

The Bronx GEAR UP Network

CHANGING

CHANGING ATTITUDES • CHANGING LIVES

STANDING

STRONG



with **GEAR UP**

SPRING 2020



Dear GEAR UP Students and Families:

We are living in unprecedented times. The coronavirus pandemic came out of nowhere and turned our society upside down. For now, we live in a very different world than we did only a few short months ago. While we must all be aware of the seriousness of the situation we find ourselves in, it is also important that none of us lose hope. Above all, we should be concerned with taking care of our loved ones, our family members and ourselves while we weather this new storm.

However, once this is all over, you will still be expected to take the next steps on your academic journey, so keep your eyes on the prize. Even during this pandemic, our GEAR UP staff are still working tirelessly to provide you with as many academic opportunities and avenues for guidance as possible. They are sending you digital communications, offering remote academic advisement, and working with our partner organizations like the New York Botanical Garden to give you unique remote learning activities. Please remember to keep in contact with your Academic College Readiness Coaches and check your emails for digital communications about various college access topics. There are also many online resources you can take advantage of while staying at home, such as Khan Academy, that are detailed in this issue. Keeping your mind sharp will benefit you when you go back to school.

All of us here at GEAR UP wish you and your families safety and health during this pandemic. As always, we will continue to give our best effort to help you make your college dream a reality.

Sincerely,

Professor Herminio Martínez, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The Bronx Institute at Lehman College

A REMOTE LEARNING REPORT FROM GEAR UP STUDENTS



While our students have been learning at home, they have still been giving their all to learn as much as they can and keep growing in school. Below, we have some students who have told us about their experiences with remote learning and how they have been working with the GEAR UP program to further their education during this period. We hope that reading these quotes will inspire you to keep standing strong and persevere during this time of change.

Jonathan Bruce, 10th Grade, New World High School:

“Since I began remote learning, it’s been more stressful to get work done, but GEAR UP has been helping me by teaching me about colleges while I’m at home. I’ve learned about the differences between target colleges, dream colleges, and safety colleges.”

Kelmitt Gonzalez, 11th Grade, CIMS:

“During my time with remote learning, GEAR UP has helped me tremendously. After I started to go into the GEAR UP live sessions I have been motivated to do all my work. I wasn’t even thinking of going to college until the GEAR UP program showed me other alternatives for school other than going to a four-year college.”

Gerliani Garcia, 10th Grade, Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice:

“Remote learning has taught me to be better at managing my time. The GEAR UP program has been very helpful during my time at home. I’ve learned that I have to be more open to new things and ideas, and I’m glad to hear that many people who got the virus have survived.”

Elsa Nana, 10th Grade, New World High School:

“My school life has gotten more confusing and harder since we began remote learning, but the GEAR UP program has been sending me tips to stay active and healthy while I’m at home. They’ve also helped me learn more about colleges.”

Wanda Salazar,

11th Grade, West Bronx Academy for the Future:

“Two months ago, I would have never imagined that we would not be in school because of a pandemic. Things changed for us all so quickly in a matter of weeks. Even during this crisis, with GEAR UP’s help, I can plan for my future, decide what colleges I’m interested in and try to maintain things as normally as possible.”

Galiba Anjum, 10th Grade, High-Performing Achievers:

“I am constantly praying for less fortunate people. I can only imagine how they feel, and I am more than thankful for what I have now. My favorite program, the Bronx GEAR UP Network High-Performing Achievers, have adapted to the situation so quickly, providing myself and many other kids with the opportunity to learn and spreading a bit of positivity in our lives.”

Stephanie Cuevas,

10th Grade, Fordham High School for the Arts:

“My entire school schedule has changed ever since I began online learning. Now I’m at school from 8 AM to 12 PM and spend the rest of the day doing work. The GEAR UP program was a good way for me to occupy my time and learn new things. My GEAR UP coaches helped me out and made the courses fun and interactive, like learning how to create a flipbook and about color theory from my class.”

The Bronx Institute Vision

“The mission of The Bronx Institute at Lehman College is to enhance educational opportunity for K-20 students in The Bronx by promoting college readiness and academic enrichment through a series of unique programs. The Institute collaborates with cultural and scientific institutions, community groups, and educators throughout New York City, with the goal of improving educational outcomes for Bronx students and their families.”

BRONX INSTITUTE GEAR UP OVERVIEW

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a nationwide effort funded by the United States Department of Education on behalf of students from low income communities to support them from sixth grade, through high school and the first year of college, as they prepare to enter college. The Bronx Institute’s Bronx GEAR UP Network serves 2,250 students in a community with among the highest educational needs in the nation. Predominantly Hispanic and African American students from nine Bronx high schools will be provided with support and assistance to achieve academic success and overcome barriers to college.

BRONX INSTITUTE AT LEHMAN COLLEGE GEAR UP PROGRAM

- Professor Herminio Martínez, Ph.D. *Executive Director*
- Bruce Irushalmi *Deputy Director*
- Martha Atencio *Assistant Director*
- Dora Padilla *Administrative Assistant*
- Nicholas Smith *Editor*
- Alberto Mendez *Designer*



College Prep



Two-Year vs. Four-Year Colleges

ADMISSIONS



Two-Year

The differences in admissions requirements between a two-year college and a four-year college are notable. Two-year colleges tend to have much less strict admissions requirements, and have proven to be good schools for students who need to improve their grades before going for a full four-year degree. The reason many people decide to go to two-year colleges first before transferring to a four-year college is the opportunity to raise their GPA in two-year colleges. If you work hard in your general classes, your better grades can entice more four-year universities to accept you when you apply. This may also make two-year colleges a good option if you are not sure which college is right for you at the moment. In order to get into a two-year college, you will still need a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent.

Four-Year

Four-year colleges are more selective when it comes to admitting students, especially for prestigious schools. To get into a four-year college, you will have to stay on top of your grades. If possible, challenge yourself by taking AP classes, both to get used to college-level work and to make yourself more attractive to potential colleges. Colleges also love to see how well-rounded you are, so take part in extracurricular activities like clubs and sports, or even take on a part-time job. Finally, you must do well on your college entrance exams, such as the SAT or ACT. The PSAT exam is a great way to prepare for the SAT, and a high score may qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship, which can take a large amount out of your tuition.

EDUCATION



Two-Year

As mentioned, many people use two-year colleges as a stepping stone to eventually get into the four-year college of their choice. Because of this, two-year colleges do not have the same range of classes available as their four-year counterparts. On the other hand, two-year colleges do have more academic support for their students as a result. You may find tutoring services and mentoring programs more readily available if you start to struggle. Two-year colleges also have a lower teacher to student ratio, so you are less likely to have classes in a lecture hall filled with hundreds of students and more likely to get one-on-one time with an instructor. It is generally easier to change your major at a two-year school due to the greater flexibility in your education. Finally, some careers may require a two-year associate's degree or certificate rather than a four-year bachelor's degree, including certain STEM careers.

Four-Year

One of the best reasons to go for a four-year college is simply the fact that you are much more likely to get a solid, comprehensive education. Four-year colleges tend to offer a wider array of courses and majors to their students, as well as a deeper understanding of all of them than a two-year college can offer. Classes in four-year schools can even feature faculty who are currently working in the field they teach. Because four-year colleges tend to be more recognized and fully funded than two-year colleges, opportunities like internships and study abroad programs are more readily available for students to participate in, and resources like career centers are much more robust. Networking with others is also easier in a four-year college, which can pay off massively in the professional world. Finally, due to their larger

size, four-year colleges are more likely to have full schools within them, such as schools of law, education or even medicine.

CAMPUS LIFE



Two-Year

Two-year colleges are not known for an active dorm life for their students. Many of them offer a commuter experience where their students commute from home or a nearby apartment. Because of this, two-year schools tend to be more flexible with classes and free time than four-year schools. According to recent statistics, about 60 percent of community college students attend school part-time, making them a better option for nontraditional students who need to balance their schooling with other commitments like a job.

Four-Year

Four-year colleges are often more social communities than their two-year counterparts, complete with plenty of student-run clubs and events, sports teams, fraternities/sororities, and more. They focus much more on dorm life, with some schools requiring students to live on campus. Because a four-year campus will typically host many more students than a two-year one, it is a good place to form strong friendships and connections with a variety of people. A four-year campus offers a better chance to focus on improving social skills, learn about viewpoints different from yours and meet people with similar interests and hobbies. However, remember that each and every campus has their own atmosphere and culture associated with it. This is part of the reason why visiting campuses is so important.

COSTS



Two-Year

Two-year colleges are usually less expensive than their four-year brethren. A typical two-year program costs about \$3,440 a year, with some two-year colleges even offering free tuition programs. If the school is within your community, it is far more likely that you will pay less tuition than if you live far away. This is because local taxpayers lower the cost of education at nearby schools. Because of the disparity between the costs of two-year and four-year schools, taking your general education classes at a two-year school and then transferring to a four-year school can save you a lot of money. However, things like meal plans and dorms will probably not be offered at a two-year college, which may leave you responsible for the costs of food, travel and even housing if you are not still living at home.

Four-Year

The average four-year college costs around \$9,410 a year. Depending on if you are living in a dorm or not, you may be asked to cover the costs of meal plans, room and board, student government and other on-campus services. However, using financial aid can greatly reduce the financial strain of tuition. According to the College Board, most college students receive some form of financial aid while going to school. This can come in the form of scholarships, grants, work study programs and loans. Students often use a combination of these to help lower the cost of their education. Also keep in mind that the higher cost generally is a result of the larger variety of education programs and more complete curriculums that four-year schools provide.

CUNY FUTURE STUDENT ENROLLMENT GUIDE

CUNY has recently published a comprehensive 'Future Student Enrollment Guide' on their main website. This detailed guide is split into admissions, financial aid, and advisement and registration sections for future college applicants. It includes virtual tours for many CUNY colleges such as Bronx Community College, The City College of New York, Baruch College and others. It also provides contact information for various departments on each campus, including the Financial Aid and Admissions departments.

Within the guide, CUNY representatives answer several frequently asked questions by students and families like you about important application topics. We have compiled some of these questions and their answers below. We strongly recommend that you read the full guide by visiting <https://www.cuny.edu/admissions/future-student-guide/>. It is a valuable resource for continuing to move toward your college goals even while at home.

CUNY Application Frequently Asked Questions

Can I still apply to CUNY?

Yes, you can still apply as a freshman or transfer using the CUNY Application. Once you submit your application, be sure to provide CUNY with your academic documents. For more information on required documents, review CUNY's How to Apply page.

I'm interested in exploring CUNY campuses. What are my options?

Many CUNY colleges offer virtual tours, and it's a great way to learn more about the campus. You can also register for virtual information sessions. Click on the 'Virtual Tour' and 'Explore the campus' links under each college in the Guide for more information about what is offered.

Will recent Regents exam cancellations impact my ability to enroll?

If you've already been admitted to CUNY, your enrollment will not be impacted. If you needed to pass a Regents exam in order to graduate, passing the corresponding class will satisfy that requirement.

I'm having issues obtaining official documents to complete my application. What steps can I take?

For college/university documents, reach out to the institution (typically the registrar office) to see if your official documents can be forwarded to CUNY electronically. For high school documents, your high school counselor can forward documents to CUNY via email. Official test scores, such as the SAT or ACT, can be submitted to CUNY electronically to code 2950. If you are still experiencing difficulties, please

reach out to CUNY at admissions@cuny.edu and they will work with you to complete your application.

My family's financial situation has recently changed. How can I alert CUNY to my new situation?

Email a written statement describing your change in finances to the Financial Aid Office at the college where you plan to enroll. Upon review of your information, the Financial Aid Office will follow up asking for more details and may request additional documentation.

What is the best way to submit financial aid verification documents to CUNY?

Verification Documents can be uploaded using the document upload feature in CUNYfirst. Visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43_16uhmWjQ for a video tutorial on uploading documents.

SURVIVING CORONAVIRUS



The coronavirus was an international pandemic that arrived almost overnight. Before we knew it, people were self-isolating, schools were shutting down, and entire countries were closing themselves off to the rest of the world. For now, we live in a very different world than we did only two short months ago.

The most important thing you can do during this pandemic is stay informed. Things continue to change all the time, whether they are programs dealing with the virus and its effects, new pieces of information about the virus itself, or things happening in another part of the world that may affect us in the near future. Continue to keep an eye on the news, whether it is by TV or internet. Even information that would seem to have nothing to do with you personally could possibly affect your living situation, such as unemployment benefits for your family.

If you have to stay at home, you should do all you can to keep yourself occupied. Sitting around all day will only make you feel worse as time goes on. Make sure to keep yourself active and social. Just going for a short walk instead of sitting on the couch can help your body stay fit. There are plenty of exercise routines you can do from the comfort of your own home as well. Stay connected with your friends and family, whether it is by phone or video chat. Apps like Zoom, WhatsApp, Skype and FaceTime can give you the closest experience to having your friends and loved ones in the room with you.

Of course, your GEAR UP Academic College Readiness Coaches are still working harder than ever to keep providing you with academic advisement and interesting activities while you are learning remotely. Keep checking your email for their digital communications and activities that can help you keep focused on your schoolwork during these unprecedented times. Remember, once this is all over, you will have to keep moving forward on your academic journey, so keep your eyes on the prize and continue to stand strong. Here are some links to help you with schooling during the remote learning period, along with links to help with other quarantine concerns.

SCHOOLING WHILE STAYING AT HOME:

- **How to Home School During Coronavirus:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/20/parenting/home-school-coronavirus.html>
- **Schools Are Closing for Coronavirus. Now What?:** <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/parenting/coronavirus-schools-lessons.html>
- **How 'regular school' parents can homeschool their kids:** <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/health/homeschooling-during-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>
- **Veteran home-schoolers share tips for parents during coronavirus closures:** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/18/veteran-homeschoolers-share-tips-parents-during-coronavirus-school-closures/>
- **New York State Department of Education (for education system updates):** <http://www.nysed.gov/>
- **The NYC Department of Education is still distributing iPads for tele-learning purposes to those in need. If you require a device, complete the form found at** <https://coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices>, or contact your school for more information.

HERE ARE SOME LINKS TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY KEEP TRACK OF THE NEWEST CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION:

- **Coronavirus stimulus package questions:** <https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-stimulus-package-questions-answers.html>
- **Live updates:** <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>
- **United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>
- **New York State Department of Health:** <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>
- **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:** <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE:

- **New York State Unemployment Benefits:** <https://www.ny.gov/services/get-unemployment-assistance>
- **Eligibility Check:** <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1771>

FOOD ASSISTANCE:

- **Food Bank NYC:** <https://maps.nyc.gov/foodhelp/#map-page>
- **NYCDOE Meal Hubs:** <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/freemeals>

HOUSING ASSISTANCE:

- **Tenants' Rights Hotline: (212) 979-0611**
- **FAQ on Eviction Moratorium:** https://www.righttocounselnyc.org/moratorium_faq

FREE WI-FI:

- **Comcast (free for 60 days for qualifying low-income families):** <https://www.internetessentials.com>
- **Spectrum (free for households with K-12 students for 60 days):** 1-(844) 488-8395

OTHER RESOURCES:

- **My Bronx Impact:** <https://my.bronximpact.org/>
- **Bronx Mutual Aid Network (FAM):** <http://bit.ly/BRONXFAM>

The Bronx Institute/CUNY College Pipeline is an initiative organized in collaboration with College Now at Lehman College, Bronx Community College, and Hostos Community College. College Pipeline is a dual-enrollment program that helps New York City public school students transition to college by allowing them to take college-level courses. This year, The Bronx Institute has provided GEAR UP high school students with the opportunity to earn college credits—and become college-ready—before they graduate from high school.

The BI/CUNY College Pipeline emphasizes knowledge of college access and career-awareness. Students are highly motivated and are drawn from Bronx GEAR UP Network schools, where they take classes in Freshman Year Services—a freshman seminar that focuses on writing at the undergraduate level. Upon completion of these classes, students earn one college credit.

The College Pipeline offers highly-motivated students a leg up, pushes students to build the academic experience needed to achieve at the postsecondary level, and introduces them to the kind of work they can expect in college. The goal is to prepare students for the rigors of college-level coursework, with the expectation that many students will enroll in colleges in the CUNY and SUNY systems.

One of our students, Katia Lopez, took the Freshman Year Seminar class, which acts as a college gateway course detailing the transition to college life. She has shared details about her experience below.

Katia Lopez

West Bronx Academy for the Future, 11th Grade:

In your own words, describe the College Now classes you are taking and your experience with them.

I am currently taking the Freshman Year Seminar (FYS) course with College Now. This is my first class with the program and I have enjoyed my experience so far. FYS encourages self-reflection about your habits, lifestyle, and personality and how each should shape your goals and decisions. It also includes many opportunities to research how your interests and traits translate to college life, and eventually the workforce. My professor emphasized the importance of critical thinking skills in both academic environments and everyday life. Many of the other skills I've practiced in this course have given me confidence in my future and although my experience with College Now is limited, the impact is not.

How has taking College Now classes helped you prepare for college-level coursework?

Taking this class with College Now has given me a look into what college-level coursework looks like. Some of the work included class lectures, group discussions, writing assignments, analysis, and research. Since the course is an introduction to college education, there was an emphasis on self-awareness and effective career exploration. These activities helped me develop and refine time management, planning, and communication skills. I had to find a balance in my personal and academic life with the added responsibilities of being a College Now student. I was able to see the difference between high school and college work on

a deeper level than ever before with honors and AP classes offered by my high school.

What have you learned from your classes that you have used in school or can use in the future?

I learned a lot about myself in this class. From taking personality tests to simply taking the time to contemplate my values, I gained clarification on careers that align with my interests and compliment me as an individual. An important skill I've used in school, and other aspects of my life, is effective planning and goal setting. It has helped me better manage my free time and reduce school-related stress by forcing me to look into where my time is spent and redirect it as needed.

Do you know which college you want to go to and what you want to major in? If so, why that college or that major?

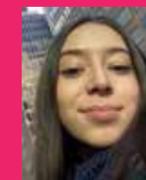
No, I still haven't decided on which college I want to go to, but I do have a better idea of a list of colleges that I'm interested in. As for majors, I also have a list that includes wildlife biology, zoology, ecology, and other environment or animal-related science majors. I am interested in these majors because I've always enjoyed learning about life sciences. As I envision my future, I always see myself working to improve our environment and helping animals.

How has the College Now class you've taken helped you towards your college goals?

College Now has helped me make a lot of progress in one of my greatest college goals, which is to decide which college I want to go to. Some of my other college goals include completing an internship and getting involved in the clubs and activities available there. When I reach that point in life, I am sure the transition from high school to college will be smoother thanks to College Now and Bronx GEAR UP Network.

Would you recommend College Now to a friend? Why?

I would recommend College Now to a friend because it is a great opportunity to get to know more about yourself as a student and get ahead in your education. Not many reasons come to mind for passing up the chance to take a college-level course and gain credits for free. From commuting to Lehman College to sitting in the classroom interacting with the professor and my peers, I got to experience an environment different from my daily life as a high schooler. I think that would be beneficial for other students as well because you learn and develop habits that are very useful in school and life.



Katia Lopez

**Bronx Institute/
CUNY College
Pipeline**

New York Botanical Garden Summer Internships 2020



Rising 11th and 12th grade Bronx GEAR UP Network students from multiple schools attended the GEAR UP Winter Institute in preparation for the Summer Internships 2020 at The New York Botanical Garden, a longtime partner of the program. This year, the Winter Institute took the form of a series of workshops titled ‘A Call to Action: Protecting Earth’s Biodiversity.’

During this workshop series, students were able to get hands-on experience in studying plant life, cataloguing different plant species and preserving them while studying their unique characteristics. They also worked closely with Garden professionals such as the Director of the Thain Family Forest, a forest that has plants dating back to the American Revolution, and The New York Botanical Garden’s GEAR UP Education Coordinator.

The Institute went on for a total of seven consecutive weeks on Saturdays. The students were taught how to create their own field notes and compared them to those of famous 19-century botanist John Torrey through the John Torrey Papers. Utilizing technology used by environmental conservationists and

scientific researchers across the world, students took inspiration for their own personal findings from those of botanists in the past and present. They researched the histories of their chosen plant specimens and learned about their roles within the ecosystems they live in, while also reflecting on their own histories and how those histories shaped their educational journeys leading to this point.

Students also helped introduce new plant life into the Garden, constructing seed balls from water, compost and clay to protect the seeds from hungry predators. These seed balls can be used not only to add to the Garden’s plant count, but also to introduce new plant life to their own communities. They even created their own mounted plant specimens and terrariums that they were able to keep.

The students who participated in the Winter Institute are receiving the unique opportunity to have internships at The New York Botanical Garden. During these internships, students will continue to explore various scientific and botanic career paths while also designing and executing their own educational activities for community members.

Emely Mendez, Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice, 10th Grade:

The most interesting plants that I discovered during the Winter Institute were the orchids. They’re beautiful and also easy to manage. The activity I liked the most was when we made our own terrariums and got to keep them. My terrarium is still alive and I have learned a very important lesson from it: take care of valuable possessions! Going forward, this one-of-a-kind experience at the Botanical Garden will help me improve in school because I have managed to obtain many new ideas from this program. I have learned how to take care of myself and others, that plants are unique and the main base for all life, and that plants are very important for me and the ecosystem. Without them, it would be difficult to survive since 90% of everything we need comes from plants. I would also use the idea that plants are made up of many different cells in chemistry!

My ideology about plants has changed for the better since attending the Botanical Garden Institute has made me more cautious about the environment. I now tend to use less plastic because sea life and green life get affected. In order to save plant life, my community and I would have to check up on our local community (we created one in 2018) and give it water and nutrients every day. I would 100% recommend the Botanical Garden Winter Institute to other students because this experience was different from other programs. This program was very peaceful and was, in a way, an escape from the city. I never thought the Botanical Garden had a park until this program! It also opened me to a variety of careers that I can do after college, like being a librarian or a botanist. I would absolutely do this program again!

Gustavia Twumasi, New World High School, 10th Grade:

What I found amazing about the plants at the Botanical Garden was that some plants are connected to each other and come from the same family. It stuck with me because I never knew there were plants that have the same family name like how humans have the same name with their families. The activity I enjoyed the most was when we had to grow our own desert or rainforest plants, because it made me realize that I can actually plant something on my own. My experience in the Botanical Garden will help me in school when we get to subjects that have to do with plants and nature.

I would also say it has made me more environmentally conscious. Now when I see people step on the grass and plants, I get defensive of the plants or I just tell them not to step on them. Some actions that people in our community can take to protect the environment are to avoid stepping on plants, give the plants water, and make sure the plants are not being attacked by organisms like fungi and bugs. I would open-heartedly recommend the Winter Institute to other people because it has helped me a lot and taught me how to take care of our ecological system and biodiversity.



HYBRID CLASSES

In order to adapt to the radically different needs of students in the wake of the coronavirus, Bronx GEAR UP Network and The New York Botanical Garden are working together to provide virtual hybrid classes for our students. These hybrid classes utilize the online Learning Management System (LMS) and Google Classroom to continue providing scientific and botanical workshops even though the Botanical Garden is closed. The Botanical Garden provides its own educational videos as context for the lesson and then has its educators work with the class through webinars, guiding them through various activities. These activities include creating life maps for various plant species, like the famous corpse flower, demonstrations of botanical techniques for plant care and preservation, and group discussions about how to best take care of the ecology of their own communities.

Bronx Zoo Summer Internships 2020

During the Bronx Zoo workshops, the participating students were able to get up close and personal with many different animal species, like lions and reptiles. They studied the habitats, behaviors and life cycles of these animals in the workshops while being taught how to care for them personally. They also learned about the different zoological careers available at the Zoo and the different skills needed to perform each one. The students in these workshops will have the first opportunity to take part in the Bronx Zoo Summer Internships 2020 with the Wildlife Conservation Society, where they will participate in designing educational programs and gain hands-on experience in the careers that they learned about here.



Edelin Restituyo, 11th Grade, New World High School:

During the workshops at The Bronx Zoo, I got the opportunity to see and touch a lion, a snake, and a lizard, which was really cool. I learned about the different jobs in the Bronx Zoo, working with animals and in laboratories which are not near the animals. The most interesting animal that I learned about from this experience was the lion because it was really big and there were really interesting things about it. Did you know people used to make medicines out of lions? I enjoyed talking to the people that work there because they told us all about their experiences working there with animals. They also let us touch and feed llamas, sheep, and goats which was really fun. I would definitely recommend the Bronx Zoo workshops.

Participating in the Bronx Zoo workshops will help me in school going forward because it helped me to have a little more knowledge about animals, the people that work in the Bronx Zoo, and the environment. As a community, we can take better care of the wildlife around us by cleaning the environment, treating animals better, and not throwing animals out to the wild because they might not survive. Little things matter.

Fatoumata Saho, 11th Grade, KAPPA:

The activities that I took part in during the workshop included finding animal enrichments and finding different jobs in the zoo. We also worked with others to look for things animals do and eat and how they live. I got to visit animals and pet them. I also learned about the animals that are endangered, about science and nature in the zoo, and about how zookeepers keep animals healthy and train them to be good showcases for people that come to see them. In the workshop I learned the Wildlife Conservation Society, founded in 1895, has 5 parks. Each park has its own sources of enrichment that are very important to the animals, even in the WCS aquarium.

The most interesting animal that I learned about was the alpaca. They're like cute little llamas, but they're not exactly the same. The alpacas were interesting because they are very smart, soft and loveable, but don't like to be petted. They were at the petting zoo, which was ironic. Alpacas have long teeth to help them eat hay. The activity that I enjoyed the most was going to the Children's Zoo and feeding the pets. I love goats and sheep, so getting to pet them and see them running to me to get the little treats was a remarkable experience. I also learned that turkeys spread their feathers like peacocks to show off, which is cute. Participating in the Zoo workshops will help me in school going forward because it can help me talk about my experiences and help with public speaking. My time at the workshop helped me get used to meeting new people and being comfortable about asking questions. As a community, we should stop littering and have more respect for our surroundings. We should preserve the environment that animals live in. We can participate in local workshops that help clean and protect animal habitats. We should save energy, and we should learn to reuse certain things. That can help save us humans too. I would definitely recommend the Bronx Zoo workshops to a friend because it's probably the best experience ever. It's not only about seeing the animals and having a free pass to be in the zoo. It's more about learning about these animals and seeing what they are capable of, how they are trained and how to care for them.



SAT Prep Classes



SAT Prep classes were offered to 11th graders in order to help them prepare for the college entrance exam. The students were given instruction on various test-taking strategies in classes specific to the English and Math portions of the exam. They also received free SAT Prep books for them to use during their classes and at home. These books contained sample passages, practice questions, and math equations. By the time they took the exam itself, students were ready to face the challenge and come out with a better score due to their preparation.

Max Sosa, West Bronx, 11th Grade:

“At first, I didn't think the SAT Prep classes were going to be helpful, but when I actually took the test, there were plenty of things on it that we had gone over. I felt much more prepared and confident thanks to the classes. Some things that really helped were the strategies for math problems and how to avoid the ways that they try to trick you. The most helpful thing I learned was the process of elimination, which is a strategy to pick out which answers are obviously wrong from the beginning. I think the classes were really helpful because they gave us plenty of time to just work on the SAT instead of needing to put it in between different things. They really prepare you for the test and I would absolutely recommend taking them to someone else.”

Oscar Cruz, West Bronx, 11th Grade:

“Taking the SAT Prep classes gave me a better way of looking at the test. By the time I took it, I was more familiar with it and understood the questions better. English was the most helpful part. I learned different techniques and approaches for questions while improving my grammar. We spent time going over certain uses for commas, semicolons and bridging sentences. Other people should take these classes because they help you get familiar with the test and you'll learn new ways to solve equations. I would say you should study the structure of the test and take practice tests before taking it. You should also read a lot beforehand so you can be prepared for reading the long passages.”

Amy Peralta, Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice, 11th Grade:

“When I took the PSAT, I had no idea what I was doing. The SAT Prep classes were really good, especially the math part. There were a lot of problems that I didn't know how to solve yet, so it was really helpful. I'd say other people should go because it helps you prepare and gives you tests so they know what you're struggling with and can help you. The process of elimination was the most useful thing we learned because it helped me take my time and look at what the question was actually asking for before answering. We were given books with practice questions so we could learn to read the passages properly and answer effectively.”

Natalie Jaramillo, 11th Grade, West Bronx:

“The SAT Prep classes I took helped me learn a lot. I've struggled with math in the past, but the booklets they gave us helped me learn new equations in subjects like geometry. The English section helped me with my grammar, and the classes in general helped me learn how to manage my time during the test. They also gave us a great environment to learn in, with people I knew from before there to help me whenever I was stuck. One of the things they taught us was to take time to read the questions carefully before answering, so you know exactly what you are looking for first. I felt so much more confident taking the test than I would have otherwise. The college I want to get into is Lehman College, because it has some majors I would like to take. I would want to major in education or graphic design. I've always liked computers and drawing, but I also like to help others.”

Virtual Tours

During this quarantine, as much as we may want to, we obviously cannot provide educational field trips to our students like we have in the past. However, many museums, historical sites and national parks have stepped up to deliver their signature experiences by offering virtual tours to anyone from the comfort of your home. We hope that these links will help make your self-isolation a little brighter. Here are some of the many places you can go:



- THE LOUVRE:** <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne>
- SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY:** <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour>
- YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK:** <https://www.virtualyosemite.org/virtual-tour/>
- SISTINE CHAPEL:** <http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/cappella-sistina/tour-virtuale.html>
- GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM:** https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/solomon-r-guggenheim-museum-interior-streetview/jAHfbv3JGM2KaQ?sv_lng=-73.95902634325634&sv_lat=40.78285751667664&sv_h=11&sv_p=0&sv_pid=MfnUmHRyOSzMtY3vtYU05g&sv_z=0.9999999999999997
- VAN GOGH MUSEUM:** <https://360stories.com/amsterdam/story/van-gogh-museum>
- THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA:** <https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china>
- THE EIFFEL TOWER:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=120&v=HNApxhvK1Hg&feature=emb_title
- MUSEUM OF MODERN ART:** <https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/oAKir0hqoP3eKw>
- SAN DIEGO ZOO:** <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/upgraded-experiences/inside-look-tours>
- BRONX ZOO:** <https://bronxzoo.com/virtual-zoo>
- CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNEOIJXVNE>
- AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY:** https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/american-museum-of-natural-history/OQGjMrLQ0rj5Dw?sv_lng=-73.97369243670577&sv_lat=40.78077791169868&sv_h=253.81848353372035&sv_p=-0.9966105571353125&sv_pid=VnzjQRniQBOIJ1KvooFq-g&sv_z=1
- INTREPID SEA, AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM:** <https://www.intrepidmuseum.org/TGTVideoGallery>
- INTERNATIONAL SPY MUSEUM:** <https://www.spymuseum.org/virtual-tour/>
- MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM:** <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
- NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM:** <https://www.neaq.org/visit/at-home-events-and-activities/>

Quarantine Assistance

Supporting Teenagers and Young Adults during the Coronavirus Crisis: <https://childmind.org/article/supporting-teenagers-and-young-adults-during-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

Grab-and-Go free meals are available to all. Any New Yorker who wants one can get three free meals a day at any of the 400 Meal Hubs throughout the city. Text "NYC FOOD" or "NYC COMIDA" to 877-877 for more information, or visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/freemeals>.

For real-time information from NotifyNYC, text "COVID" or "COVIDESP" (Spanish) to **692-692 (NYC-NYC)**

For **mental health support** while staying at home, visit ThriveNYC at https://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us/mental_health_support_while_home, or contact NYC WELL at 1-888-NYC-WELL (692-9355)

For assistance with housing, please call the **Tenants' Rights Hotline** at (212) 979-0611. You can also read frequently asked questions on the **Eviction Moratorium** at https://www.righttocounselnyc.org/moratorium_fa

Regional Enrichment Centers are still open to help care for the children of essential employees, including first responders, healthcare workers, transit workers, and other essential services. For more information, visit <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/regional-enrichment-centers>.

Visiting [benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov) can help provide your family with essential benefits that can help with the strain of living in quarantine, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or the Low Income House Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Using the Benefit Finder can help you find additional benefits that are right for you.

For assistance with virus testing, visit <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-testing>. This link also includes an Online Assessment where you can enter your symptoms to see if you need a test.

Follow the steps at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html> to know how to avoid contracting COVID-19 or what to do if you or a loved one has become sick.

Educational Assistance

How to Help Your Child Focus and Stay Engaged during Remote Learning: <https://education.jhu.edu/2020/04/8tipsforfocus/>

If you find that your child is struggling with schoolwork during the quarantine, have them visit Khan Academy at <https://www.khanacademy.org>. Using short videos, **Khan Academy** lets students learn about any academic topics they might need help in, including math, science, the humanities, and test prep. All of the videos are free for anyone to watch, the site provides practice questions after every lesson, and the website keeps track of how far you've progressed in each topic. No account is necessary.

The NYC Department of Education is still distributing **iPads** for tele-learning purposes to those in need. If you require a device, complete the form found at <https://coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices>, or contact your school for more information.

Parents Help Page

To all our GEAR UP parents, we are here for you and will continue to make sure your students receive the best education possible, both during this quarantine and beyond. On this page, we will share links both to help you with any issues you are experiencing during this difficult time and to help you provide educational aid to your children as they continue their studies from home.



