate to have a dedicated high school English teacher like **Felicia Mgbada**, who is not only passionate about Hyde students learning fundamental literacy skills, but pushes students to develop their skills in computer science and more advanced digital literacy as well. “The computer science job field has expanded dramatically, but there aren’t enough well-trained people to fill the jobs,” Felicia told us. “More than that, computer science is not yet a career path that is easily accessible to minorities and women.”

Working with Hyde partner C/I, a computer programming and leadership initiative serving under-resourced communities, Felicia strives to ignite a fire in

students’ minds and introduce them to the possibilities that are out there. “A lot of our students really like computers,” Felicia told us, “and many of them not only know how to fix computers, but also have ideas on how to create and improve them. I want our students to know that if they are well-trained, they can be recognized and paid for their skills. If a student is so intrigued that he or she wants to study computer science in college, many doors may open.”

C/I is a Bronx-based organization working to equip underserved students with skills in computing, leadership, and professionalism, helping them to thrive in the Internet economy and beyond.

SHAKESPEAREANS TAKE THE STAGE IN HUNTS POINT

Hyde 7th grade student **Jayson Polanco** used to be shy. That’s changed. Since joining The Hunts Point Children’s Shakespeare Ensemble, a collaboration between The Hunts Point Alliance for



Children and The Shakespeare Society, Jayson has memorized lines, rehearsed stage directions, and performed live in theaters packed with adoring fans.

“I developed a lot of courage through the program,” Jayson remarked. “You need a lot of guts to perform for parents, staff, and strangers.” Jayson learned about the ensemble through a Hyde teacher a few years ago who gave him a flyer and encouraged him to join. “My mom was surprised when I told her I wanted to do it.” Today, Jayson speaks up confidently and clearly, his eyes shining with joyful ambition. As for the future? “I definitely want to go to college. Maybe I will be an actor, or an artist.”

The Hunts Point Alliance for Children is a local coalition working to ensure that all Hunts Point students are ready for kindergarten, elementary school, high school, and higher education. Hyde Leadership Charter School is a proud Alliance member.

The Shakespeare Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of Shakespeare’s works through performance, commentary, and educational activities.

ONE TUTOR. ONE CHILD. INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

Limited classroom space in Hyde’s elementary school building means that our Reading Partners AmeriCorps Site Coordinator, **Victoria Haltermann**, has to work with Hyde’s youngest students from behind a dangling curtain in the school’s hallway. But as this Johns Hopkins anthropology and writing major graduate told us, “Research has shown that unless children can read proficiently and on grade level by fourth grade, they are four times less likely to graduate on time, so I am willing to sit wherever is needed to help each student.” Reading Partners is devoted to recruiting

and training over 50 volunteers to support 50 students individually this year. Each student selects from a variety of reading materials based on interests. “Yes, we test each student throughout the program, but my goal goes beyond just test scores,” Victoria told us. “I want



Victoria Haltermann and Na'Laejah Warren-Avila.

to instill a love of literature, challenge each student to understand and comprehend what they are reading, and use reading to help each student discover or build his or her unique potential.”

Reading Partners is a national educational nonprofit that works with

elementary schools to support student literacy. If you are interested in volunteering with Reading Partners, please reach out to Marina Santiago, Volunteer Coordinator at marina.santiago@readingpartners.org or 646-571-0792. Reading Partners asks each volunteer for a minimal commitment of 1 hour per week for 1 semester. They are in need of volunteers Monday-Thursday from 8am-4pm. Each new volunteer that commits is another Hyde student that can participate.

HYDE STUDENTS BUILD BOATS AND CHARACTER ON THE BRONX RIVER

Two years ago, **Kevin Flores** decided he wanted to build boats. A friend of his at Hyde, **Charley Marcelo**, approached him in the spring of his freshman year and told him about Rocking the Boat, a local organization just down the street that teaches boat building and urban waterway restoration to kids. “I thought it would be fun because I like to build stuff,” said Flores. A number of Hyde students and alumni participate in the program, which was recently featured on the NBC Today Show for its success.



Flores believes both Hyde and Rocking the Boat have helped him to develop his character and put him on the path to reaching his unique potential. “Rocking the Boat has helped me to be more open and Hyde has taught me to be humble and curious as I approach something new. Hyde has taught me to be a leader.”

Rocking the Boat empowers young people challenged by severe economic, educational, and social conditions to develop self-confidence, set ambitious goals, and achieve them through boat building, rowing, sailing, and urban waterway restoration. ■

You Can Empower a Child, a Family, a Community

When you invest in Hyde Leadership Charter School, you are part of something bigger. Not only are you supporting each of our nearly 1,000 students, 700 families and 150 teachers, but you are affirming a movement to develop

character, unite loved ones, and provide an excellent education for all children. Despite the profound challenges we face in Hunts Point, currently the nation’s poorest Congressional district, together we can and we will create change.

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution—by doing so you will be sharing your resources to empower our children who deserve an equitable education and opportunities in life. ■

HYDE BY THE NUMBERS

96%

of Hyde’s 2014 senior class graduated from high school in four years vs. 79% of the U.S. average

96%

of our graduating seniors enrolled in college vs. 66% of the U.S. average

90%

of our 2013 graduating seniors are returning to college for their sophomore year vs. 74% of the U.S. average

100%

of Hyde students complete 100 hours of community service before graduation

80%

of Hyde’s families have attended six or more school events each year since the school was founded

PORTRAITS of Unique Potential

VALARIE HUNSINGER

Hyde K-8 Librarian

Summer wasn't exactly a relaxing time for Hyde's K-8 librarian, Valarie Hunsinger, but it was one that enhanced her love of literacy and empowered her as a library leader. While on maternity leave this past spring, Valarie flew with her newborn son Dominic to the Dominican Republic to introduce him to her in-laws. While there she researched local libraries and programs, which included a visit to the Juan Bosch Library, a facility created by the country's former president Dr. Leonel Fernández.



Valarie Hunsinger with Hyde students Sebastian Genao (left) and Adama Bah (right).

During her visit, Valarie surprisingly met Dr. Fernández who is a voracious reader, a proponent of literature and learning, and is never without a book. Valarie was also introduced to Fernández's library director, Aida Montero, who asked Valarie to speak about her work building libraries in the Bronx and in Africa. Valarie agreed and helped plan a conference in the Dominican Republic that would discuss how "Libraries Change Lives." Valarie spoke at the two-day event to a packed room of Spanish speakers. "Not only did I develop a lot of new ideas for Hyde," Valarie told us, "but I have a greater insight into the Dominican culture and how I can better support our students and families. I can also give students and parents who visit the Dominican Republic specific information on the many local libraries and educational programs available."

KRISTAL ESTRELLA

Hyde Student

Most students in America like spending their summers relaxing, perhaps hanging out with friends and family, watching movies or shopping at the mall. Seventeen-year-old Hyde senior Kristal Estrella isn't most students. This past summer, Kristal traveled to Barahona, Dominican Republic for six-weeks through Global Potential, a youth-empowerment program, to lead multi-lingual workshops on global issues such as evolving gender roles in society. "I didn't think I'd ever go away, stand in front of a group of people, and present in Spanish," said Kristal. "I didn't think I had that potential—but I found it there." Today, Kristal, who also is President of the National Art Honor Society, plays on the Hyde Women's Varsity Basketball team, and takes college courses in



Business and Sociology through College Now, has established a clear vision for her future. She plans on attending college next year, taking advantage of study abroad programs, and pursuing a career she is passionate about. "I think unique potential is not really creating yourself, but finding yourself first, understanding what you're capable of, then working with that." Ms. Estrella seems to have plenty to work with.

PAMELA WHITE

Hyde Parent

At 3:55 PM on a brisk Thursday in October, Pamela White and her good friend Jeanette Hall stood beneath the shade of a skinny tree on Bryant Avenue, waiting for their children to be let out of school. She smiled, laughed, and spoke openly, eager to share her story.



Ms. White has been a Hyde parent for eight years, ever since she enrolled her daughter in Hyde's inaugural kindergarten class in 2006. "At first, I didn't take the Hyde process seriously," commented Ms. White, who struggled with punctuality as a single parent and New York City police officer at the time. "It was a lot getting my daughter to school, then getting to work on time. It wasn't easy." However, after conferencing with her daughter's teacher and the Head of School, and developing a relationship with other Hyde parents, Ms. White began to undergo a change. Through Family Seminars and strengthening bonds, she grew to love Hyde, its mission, and its approach to education. "I absolutely feel like a partner of the school today. Hyde has helped me to think about what I want for myself and for my family, and has given me a better understanding of how to be a supportive parent." Although Ms. White is currently retired, she has big plans for the future. "I have a gift for talking to people, organizing groups, and speaking to crowds. I might go into public speaking. As for my daughter, our goal is for her to go to college." Given the devotion she exudes for her child, a college degree is just a matter of time. ■

WHITE AND WILLIAMS

Thank you to Mitch Mandell and our supporters at White and Williams LLP! The law firm made a generous donation to Hyde's elementary school Reading Partners program. To kick off our two-year partnership with White and Williams, fifteen lawyers came to the elementary school to donate school supplies and read with first grade students this fall.

MORGAN STANLEY

Thank you to Justin Wass, Nelson Gaertner, Hyde Board Member David Steadly and their team members at Morgan Stanley for providing a substantial gift to Hyde students, families, and teachers through the Global Volunteer Month program.

HYDE FOUNDATION

Thank you to Joe Gauld for visiting us this fall! As founder of Hyde Schools, your feedback on our school and our use of the Hyde way to develop character in our students and engage our families in the education program is invaluable. Along with Joe came the Hyde Foundation Board of Trustees who conducted their fall meeting at our high school on October 8th.

ELIZABETH MELLOR

Thank you to long-time Hyde supporter Elizabeth Mellor who consistently supports Hyde's Family Education Department. Elizabeth, your years of partnership and dedication to Hyde's students and families will not be soon forgotten!

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE

Thank you to Jessica Cerullo and Cecilia Dougherty who have volunteered to Co-Chair Hyde's Young Professionals Committee (YPC) in 2014-2015. The YPC meets on a monthly basis to network, plan educational service events, and coordinate fundraisers that support our community. Thanks also to YPC members Girish Gupta and Debra Braganza who did an excellent job organizing Hyde's middle school library at a service event this September.

JOSEPH AND KATHARINE MACARI

Thank you to Joseph and Katharine Macari for their annual support of Hyde each year since its humble beginnings. We could not serve our students and families without partners like you!

THE D'ARRIGO BROTHERS COMPANY OF NEW YORK

Thank you to the D'Arrigo Brothers Company of New York, a local Hunts Point business regularly supporting Hyde through financial gifts and in-kind donations. D'Arrigo even donated hundreds of apples to our students and families for a recent Middle School Back to School Night. Thanks for the delicious fresh fruit! ■

HYDE FATHERS ARE EDUCATION PARTNERS

On September 16, 2014, over 100 fathers and father figures attended Hyde's first ever "Dads Take Your Child To School Day" at the Hyde Elementary School.



Wilbert Perez and Mia Perez

Hyde was thrilled to have so many loving guardians in attendance. After a welcome breakfast, Hyde fathers and father figures accompanied their children throughout the day, joining them at their weekly school meeting and even working with them during class. Daniela Acosta of Hyde's Family Education Department reflected, "It was awesome to see the energy the dads brought with them that day. It was really inspiring."

FLAMENCO DANCE FEVER

In September, Hyde Middle School students celebrated the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month with an authentic flamenco experience. Dancers Juana Cala and Ricky Santiago, singer Mario Rincon, and guitarist Carlos Revollar from Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana led a lecture and demonstration, culminating in performances from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

HYDE'S YOUNG WOMEN RISE TOGETHER

The young women of Hyde's Girl Rising group are excited to reconvene this fall. Girl Rising students meet on Saturdays to plan, prepare, and develop school-community leadership projects that empower others, with a particular focus on the benefits of educating girls throughout the world to eradicate poverty. Last year, six Girl Rising group members had the chance to attend the Women in the World Summit at Lincoln

Center and they are working to keep up that momentum in 2014-2015. "It is an incredible program in which our students learn the power of community organizing, analytical reasoning, and team building skills," reported Faatima Campbell, Middle School Dean of Students, who co-leads the group with Eva Rubinoff and Marion Holley.

21 HYDE STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO NATIONAL HONORS SOCIETY

On the evening of Tuesday, October 14th, students, families, and teachers gathered in celebration to induct 16 Hyde High School students into the National Honor Society. Smiling proudly, Hyde's newest NHS members were recognized for their achievements in scholarship, leadership, service, and character. They joined our nation's premier organization for outstanding students.



Following this ceremony, 5 *more* Hyde students joined the NHS after a thorough review by teachers and staff. Well done scholars!

WANNA HEAR A STORY?

This fall, Hyde is excited to partner once again with The Moth national story telling organization. In this five week after-school program, students will work closely with professional storytellers to cultivate a true story from their own lives, culminating in a story slam performance at Hyde High School! Champion story tellers are then selected to participate in a city wide competition, like Hyde alumna Janet Williams who shared her story at Housing Works in Soho. Hyde students Jeffrey Smitherman, Anwar Dawaod, Maame Mensah, and Chelsea Abbeyquaye will return for their second The Moth: SLAM this fall. ■

HYDE

Preparation for Life

Hyde Leadership Charter School Elementary & Middle School

730 Bryant Avenue
Bronx, NY 10474

High School

830 Hunts Point Avenue
Bronx, NY 10474

Developing a Child's Character Is as Important as Developing a Child's Mind

WHAT MAKES HYDE UNIQUE?

Hyde's mission is to develop the deeper character and unique potential of each student. Using our Family-Based Character Education model of self-discovery, rigorous academics, and family involvement, Hyde helps students develop as leaders and prepares them for life.

Opportunities that aid students' academic development, cultivate leadership skills, and shape a social conscience include:

- Extended school day
- Diverse course offerings
- Inclusive learning environments
- College counselors and alumni affairs teams
- Structured character curriculum
- A Family Education Department working to unite students, families, and teachers
- Opportunities for community and individual reflection

HYDE STUDENT SUCCESS CONTINUES

In 2009, our *Character Matters* cover story featured Hyde student, Jassiel De La Cruz—an eighth grader at the time—who had come from the Dominican Republic in sixth grade speaking no English. Over the course of his seven years at Hyde, Jassiel worked with supportive teachers to overcome a language barrier, succeed in his classes, and develop his character. "Hyde made an enormous difference in my life," Jassiel told us. "The teachers made me realize the importance of integrity, curiosity, courage, and concern for others. Hyde also helped make me a leader."

Today, Jassiel is a freshman at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. ***Congratulations!*** We look forward to the continued success of this young man and the entire Class of 2014 as they navigate their lives seeking to fulfill their unique potential. ■

