

# NO Limits



Summer 2008

**“Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know.”**

Daniel J. Boorstin

## AHES parents, students check out their “new” school

**F**ive-year-old Gabriana McBride wore a puzzled look as she eyed one of the large lockers in the long hallway at the former Philip Schuyler Elementary School.

“How do you open it?” the inquisitive kindergartner asked her mom, Linda Estella, who picked her up and showed her how the locker latch worked.

Satisfied at having mastered the contraption, Gabriana, now back on her feet, smiled and proceeded to skip down the hallway, past groups of smiling, talkative Arbor Hill Elementary School parents and teachers.

Gabriana was one of more than 50 students and parents who joined Principal Rosalind Gaines-Harrell and AHES teachers on a late-May tour of the Western Avenue school, which will serve as a temporary home to students and staff starting in September.

The move is necessary for AHES to undergo a long-awaited, two-year renovation, which will include new roofs, classrooms with doors and walls, improved lighting and rewiring to accommodate computers and other technology. AHES will house students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5 when it reopens in September 2010.

“I like it,” parent Betty Scott said of the Schuyler school, adding that two of her children will be attending school there. “It’s a lot bigger and there’s an auditorium.”

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Gabriana McBride, left, walks down the hallway at the former Philip Schuyler Elementary School with her sister, Anessa Scott, center, and her mom, Linda Estella, right. They took part in a late-May tour of the school, which is where students will take classes while AHES is closed for renovations. The school will reopen in September 2010.

### Dates to Remember...

- June 23: Pre-k graduation
- June 24: Kindergarten graduation
- June 25-26: Half days of school
- June 26: Last day of school; 6th grade graduation
- July 7: Summer school & YMCA Summer Program begin
- Aug. 1: Summer school ends
- Aug. 15: YMCA Summer Program ends
- Sept. 3: First day of school

## AHES students shine in Student Exhibition



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**“Whenever you do a thing, act as if all the world were watching.”**

Thomas Jefferson

Students from each grade level got an opportunity to showcase their knowledge to their classmates in May in AHES’ annual Student Exhibition.

The afternoon event featured presentations by kids in pre-kindergarten through grade 6, chosen to speak on topics taught in class during the school year.

Their audience: the rest of the student body and their teacher escorts, who moved from exhibit to exhibit to see and ask questions about each presentation.

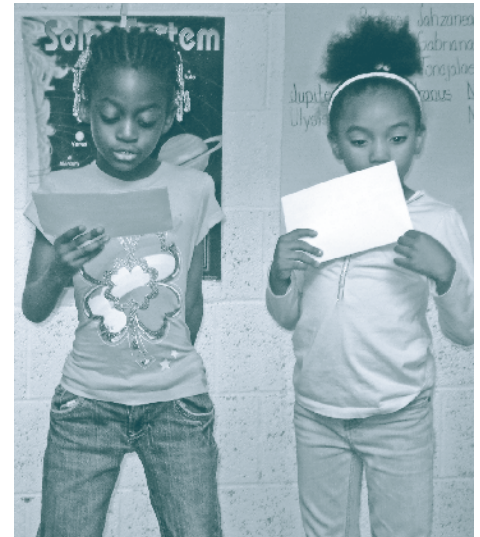
In one part of the school, first-graders talked about the weather. In another, third-graders discussed ecosystems. At the same time, a group of kindergarten

students read a passage about the solar system written on a large poster as more than 50 people listened and learned.

“For the younger kids, it gives them an opportunity to show that little kids can do a lot,” said kindergarten teacher Zulieka Gayle. “They can read, project their voices and answer questions on the spot.

“For the older kids, it gives them a chance to show their maturity and what they’ve learned,” she said.

That’s what a group of fourth-graders did, confidently answering questions about the American Revolution asked by students and teachers who listened to their presentation.



Kindergartners Dakota Caldwell, left, and Uniyah White, right, make a presentation on the solar system at AHES’ Student Exhibition.

“It’s a great way for students to learn, Ms. Gayle said.

The Student Exhibition is based on the ATLAS Communities principal, where students learn by doing.

## Giving the gift of knowledge

Some children in Zimbabwe have hard-cover textbooks for the first time thanks to teacher Todd Benton and the generosity of AHES teachers and staff.

Mr. Benton collected more than 300 school books in May for the Dangwa Foundation, an Albany-based group that helps needy children in Zimbabwe.

The books, donated by teachers, were shipped to Zimbabwe a few weeks later.

“Some (Zimbabwean) kids had never held whole books be-

fore,” Mr. Benton said. “The books they get are ripped or torn.”

Mr. Benton got the book collection idea after he met Teresa Dangwa, the Foundation’s founder, at a recent meeting of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Caucus in Albany.

Ms. Dangwa, who is from Zimbabwe, suggested a book drive after Mr. Benton asked how he could help.



Mr. Benton, right, and Teresa Dangwa, left, hold school books collected at AHES for needy children in Zimbabwe.

“This is a good time for a book drive,” he said. “With our move to a new school, we are in transition and (AHES) is getting rid of old books.”

## AHES students run for fun

AHES gym teacher Tim Castle walked in front of the students lined up to race on the groomed running track at the University of Albany and told them to get ready to run.

“No false starts,” he said. “Don’t be jumpy.”

It was easy to understand why students might be jumpy – and downright excited – about the race, which was part of the Albany Police Athletic League’s annual Elementary School Track Meet.

The friendly competition, held May 20 at SUNY Albany’s outdoor track complex, involved more than 300 elementary school students from



Alex Encarnacion, 11, heaves a shot put at the Albany Police Athletic League’s Elementary School Track Meet.

Albany’s public elementary, charter and parochial schools.

Arbor Hill was represented by fifth and sixth-graders, who participated in events such as the shot put, long jump and the 100, 200, 400 and 800-meter sprint races.

“This is really fun,” said 11-year-old Jasmine Castillo, after heaving a shot put 15 feet.

Students also ran in relay races during the afternoon event, which ended with a pizza party.

“And everyone’s a winner,” said AHES Principal Rosalind Gaines-Harrell.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students, and we want to thank the Albany Police Athletic League and all the teachers and parents who helped make it a reality,” Coach Castle said. “Our students benefit in so many ways by taking part in such a positive event.”

## Parents visit Schuyler School

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“I went here when I was a student,” said Estella, whose 10-year-old daughter, Anessa Scott, also came to the open house. “I don’t mind this move at all.”

Parents asked good questions during a 20-minute question-and-answer session before the tour. Schuyler



Teachers and parents visit a classroom during a tour of the Philip Schuyler Elementary School.

er is currently home to Hackett Middle School students while that school is renovated; Hackett reopens in September.

Principal Gaines-Harrell said students and staff will use three of the four floors in the expansive

Schuyler school. The building has several gyms and an ornate auditorium.

The basement houses the gyms, computer rooms and cafeterias, while the first floor has the school office and classes for pre-k and kindergarten. Grades 1 through 5 are on the second floor.

“We are trying to give the school more of a family feel by keeping grade levels together,” the principal said.

Several parents asked about transportation to and from school. AHES students who live a half mile or more from Schuyler will be bused. Bus stops and routes, and a student drop-off point are not set; that information will be mailed to parents over the summer.

School will still start at 9:05 a.m., with breakfast at 8:30 a.m. The YMCA After-School Program will relocate to Schuyler in September, keeping its same hours.

During the tour, teachers led groups of parents and students through the school, visiting classrooms, the library, the cafeteria and gyms. Parents chatted with teachers while some of the younger children sat in desks and eyed the large classrooms with wonder.



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“The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer someone else up.”

Mark Twain



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**“100 percent of the shots that you don’t take don’t go in.”**

Wayne Gretzky

## State names AHES a “Rapidly Improving” school

**C**ongratulations to AHES teachers and students for making AHES one of New York’s “Rapidly Improving” schools for the 2006-07 school year.

AHES was one of 435 schools statewide given the designation for meeting state performance benchmarks in one or more subject areas in each of the past three years and making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Seven other Albany district schools were also designated as

“Rapidly Improving” by the state Education Department in May.

“This illustrates just how hard our students and teachers have been working,” said Principal Rosalind Gaines-Harrell. “We are very proud to be a ‘Rapidly Improving’ school.”

“To be recognized with this distinction in eight of our schools shows that our efforts are paying off and that greater achievement is on the horizon,” said Superintendent Eva C. Joseph.

### A note from Principal Gaines-Harrell



This has been such a great year!

I’d like to thank all of the students, parents, teachers and staff at AHES for making my first year here as principal one that I will always remember with lots of love.

We met our challenges head-on, and we celebrated our successes – which seemed to happen almost every day! Thank you all for your hard work.

I’d also like to thank our parents, who played an active role in their children’s education. We can’t do it without you.

Our students were a joy this year. They are bright and willing to learn.

There will be many more challenges come September. I look forward to meeting those challenges and celebrating those successes with all of you. Have a wonderful summer!

### They’re perfect!

It’s not easy being perfect.

But these students are when it comes to coming to class.

The following students have perfect attendance through the first three quarters of the school year. They are:

Tiffany Bernard, Adamaris Castillo, Jaimin Castillo, Jennifer Castillo, Cheyanne Clark, O’Zias Courtwright, Darren Demmitt, Ulysis Douglas, and Shaun Drayton.

Also, Michael Ford-Terry, Malcolm Gray, Anthony Hay Jr., Yvonna Hay, Jasmine Headley, Janaya Hogan, Malaysia Hudson, Gianni James Pringle, Ashanti Johnson, Syir Lewis, Ashanti McAdoo, and Ashiah McAdoo.

Also, Ni-Za’liek Morris, Tianna Parchment, Kaliera Perry, Trenyce Rios, Elijah Smith, Queone Sylvester, Niasha Thomas, Tanija Turner, Dinero Washington, Domanique Watson, and Elijah Wright.

### Ready to graduate

A graduation ceremony for AHES fifth and sixth-graders will take place at 10 a.m. on June 26 at the school.

Both grades are graduating this year because AHES won’t have a sixth grade in 2008-09. Starting in September, Arbor Hill will house students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade.

A graduation ceremony for pre-k students will be held at 10 a.m. on June 23 at AHES. Kindergarten students will graduate at 10 a.m. on June 24 at the school.

Arbor Hill Elementary School

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Home-School Coordinator  
Stephon Frost

School Nurse  
Linda Gilchrest

Social Workers  
Tricia Brady  
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Psychologist  
Michael Pelkey

After-school Program Director  
Frank Peris