



Staff Anniversaries

May

O'Sheonia Chancey – 2 years
Sarah Rowlands – 3 years*
**since re-hire date*

June

Susanne Bequer – 6 years

From the Desk of Regional Director, Karinda Shanes

WE ARE EXCITED! 🎉

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HWSC) continues to see powerful results from the students who enroll and actively participate in our programs and services. This work truly takes a village, and we are grateful for the many partners and supporters who help make these outcomes possible.

We extend special thanks to our dedicated scholars, Youth Advocates and Specialists, the HWSC leadership team, parents and guardians, valued SCSD teachers, school building liaisons, and the broader network of community partners who support our students every day.

Together, this community helps ensure that our scholars achieve outstanding outcomes. During the 2024–2025 school year, HWSC scholars graduated at remarkable rates across our partner schools:

- 92% at PSLA
- 92% at ITC
- 100% at Nottingham
- 96% at Henninger
- 94% at Corcoran

These results reflect the strength of the Hillside model. When students are connected to caring adults, receive consistent support and mentorship, have safe spaces, and access meaningful opportunities, they thrive and graduate at exceptional rates. Behind every percentage is a young scholar who worked hard to stay on track, worked even harder when they were knocked off track, reached an important milestone, and moved one step closer to a promising future. It is a testament to the dedication of our staff, the perseverance of our scholars, and the strength of the relationships that support them every day.

At a time when conversations often focus on challenges, these outcomes remind us that this work is meaningful, impactful, and truly changing lives. 🙌🌟



Notes from Mari and Naj

As we wrap up the third quarter, our team has continued to go above and beyond in supporting student success. From ensuring students completed their Regents exams and stayed on track academically to prioritizing their overall well-being, their dedication does not go unnoticed. We are grateful for the care, flexibility, and commitment staff bring each day. Over Spring Break, our Spring Refresh Week provided a valuable opportunity to reset, catch up on important work, and strengthen connections with students while also enjoying lighter moments together, including time at our Hillside lemonade stand and participating in Spirit Week (see pictures above). Staff's encouragement and motivation as we head into the fourth quarter mean everything. Let's carry this momentum forward and finish the school year strong together!

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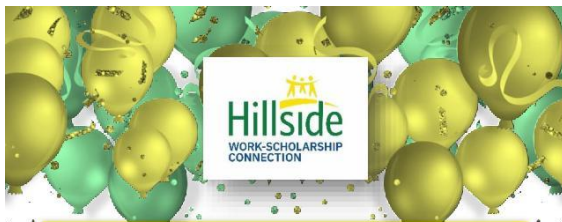
Binghamton



During after school, students participated in making goals, vision boards, and positive posters to kick off January and start the new year right. In February, guest speakers from Binghamton University came to speak to students about campus life and different clubs and organizations available to them, while quizzing students in a game of Jeopardy to end the presentation. Russ from All Active Athletics spoke to students about his fitness journey and gave helpful tips on how to stay fit and healthy. In March, students participated in Black History Month and Women's History Month activities, celebrated St. Patrick's Day, took part in self-care crafts, competed against friends and classmates for prizes, caught up on work, studied for their Regents, and prepared brackets for March Madness.



CLASS OF 2026!



Senior Celebration
IN HONOR OF
HWSC Students from
Binghamton High School

Friday, June 5th from 3-4:30 pm

Binghamton High School
 31 Main Street, Cafeteria
 Binghamton, NY 13905

Food will be provided



Congratulations to Ka'Leah, who took first place in the Food Prep Assistant Competition at SkillsUSA.

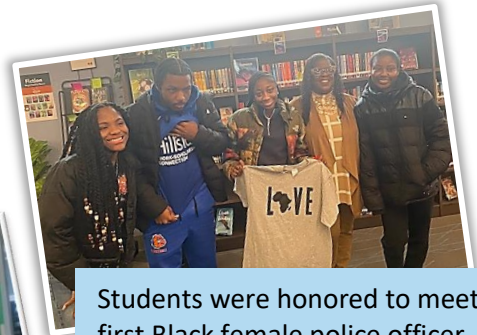
Wegmans

Congratulations to Zaquarrah, Gypsee, and Caisy for getting hired at Wegmans. Way to go, girls! In March, Binghamton had five students become YETA certified.



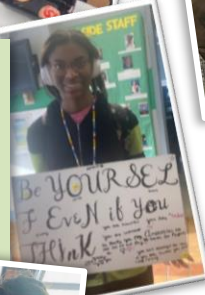
Vera has been doing a great job in supporting her students and their families. She has been going above and beyond including conducting DAP sessions after school and giving additional support to students where needed. Her commitment to her students has made a meaningful impact on both them and their families.

Nottingham & Henninger



Afterschool fun with Hillside has included cooking with SU, arts and crafts, cookie decorating, vision boards, and Women's History Bingo. Students are engaged and always look forward to coming over to Phoenix.

Students were honored to meet the first Black female police officer, Mrs. Ingram, who came to visit the school for Black History Month.



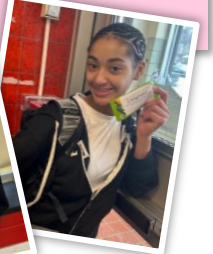
Our Hillside ITC students have been enjoying the lunch bunches that started in March. They made a special St. Patrick's Day snack and played college bingo.



We are on a roll! Congratulations to our Hillside ITC scholars who made merit, honor, and high honor roll for the 2nd marking period. Great job! Stay focused and keep working hard.



Henninger students enjoyed their time at Dave & Buster's over spring break!



Henninger students Luley and Hakima are pictured here entering the world of WonderWorks over spring break!

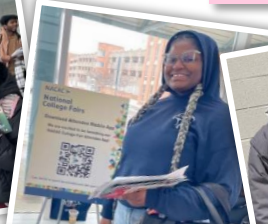
ITC



Hillside after school has been very beneficial to our students' engagement and productivity during afterschool hours. Activities include cooking with SU, crafts, guest speakers, and so much more!



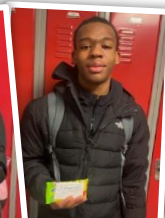
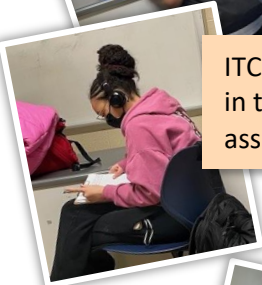
Our Hillside ITC cheerleaders performed during the Black History Month celebration at Roberts School. They gave an amazing performance and were one of the many highlights of the evening.



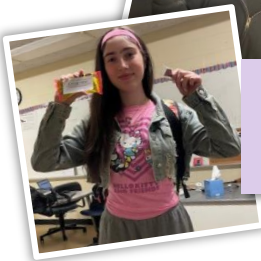
Our students enjoyed attending this year's National College Fair. They received a variety of information from colleges and about future job opportunities.



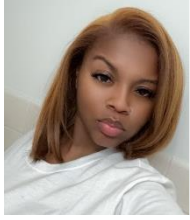
ITC students are making the best of their time while in the Hillside office by studying and completing assignments before the end of the marking period.



Congratulations to our Hillside scholars at ITC who made merit, honor, and high honor roll for the 2nd marking period! We are very proud of your accomplishments. Keep up the good work.



Corcoran & PSLA

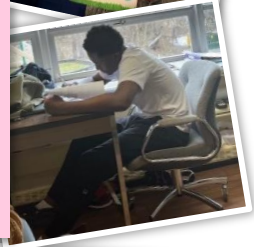


The Corcoran team is happy to introduce our new YA at Corcoran, Ahjelae Johnson. Ahjelae has already begun connecting with and supporting students. We are so happy to have Ahjelae on the team!



YA II Noelle (pictured here in the middle with Hillside's Managers) successfully completed Restorative Justice training through the Syracuse City School District. Noelle is now equipped with additional skills to support student challenges.

Corcoran students have been attending afterschool programming at the Phoenix Center, where they spend time studying and working on homework. They have also participated in enrichments such as cooking with SU and button art.



Students have been utilizing the office space to study and complete work. For marking period 2, Corcoran celebrated 39 students who achieved an 80+ GPA. We are so proud that our students continue to strive for excellence!



Seniors at both PSLA and Corcoran have begun committing to colleges and trade schools. In the next edition, we will reveal those details!

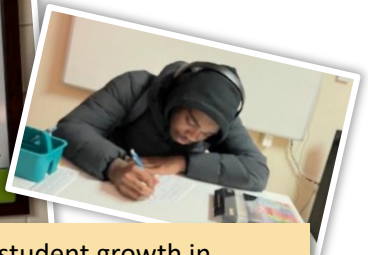
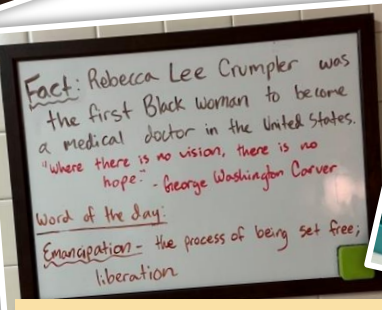
Class of 2026



Hillside seniors MC'd PSLA's career and trade panel for fellow seniors.



PSLA YAs enjoy working with students on different enrichments in afterschool programming. They have also been supporting their students' EA Sports competitions.



PSLA continues to support student growth in history and english through activities at the Hillside office. They encourage students to explore new vocabulary through their Word of the Day. In February, these activities celebrated African American History. Students are utilizing the office to complete work or study during non-class times.



Middle Schools

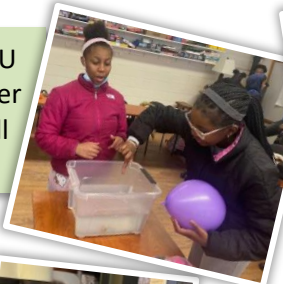


The Clary Sneaker Ball was truly an unforgettable evening for our scholars. From the moment students walked in dressed to impress, pairing their stylish attire with their freshest kicks, the room was filled with excitement and confidence!

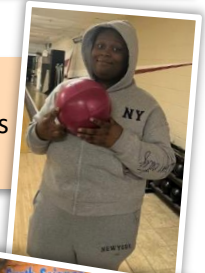


Mrs. Wright has started a spring book club with her students, and they are beginning to read Amina's Voice. It has been a joy to watch the students cultivate their inner bookworms!

Students enjoyed the SU Engineering activity after school with Hillside: will it float or sink?



Our recent bowling trip over February break was a "striking" success!



Science is alive!!! Over February break and during our after-school program, the middle school students have been enjoying getting hands-on experience with STEM exploration at the MOST. One of those experiences was learning how to extract DNA from a strawberry.



Blodgett students enjoyed their spring break outing at Dave & Buster's!



Some of our Blodgett students enjoyed a Shamrock Shake to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Phoenix Center during after school!



YA II Rachael Acosta supported Grant Middle School's open house. Rachael gave out Hillside merch and talked with families about what Hillside has to offer.



Rachael has allowed students to sit with her during lunch to complete work or study, and they have also enjoyed after-school activities and activities during school breaks.



Phoenix Center



Each visit to the Phoenix Student Center earns students a Phoenix Dollar. Elijah, one of our ITC students, has been patiently saving his, and now he was excited to trade them in for some awesome items from the Phoenix Cabinet!



Another amazing spring with STEM Explorers and SU! Our middle school students dove into hands-on learning with SU mentors, launching rockets to explore physics, comparing electric vs. gas cars for automotive engineering, and experimenting with chemical reactions through hot air balloons. They wrapped up the semester by diving into chemical engineering with a fun bath bomb session! We also received some amazing gifts that students will be able to use and enjoy throughout the year.



From chopping to cooking, our high school students are becoming kitchen pros! With help from local chefs at the Salt City Market kitchen, they're learning new skills and whipping up a fresh dish each session, thanks to The Kitchen Literacy Project.



Our students brought the energy to a competitive Hillside basketball tournament during after school, full of teamwork, hustle, and fun!



Hillside students had a blast ice skating at Sunnycrest Rink in Syracuse!



Hillside's Culture Appreciation Day was full of flavor, music, and fun! We celebrated the cultures of three staff members' families, Cuba, Italy, and New Orleans, through delicious dishes, lively music, and hands-on activities.

Phoenix Center Continued



Students had the chance to explore exciting careers through some awesome guest presentations! We had our very own Hillside Supervisor, Aleesha Cysz, discuss the details of a real estate career with students and the opportunities in this field. We also had the privilege of welcoming a panel of speakers from Pomeroy School of Nursing and MOWER Marketing Agency to share their experiences and provide helpful information on post-secondary pathways.



This February, we hosted a YETA session at the Phoenix Student Center, where students learned about job readiness and did an excellent job during their mock interviews. The students' favorite activity was drawing examples of how someone might prepare for a job interview before versus after YETA.

CLASS OF 2026!



*Senior Celebration
(Families Welcome)*

IN HONOR OF

HWSC Students from

Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham and PSLA

Wednesday, May 20th from 5-6:30 pm

Hillside Phoenix Center

101 East Ave
Syracuse, NY 13224