

REACHING FOR THE STARS

REACH PREP CELEBRATES TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF OFFERING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION



Members of Cohort 24 at their Prep Academy Commencement hosted at The Greenwich Country Day School.

The summer after fourth grade, Stamford public school student Guilbert François found himself learning Latin and coding instead of “playing video games or watching cartoons.” The son of Haitian immigrants, François was part of “Cohort 12”—REACH Prep’s twelfth group of students to embark on a twelve-year educational journey designed to guide academically motivated, underserved area students in fulfilling their academic potentials. The summer classes paid off: François graduated from King School and Duke, becoming the first in his family to attend

college. He now works for Microsoft.

In 1994, three Greenwich Academy educators joined forces to identify black and Latina girls from underserved local communities who demonstrated the aptitude to succeed at schools like GA but who didn’t have the necessary resources. (The organization began incorporating boys in 2000.) Modeling REACH Prep on New York City’s Prep for Prep, Patsy Howard, Patricia Young and Nancy Hoffmann developed supplementary study programs for these students and guided them through preparing for, applying to, and succeeding at independent secondary schools and colleges.

Now, twenty-five years later, REACH Prep counts more than 250 students in grades four through college in its current programs and eleven full-time employees led by CEO Gina Lucas. Howard and Young closely follow the organization’s successes; Hoffmann passed away but her husband takes great pride in her legacy.

After a thorough admissions process, twenty to twenty-four students from Fairfield and Westchester counties and the Bronx are selected every year, spending six weeks of the summer after fourth grade in classes at Prep Academy, REACH Prep’s preparatory program held at Greenwich Country Day School. They receive a Chromebook and use it for classes like math, technology and Latin. In fifth grade, the kids dedicate their Saturdays to academics during the school year and apply to independent schools like Brunswick and Rye Country Day for sixth grade placement. Another possible path is later placement at boarding schools like Taft and Philips Academy Andover.

REACH Prep’s work isn’t finished after the placement process. Each student receives ongoing individualized support ranging from test prep to financial aid guidance as well as opportunities for meaningful summer experiences. REACH Prep even organizes group trips to look at colleges and keeps in touch every step of the way through graduation. No wonder 90 percent of its students graduate college (compared to the national average of 58 percent). Though this college graduation rate is impressive, REACH Prep recently added a staff member dedicated to increasing support for its



Some of REACH Prep’s high school seniors celebrating at the annual family potluck hosted at Greenwich Academy.

college students, many of whom are first in their family to enter higher education.

“Throughout this significant anniversary year, we are already thinking and planning for what is next for our students and the organization,” says Lucas. Pointing out how the “ripple effect” of REACH Prep’s students “positively impacts their families, schools, communities and professional endeavors,” she says “It is incredibly rewarding and encouraging to hear more and more stories of

how our students and alumni are actively and intentionally expanding the ripple effect of their REACH Prep experience; and, as we launch into the next twenty-five years, I know the power and influence of their impact will only grow.”

To date, more than 150 alumni have graduated from colleges and universities like Johns Hopkins, Amherst, Yale and Princeton, guided by a team dedicated to the successful completion of their transformative educational experiences. Learn more at REACHprep.org



FUN FACT

Last May Benjamin Schwartz, an English teacher at King School and REACH Prep, made it to the *Jeopardy!* Tournament semifinals.

REACH PREP
Gala 25
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25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

2019 **Nov. 1 / FRIDAY**
7:00PM

The Loading Dock
375 Fairfield Avenue, Stamford

All are invited to a festive evening of cocktails, dinner and dancing.

ANNUAL BENEFIT LUNCHEON

2020 **Apr. 27 / MONDAY**
11:30AM

The Hyatt Regency
Greenwich

1800 E. Putnam Avenue, Greenwich
This annual event celebrates REACH Prep’s scholars and partners.