

Science PA Bulletin

Parents' Association of the Bronx High School of Science

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ADVICE ON BEING A BRONX SCIENCE PARENT . . .

by Paula Gannon Connor
Chair, 2005-6 School Leadership Team
Past editor-in-chief of the *PA Bulletin*
Parent of 2 Bronx Science graduates
(classes of 2002 and 2006)

Loving parents have caring children. - Chinese proverb

"It is our continuing love for our children that makes us want them to become all they can be, and their continuing love for us that helps them accept healthy discipline from us and eventually from themselves." - Fred Rogers

Something about a big, competitive, underfunded, impersonal public high school weakens the knees, clouds the head, and rattles the brain, no matter who you are or how well your teen performs.

Despite this anxiety, just keep in mind the mantra that guided our family through 8 rewarding years at Bronx Science — make time to talk with your kids, familiarize yourself with their academic load, connect with other parents and your child's friends — and you'll probably be fine.

I didn't make these up. Lots of conversations along the way with principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and parents got me through. Listed below is a kind of compendium of quotes, some provided by colleagues, others by familiar authors, that may help you. By the way, every faculty member quoted here has parented teens. I hope I've captured some of their passionate interest on the subject. Most importantly, I hope the collective encouragement of these friends and mentors supports the good work you do with your own children.

• Make time every day for your teen, no matter what.

"If I could summarize my suggestions to parents over the past 25 years it would be: worry less, criticize less, preach less, listen more, have more fun, be more honest with your own feelings, develop your own joys and friendships, and don't sweat the small stuff (which is nearly everything)." - Charlotte Davis Kasl, psychologist, author

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, April 20th, 7:30 PM

John Pizzarelli

Henry Street Settlement - Harry de Jur Playhouse

World-renowned, award-winning musician and Bronx Science parent John Pizzarelli will be holding a concert to benefit Bronx Science on Friday April 20 at 7:30 PM. Hailed by critics as one of the most accomplished interpreters of the Great American songbook, John Pizzarelli is known for his brilliant guitar work and smooth vocals. In a career that has produced eighteen recordings and gained international recognition, John has brought classic standards and late-night ballads to a new generation ready to swing and swoon. From Carnegie Hall to Melrose Place, John has gained a wide following from his numerous stage, screen and television appearances and is setting the standard for stylish, modern jazz.

Wonderful desserts!

CDs and school memorabilia will be on sale.

For purchasers of higher level tickets, a cocktail party with the band will follow.

Stayed tuned to the PA website (www.bxsciencepa.org) for details of ticket sales.

"Teach your children everything you know. As a parent, you are in the key leadership position. Drum in how special he or she is and why. This is your golden opportunity. Give your children expectations to live up to (and they will). Tell them you love them. Listen to them. Listen some more. Build incremental levels of freedom balanced with responsibility. We're here as specialists to supplement what you do, to fill in the gaps." - Steve Kalin, Assistant Principal, Management Information Systems

"Children need our guidance as high school students, perhaps more than at any other time in their lives. Peer pressure can be a powerful, even overwhelming influence. Our roles as parents can help them mature and develop the ability to navigate these shoals of life. Often, our advice and counsel is refused. But we should never give up our roles. We just need to be patient, "let out some line," but quietly insist on our roles." - Tony Major, former PA co-president

"Stay involved in your child's life, showing a real interest not just in their academics but also in their social, extracurricular, and club activities. Know the school calendar. Go to their soccer and basketball games, attend their events, and be a visible and active

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ADVICE ON BEING A BRONX SCIENCE PARENT . . . (continued)

parent in their lives. After middle school, parents often shift attention to their jobs, and children can feel abandoned. Remember, family comes first – the job comes second; your family is your first job, especially in high school. Make time to stay involved with your child. Sit down to a family meal two or three times a week. Listen and be there for your child even if your child acts like he or she can go it alone.” - Christine Scott, former Assistant Principal, Pupil Personnel Services

- **Become familiar with your son's or daughter's academic courses, projects, and methods of organization. Engage their teachers at parent-teacher conferences . . . or anyway you can.**

“What did you do in school today?” “Nothin’!” - Anonymous

“It is the responsibility of every adult — especially parents, educators, and religious leaders—to make sure that children hear what we have learned from the lessons of life and to bear over and over that we love them and they are not alone.” - Marian Wright Edelman, president, Children's Defense Fund

“Realize that gifted kids need help. Sure, they have great memories, but once they get to Science, academics go beyond great memories. Learning advanced concepts takes organization, time, and perseverance. Be attentive. Ask questions. Take a look at the freshman planner and handbook for key information about our routines and protocols. Kids need imposed organization. Make it your business to know what's going on with your kids' academics, even if that means looking at their notebooks and checking their test schedules. Help them organize (especially freshmen). Get to know their teachers.” - Valerie Reidy, Principal

“Being a Bronx Science parent means being proud of your child for attending such a great school and amazed at the amount of work that they have to do. It means having to find out many things for yourself, yet finding many helpful and caring people along the way. It means being reminded of how much you have forgotten since you were in high school, yet sometimes saying, ‘I remember when I learned that.’ It means waking up early with your kids and staying up late with them as they finish homework or projects. It means getting a top-notch education in a great institution, and being thankful that you are not paying \$30,000/yr. for tuition.” - Michael Hoffman, former chair, School Leadership Team

(continued on following page)



Bronx Science Parent Coordinator:

Available every day in school to help families whenever they have questions or concerns, **Cindy Golan** can be reached on her office phone, (718) 817-7705, on her Department of Education cell phone, (347) 563-4846, or by e-mail at golan@bxscience.edu.

Cindy also has her own Bronx Science web pages. Full of useful information for parents, they can be accessed from the link at the bottom of the school's home page (www.bxscience.edu) or via the link provided from the Parents' Association home page (www.bxsciencepa.org).

“Recognize that there’s more to school than grades—being happy and well-adjusted and having friends. Acknowledge your son’s or daughter’s progress. Resist criticizing results. Draw on your child’s teachers as consultants — they’re your hard-working, caring partners.

“Attend parent-teacher conferences to get a sense of expectations.”
-Linda Weissman, former Assistant Principal, Administration and Organization

“If you want your child to succeed, get involved with his or her education. There’s a 100% correlation between parent involvement and student success.” - Steve Kalin, Assistant Principal, Management Information Systems

• **Connect with other parents, and your child’s friends.**

“Families need families. Parents need to be parented. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles are back in fashion because they are necessary. Stresses on many families are out of proportion to anything two parents can handle.” - T. Berry Brazelton, pediatrician, author

“Successful parents . . . strike a balance between empathy and expectations. Instead of trying to create “quality time” with kids, they share “comfort time.” These adults talk to teens and their friends about issues they’d never have dreamed of discussing with their own parents — and, in the process, discover that Planet Youth is both more forbidding and yet more accessible than they assumed it would be.” - Dr. Ron Taffel, family therapist, author

“Bronx Science is full of bright, independent-minded young people whose passion about the world and their place in it makes them astute observers and therefore vulnerable to high levels of anxiety and stress. It’s been a process of learning as much as possible about what’s going on in my daughter’s life, yet also realizing that the biggest service I can perform during these transitional years is to get out of the way and let her forge her own path. The pressure some of these kids put upon themselves is so intense. From the very start, they seem to share a collective terror about college placement—as if failure to get into the “right” school would be the end of the world. I’ve found myself in the position of working — not always successfully — to counter the high demands my daughter and her friends place upon themselves on a daily basis.” - Lynn Crimando, former co-editor-in-chief, PA Bulletin

“Become involved in parent activities through our Parents’ Association. Help us with a contribution of \$300 (or whatever you can afford) to the PA annual drive. The \$300 plays such an important role in paying for activities that makes Science a first-class, comprehensive, educational institution. Attend monthly PA meetings, if only to support our Principal and learn all that is being done for the children of our school.” - Stefan Mayer, former PA co-president

So how to become a more involved parent? The possibilities for partnerships and friendships are vast. The Parents’ Association holds monthly meetings in the students’ cafeteria, an open, user-friendly place, with refreshments

to sustain you until dinnertime. There’s plenty of nearby parking, or the #4 train will bring you to within two blocks of the school. There’s always a place for parents with a penchant for fundraising – the November Phonathon and the Spring Auction -and the importance of beefing up funding for both extracurricular and academic programs can’t be overstated. The PA Website (www.bxsciencepa.org) and Bulletin provide an opportunity to interact with faculty, administrators, parents, and students, and at the same time improve school-parent communications. Then there’s the world of other parent-school activities - speakers’ forums, discussion groups, School Leadership Team activities—just waiting for bright, energetic, community-minded parents to adopt.

Congratulations to Science Survey the school’s student newspaper, which won a gold medal certificate at the Columbia Scholastic Press Association workshop at Columbia University last year.

The incoming editors attend the intensive 5-day workshop, where they meet journalism teachers from throughout the country and learn about the latest trends in student journalism. The Bronx Science Alumni Association sponsors the students.

Science Survey consistently wins gold or silver medals, in part because of the excellent writing and editing and the variety of subjects covered in the paper, according to its advisor, Polly Schoenfeld. “Students receive an education not only in the best journalistic practices but also in their ethical responsibilities as journalists within the Bronx Science community,” she added.

To join the paper, a student must take Journalism Workshop, which is a sixth-major special-permission class applied for in the spring of sophomore or junior year. Many juniors take this workshop in conjunction with Junior Honors Journalism, a special permission English class, which they also apply for in the spring of sophomore year.



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- David Semler, student

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|---------|--|--|
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| Drew | PSAT: 1850 | SAT 2380 |
| Scott | PSAT: 2050 SAT II Chem/Math/Physics | SAT 2390 Nat’l Merit fin. 600/800/750 Adm. Yale |
| Aria | Math E: 88 Physics: 89 Chem: 92 | 99 96 100 Adm. Dartmouth |
| Mary | Math/Biology: Failed Chem/History: Failed | Passed all 3 after 3 weeks of tutoring |

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CLUBS & SPORTS BEAT

By Joel Chaiken

What do Eleanor Roosevelt, Glen Close, Oliver Stone, Andy Rooney and George Tenet have in common other than being famous? They have all been guest speakers at the Bronx Science Famous Speakers Forum. Jerry Eng, the school's COSA (Coordinator of Student Activities) and the current student cabinet are working hard to revive this program, which is entirely student run. Students identify potential candidates, then draft letters, and the best letters are sent out. Seniors Amrin Khander and Cathy Lu are leading the effort. Stay tuned for details as to who will speak at the school.

Marissa Lang, senior, is working hard to get students more involved and to raise school spirit as this year's President of the Student Organization. She and her cabinet are trying to have all inclusive, unifying, fun events for all the grades. She would like to see more cultural and arts events. Jennifer Ramirez, head of the League of Presidents, concurs and she is trying to get the students excited about all the different club opportunities.



Bronx Science student leaders, 2006-07.

For the first time in the history of Bronx Science, the school had two nominees to the Wendy's High School Heisman award. Each fall, the program recognizes the nation's most esteemed high school senior men and women for excellence in academics, athletics, and community/school involvement. This year's nominees were seniors Corey Brant and Oriana So.



2006 Heisman award nominees.

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

The biggest accomplishment this year for the entire girls cross country team was capturing first place in their respective divisions at the Bronx Borough Championship Races at Van Cortlandt Park. The freshman,

the sophomores, the junior varsity and the varsity team all came in first place. Specifically, the varsity girls captured a perfect score of 15 taking all of the 5 top spots and the JV team captured 8 of the 9 top spots at the Bronx Championships.

The freshman team came in 7th in the city and the sophomore team came in 8th in the city at the NYC Freshman/Sophomore Championships held at Van Cortlandt Park on November 4.

The varsity girls placed 12th out of 30 teams in the November 11th PSAL City Championships and the JV team placed 10th in the city. Junior Vera Parra qualified as an individual for the state championship.

All of the starters are returning next year so coach Miller is looking for an even better season next fall.



BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

"The boys team had a successful year all around", according to Coach Cesar Gracia. The varsity, junior varsity, and freshman teams all placed first in the Bronx and the sophomores came in second. Two team members, seniors Corey Blant and Brendan Blaney broke their personal records at the City Championships. The varsity team placed 13th in the city and the junior varsity team placed 8th in the city.

Visit www.psal.org for an up to date list of all the games and the standings for all the sports in which Bronx Science participates. Come out to a game and cheer them on.

Principal for a Day



Students and staff lunch with Burberry Vice Chairman and Bronx Science alumna, Rose Marie Bravo.

"Everything I learned here held me in good stead," said Rose Marie Bravo (class of '69), the 2006 Bronx Science Principal for a Day. Ms. Bravo is Vice Chairman of Burberry, the international luxury goods company based in London. The principal for a day program is sponsored by PENCIL (Public Education Needs Civic Involvement in Learning), a group whose mission is to galvanize and coordinate meaningful civic involvement in NYC public education to improve student achievement. The principal for a day visits the school, experiences first-hand the activities at the school, and shares her thoughts with the students and staff.

Ms. Bravo started the day with a breakfast get-together with the Assistant Principals and representatives from the Parents' Association, and then visited several classes. Her day culminated in a lunch with students, teachers, and administrators. The various student organizations presented Ms. Bravo with gifts, including various Bronx Science apparel, and lastly, Principal Valerie Reidy presented Ms. Bravo with her permanent record.



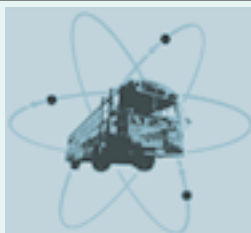
Principal Reidy presents Ms. Bravo with her permanent school record.

Ms. Bravo said that the day was like walking through memory lane. She said that Bronx Science gave her a 'toolkit for life' and that, "You won't even realize how you will use the tools you will learn here." She discussed how

technical drawing helps her even now, when clothing designers present their plans to her. "You are going to cherish these years, because when you get to college, you will do more on your own," *(Continued on page 7)*

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BX SCI CALENDAR 2007

2007

January

| | | |
|-------|-----------|---|
| 2 | Tue. | School Reopens |
| 10 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 15 | Mon. | Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (school closed) |
| 23-26 | Tue.-Fri. | New York State Regents Exams |
| 27 | Sat. | SAT Testing [†] |
| 28 | Sun. | PA Annual Lunar New Year's Feast |
| 29-31 | Mon.-Wed. | Fall Term Ends (students not in attendance) |

February

| | | |
|-------|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Thurs. | Spring Term Begins |
| 5 | Mon. | Junior College Night |
| 7 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 19-23 | Mon.- Fri. | Midwinter Recess (school closed) |

March

| | | |
|----|------|--|
| 7 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 10 | Sat. | SAT Testing [†] (SAT only; no subject tests) |
| 22 | Thu. | Parent-Teacher Conferences (evening) |
| 23 | Fri. | Parent-Teacher Conferences (afternoon) |

April

| | | |
|------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 2-10 | Mon.-Tues. | Spring Recess (school closed) |
| 14 | Sat. | ACT Assessment [‡] |
| 18 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 20 | Fri. | John Pizzarelli Concert |

May

| | | |
|------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 2 | Wed. | College Fair |
| 5 | Sat. | SAT Testing [†] |
| 7-18 | Mon.-Fri. | AP Exams |
| 12 | Sat. | Junior Prom. |
| 16 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 28 | Mon. | Memorial Day (school closed) |

June

| | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Sat. | SAT Testing [†] |
| 7 | Thu. | Senior Prom. |
| 13 | Wed. | PA Meeting, 7 PM* |
| 9 | Sat. | ACT Assessment [‡] |
| 13-22 | Wed.-Fri. | Regents Exams |
| 26 | Tues. | Graduation |
| 27 | Wed. | Last Day of School |

* PA Meeting dates are subject to change. Please refer to the PA website at www.bxsciencepa.org for the most up-to-date information.

[†] SAT test dates and registration: www.collegeboard.org
(School code: 333480; test site: 33-170)

[‡] ACT test dates and registration: www.act.org
(School code: 333480)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

Is your child's medical and contact information up-to-date? Throughout the year, please report any changes to the Program Office, at (718) 817-7700, ext. 427. If your child is on medication or in therapeutic counseling, we suggest you call his or her guidance counselor and have a confidential conversation. Someone in the main office will direct your call to the appropriate person.

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an auction, so if you can
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- **your own items to donate**
- **your time as a volunteer**
to help in organizing
this critical fundraising event,
please contact us now at
fund@bxsciencepa.org

Principal for a Day

(Continued from page 5)

she continued. She also praised all the students, teachers and staff for creating such a multifaceted approach to learning that was here 40 years ago and still exists today.

Students followed with questions and she revealed some of the business strategies that she employed to revive Burberry over the last 9 years.

On a lighter note, a student asked her to name the most exciting person she had ever met. After naming a number of exciting people, her eyes twinkled, and she said, "The Queen of England."

Principals for a day at other city schools that day included Spike Lee and Donny Deutsch.

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