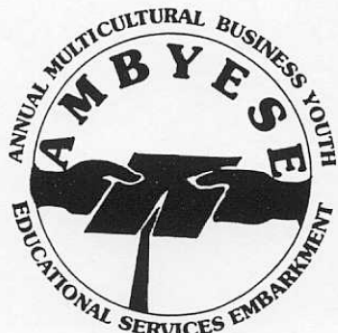


Irene Reynolds Receives an A+ from her Y.E.S., I Can 2005 Students



ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS YOUTH EDUCATIONAL SERVICES EMBARKMENT

AMBYESE NEWS

“Who would like to share their reflection first?” asks **Mrs. Reynolds**, language arts teacher for **AMBYESE’s** summer **Y.E.S., I Can** program, as she gently surveys her group of ten students (the other twelve had not yet arrived).

“I will,” responds Courtney, a rising 11th grader from Woodlands High School.

Although this group of high school students from all over Fairfield and Westchester Counties have only known each other for five days, Mrs. Reynolds makes them feel at ease. Her tone of voice—gracious, understanding, and calm—and her comments—

positive, concrete, and thoughtful—provide an environment where even the most recalcitrant of students feels comfortable enough to practice his/her public speaking skills. “Public speaking is all about building confidence,” explains Mrs. Reynolds.

“One of our goals is to build students’ confidence because self-confidence is one of the keys to success.”

Mrs. Reynolds works on building confidence in several ways. The students make presentations often, read their essays aloud regularly, and, she explains, “By building their understanding of how they learn, they grow to understand that their way of thinking and learning is unique. Finding out what works for them is really important.”

SAT preparation is another goal of AMBYESE’s intense, three week, college prep program. Mrs. Reynolds works with students to prepare them for the reading and writing portions of this newly-formatted college entrance exam. “The writing portion is very difficult for many students. And

because it was just added to the test, it’s the least familiar.” Reynolds has the students writing everyday. This may sound uninviting to many high school students but the assignments are fun and often reflect their experiences that students then get to share. Because of this, by the end of the first week, students often feel they have known one another for a lifetime.

AMBYESE provides all their students with SAT prep workbooks for free. “We use excellent books,” comments Reynolds, “that give students guidelines and strategies for focusing and using their time

wisely.” But even with this seemingly standardized resource, Reynolds finds ways to build students’ confidence, “The fact of the matter is that there are different strategies to solving the same problem. I want students to understand there is no



one right way to doing this. Different strategies will work for different people. It’s important for them to understand this and accept this. This is part of what makes them unique.”

Most of the twenty or so students who participate in this year’s Y.E.S., I Can Program are here because of the program’s fabulous reputation, and that, in no small measure, is a reflection on the excellent teaching staff. As Carl, a 10th grader from Brookfield wrote, “I learned a lot from the English class, especially Sentence Completions and tips on time management. Both classes have had a good impact on me and have helped me already. They have helped with my English and Math skills. “

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American Express Trip By Paige Pavone

As a big yellow school bus totters along slowly with a plethora of cars and trucks headed in the same frantic direction, twenty students occupying the vehicle busy themselves patiently with anticipation of the mystery field trip they were traveling towards. A few returning students to the Y.E.S. I Can program reminisce of warm memories of this event two years prior and are anxious to return. Finally, as the students observe the familiar sights of New York City – sensing that the knowledge of the enigmatic destination is inevitably on its way – Mr. Johnson clears his throat and articulates to the students, in his strong voice, the significance of the day's excursion. A few clever hints turn this would-be exasperating prologue into a playful game that an astute student solves by screaming with excitement – "American Express!"

When the students have disembarked off the bus, and the necessary security precautions were sorted through, an employee of the building gathers the ensemble into two elevators and presses the button leading to the fiftieth floor. Up soars the winch and a few distinct ear pops later, the doors open exposing a magnificent array of marble walls and carpeted floors, dapper men and women, and the amiable smile of Ms. Lena Johnson. She leads the zealous Y.E.S. I Can group into the executive boardroom – quite a privilege for a bunch of high school students on a field trip. Leather armchairs surround a large wooden table – each with an individual monitor, replicating the words seen on a frontal screen, where a presentation is about to be given.

The seminar proves to be as regal as the ambience of the building. Mr. Ira Galtman – the sole archivist and historian for the entire American Express corporation – delineates how and why the latter evolved into the great company it is today. Following, the state government affairs vice president, Mr. Steve Lemson, gave an informative lecture on the restoration of Ground Zero. Throughout the discourse students peered out the floor-to-ceiling windows at some buildings with a daunting gap between them where two of the tallest structures in the world once stood. Third was a speaker from Senegal, holding the position of senior information technology specialist. His occupation sounded fascinating, but even more special was his laudable appreciation for education, food, employment, and America. Lastly – just when the enthusiasm of the students was wearing thin with hunger – a vivacious woman named Sarah Hoople, the global business development manager, gave a great oration on marketing and public relations. She offered beneficial insight about the path to achieving an important position in the corporate world.

The adjournment for lunch was welcomed and the aroma of the hot, delicious food was even more inviting. During the meal, the students could directly talk with the executives and learn more about their duties. It was both informative
(con't on page 4)



American Express Trip By Paloma Ferreira

The trip to American Express was an amazing experience. The company is such an amazing company. I was blown away by how big and successful the company is. As soon as we arrive at the gorgeous facility we go through security which kind of gave us a hard time; but its understandable, they are such an important corporation. Then, we walk down the hallways where the walls were made of fine marble and take the elevator to the 50th floor. The 50th floor already seemed very luxurious from the second we got off the elevator. The 50th floor had its own security. We walk through huge cherry wood finished doors with big door knobs: the doors lead into the executive boardroom. Right there from that moment I knew that I was about to experience something that not many people have the chance to. The room was gigantic. The only kind of chairs in the room were big leather chairs around the discussion table with many plasma televisions for power points.



The first speaker who talked to us was Ira Galtman. He is the Manager of Archives and the company Historian. His presentation was about the History of American Express. We learned that American Express started off as a Freight Company. Then began working with other goods, then money orders and now a main

part of their business is credit cards.

The next speaker was Steve Lemson. He is the Vice President of State and Government Affairs. His presentation focused on the Restoration of Lower Manhattan after 911. He said that American Express is very involved and really cares about what is going to happen with ground zero. He also mentioned that 11 workers from American Express died in that tragic event.

The following speaker was the speaker who I thought was the most interesting. He was Osmane Mbacke. He is the Senior Information Technology Specialist. His presentation was on technology at American Express. He told us about the innovations that American Express is doing and everything that he does in the company. He works with computers mainly.

Mbake said that his job can be summarized as bringing business and computers together, but what I thought was interesting about him was the fact that he is from Senegal which is in West Africa. He moved here all by himself when he was 16. He went to college and graduated with a degree in Information Technology. I thought that he had a great deal of determination. He is living here in the United States all by himself. One statement he made was really remarkable. He said, "In this country if you work hard you will get rewarded, you will get where you deserve." He said that people in this country take the simple things in life for granted. He said that he appreciates things so much more than we do because
(con't on page 5)

Our Trip to American Express

By Sarah Menichelli

The field trip to American Express was amazing. Even though it was my second time, it was still an awesome experience. Nothing can compare to sitting in the boardroom and eating lunch in the executive dining room of one of our country's leading corporations.

We walked into the magnificent building in Lower Manhattan and had to go through security. The walls and floors were made of marble and employees passed us with lunch from the cafeteria, which I heard from an employee is very nice and has a great selection. We then took the elevator up to the 50th floor, and at that moment I knew we were going to experience something not many people are able to partake in, especially not twice.

The doors opened up to a foyer where Barbara (I don't remember her last name, or her exact position in the company but she was there last time also) greeted us. We walked through the carpeted halls to the board room, met Lena Johnson, and sat in the leather chairs. After sitting for about two seconds I caught sight of the view and went to the windows. It was a pretty clear day and you could see three bridges and an aerial view of ground zero.

After everyone got settled, Ira Galtman, Archivist and Historian, talked about the history of American Express. Then Steve Lemson, VP of State Government Affairs, discussed what American Express has done with the restoration of Lower Manhattan since 9/11. When I visited American Express two years ago ground zero was still full of piles of debris and it was questionable what would be done with the area. When Steve spoke to us now plans had already been put into play and he explained the company's part in rebuilding the area.

Ousmane Mbacke, Senior Information Technology Specialist, spoke about the different jobs that involve working with computers. He talked about moving to the States from West Africa and learning a new language and being by himself. He was an example of a person who worked hard and became very successful because of his determination.

Next Sarah Hoople, Manager within Global Business Development, spoke about marketing careers. This was particularly interesting to me because I want to go into marketing after college. She talked about the company wanting employees to move around in different departments to try new things and really understand what the company is all about.

After the presentations we walked into the adjoining room to have lunch. It was a buffet full of chicken
Con't on page 5)



The University of Connecticut Mentor Connection Program

By Sarah Menichelli

Participating in the UConn Mentor Connection was an amazing experience. I met great people, did new things, and learned new material. Whether I was in the dorm, in the classroom or at Six Flags, I was always having fun and learning new things.

My mentor was Abraham Deleon. He was an awesome guy who taught us to see things in a different light. We were a small group of five high school students who felt comfortable talking about controversial issues. We were exposed to different views about corporations and socially constructed ideas. We analyzed advertisements, movies, and stores at the mall. We broke down stereotypes and discussed current events and issues. We grew very close very quickly because we were together everyday from nine to four.

We took part in different exercises such as observing a lamppost to see things that may not be considered important. We also took a trip to Toys R Us, Home Depot and Buckland Mall. We analyzed ads in Home Depot, looking at things like what types of people were in the advertisements? And how were they portrayed? And what were they doing? At Toys R Us we saw what toys were "girl toys" and what were "boy toys." At the mall we were questioned by employees as to why we had notebooks and then they followed us around the store. We analyzed the front windows, the employees' styles and personalities and the pictures within the store.

We used this field trip to help us with our term paper due at the end of the program. My paper discussed the effects that advertising has on American culture. I used our mall trip and print advertisements as examples, and used discourse analysis and deconstruction to analyze these ads. I used authors of the many books and journals I had read and some of the ideas of the philosophers we had discussed in class to back up my thesis. My finished product had to be fifteen pages and have at least ten sources in order to get three college credits.

In the dorm I met a lot of people from around Connecticut and the country. I quickly became close to a certain group of girls. If one of us was missing, people would ask, "Where's the fourth one?" or "Where's your trio?" I also was able to interact with different people I may have never had the chance to meet.

This was my first time away from home for an extended period of time and was apprehensive in the beginning. But by the end of the first day I was already comfort
(Con't on page 4)

YES, I Can
The First Week According to the Students!
By Naseer Robinson, Catherine Trieu, and
Jack Redman

When Naseer began the Y.E.S., I Can Program, he was a bit apprehensive. In his week one reflection he wrote, "When students are admitted into the Yes I Can program it means that an adult from their high school has recommended them; but, that doesn't always mean that they know what they are getting into! For all of you who don't know what the Yes I Can Program is, it is partly an S.A.T prep program that teaches us to cope with the challenges that the S.A.T will bring us. For example students discover many different ways to get to the answer of a question. And it is also taking great field trips to big corporations." Now, despite the early morning bus ride, Naseer is happy to be here! "This past week at the Yes I Can program was a pleasant one for me. We started off the week on Monday, August 8 by getting to know a little bit about everyone. We did that by playing a game called snowball



Pavone con't

tive and entertaining, proving to be a worthwhile trip (condoning the five hour bus ride in traffic). To top off the day's events, the students were generously given goody bags with an eclectic variety of terrific materials, including a hat, a magnetic chess set, and a stress ball.

And the same big yellow school bus tottered slowly out of the city into the familiar sights of Stamford with the students reflecting on the fun-filled adventure they just completed as well as all the possibilities for the future.

Menichelli con't

able and was never homesick throughout the three weeks. I would recommend this program to anyone who wants to meet new people, have fun, and get college credit over their summer.

fight. The second day of the Yes I Can program was when the program started to show its true colors. We started to prepare for the S.A.T's, and got a good amount of homework that night. The next day we went to The American Express Company in Manhattan for our first field trip. We were very pleased with this trip, plus, it started out as a surprise trip."

Jack was floored by the floor, and, well, the rest of the environs as well! He noticed, "Marble walls, flashy golden trim and beautiful plants all around."

And, according to Catherine, who was also impressed by the environment, the trip was well worth the effort, "Despite the daunting five hour bus ride to Lower Manhattan, the mystery field trip to American Express proved to be worthwhile." As she explains, "[We went] up to the fiftieth floor where the executive boardroom was located. When the elevator opened, I was taken aback by the sophisticated furnishings and elegant décor.

Leena Johnson, assistant to the company's CEO Ken Chenault, was there to greet us and lead us into the boardroom where the executives hold their monthly meetings. Inside, there was a gargantuan circular table with monitors and chairs encircling it."

There were several speakers giving us a history of the corporation, information about September 11th, and a few success stories. Catherine's favorite speaker was Ms. Hoople, "Sarah Hoople's presentation was about how she arrived at American Express after college at the University of Michigan. Though I'm not interested in the marketing and advertising field, Ms. Hoople provided a plethora of other helpful information about internships and tips on college."

Jack was inspired by a different speaker, however, Mr. Osmande Mbake. He explains, "Mr. Mbake the computer/networking engineer, who came from Africa [was amazing]. I like someone who is honest and real, and his story was touching. I could never imagine coming from another place and not knowing anyone, not speaking English, and living without my family. Just those things alone touched me and earned my total respect. It is also inspiring to see someone who has come so far yet started off with nothing."

When Ms. Hoople, Director of Marketing, spoke, many of the students could relate, "All of the things she talked about are things I have done in my marketing class and made me realize that the things I really love about marketing, are what they really do in the "real world." She made me really want to continue my dreams of teaching marketing," said Jack.

In the end, all concurred, "We were treated like stars. It was definitely a once in a life time experience!"

Ferreira con't

in Senegal people don't have the advantages that we have here. I can totally see what he means because I was raised in a country where the living conditions are very different from the ones here. I have lived in both worlds—the poor and the wealthy—so I don't take things for granted.

The last speaker to make a presentation was Sarah Hoople. She is the manager of the Global Business Development Department. She talked to us about the Marketing careers that are out there. She told us how she got involved with AMEX and what she does in the company; which is something I might consider as a career for myself.

After Ms. Hoople's presentation we had lunch in the executive dining room. The room was beautiful and we had such a good meal. We were taken care of very well!

I had a great time at American Express. The experience was very beneficial. I got to know more about other careers that I might like to pursue. I got to know how big companies are evolving and changing.

I can only wish that one day I can work for a prestigious company such as American Express. I feel as if I can contribute so much because of everything that I'm being exposed to at such an early age.

Menichelli con't

fingers, Caesar salad, mini-pizzas, mini-hamburgers and french fries. The food was delicious. We sat at the tables and talked to our peers and as well as the professionals who talked to us earlier. Then, after talking about getting into their careers and any advice they would like to share, we were all asked to speak about ourselves and our achievements and where we were in the college process. For many it was a nerve-racking experience talking to adults so high in power in the business world, but most of us pulled it off very well and did not seem nervous at all.

We then thanked everyone for having us and piled onto our school bus to begin the long journey home. Since a Yankee game had just gotten out and traffic was inevitable.

Going to American Express my first time had a huge impact on my life. I was a sophomore and did not know what I wanted to do in college or in life. I did the YES I CAN program not knowing what I was getting myself into and came out of it having a better idea of what I wanted in life. American Express made me realize how much I wanted a career in business and since then I have taken part in every opportunity possible to experience a business environment. Now I am a senior and going again two years later confirmed that I do want to be in the business field and want to be the best, maybe even the CEO of one of the best corporations in the world.

Mariana Oliveira, Danbury High School Class of 2005

My name is Mariana Oliveira. I moved to the U.S. from my home country, Brazil, four years ago. At first, I had a very hard time fitting in with my peers. Danbury High School is a highly diverse place, and yet I felt extremely out of place, not speaking any English and not being able to communicate with the other students or my teachers. I grew isolated and frustrated, because I was no longer able to be the productive and extroverted girl I was before I left my former school in Brazil. However, I refused to stop trying, and I put all my free time and effort into learning English. In no time I was able to understand what people were saying on TV and read magazines. By my senior year I was placed in AP English Literature: I became the only student in the history of Danbury High School to leave ESL (English as Second Language) and be accepted into Advanced Placement English Class.

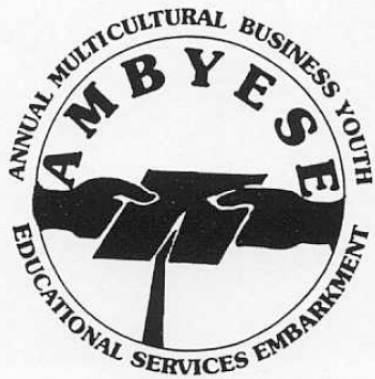
I kept striving to do better and my efforts were rewarded. I was introduced to the *Y.E.S., I CAN Program* at the end of my junior year through my role as Public Relations Officer in an after school club called Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). I was unsure as to what AM-BYESE would do for my future, and I was a little skeptical in accepting the challenge of waking up at 7 o'clock for two weeks during summer! But I decided that the experience would be worth it. Well, I can only say that it was one of the best decisions of my life. In those two weeks, I experienced more than I did my entire summer.

AMBYESE gave me, and all the *Y.E.S., I Can* students, the opportunity of not only preparing for the SATs, but the chance to meet real business people and to learn



about different aspects of business-related careers. AM-BYESE took us to “empires” such as PepsiCo and ABC Studios in NYC. At PepsiCo we made our own sodas, and at ABC Studios we experienced “first hand” what happens behind the cameras. By the end of those two weeks, I had formed strong friendships, and I had prepared myself for my senior year and for the process of applying for colleges.

Now, after graduating in the top 8% of my class, with High Honors, I will attend Penn State University where I plan to major in Advertising. The *Y.E.S., I CAN Program* gave me the drive and the passion to succeed in all I did, and the courage to go after what I wanted. After the Program I saw myself as a different person and now I know that their motto is true: YES! I CAN!



**ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL
BUSINESS YOUTH EDUCATIONAL
SERVICES EMBARKMENT**

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***We've mentored 10,600 culturally
diverse high school students in
Fairfield and Westchester Counties
over the last 20 years!***

AMBYESE is a four-phase program consisting of the following:

The 1st phase: One of the most important phases of our program is the **21st Annual AM-BYESE Educational Conference**, which will be held on Veterans Day weekend, November 12 - 13, 2004. The awards program will be held Friday evening November 12 from 7 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. at Stamford's Holiday Inn Select and the educational conference will be held on Saturday, November 13 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at UConn-Stamford. There will be 200 college-bound students attending from various high schools in our region. The entire educational conference is free! We begin with all the students together and present general information concerning career development and college requirements, and then we break into smaller groups where the students have an opportunity to interface with and learn from corporate mentors. The mentors work for participating companies. As a result of interfacing with a number of students during the conference, the mentors connect with certain students who are then identified and become their mentees. This is a very important phase as this establishes a yearlong and sometimes a lifelong, relationship between mentor and mentee.

2nd phase: at this time a mentor/mentee relationship is established. We call this phase the **Student Tracking and Academic Fulfillment Force (STAFF)**. **STAFF**'s role is to understand and coordinate the needs of its participating students. **STAFF** maintains year-round contact with the students, their parents, and the faculty members of the student's schools. We encourage communication via e-mail and telephone. If the mentor has the time, we encourage person to person contact, as long as the parents and the school approve of such arrangements.

The 3rd phase: is our **Y. E. S. I CAN Summer College Prep Program**. Y.E.S. I Can is a free two-week academic summer program held in August at UConn-Stamford. Students are identified by their respective schools and must be sponsored by participating corporations. During the two-week period classes are held from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Students learn IT skills, and improve their verbal and math SAT scores. They improve their non-fiction writing skills while making presentations that help develop their presentation skills and become confident public speakers. They take several field trips, meeting with corporate executives and government officials. This program is highly competitive and is limited to 20 students.

Our 4th phase: after twenty years of mentoring students, we have added the **AMBYESE Scholarship Fund**. This fund will serve as both incentive to our students as well as providing financial support so that they can fulfill their dreams of attending college.

Meet Our Fabulous Y.E.S. I Can Instructors!

Beena Ramachandran, Ph.D is a Computer Science and Engineering expert currently on faculty at both the University of Connecticut/Stamford and Norwalk Community College. She is also C.E.O. at Pepper Ridge Consulting, Stamford and the mother of two. AMBYESE students are extremely fortunate to have Dr. Ramachandran teaching our *Y.E.S. I Can* S.A.T. math-preparation course again this summer!



Irene Coussa Reynolds teaches at Wooster School in Danbury and is Director of Diversity for its Upper School. She has her Masters degree in TESOL and works primarily with non-native English speakers. She is delighted to be back with AMBYESE students teaching the Critical Reading and Writing components of the SAT prep course. She has 3 children and enjoys cooking.

