



# PEF News

## November

### 2017

GRADUATING EVERY PATERSON CHILD!

## Jeffrey Sanchez - inspired by Iron Man and MOTH!



Jeffrey learned about PEF's MOTH program when Lead Teacher Mario Benitez visited his 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at School 2 to recruit new members.

Since he was already interested in science and galaxies, it caught his attention right away. When asked what sparked the interest he said, "I had seen Iron Man!"

Six years later, Jeffrey is now in his senior year of high school. He believes he has been enriched by his participation in the William Paterson University Astronomy lectures, stargazing on the football field and the hiking trips. When asked what was his best experience, his response was, "The Solar Eclipse, of course!" Jeffrey was excited to travel with

the group to St. Louis, MO, to experience Totality. The preparation leading up to the trip was intense given the NAACP travel alert. PEF and the mentors took every possible precaution to ensure their safety. The actual experience, however, was one that Jeffrey and the other young men will remember for a lifetime. Besides the solar eclipse, the human experience was also rewarding for him. He found the people of MO to be warm, welcoming folks. Thankfully, he didn't experience any of the negative interactions he had read about or seen in the media.

Jeffrey shared that he was very shy and didn't like to talk to anyone when he first joined MOTH. Now, he considers himself a good communicator and will talk to anyone about his experiences and dreams.

College was always on the horizon for this young man, but he didn't know where he would go. Thanks to the Iron Man influence, he knew he was interested in the technology field. MOTH helped

him sharpen his focus on programming and software development. He has already been accepted to the University of Advancing Technology in AZ. He is worried that the tuition and fees, being very high, may not be affordable even having been awarded a scholarship. Not to be deterred, he's also applying to several NJ universities.

Jeffrey is learning coding on his own time to get a head start on college lectures. He says the online courses are free if you don't need a certificate and \$49 if you do. He's already looking forward to coming back as a mentor after college.

We are so proud of Jeffrey! To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, "Oh the places he will go!"



# A Message from our Executive Director

## PEF is Staying Focused on Improving Student Outcomes Through Unprecedented Change!

Paterson Public Schools has a new Interim Superintendent and is in the midst of a search for a new permanent leader. The return of local control is a real possibility in the short term and will necessitate a period of transition and reorganization. Throughout all these changes, PEF will remain focused on ensuring that the community's voice is heard and respected and that students' needs are being met. Over the past few months, we conducted focus groups with adults and students to establish a community vision and values for Paterson's return to

local control and the Superintendent Search process. (The Superintendent Search Community Engagement Report is on our website.)

Paterson community's vision for our public schools is a Paterson Public Schools system that offers our children a high quality education from pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, in an environment that is safe and conducive to 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. This should include curricula that prepare all of our students for the global workforce and schools that equally meet the needs of our gifted, regular education and special education populations. We envision District schools that have the resources to be competitive and offer the same opportunities as charter schools and suburban schools along with teachers and administrators that honor and embrace our diversity. Finally, and emphatically, we



want control of the schools to be returned to the local community.

PEF wholeheartedly endorses this vision! Our board, staff and volunteers are working diligently to advocate for policies and programs that support this vision. Our work with The College Track, our STEAM programs and Paterson Reads are all evidence of how Paterson kids can soar when they have the right supports and resources. We want this for all our kids! With your help, we can continue to focus on strategies and advocacy to ensure that Paterson continues along the trajectory of improving student outcomes!

## Focus on Early Literacy



*Paterson Reads* continues to engage the community in ensuring that every Paterson child reads on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The city-wide plan aligns community resources to improve summer learning, increase early learning and improve attendance by reducing chronic absenteeism. This year, 9,500 students participated in Paterson Reads activities. We're happy to announce a new city-wide congregational literacy initiative and a barber shop "Fade to Books" collaboration with Paterson Library. We're also working with Paterson Public Schools Department of Parent and Community Engagement to place books in laundromats. Ten churches have also received Free Library Exchange bookcases!

**Our 50 Book Club** encourages elementary students to read 50 books of their choice for pleasure. School Library Media Specialists, teachers and Paterson Free Public Library staff help children select age-appropriate books and keep track of how many books the students read. 1,450 students received certificates of achievement, stickers, bookmarks and free books at this year's celebration. As we celebrate the kids, we also celebrate the 45 volunteers, Paterson Library staff, PPS teachers and administrators and Clifford the Big Red Dog for helping to make the celebration a success.

# Creating a College Going Culture

Our *College Track* workshops expanded this year and now include all the academies at Eastside and John F. Kennedy. PEF trained 52 student facilitators and they lead their peers in workshops for college preparation, planning, access and retention. We also facilitated workshops at several elementary schools.



It's never too early to start thinking about college! The majority of our students will be the first in their families to attend college. Let's help them get there!

JFK's Communications students did the research, wrote the articles and published our 13th Edition Paterson College Guide featuring interviews with successful alumni as well as admission and cost information for all NJ colleges and universities. Gannett Newspaper graciously printed 10,000 copies for our middle and high school students! Are you affiliated with any of these colleges? The kids love to hear from Paterson alumni. Give us a call and we'll make the arrangements.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website  
[www.paterson-education.org](http://www.paterson-education.org)

## FAST FACTS

# 606

The number of JFK and Eastside students that participated in College Track last year

# 4,032

The number of students directly impacted by PEF's STEAM programs

PEF supports three STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) enrichment programs for teens. Girls United for the Earth (*GUFE*) for high school girls, Matter Observed Through Hombres (*MOTH*) for high school boys and *Summer STEAM* for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The *Summer STEAM* students studied how pollution affects our watershed and devised robotic solutions to address current pollution issues.



The girls are studying environmental impacts on water and its effects on animals. They're scheduled to take an international service learning trip next year.

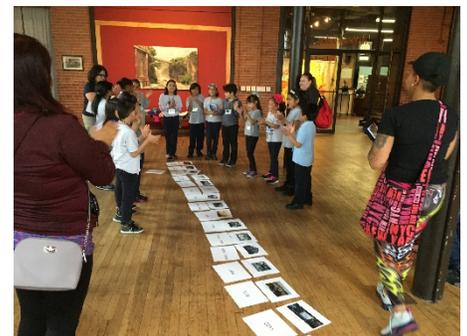
### Where will they go?

The boys continue to study Planetary Science. They are organizing stargazing meetups in Paterson. Watch their Facebook page for the announcements.

**Totality!** 10 members of our *MOTH* group traveled to Jefferson City, Missouri, to experience two minutes and thirty seconds of totality of the Great American Solar Eclipse. By all accounts, the year of preparation was well worth it!



PEF is host to the *Great Falls Teacher's Collaborative*. This group of Paterson teachers use Paterson's natural resources and history to develop and test lessons as a peer led professional development model. PPS Teachers and NJ Audubon created professional development experiences using the Passaic River and the adjacent Great Falls National Historic Park as resources. The teachers aligned resources to Next Generation Science Standards that reflect PPS learning goals. How exciting for our kids!



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Like @PatersonMOTH on Facebook for updates

# Thanks to our Donors and Volunteers

## Foundations

Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation  
 Journey for Justice  
 National Economics & Social Rights  
 Paterson Children's Foundation  
 The Blum-Merians Foundation  
 Hamilton Partnership for Paterson  
 The Schumann Fund for New Jersey  
 The Henry & Marilyn Taub Foundation  
 The Turrell Fund  
 The Nicholson Foundation  
 Victor Cruz Foundation

## Corporations

PNC Bank Foundation  
 PSE&G  
 TD Charitable Foundation  
 Bank of America  
 Wells Fargo Foundation  
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## Local Businesses

Ace Reprographic Service  
 Airtron Technology Inc.  
 Alma Realty  
 American Dream Management  
 Arnet Consulting  
 Arrow Steel, Inc.  
 AXA Advisors, LLC  
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Berkeley College  
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 Paterson Free Public Library  
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 Shoprite #120  
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 Sweet Potato Pie  
 The Tablecloth Company, Inc.  
 United Way of Passaic County  
 Wilkstone, LLC  
 Francesco's Restaurant

## Individuals

Michelle Abel  
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 Daisy Ayala  
 Rosalie Bepalko  
 Nellista Bess  
 Clarence Boseman  
 Alan & Kathleen Bowen  
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 Antoinette Brevard  
 Rosa Brown  
 Karen Brown, Esq.

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 Eli Burgos  
 Candace Burns  
 Marsha Cohen  
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 Candice Cotton  
 Edward Cotton Jr  
 Edward Cotton III  
 Ruby Cotton  
 Linda Crescione



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 Rachel Cuff  
 Cindy Czesak  
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 Margaret Dalton  
 Tray Davis  
 Mary Dawson  
 Ralph & Marcua DeLuccia  
 Lois Deyo  
 Sandra Diodonet  
 Andrew & Barbara Dunn  
 Jamie Dykes  
 Vilma Ferreri  
 Janet Finke  
 Carol Friedman  
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 Barbara Gorski  
 Janelle Grant  
 Renee Greene Levitt  
 Robert & Cynthia Hamburger  
 Elaine Harrington  
 Norma Harrison  
 Karen Johnson  
 Milsey Katz  
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 Arnold Korotkin  
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 Zatiti Moody  
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 Dolores Most  
 Donna Nelson-Ivy  
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 Mark & Dawn Van Denend  
 Donald & Megan Vanderbeck  
 Dorothy Vanderbeck  
 Felisa VanLiew  
 Dennis & Carole Vroegindewey  
 Virginia Whatley  
 E. Florine White  
 Richard Williams  
 Mary Wilson  
 Belinda Wilson

### **Volunteers**

Yesi Alejo  
 Anthony Arenas  
 Doris Arnett-Gary



Linda Arnett-Tinsley  
 Tamasha Balmer  
 Demetrius Balmer  
 Mario Benitez  
 Latita Blount  
 Lillian Branch  
 Phyllis Bronson  
 Gerard Burns  
 Jeron Campbell  
 Destinee Canty  
 Shamaysha Canty  
 Windella Canty  
 Nazmere Canty  
 Shakia Carter  
 Oshin Castillo  
 Pat Caulfield  
 Jonathan Chavez  
 Fonda Collier  
 Sa 'Conya Combs  
 Orlando Cruz

Akiaya Curry  
 Kierra Dailey  
 Robin Daniels  
 Christie Encarnacion  
 Angeline Francois  
 Omar Grant  
 Janelle Grant  
 Ellen Greenwood  
 Nancy Grier  
 Marqweesha Guthrie  
 Louise Hanania  
 Zakiyyah Harrison  
 Samuel Hinds  
 Gloria Hunt  
 Raven Jones  
 Errol Kerr  
 Audrea Leiva  
 Dayanara Magallenes  
 Kim Mapp  
 April Martin  
 Luis Matos  
 Little McElveen  
 Dottie Natale  
 Nelson Olivo  
 Christian Padilla  
 Margaret Padilla  
 Ryan Palmer  
 Karen Pearson  
 Mayra Piereschi  
 Jim Quinlan  
 Terry Reed  
 Kenyatta Reid  
 Kwashon Reid  
 Ty'Jahnay Reid  
 Mi'Heaven Reid  
 Jerson Sanchez  
 Gladys Sinclair  
 Jareen Singletary  
 Alveria Spencer  
 Irene Sterling  
 Sarah Sterling Laldee  
 Ky'Zirah Townes  
 Demile Townes  
 CeeAsia Walker  
 Tamika Wiggins  
 Jason Williams  
 Lutrisha Wilson  
 Paterson Girl Scout Troop # 112

# PEF's Board of Directors

## Our Board of Directors

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Paterson Public Schools

## Our Staff

Rosie Grant  
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Doris Pagan  
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Linda Reid  
Program Manager

Annette Wignall  
Database Coordinator



PEF's mission is to stimulate community action for change so that the Paterson Public Schools ensure that all Paterson children achieve high standards.

### Our Goals:

- Build the community's capacity to support, monitor and advocate for education improvement.
- Educate the community about changing education needs, enabling the community to respond.
- Serve as a vehicle for community participation in decision-making around public education.

## Keeping Kids First!

Thanks to Jamie Dykes, Alveria Spencer and Don Vanderbeck, Jr. for years of service on our Board of Directors!



Jamie Dykes served 12 years on the Board including 2 terms as Board Chair



Alveria Spencer was a member of the board from 2011 through 2017



Don Vanderbeck served 12+ years including 1 term as Board Chair!

# Engaging Our Community in Advocacy

Building on the Community Schools momentum, Paterson's *Full Service Community Schools* initiative is focused on creating a community hub, providing needed health, mental health, social and emotional support to children and their families at the school in order to remove the non-academic barriers that prevent students from succeeding. PEF's leadership ensures sustained focus on improving student outcomes, meaningful community participation and good documentation of the process.

Last spring, we participated in the renewal of a district-wide Theory of Change for the initiative.

We also collaborated with statewide partners to share our successes and challenges with policy makers and other districts interested in the community schools strategy.



## What are we advocating for?

**For our kids!** As the Feds released the State ESSA Guidelines last year, PEF collaborated with PEOC, NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Dignity in Schools Campaign to encourage the NJ Department of Education

(NJDOE) to use "Climate and Safety" as an accountability indicator for NJ schools. In response to our comments, NJDOE ESSA Team invited us to join the ESSA Stakeholder Engagement Team. We hosted several focus groups to give Paterson parents and community members the opportunity to inform the state's ESSA plan and understand how it will affect Paterson schools and students. We are currently working with the district to develop the Paterson ESSA Plan.

**Who will be our next Superintendent?** PEF invited several community partners to collaborate in series of focus groups this summer. The conversations provided a forum for parents and community members to express their vision for Paterson Public Schools and Paterson children. That vision (in our Executive Director's message on page 2) was shared with the Superintendent Search team and the Board of Education to inform the Superintendent Search process. We're pleased that the community voice and concerns have been incorporated into the search process.

Ask us about our *Arts Education Taskforce* which is working to develop and implement a plan for expanded arts education in Paterson!



Our [#WeChoose](#) Critical Conversation led the community in demanding the return of local control of Paterson Public Schools; no closing or selling of Paterson Public Schools as long as enrollment is constant or increasing; and a moratorium on charter schools along with a statewide campaign to stop funding charters out of districts' budgets.



**#PPShowUp!** As a result of our advocacy, Paterson Public Schools launched a campaign to reduce Chronic Absenteeism. PEF is working with a District team to develop and implement district-wide strategies. Search [#PPShowUp](#) on Facebook.



Congratulations to Jhonathan Garcia, our 2017 Nathan and Dorothy Peller Scholarship recipient! Jhonathan, seen here with his principal, Dr. Karen Johnson and PEF's Executive Director, graduated from Eastside's School of Government and Public Administration. At the time of the award, he was still contemplating which of 14 college offers to accept!

# A River Story

"How do we share all of these great ideas with more teachers?" Norma Menchon, 2nd grade bilingual teacher at School 2 and Teacher Leader for the River Story program asks this question all the time. For her, it is not enough to learn exciting new ways to explore science concepts with her students, or implement those concepts in her classroom. She is always thinking about how to spread her science fever to other teachers, so that they can have as much fun as she is and inspire future scientists as well.

Ms. Menchon has been a part of the River Story project since its inception as a small pilot. During that year, the group explored the Great Fall Historic District on foot, making observations of natural and man-made changes to the environment. This experience inspired her to take her students outdoors on a field

trip....to the sidewalk outside her school. "I realized that many of the things that I wanted to teach them about observing nature could happen anywhere as long as we were outside." Her students drew and wrote about their observations of plants and animals, which they later embellished with colors from the natural pigments provided by dandelions and grass rubbings they collected while outdoors.



"The River Story project has helped me step outside my comfort zone and try new things with my students.

When we develop lessons for our teacher trainings, we try to remember to stay focused on the process, not the final product that students create. This was hard for me at first, but I realized that students (and adults) learn more in science and engineering from trial and error than worrying about getting a perfect result on the first try," she explained. The River Story leadership team is experimenting with new ways of teaching that have been introduced by the Next Generation Science Standards. The team models productive risk taking for the teacher participants, and Ms. Menchon is a great example. She openly shares with teachers how she works to modify the science curriculum to meet the needs of her English Language Learners and shares her successes and her struggles. We are proud to have Norma on our team, and hope to help her find new ways to share her science fever!



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