

the **Stand** south side news

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Syracuse, NY

March 2011

issue 9

FREE

SU VISITS S. AFRICA

Grahamstown stories:
young men in the bush
and people just like us

CORCORAN HOCKEY

Cougars players team up to represent the South Side and Syracuse

bone marrow

African-Americans
at risk unless more
people donate DNA

Dunbar Center

Cuts in funding, shuffling of the board
spur alumni and community to action

SOUTH SIDE HISTORY SAVED



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THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.**SPORTS** | Read about the Corcoran High School hockey team and its successes. Despite challenges to field a squad, the team remains a vital symbol of Syracuse hockey.**HEALTH** | Learn how SUNY Upstate Medical University is helping African-Americans to find life-saving bone marrow matches needed to cure diseases. You, too, can help!**EDUCATION** | Read about On Point for College, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping underprivileged students attain a higher education.**EDUCATION** | Meet two Corcoran High School seniors, Alicia Cobb and Vasily Pecheny, who have been pursuing the school's coveted International Baccalaureate Diploma.**COMMUNITY** | Learn how Dunbar Association, Inc. is trying to combat recent funding cuts so it can continue to serve the local community, as it has been doing for years.**COMMUNITY** | In the middle of funding cuts and administrative reshuffling, read about how Dunbar Center alumni have rallied to support the center and its historical roots.**COMMUNITY** | Check out the archival display that the Dunbar Center has put together to share the organization's history and the overall history of African-Americans in Syracuse.**FEATURES** | Find out about a trip taken by a group of SU students and faculty to Grahamstown, South Africa, a town they chose because of its similarity to Syracuse.**FEATURES** | Interested in helping to send local children to Ghana this summer? Syracuse Africa Bound will hold a series of fundraising events during the next few months.

■ Cover photography of South African boys living in the bush by Steve Davis

CALENDAR | MARCH

What: Board of Education Meeting**When:** 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 9**Where:** School District Central Office, 725 Harrison St., Syracuse**Cost:** No charge**More details:** Meetings of the Board of Education are generally held on the second Wednesday of every month. All business meetings are open to the public, and a portion of the agenda is set aside for speakers.**More Info.:** Contact the Board Office at (315) 435-4691**What:** Parent and Youth Empowerment Day: Youth in STEM**When:** 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, March 19**Where:** Danforth Middle School, 309 W. Brighton Ave., Syracuse**Cost:** No charge**More details:** Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority will host this event for youth interested in STEM — Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Students must be accompanied by an adult. Lunch will be served.**More Info.:** E-mail LKMweek@gmail.com

HOW TO BUY AN AD

If interested in **running an ad**, contact Ashley Kang to request a **rate card** and discuss options by e-mailing her at Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or by calling (315) 882-1054. The Stand's rate card can also be found online at www.mysouthsidestand.com

The Syracuse Poster Project, which aims to create a sense of place through a series of illustrated poetry posters displayed throughout downtown Syracuse, will join The Stand to lead the next public writing workshop, on haiku poetry, March 26. Each summer, the project solicits the three-line form of poetry to best represent Syracuse: downtown, different parts of the city or the nearby countryside.

Project organizers sought to teach a workshop with The Stand as a way to connect with a part of the community that has an increasingly vibrant presence in the arts. Workshop organizer Herm Card said, "Utilizing the energy of The Stand provides a connection to encourage writing and enhance our goal to provide artistic and educational opportunities throughout Syracuse." The annual poster series will come out in April and will be on display for a full year.

Planning community workshops and recruiting community correspondents are ongoing initiatives. If you are interested in writing for The Stand, please contact me.

A priority of The South Side Newspaper Project is to secure advertisers for The Stand. Local businesses can support and sustain this project by contacting me to learn about opportunities to purchase ads in the print issue and online and to even place inserts.

In this issue of The Stand, a number of local stories are shared on the following pages. And online, a number of South Side residents are profiled alongside people in South Africa. This pairing is the work of Newhouse School students who were reporters in last semester's Urban Affairs reporting class. They wrote about the South Side and then traveled to Grahamstown, South Africa, to produce video pieces as a final global component of the course. The collection of profiles displaying the similarities and differences of people on two sides of the globe can be seen online at <http://worldjournalism.syr.edu>. To learn more about the reporters' experiences and global project, check out coverage in this issue, starting on Page 16.

To reach me, e-mail me at ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or call (315) 882-1054.

Ashley Kang



UPCOMING EVENT

March 26

March Workshop

"Haiku Poetry Workshop"
presented by the
Syracuse Poster Project

10 a.m. to noon
Saturday, March 26

South Side Communication
Center, 2331 S. Salina St.

Free and open to the public;
no RSVP required

The Poster Project generates community and sense of place through poster art. Organizers are leading a poetry workshop on the South Side to have this area better represented in future poster displays downtown.

To learn more, contact The Stand's Director, Ashley Kang, at Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or by calling (315) 882-1054.

SPECIAL THANKS FOR SOUTH AFRICA TRIP

From Seth Gitner and Steve Davis, professors at the Newhouse School:

- Newhouse Dean Lorraine Branham and Associate Deans Joel Kaplan and Hub Brown for their support — financial and otherwise — in helping to make the trip (Dec. 29 to Jan. 9) happen
- The Kauffman Foundation, whose funding paid for part of the journey
- Our trip consultant and facilitator, Jason Torreano, who was invaluable and unflappable
- All the students, who gave up a good part of their time off, and spent a good bit of their own money, on a working trip
- Ginny Pellam-Montalbano at SU Abroad, who made most of our travel arrangements and helped the students with the required paperwork



VISIT [HTTP://WORLDJOURNALISM.SYR.EDU](http://worldjournalism.syr.edu) FOR OUR STORIES



> Some members of our group walk to an interview that they will conduct with a local man who does circumcisions of teen boys who go off "to the bush" for this rite of passage. From left: Christine Mehta, Nate Hopper, translator/guide Zukisani Lamani and Shayna Meliker. The township stretches out behind them, with downtown in the valley. | Steve Davis, Staff Photo

SECTION III PLAYOFFS

The Cougars played an away game Feb. 18 at Cortland-Homer. Corcoran won 3-1 in the first round.

However, the season ended for Corcoran on Feb. 23, when the Cougars lost to West Genesee, 3-0.

GET INVOLVED!

Although Pat Stanford and 10 other seniors will have moved on, Corcoran will be back next season to try to capture its fifth straight playoff appearance.

No schedule for the **2011-2012 season** has been posted online at this time.

Valley Youth Hockey is an organization for players ages 4 to 18. It provides a number of hockey programs for boys and girls. The season runs from September to March.

Valley is a member of **USA Hockey** and holds games, practices and other events at Meachem Rink.

INTERESTED?

Visit the Valley Youth Hockey Association website: <http://www.eteamz.com/valleyhockey/>

COUGAR CHEMISTRY

Students from seven schools come together for Corcoran hockey team



> Senior defenseman Dan Stanford (#15) and the rest of the Corcoran ice hockey team face off against Ithaca on Feb. 14. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo

By | Jason Krakower
Urban Affairs reporter

For the fourth straight year, Corcoran's ice hockey team has made it to the playoffs

Whenever Pat Stanford is wearing shoes instead of skates, he is reminded Syracuse is not a hockey town. The senior captain of the Corcoran High School hockey team jokes that fellow students see him and seem surprised their school even has a team. Yet Corcoran has been at the center of city high school hockey for nearly two decades.

The team that uses Corcoran's name and funding is actually composed of students from six other area schools, including Henninger High School and Tully Junior/Senior High School, that could not manage to build a program. As a result of the absence of hockey elsewhere, Stanford and his teammates have dealt with the challenge of Corcoran and the entire South Side being the only symbol and resource for Syracuse hockey.

"We're representing all the city schools on our team," Stanford said. "We don't have that many kids, so we whip up a team as best we can. We play with what we have, and it's been pretty good so far."

At the conclusion of the regular season on Feb. 14,

the Corcoran Cougars posted a 10-7-2 overall record and were in the playoffs that began Feb. 18. This is the fourth consecutive playoff appearance for a program that originated in 1986 and began accepting players from other schools in the mid-1990s, just before assistant coach Matthew Saur started playing for the school. Saur and head coach Matt Caron said the team's history of combining schools is key, but even more important is the players' history with one another.

The coaches emphasized that team chemistry is one of the most important factors in a group from all over the city, but the roots of the Syracuse hockey community have already connected these players from a young age.

"Valley Youth Hockey is where everybody plays together, and a lot of the kids who play for Corcoran have already played with kids that go to these city schools and play on this team," Saur said. "Everybody knew everybody, and it was just about getting them to gel."

The Valley Youth Hockey Association is a program for children ages 4 to 18 that holds events at Meachem Rink, home of the Cougars, at 121 W. Seneca Turnpike.

However, getting players to work together on the ice is on a different level than nourishing the diverse program, and it is athletic director April Wertheim's job to make sure the city of Syracuse continues to have a high

school hockey team to support.

Wertheim said the school's healthy relationship with the Syracuse Parks and Recreation Department has eased the financial burden, and she credits Caron's team with getting the biggest "bang for their buck."

"The concern is, with the high cost of everything these days, is that no matter what we get as a school district, it's not going to be the best stuff," said Wertheim, who has been the athletic director for 16 years. "There is no specific budget for any given year, but we try to make sure coaches always get what they need. It's an expensive sport from Day One."

Caron has kept his focus on the ice and quietly established a winning program from talent that extends past the South Side of Syracuse.

"We wanted to bring a culture of hockey, and we're copying what's good about hockey in the area and trying to create our own program," said Caron, who has coached the team for five years. "We've been a Syracuse success story for secondary school sports."

Though coaches and players understand their place behind lacrosse, basketball and football, Caron and Saur said it's all about maintaining passion for the game and the team at Corcoran. With that, they hope to sustain the program and generate interest in hockey as a "reliable option" on Syracuse's South Side.

"We live in the city and we're city teachers, so we're embedded in this program. We're working hard to popularize hockey in the city," Caron said. "We have tremendous pride in presenting the best possible program for our players, our parents and the city."



> Senior captain Pat Standford (#7) asks for the puck in Corcoran's offensive zone. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo



> Junior forward Mike Downs (#4) takes a faceoff in the offensive zone. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo



> Corcoran fights for the puck during the game against Ithaca. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo



> Senior goalie Gavin Gretzky (#29) sets up in the crease before the puck drops in Corcoran's loss to Ithaca on Feb. 14. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo

POMEROY DETAILS

The William G. Pomeroy Foundation's mission is to increase the number of minorities on the bone marrow donor registry.

If you are interested in organizing a bone marrow registration drive, please contact Paula Miller at (315) 476-3000, extension 2576, or e-mail her at pmiller@cxtec.com.

Visit the Pomeroy Foundation's website at www.gifttolifeonline.org

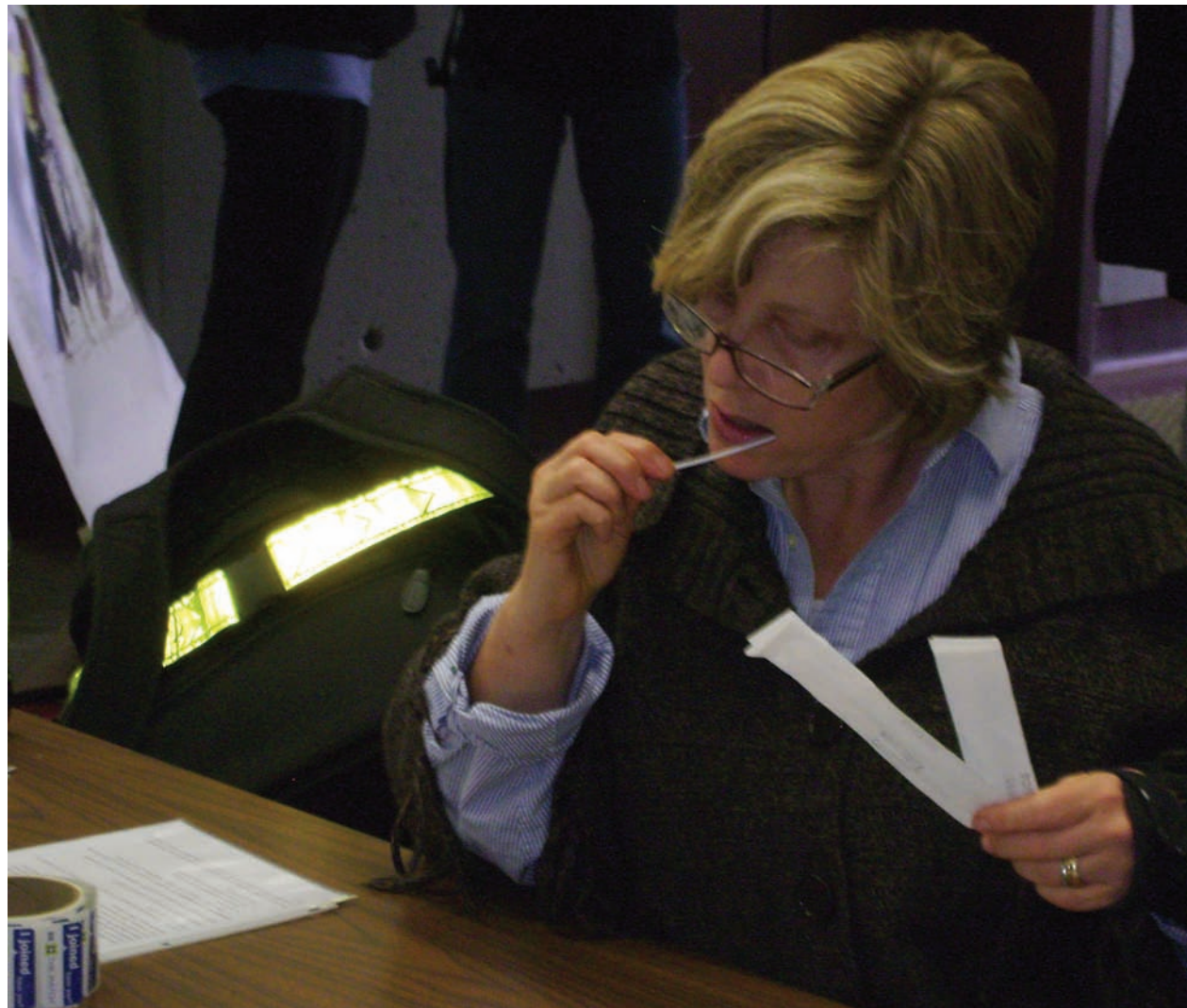
BY THE NUMBERS

Information provided by The National Marrow Donor Program.

- African-Americans make up just 7 percent of the national Be The Match Registry, representing about 600,000 of the nearly 8 million registered donors.
- The 2010 U.S. Census reported that 15 percent of America's population was African-American.
- About 70 percent of patients who need a bone marrow transplant do not have a family match.

ARE YOU A MATCH?

Becoming a bone marrow donor does not hurt, and it could save a life



> Volunteer Eva Pecor swabs for DNA at SUNY Upstate Medical University's bone marrow drive. | Dan Scorpio, Staff Photo

By | Dan Scorpio
Urban Affairs reporter

A local nonprofit strives to increase the number of bone marrow donors for African-Americans

African-Americans face an increasing possibility of not finding a bone marrow tissue match – often the only cure for leukemia and other blood-related diseases – because of a low number of registered African-American donors.

“Patients are most likely to find a match in their own race,” said Paula Miller, executive director of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation and a local organizer of bone marrow registration drives. “Low numbers of African-Americans on the registry mean that they’re especially at risk of not finding a potentially life-saving match.”

The Be The Match Registry is a national list of

prospective bone marrow tissue donors, designed for patients without a family match. The National Marrow Donor Program, a nonprofit organization, maintains the registry.

Because a donor must have the same genetic composition as a patient, family members offer the best chance for a match. Only four out of 10 patients receive the transplant they need for survival.

The Pomeroy Foundation partnered with SUNY Upstate Medical University to host a bone marrow registration drive Wednesday, Feb. 16, at the university. Dozens of students, faculty and hospital employees volunteered a cheek swab, entering their DNA into the bone marrow registry.

Named after William G. Pomeroy, founder of the North Syracuse engineering firm, Cxtec, the foundation's mission is to increase minority representation on the registry, Miller said. Pomeroy created the foundation in

2005 after he received a life-saving bone marrow tissue transplant.

More than 6,000 people have signed up for the donor registry as a result of the foundation's efforts, Miller said. About 3,300 of those, more than half, are African-Americans or other minority groups, dwarfing the national average.

"We'll go in and organize a drive in areas where we know an overwhelming majority of residents are African-American or Native American," Miller said. "For many, this is their only hope."

Thurston Bailey, Cxtec employee and a volunteer at SUNY Upstate's drive, has volunteered at about 20 events during the past four years. "Our main objective is to give people of color an equal chance for a transplant as Caucasians," he said. "Compared to 2005, we've definitely seen an increase in African-Americans on the registry."

Prospective donors swab their cheek four times to register, twice on each side of the mouth. Doctors test a donor's DNA to match a patient based on antigens, the proteins on white blood cells, said Laura Kilburg, coordinator of SUNY Upstate Medical University's Bone Marrow Transplant Program.

Siblings have the highest probability for a bone marrow tissue match, Kilburg said. Half of a patient's genes come from each parent, so each sibling has a one-in-four chance of being a match. "This is the best kind of match," Kilburg said.

Once matched with a patient, a donor undergoes

several tests for medical safety. In addition to a chest X-ray and heart tests, doctors perform blood tests on the donor's liver and kidneys. "We have to make sure each possible donor is safe to be a donor," Kilburg said.

There are two myths surrounding the transplant process, Kilburg said. One myth is that a transplant is expensive for the donor. In cases of sibling donation, the family's health insurance often covers the procedures. If a donor is not related to the patient, the National Marrow Donor Program covers all costs, Kilburg said.

"They will pay for your hotel, your meals and even fly you into town if you live far away," she said. "A match is that important."

The second myth is that the donation process is painful for donors. Donation requires a four-hour blood procedure, similar to dialysis or donating blood. Donors must take four days of medication before the procedure, designed to "trick the bone marrow out into the blood," Kilburg said. Doctors take just two ounces of blood during the procedure.

"There are no risks at all for donors," Kilburg said.

At SUNY Upstate's registration drive, possible donors did not mention any fears about donation. Dan Harris, a first-year medical student, signed his name to the registry and submitted his DNA.

"The reason I'm going to medical school is to make a difference for people who are sick," Harris said. "Events like these are a huge part of that goal."

"The reason I'm going to medical school is to make a difference for people who are sick."

—Dan Harris



> First-year medical student Dan Harris collects his DNA. | Dan Scorpio, Staff Photo

MORE INFO

For more information about becoming a bone marrow tissue donor, hosting a registration drive or what to do if you are seeking a transplant and need financial assistance, please connect with the following resources:

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

Western New York Chapter
(315) 471-1050
www.leukemia-lymphoma.org

Cancer Care

275 7th Ave., 22nd Floor
New York, N.Y. 10001
(800) 813-4673
www.cancercare.org

National Transplant Assistance Fund

(800) 642-8399
www.transplantfund.org

The Bone Marrow Foundation

(800) 365-1336
www.bonemarrow.org

SUNY Upstate Medical University

Financial Assistance
Debi Reifsnnyder
(315) 464-5026

SERVING STUDENTS

Ginny Donohue founded On Point for College more than **11 years ago**.

An organization that literally started out of the trunk of Donohue's car has now helped more than **2,200 financially or academically challenged students** go to college. More than 900 of them have come through the Southwest Community Center at 401 South Ave.

Say Yes to Education contributes to **On Point's \$800,000 budget**, which comes from a variety of donations, fundraising events and agencies such as United Way and the Higher Education Services Corporation.

Among the services On Point offers, it provides **"last dollar grants" of up to \$150** to finance housing payments, textbooks and anything else that a student might need to buy before school starts.

Sam Rowser, the program's director, along with **On Point retention counselors**, check in on students at New York schools such as Columbia University, New York University and Pace University. **Re-enrollment counselors** constantly work to get students back into school if they have "stopped out."

HIGHER ASSISTANCE

Nonprofit helps students overcome barriers to gaining college education

By | Jason Krakower
Urban Affairs reporter

On Point for College gives students financial, transportation and application assistance

When Ginny Donohue responded to her daughter Shanley's request to help a friend get into college, she could not have predicted that one good deed could affect thousands of young lives — and also cause her to change careers. Donohue, a chief financial officer for a local electronics company at the time, broke away from her corporate life and founded On Point for College, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping underprivileged students attain a higher education.

"I feel like we live in this land of opportunity, and yet it wasn't really an equal playing ground," said Donohue, who was named a 2010 Purpose Prize fellow for contributions to the Syracuse community. "Someone said once that it's an honor to be able to change the course of somebody's life, and I just think that we're in this wonderful position to make their road a little easier." The Purpose Prize is provided by the Atlantic Philanthropies and the John Templeton Foundation.

Sheleia Horton's life was changed by On Point, and her success at The College at Brockport State University of New York is an example of the inspiration that the program provides.

"Looking at statistics, it shouldn't be possible," Horton said of her low-income, single-parent upbringing. "With that struggle, I'm surprised that I completed college, and I'm going back for graduate school. It's inspired me to help other people the same way that they helped me."

Though On Point was Donohue's brainchild, she credits Sam Rowser, the program's director, with a large share of her organization's success. Rowser was eager to join On Point when Donohue learned of his experience working with admissions and financial aid for 12 years at Onondaga Community College. Donohue gave him a chance to do what he was doing at OCC for students across the country, he said.

"It's an overwhelming feeling of happiness after you do something for someone and they're so appreciative," Rowser said.

Rowser said that his passion and commitment led him to "the trenches" for years doing outreach work for On Point, especially in the Syracuse community. He and the 13 full-time employees and 160 volunteers have worked with area community centers, boys and girls clubs, the Salvation Army's Barnabas House at 1912 S.



> Sheleia Horton (left) and Caly Givens say On Point changed their lives. | Jason Krakower, Staff Photo

Salina St., and programs such as Say Yes to Education to get the word out and find students for On Point.

"Our goal is to remove barriers that would hinder students from being successful," Rowser said. "I see education as the great equalizer. If we can help the youth become educated, we give them equal footing to be successful at whatever they want to do."

The major barriers that Rowser refers to are the application process, transportation, and financial problems. It is part of his responsibilities to deal with these issues every day. For example, On Point will guide a student through standard and financial aid applications and help them understand what everything means. If a student has an interview or needs help moving into a dorm but does not have access to a vehicle, On Point will provide transportation.

"Our program is not one where we just help kids get in. We work with them throughout that process," Rowser said. "We call it application to graduation. We're not giving up on a member."

Horton and other students have come back to work for On Point — at least temporarily — partially in gratitude for the help that the program provided. Another student assisting the organization now is Caly Givens, who said she was a former gang member who needed someone's help to get on track.

"It was necessary that I sign up with a program like On Point for College because I was headed down the wrong path," said Givens, who went on to the Fashion Institute of Technology and an acting career. "Through their assistance, it created opportunities for me and opened doors. It made me who I am because I still sometimes wonder how I'm in the position that I'm in right now."

HIGH SCHOOL VOICES

Seniors say college can be a reality if students don't give up

By | Megan Ripley
High School columnist

Two Corcoran High School seniors describe what they love about their education and why they believe students should put hard work first

Graduation rates are slowly decreasing, and our district offices are scrambling for change. However, Corcoran High School's highly recognized International Baccalaureate Diploma could be a source for that change.

Many students have already pursued careers at prestigious institutions, such as Brown University and Cornell University, with the help of this program.

Syracuse City School District Commissioner Calvin Corriders suggested in an interview published in The Post-Standard in 2007 that an extensive reading program in our city's elementary and middle schools was the way to improve literacy levels and graduation rates for future classes.

Is there hope?

I interviewed two of Corcoran's most thriving seniors, Alicia Cobb and Vasiliy Pecheny.

Both students have been pursuing their goal to receive the International Baccalaureate Diploma their whole high school careers. They are close to achieving their goals.

Read more about them and why they believe in Corcoran High School.



ALICIA COBB

Alicia Cobb plans to major in film production because she is passionate about theatrical arts. Various institutions such as Rochester Institute of Technology and Oswego

State University of New York have caught her attention. She will miss theater and English teacher Greg Hipius because they have created a bond over the past four years.

"He's more than a teacher to me, and he seems more like a friend with all the time I spend with him, whether it's in class, or those hours after school trying to perfect scenes for an upcoming show," Alicia said.

As for Corcoran, Alicia hopes the school remains. Alicia also hopes that IB and non-IB students become more integrated. She feels the split between the two academies could potentially ruin prior friendships.

*"If you really want it,
you'll find time for it."*

—Alicia Cobb



VASILII PECHENYY

Vasiliy Pecheny plans to study engineering at Syracuse University in the fall. He enjoys the challenges and complexity of mathematics and science. Physics teacher Debbie Panebianco and English teacher Megan Root have encouraged him to strive for the best, which has helped him become the successful person he is today.

Vasiliy wishes for future students to put forth more effort in their academics, instead of doing the bare minimum. He hopes they realize how hard work can grow into a promising future for them.

Vasiliy wishes for future students to put forth more effort in their academics, instead of doing the bare minimum. He hopes they realize how hard work can grow into a promising future for them.

His advice for future scholars: "Just don't give up, and when you do give up, DON'T!" Vasiliy continues to strive for excellence, even though he is close to graduating with honors.

ABOUT MEGAN



Megan Ripley is a senior at Corcoran High School and a South Side resident. She is a member of Kristie Yarnell's journalism class.

If you are a high school student and would like to write for The Stand, contact Ashley Kang at ashley@mysouthsidestand.com

*"Corcoran parallels
the real world, every
decision will shape
your future, so make
every choice carefully
and with the right
motives in mind."*

—Vasiliy Pecheny

Preserving Dunbar



> Haven Hicks, 7, draws at the Dunbar Center's after-school program. | John C. Liau, Staff Photo

By | Bethany Bump
Urban Affairs reporter

Community members rally to overcome challenges as the Dunbar Center loses funding

Adalsa Latty points out the window of his ground-floor office at the Dunbar Center. A snow-speckled South State Street outside is cracked and rundown, cutting through a struggling neighborhood. He drops his hands in despair. He sighs with the force of someone exhausted after a long battle.

"Sometimes when you come here, you see cars lined up from here down to the next block," Latty says, looking out the window. "They come for service. They get service. I don't think anybody has ever come here for help and they don't get it."

As an after-school supervisor at Dunbar Association, Inc., a 92-year-old nonprofit that largely serves the local black community, Latty has seen children and parents in need of help. But that help could be hard to get come July when Dunbar will no longer receive \$200,000 in funding from United Way of Central New York, about a quarter of Dunbar's \$999,720 budget.

"I don't see the necessity for the cut," said Latty, who

has been with Dunbar for eight years. "I can't see why. I really don't know why. Why would you cut funding when children are learning? What is it you're doing really?"

Dunbar helps more than just children. With its 25 employees and 15 volunteers, Dunbar provides outreach programs for the elderly, teen mentoring, after-school youth programs, and family and adoption services. But the center has been burdened with declining revenue and a thin base of support over the years, prompting a recent reorganization of its administrative staff.

The local United Way, which funds 38 nonprofit agencies in Onondaga County, was forced to decrease its funding for Dunbar a total of 10 percent in 2008 and 2009 because of the recession, said Frank Lazarski, president of United Way of Central New York.

Dunbar did not pass a fiscal and management review, Lazarski said, and in turn was not invited to participate in United Way's next three-year funding cycle, beginning July 1. He cited concerns about Dunbar's efforts to bring in new revenue, its lack of a well-organized development plan and low attendance at board meetings as reasons its funding was cut.

"You can't just say, 'We've gotta raise more money.' You have to organize yourself, and we found that that

just didn't happen," Lazarski said. "They need hands and feet over there and people helping them out. For too long, they've struggled with lack of help."

Louella Williams, who had been president of Dunbar's board of directors, recently became executive director when Sharon Jack-Williams stepped down from that position; she declined to comment on her temporary move to executive director. Jack-Williams could not be reached for comment. Louella Williams said Dunbar already has reorganized its board; Steve Williams, who had been vice president, recently took over as president.

Several new members to the board are Dunbar alumni. Dunbar was their place growing up, Louella Williams said. It gave them their start.

In February, Williams said the city increased funding to Dunbar's neighborhood program from its Community Development Block Grant, a federal program that supports low-income neighborhoods.

The community refused to let Dunbar's doors close, Williams said. "It really sort of brought people out of the woodworks — people who were just sitting down and just doing nothing," she said. "It has really brought them out. And a lot of Dunbar's alumni woke up and said, 'We have to do something to keep Dunbar at the forefront.'"

Dunbar can reapply for United Way funds in 2013. In the meantime, it is working with the YWCA Syracuse & Onondaga County to continue several of its programs.

The YWCA and Dunbar have had a relationship for a little over a year, said Joan Durant, executive director of the YWCA. When United Way announced the cut, the YWCA submitted a collaborative funding proposal — currently under review — for the two organizations that would allow several Dunbar programs to operate under the YWCA umbrella.

"We saw a real fit for our missions to work together,

so it didn't seem a real stretch to do this," Durant said. "We're very familiar with the South Side and the programs and the needs there. And we wanted to make sure these services were still being provided in that area."

United Way funding pays for more than half of Dunbar's after-school program, which Durant hopes the YWCA can help keep afloat.

When the children arrive at Dunbar every day, the first thing they do is homework: math, English Language Arts, writing. But homework isn't all the program does.

In the back of a toy-filled classroom, plastered with nutrition posters and artwork, Javonna Procks gets out of her chair and twirls the pendant of her necklace. With each tap of the pendant on the chair, Procks smiles.

"People used to play with these when the Erie Canal was made," said the 9-year-old student of Van Duyn Elementary School on Loomis Avenue, admiring her necklace. "I think it's very interesting."

Procks learned about the necklace and the Erie Canal on a field trip with other children from Dunbar. The children have visited Syracuse University, Paradise Market on Erie Boulevard and the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

In a classroom down the hall, Latty quizzes four students on science, health, geography, math and English. He explains to them that guessing on true or false questions rarely works.

Latty said he's thankful for United Way's help in the past, but he wonders if it could be doing more now. Dunbar will continue to do what it can out of the little it has, he said.

"Dunbar will remain Dunbar," Latty said. "God has his time for doing things in a way that we might not be pleased with because we don't understand what God has given to us. So we are upset about it. But it's a process. It takes time. It takes faith, and that's what we have."

THEY LOVE DUNBAR

Two of the 60 children in the Dunbar Center's after-school program share some thoughts about their experiences.

"This is my special place because we play a lot of games and we learn stuff and we work on special stuff."

— Saif Waheeb, 9

"People used to play with these when the Erie Canal was made, I think it's very interesting."

— Javonna Procks, 9, about her necklace, which she learned about on a Dunbar field trip



> The Dunbar Center is located at 1453 S. State St. | Bethany Bump, Staff Photo

SAVING THE HAVEN

Alumni who were helped by the Dunbar Center have faith in its future

By | Bethany Bump
Urban Affairs reporter

They believe people in the community will help to sustain what has been a vital support system

Preston Fagan knew African-Americans who would walk down to the Onondaga County Office Building in Syracuse to sign up for social services. Many would get there, but would turn around at the last minute without going in for the food stamps, day care or medical assistance they needed. The problem, he said, was they felt stigmatized.

“Whenever they went down there, they felt people thought they were only there to get welfare or to do some begging,” he said.

That’s why the Dunbar Center on South State Street is so vital to the community, said Fagan, who served as president of the 92-year-old nonprofit’s board of directors on and off from the 1980s until 2003. No one feared being unfairly judged at Dunbar, he said, because the center provided so many varied services.

With Dunbar currently facing a major funding cut and administrative reshuffling, alumni have rallied to support the center and its historical roots in the community. In July, the center will no longer receive \$200,000 in funding from United Way of Central New York, about a quarter of Dunbar’s budget. Dunbar’s executive director

Sharon Jack-Williams resigned several weeks after the cut was announced. Louella Williams, former president of the board of directors, is temporarily filling her role.

Fagan, 59, president of Syracuse-Onondaga County NAACP, attended Dunbar as a teenager. Growing up in nearby Camillus in the early 1960s, he lived in a largely white neighborhood and attended school with few black peers. That’s where Dunbar played an important role for him.

“I was a regular there. Personally, it was an outlet,” Fagan said. “I met a lot of youth that I would normally not know otherwise. So, this kept me in touch with a lot of youth that I probably would not have come in contact with.”

Fagan remembers a jukebox at Dunbar. Kids had to insert a quarter. Once their song started playing, it would spit their quarter back out.

“It was a good social life and it was a positive social life,” he said. “You weren’t hanging out on the streets. There was always a meeting place.”

Merriette Pollard remembers that inadequate resources and sources of major funding were Dunbar’s main issues during her six years as executive director until 2002. “There’s also the stereotypes that you get when you run an agency that’s predominantly African-American,” she said. “There’s a feeling that you cannot deliver what you say you’re going to deliver.”



> The Dunbar Center’s impact on the community is shown in the news. | Bethany Bump, Staff Photo

But Pollard, 64, said Dunbar serves a target population that wouldn't be able to get the services it needs if Dunbar weren't around, and they wouldn't go anywhere else.

"It's a place where individuals can come and feel a part of the community," Pollard said. "They feel more comfortable because of what Dunbar stands for. It's a community agency owned by the community."

"Dunbar serves the population. We cannot allow that agency not to be able to make it."

—Merriette Pollard

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Dunbar began to change its mission from a recreation center to a social service provider, when the Southwest Community Center opened down the road on Syracuse's South Side.

Fagan said he knew people in the community needed social services, but for some reason weren't getting them. So he and other Dunbar members polled residents of the community. They found that people were afraid to go to the county building. Dunbar soon gave them another option.

"I think the people who come to Dunbar and use the services won't go to other places," Fagan said. "They're comfortable dealing with Dunbar because it's in their community and they know that Dunbar was always there for them."

Looking back, Fagan said Dunbar gave him the focus needed to pursue a career. He had no desire to go to college after high school. But the importance Dunbar placed on education and getting a decent job gave him the push he needed to go into banking. After 25 years in banking, he retired and returned to Dunbar to serve on its board.

"I feel it gave me something and it made me realize that I needed to give something back," Fagan said. "And I guess I've been doing that ever since."

Mary Lockett joined Dunbar's board of directors in

2001, where she served for seven years. She was upset, but not surprised, when she found out about the center's financial problems. Dunbar was the place to be. She said that although Dunbar is the oldest center, she thinks it's one of the best in the city because of what goes on there.

"If these kids didn't have Dunbar you wonder where they would be," Lockett said. "How about their parents that are working? Do they give up their jobs to try to be home with their children? It just benefits the family all the way around. The children have a safe haven in the center, and the parents are able to work."

Lockett, 65, said she's spoken to people in their 40s and 50s who grew up in Dunbar. They told her it was the thing to do after school. It kept them off the streets and gave them activities.

Lockett said she knows Dunbar is beneficial just by watching the children and the people who come in and out of its doors.

"I have talked to seniors who just love being there," she said. "I have seen the children with their smiles and their laughter. I've walked in there and seen them in classes, and they were learning and they were happy."

Louella Williams, interim executive director as of Feb. 11, said along with a reorganization of Dunbar's board, Dunbar's alumni have come through to help out the struggling nonprofit. Several new members of the seven-person board are alumni from the Friends of Dunbar Committee.

"They're people who have served and excelled in their various professions," Williams said, "and they have come together now to really be an asset and fundraise for Dunbar."

Williams said Dunbar can meet the challenges ahead with the community supporting it.

"My take on this if you really look at it, is sometimes we look at the glass as half empty or half full. I view it as an opportunity for growth. It caused a lot of people in the neighborhood to ask, 'What can we do?'"

Pollard, former executive director of Dunbar, and her husband, William, have worked in higher education for 42 years. Up until Dunbar, her life was fulfilling. But at Dunbar she would get to know a diverse community, she said, and serve students who would later thank her.

Most memorable for Pollard are the families Dunbar helped with its adoption services. Whether it was certifying a family to be a foster family, or facilitating an adoption, knowing she was taking a child out of the welfare system was all that mattered, she said.

"I felt like I was giving back to my community in a way that people really benefited from," Pollard said. "People appreciated the services that they received and they would come in and access the services — maybe not in the way the grants wanted them to. But Dunbar serves the population. We cannot allow that agency not to be able to make it. And I hope that other people would also step up to help keep its doors open."

COLORING AT DUNBAR

The after-school program at the Dunbar Center is a hit with young people, who enjoy a variety of activities. But, first, they must do their homework.

Below, they spend time coloring.



> Britan Jernigan, 9, and Analisa Hildebrandt, 5



> Gabriella Hildebrandt, 8



> Keiair Everson-Brown, 7, and Dhulfigar Waheeb, 8



> Javonna Procks, 9

RELIVING HISTORY

Dunbar Association's archival display documents its social advocacy



> Newspaper clippings feature the Dunbar Association, including poetry from African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo

By | Jennifer Moncayo
Staff reporter

The materials are available for all to see, just remember to call ahead for an appointment

Though unknown to many in the Syracuse community, the Dunbar Association, Inc., 1453 S. State St., has more than 1,000 items in its archive that chronicles the rich history of African-Americans in Syracuse. The archive contains everything from newspaper clippings on the organization to letters from civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr.

“The archive shows the role that Dunbar played in not just the history of African-Americans but in the history of the United States,” said former executive director of the Dunbar Association, Sharon Jack-Williams, who stepped down from the position on Feb. 11 in a cost-saving move for the organization.

“There are a number of parallels between what is going on in the country, by way of freedom movements and civil rights movements, and the things being addressed in Syracuse by [the] Dunbar [Association],” said Jack-Williams, who was with the organization for

eight years.

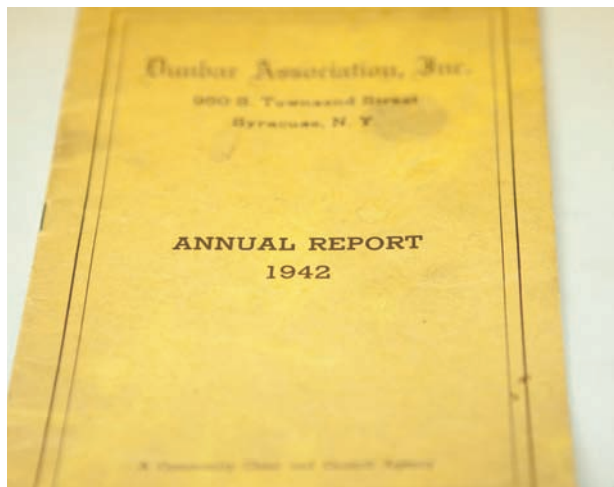
Founded in 1918, the Dunbar Association was modeled as a community center to provide recreational activities for youth, as well as a settlement house to aid African-Americans from the South to the North. The founders chose to name the organization after Paul Laurence Dunbar, a famous African-American poet.

“Dunbar started as an answer to segregation, but it evolved into something much greater,” Jack-Williams said.

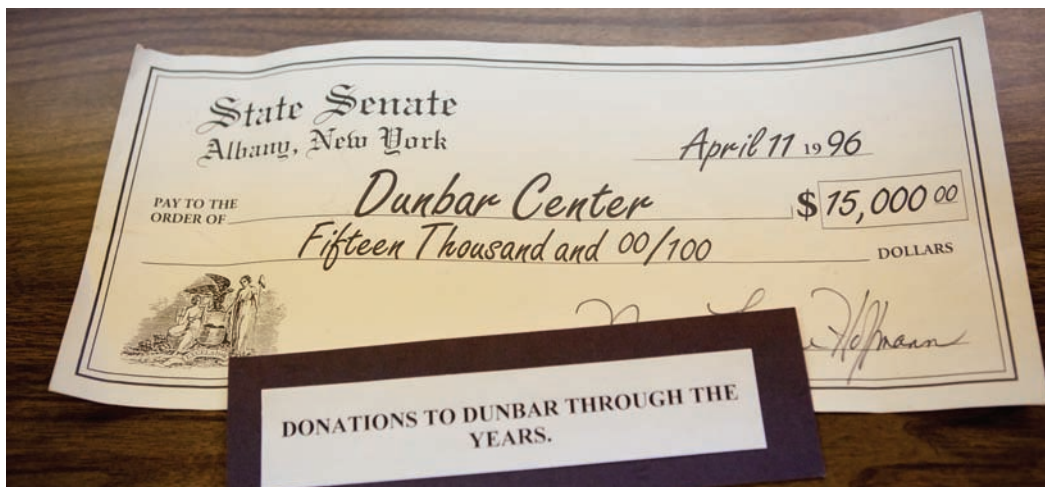
The archival exhibit documents the social advocacy of Dunbar, said Louella Williams, interim executive director for the Dunbar Association. For example, Dunbar has records from the 1960s when executive director Frank Wood contacted civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King, and Thurgood Marshall to visit Dunbar.

“We think it might have been for a speaker series,” Jack-Williams said.

Although the civil rights leaders could not attend, Dunbar has the original signed letters in response to Wood’s request. “It’s quite remarkable,” Jack-Williams said. “It shows how connected Dunbar was to the civil



> The 1942 annual report is part of the archival display. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo



> The Dunbar Association received several donations over its history, including \$15,000 from the New York State Senate in 1996. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo



> The Dunbar Association is named after Paul Laurence Dunbar. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo



> The Dunbar Drum and Bugle Corps is featured in the Pride of Syracuse Magazine in 1949. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo

rights movement and how connected the African-American leaders were.”

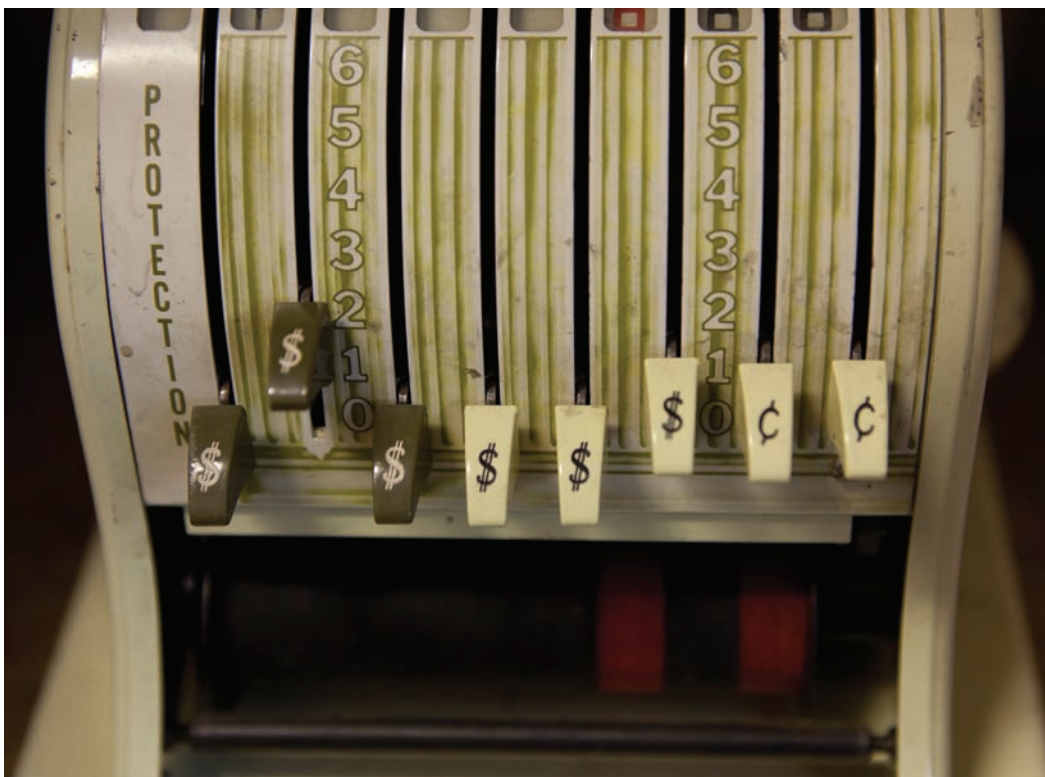
The archival display is housed at the Dunbar Association. However, the materials are not permanently out for public viewing. Visitors must contact Dunbar and make a request to see the display, and the staff will then pull out the materials.

“Any time somebody wants to come in and see the archival exhibit, they just need to make an appointment,” Jack-Williams said.

In the future, Dunbar hopes to secure funding for the archival process and create a more permanent display.

In the meantime, Dunbar shared archive pieces with the Onondaga Historical Association, 321 Montgomery St., for the Black History Preservation Project. OHA collected artifacts on African-Americans in Syracuse and featured the exhibit at the museum during the month of February. OHA also plans to put all of the artifacts from the exhibit in a digital museum.

“Archival histories help you understand more than just the place that the documents represent, it also gives you a more global perspective,” Jack-Williams said.



> An old cash register sits in the archive room at the Dunbar Association. | John C. Liao, Staff Photo

ON THE SIDE

STUDENT EXCERPTS

I bonded with our translators over an international game where rules don't need translation. It was the first of many lessons we would learn from our translators, who were patient enough to kindly correct our mistakes and laugh with us as we struggled to learn.

— Jennifer Cheng on how chess bridged a gap

People welcomed us into their homes and treated us like family instantly — without that time set aside to size one another up, as seems customary in the United States after small talk shrinks to silence.

— Nate Hopper

I was expecting to be in a place that was outside my comfort zone. However, because of the welcoming nature and spirit that I felt in South Africa, it quickly became a second home.

— Brandi Kellam

In the end, we all have the same desires regardless of geography, race or language: security, freedom, education and friendship. I found, to my surprise, that two such very different places as Grahamstown's township and Syracuse's South Side have more in common than I could have ever suspected, and that reporting halfway across the world is much like reporting right here at home.

— Christine Mehta

SU VISITS S. AFRICA

Reporters for the South Side find familiar stories in Grahamstown



> A young Xhosa man sits inside the cardboard-reinforced tent where he'll live for a month or more after he is circumcised. Groups of young boys bring water and food regularly. Three or four people live in each tent. | Steve Davis, Staff Photo

By | Steve Davis

Founder of *The Stand* and professor, Syracuse University

A group from *The Stand* spent 11 days in South Africa, telling stories about the interesting culture and people who live there

Over Syracuse University's winter break, 13 of us packed up and went halfway around the world to Grahamstown, South Africa, which is on the country's Eastern Cape. The group included myself, Stand Director Ashley Kang and another professor, Seth Gitner, plus a trip consultant and nine students who had just wrapped up a semester of writing stories for *The Stand* print edition and website.

We chose Grahamstown because it is much like Syracuse in a number of ways: About 125,000 people live there, and it is home to a well-known university, Rhodes.

We wanted to have a "global experience," to set out on a journalistic and life adventure and to do there what we have done here — tell the stories of everyday people. Before we left, we produced video profiles of a number of South Side residents. Among them were a high school student, a convenience store operator, and a police officer based in a middle school.

In Grahamstown, our stories included:

- A local bead maker who, post-apartheid, was able to put her daughter through once-white Rhodes.
- An entrepreneur whose donkeys were a township fixture, delivering the wood he cut to build residents' homes and to fuel their warming fires.
- A young man who'd just passed into manhood, via a circumcision rite and monthlong stay "in the bush."

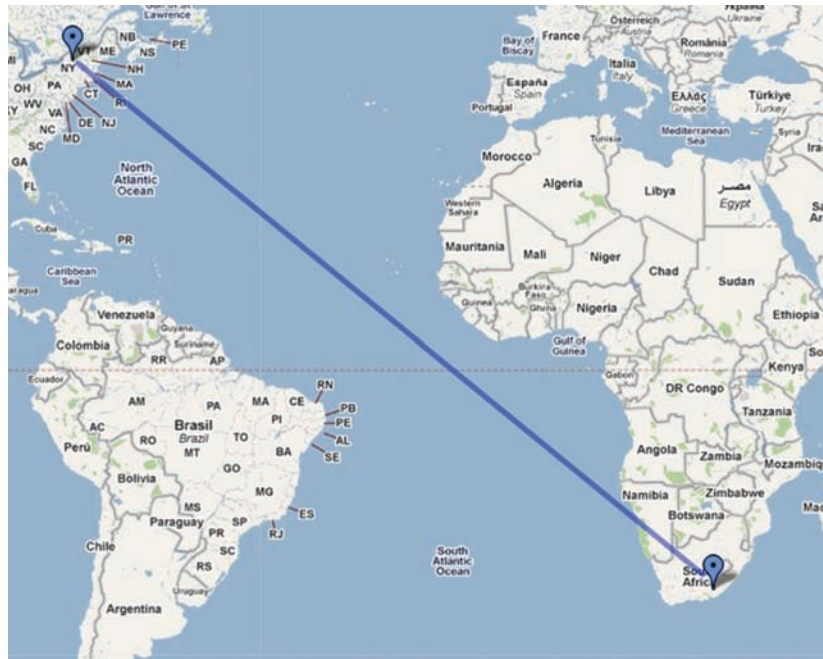
Our team spent most of its time in the township, where the black population lives and where some three of every four adults are unemployed. Living conditions were tough; most people lived in mud or tin homes of a room or two.

But that was not the impression most of us carried home with us. What stuck? It was the upbeat and welcoming nature of the place and the people. Apartheid was done away with in the mid-1990s. Clearly, it will take several generations more, at least, before the people of the township will have anything close to real access to a quality education, the real key to eventual equality.

While there is far to go, the optimism for that future is palpable. It surprised us. Perhaps we are so used to opportunity that we don't even recognize its constant presence in our lives. Now — at least for a time — I think all of us do.



> Top, student Jenny Cheng realizes she's about to lose her match with her translator. Student Shayna Meliker and Stand Director Ashley Kang at work.



> The travelers met in New York City at John F. Kennedy Airport, then flew to Johannesburg. The time spent in the air was more than 15 hours. From Johannesburg, they took a 90-minute connecting flight east to Port Elizabeth, which is on the Indian Ocean. Then they drove 90 minutes back west by taxi/bus to Grahamstown.



> A woman walks by a building with a satellite dish on it, showing the juxtaposition of poor and isolated living conditions (many people live in tin shack homes) with a desire to connect with the world, too. | Steve Davis, Staff Photos

Outside Asanda's (Ncwadi's) house, dogs and black-tailed roosters wander past the rugged mud Monopoly shacks. As it rains, dirty water — the color of milk and sugared coffee — tumbles down the curves of the pebbled roads. Three little boys shriek with laughter as they chase a plastic bottle cap down the murky waterfalls.

Back home now, when I hear the rain's pit, pat, pit, pat, I remember life at the top of the world.

— Shayna Meliker

We were able to navigate through these townships with the help of our irreplaceable translators, who became our dear friends. They were all around the same age — 18 to 24 years old — from the Grahamstown township. They were respected and trusted members of the community. I could have never predicted the immediate connection that I felt with my translator, 17-year-old Sanele Ntshingana, who is undoubtedly one of the most intelligent, generous, and inspirational people I have ever met. Sanele and the other translators embody the spirit of the country: vibrant, communal, full of potential, and determined to make South Africa's future better than its past.

— Danielle Waugh

To enjoy the stories of the people from here and there, please visit our website at <http://worldjournalism.syr.edu>. Cover 8,340 miles with a click.



PREVIOUS TRIPS

- 1990:** Africa Bound went on its first trip, to Senegal.
- 2005:** The group took three children on their first trip to Ghana.
- 2006:** The group took six children to Ghana.
- 2008:** Africa Bound took nine children to Ghana.

AFRICAN ADVENTURE

Africa Bound takes children from the South Side to West Africa



> Africa Bound visits Takarodi Orphanage, located in a small town near Cape Hope, Ghana. It supports 80 children. | Photo courtesy of Valerie Escofferey

By | Mary Desmond
Urban Affairs reporter

Africa Bound plans to take children to Ghana to learn about their African heritage

Syracuse Africa Bound, an organization designed to educate children about their African heritage, will be taking three local children to Ghana in West Africa this summer. Over the next few months, the organization will hold a series of fundraising events to raise money for travel expenses and the service work they will do in Africa.

In January, the organization raised about \$500 at a special Syracuse Stage event. In the hour before the curtain rose for the rock musical, “RENT,” guests snacked on spicy African food and exchanged banter with Stanley Bahorek, a professional actor who played the character Mark in the production. The crowd included current Africa Bound members and newcomers eager to learn more about the program.

“The best part of the night was seeing community members who’ve known about Africa Bound, but who for whatever reason have not come to our other events,” said Valerie Escofferey, co-director of Africa Bound.

After Bahorek left to get into costume, founder Vanessa Johnson told the story of why and how she started Africa Bound in 1990. At the time Johnson owned an art gallery in Syracuse. One afternoon she noticed a young man “acting up” and behaving disrespectfully toward adults outside her shop. She said she had seen him out-

side before, and decided to intervene.

Johnson called the boy inside and together they developed a plan. He would come each day and do his homework in the store, and in return Johnson would provide him with a small after-school job. One afternoon, the boy arrived upset by something he had heard in school.

“His teacher had said something about Africa that he didn’t like,” Johnson recalled. “That Africans were stupid, that they practically swung like monkeys from trees.”

In response, Johnson advised him that he should one day travel there and see the truth for himself. The child answered that he would never go to Africa because he was too poor.

“I didn’t think. I said, ‘I’ll take you to Africa.’ And then when the words came out of my mouth, I thought, ‘Oh my God, what did I just say?’ ”

Johnson believes a promise is a promise, so the very next day she began calling friends telling them, “We’re taking kids to Africa.” For the next year and a half Johnson worked with friends and parents of interested children to arrange everything from passports and accommodations to funding. It costs around \$3,000 to send one child on the trip. Africa Bound went on its first trip, to Senegal, in summer 1990. The trip was a success, but a hard-won success, and Johnson did not intend to plan any more trips. It wasn’t until the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that she considered restarting the program.

“When 9/11 happened, my response was like the response of a lot of Americans, ‘What can I do to make

an impact on the way we're seen as Americans?" Johnson said.

Africa Bound began again. In 2005, the group brought three children on their first trip to Ghana. The next year, they brought six children. And in 2008, they brought nine. Johnson says there has not been another trip since then because the economic crisis has made it impossible to raise enough money.

Africa Bound works to promote multicultural understanding and service here in Syracuse and Ghana. Johnson says that the group strives to support and donate to both a library and an orphanage in two small towns near Cape Hope, Ghana. The orphanage supports 80 children – some without families, others with families that are unable to care for them.

This year, the group will hold a Facebook and e-mail "blitz" asking community members to help them procure six used laptops for the library, which is located in Wora Wora, Ghana.

Service work in Ghana is close to the heart of Africa Bound, but Johnson says the most important aspects are the lessons it teaches participants about multiculturalism, African heritage and diversity.

"It's about teaching kids where they come from historically, what makes this melting pot," she said.

The program hopes to instill values associated with hard work, compassion and patience. Johnson says she wants members of Africa Bound to serve as ambassadors to their communities, and to take what they've learned during their travels and use it to effect change here.

"You have the power to change the world even in your own neighborhood, even in your own school," Johnson tells participants when they return home from their travels.

Cynthia Dundas-Judge has seen Africa Bound's values firsthand. Dundas-Judge and her two children, Brandi and Brandon, participated in Africa Bound in 2008.

"It makes them more aware of the world, it makes you re-evaluate life, re-evaluate priorities," Dundas-Judge said. She also values the lessons the experience taught her children about the effects of determination and hard work.

"The earning part of it, working toward a goal, helps facilitate vision," she said.

Her 13-year-old daughter, Brandi, spent time in Ghana, which still guides the way she lives her life today.

"I learned that a lot of people take stuff for granted," Brandi said.

Brandi is still involved with Africa Bound and other community service programs in Syracuse. She incorporates lessons learned in Africa into her daily routine by doing little things, such as saving water and turning off lights. Her mother says she sees how the trip continues to influence Brandi's life. Seeing the poverty of orphans in Ghana has taught her children the difference between "want" and "need."

"She's very aware," Dundas-Judge said. "I've never heard her say, 'That's not fair.' I've never heard that come out of my children's mouths since we've been back."

Over the next few months, Syracuse Africa Bound members will host events to raise money for their trip this summer. In May, they will hold an event called "Cooking with the Diaspora," in which local chefs will teach participants how to make a variety of ethnic meals.

Dundas-Judge believes that anyone who wants to be involved should reach out to learn more.

"I would say that it's a lot of work, it's a big commitment but the gift is life changing. It will change your child's life."

TRIP AS TEACHER



| Mary Desmond, Staff Photo

Cynthia Dundas-Judge and her daughter, Brandi, attended a fundraising event at Syracuse Stage this year to raise money for Africa Bound.

In 2008, they traveled to Ghana, along with son Brandon.

Now her children see the difference between 'want' and 'need,' Dundas-Judge says.



> Members of Africa Bound in Kokrobite, Ghana. | Photo courtesy of Valerie Escofferey

Learn More CURIOUS ABOUT AFRICA BOUND?

Africa Bound has fundraising workshops in Syracuse. To get involved:

- Find Africa Bound on **Facebook**
- Send an **e-mail** to africaboundsyr@yahoo.com

Pregnant?



Have a
new baby or
young kids?



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