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## News & Updates

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June 4, 2021

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### **A Farewell from New Rochelle Interim Superintendent Dr. Alex Marrero: "It Has Been an Absolute Honor and Pleasure"**

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Dear City School District of New Rochelle,

Please know that it has been an absolute honor and pleasure to serve the City School District of New Rochelle. My short tenure has been an exciting, productive and challenging journey, which resulted in making inroads as a community.

For this reason, it is bittersweet to inform you that I will be resigning from the City School District of New Rochelle, the district that enabled me to lead fearlessly. I will next lead one of the nation's largest school districts, Denver Public Schools in Colorado.

As interim superintendent, I have been fortunate to work with many of you, and I deeply value your commitment to supporting the objective that all New Rochelle students be provided with excellent educational opportunities. The many hours we have spent collaborating to ensure that everyone within our community is learning and growing socially and emotionally have been among my proudest moments as a district administrator. Thank you for providing me with the support and encouragement throughout my tenure to perform this important work.

In closing, I wish you all the very best in the days ahead. The City School District of New Rochelle has a bright future and I strongly encourage you to continue to be engaged in the process of framing the achievements of our students.

Sincerely,

The New Rochelle Board of Education last week unanimously approved a three-year contract with Jonathan P. Raymond to become Superintendent. He starts in July.

## District-wide Graduation Events Schedule Available

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW ROCHELLE

### GRADUATION EVENTS 2021

UPDATED AS OF 6/16/21



SCHOOL	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Isaac E. Young MS	June 24, 2021	8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Diploma Day Walk-Through Celebration: Football Field Parking Lot
Albert Leonard Middle School	June 24, 2021	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Diploma Day Drive-Through Event
New Rochelle HS 2 ceremony	June 24, 2021	10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.	Senior Field - Sen Lanes
Barnard Elementary	June 25, 2021	Morning and afternoon	Virtual ceremonies in individual classrooms; then afternoon activities for 2nd grade students
	June 25, 2021	1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Drive-through parade for 2nd grade families
Columbia Elementary	June 25, 2021	9:30 a.m.	Senior Field
Davis Elementary	June 25, 2021	Morning	Virtual Graduation Celebration
	June 25, 2021	Afternoon (12:30-2:30 p.m.)	Drive-Through + On-Site Celebration
Jefferson Elementary	June 11, 2021	9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.	Field by the playground - in back of the school
Trinity Elementary	June 21, 2021	9:00 a.m.	Drive-through (back driveway)
Wood Elementary	June 17, 2021	9:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.	Behind the School
	June 18, 2021	11:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.	Individual Classroom Ceremonies
	June 18, 2021	9:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.	Behind the School
	June 18, 2021	11:15 a.m.	Individual Classroom Ceremonies
Webster Elementary	June 21, 2021	9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 a.m.	Auditorium 9 Individual Classroom Ceremonies
	June 22, 2021	9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.	Auditorium 9 Individual Classroom Ceremonies

The countdown to the end of the academic year continues, with schools planning moving-up and graduation events to celebrate our students' accomplishments.

Students and families will receive information specific to their schools.

For an overview of the District-wide schedule, click on the image above. For details about New Rochelle High School's graduation, [click here](#).



Some of the participants in the Human Rights forum.



DJSmithyBoy, also known as Albert Leonard Middle School eighth-grader Maison Smith, at the controls.

## The Music Man: Albert Leonard Eighth-Grader Maison Smith Thrives as DJ and Entrepreneur

Maison Smith was moseying around the Sam Ash music store in White Plains when he saw a disc-jockey controller and started playing with it.

Just 9, he requested it for Christmas but didn't get it. He wrote Santa a letter the following year, again asking for the controller. This time it arrived, and five years after walking into Sam Ash, Maison Smith is now known – actually well-known – as DJSmithyBoy.



"At first, I didn't know how to work it," Smith, now 14 and an eighth-grader at Albert Leonard Middle School, said of the controller. "I kind of fell in love with it and thought, this is what I want to do."

Smith taught himself by watching YouTube videos and checking out other DJs. He already showed a natural gift for music as a passenger-seat DJ flipping CDs with mom or dad behind the wheel. He was 10 when he got his first gig at a Christmas party put on by the Westchester chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., of which his mom, LaThell, is a member. About 100

# NRHS Discussion on Human Rights Energizes Students

Energized by their experience at the Human Rights Institute for Student Leaders hosted by the White Plains-based Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center in March, a group of New Rochelle High School sophomores and juniors presented a forum on racism and white supremacy.

Conducted virtually after school on May 24, the event attracted 70 students anxious to engage in meaningful discussion around current human-rights issues.

The organizers of the forum, members of the NRHS Human Rights Club advised by social studies teacher Eric Katz, created and led presentations on The Breakdown of Colorism, Police and Racial Bias and Racism within Education.

These were followed by breakout sessions during which participants discussed the issues raised in a respectful and safe environment. Co-hosts of the event were students Jeremy Bramson and Inaya Uzun.

Presenters included Maribela Dias, Rubi Galindo, Skye Hill, Jeba Karim, Matthew Quijada and Rachel Venable.

"I'm really happy with how a small group of committed students worked together to develop, promote and facilitate an event in which young people from different backgrounds discussed timely topics that are vital to the future of our nation and relevant to all of our lives," said Katz.

Each year, NRHS sends a small delegation of students to the Human Rights Institute, which attracts about 700 high schoolers from 50 regional schools.

This year, attendees heard the powerful and personal revelations

people were on hand, and folks swarmed the dance floor to the beats.

"I can do this," DJSmithyBoy thought.

Done it he has, to the tune of a calendar chock-full of events. Boys & Girls Club parties, holiday and birthday gatherings, his talents have wowed crowds. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed business a bit, but Maison compensated by doing virtual shows for events as far away as Georgia. He was scheduled for five gigs in eight weeks during April and May.

And yes, DJSmithyBoy is an entrepreneur who is compensated for his efforts. LaThell Smith, a high school teacher in Westchester, is his manager and helped line up about 14 gigs in May and June. Suffice to say, Smith is saving money for what promises to be a bright future.

LaThell Smith and her husband, Matthew, a principal in a nearby school district, are immensely proud of their son. They saw his potential early, getting him piano lessons at age 5 and noticing his natural rhythm. LaThell remembers that Maison was only 4 or 5 years old when he opened her eyes to his talent at a family party. "He could catch the beat," she said.

His life isn't all about DJing. Smith maintains honor-roll grades, plays organized basketball and football, and partakes in many recreational activities with friends – all while performing gigs on weekends.

The Westchester Alliance of Black School Educators hired Maison for the last two Black History Month celebrations at New Rochelle High School. Alliance President Candace Pinn said Maison had the capacity crowd at Whitney M. Young Auditorium on its feet playing Afropop during a 2019 celebration of Africa. The organization will engage Smith for a Juneteenth celebration on June 19.

"His skills on the ones and twos are amazing considering his age, and his versatility is evidence that he is a great student of his craft," Pinn said.

Smith, who has surpassed 1,000 Instagram followers, makes sure to have his homework done by Friday to clear his weekend for work and fun. He admits that the busy schedule is "sometimes stressful," but he wouldn't change it for anything.

"Maison is a wonderful young man and it has been a joy to have him at ALMS over the last three years," Albert Leonard Principal John Barnes said.

"He arrived at ALMS already on his path as a DJ, but each year he has elevated his craft while giving back to his community in immeasurable ways. During the pandemic, he facilitated weekly dance parties on Instagram for everyone to come together despite being on lockdown. His musical knowledge expands over decades and his technical abilities and positive messaging continue to impress me every time I get to



of a former white supremacist and also from a Holocaust survivor. Students selected to participate were encouraged to share what they learned with their peers and the community.



Participants in the new partnership.

## Be Engaged! That's the Goal of a New Partnership With Community Groups

An innovative community collaboration among Albert Leonard Middle School, My Brother's Keeper New Rochelle, the Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle and the New Rochelle Youth Bureau engaged students this spring through art, team building and other activities that facilitate self-awareness, self-care and introspection.

The eight-week, in-person pilot program, MBK Excel, was created to enrich middle-schoolers' experiences during the pandemic. An event to celebrate the inaugural cohort and recognize the community partners was held on Wednesday evening.

Launched in March as a once-a-week offering at the Mascaro site of the Boys & Girls Club, the program shifted to ALMS in late April when students returned to in-person learning five days a week.

Two to three hours of programming were provided on Wednesday afternoons, along with free bus transportation for participants. Outcomes of the program – including student attendance, study habit improvements and academic

see and hear him in action.”

Still, Smith isn't ready to map his future. There is ample time for that. He knows that becoming a phenom DJ will continue to open doors for him.

“I'd love to be a music producer,” he said.

## Don't Miss Out! Still Time to Enjoy NRHS' Innovative Musical Online

If you missed "Is There Life After High School?", you have another chance to see it. If you *did* see it, here's your chance to relive it.

The innovative high school musical, recorded in and around New Rochelle High School – and in the performers' homes (with their parents getting into the act) – will be available for streaming June 10 through June 20.

As a bonus, a behind-the-scenes documentary is included. All proceeds will go to New Rochelle High School's TheatreWorks and future shows.



## More Honors for Girls' Track Stars

Olivia Moxey added to her long list of achievements while helping New Rochelle High School add to its brilliant girls track & field legacy under coach Andy Capellan.

Moxey won the 100- and 200-meter titles at the Westchester County track and field championships on May 29. A week earlier, she won the 100 in the Section 1 League 1B Championships at Scarsdale with a personal-best time of 12.94 seconds. She also won the 200-meters at the prestigious Loucks Games at White Plains High School.

“She is a hard worker, very coachable and a great kid,” New Rochelle Athletic Director Steve Young said. “She’s certainly one of our stars. Academically, she’s really solid. She’s a true student-athlete, and if she wants to pursue (track) in college, she can do so.”

performance – will be measured and if deemed successful, MBK Excel may be expanded to other schools and student populations.

ALMS Principal John Barnes is encouraged by the new offering.

“The students have made a commitment to the program and their group members, and we have made that same commitment to each and every one of the participants,” he said.

“All of the efforts to coordinate have been extraordinary and we are grateful to our ‘village’ in the City of New Rochelle for working so hard to bring this program to life and to ALMS.”

Moxey, a junior, clocked 13.24 in the 100 and 27.84 in the 200 amid cold and wet conditions at New Rochelle. She helped New Rochelle win the South region team title with 214.5 points, besting runner-up Ursuline (185.5), in a meet formatted geographically to adhere to COVID-related social-distancing guidelines.

It was another title for Capellan, New Rochelle’s state Hall of Fame coach with well more than 100 league, county and section titles in his four decades as coach. Other New Rochelle winners included Kaela Godfrey in the 400 (1:02.83); Kaitlyn Casas in the 3,000 (11:00.24); Sabiha Dodd-Brown in the javelin (80 feet, 1 inch) and Emma Farley in the pentathlon (1,300 points).

Jaheim Gregory won the long jump (19-10) and Oscar Jackson won the pentathlon (1,880) to help the boys’ team finish second (148 points) to Bronxville (234) in the South. Eight of 11 teams scored in both the girls’ and boys’ meet.

## More News to Know



[Click here for a time to visit the Greenhouse](#)

### Father's Day Shopping? Plant/Flower Sale Saturday at Barnard

Looking for an early Father’s Day gift? Amy’s Greenhouse at the Henry Barnard Early Childhood Center can help!

The Amy’s Greenhouse Father’s Day and Guardians Sale is Saturday, June 5, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rain date is June 12.

A variety of beautiful plants and flowers, grown right in the greenhouse, will be for sale. These include basil, peppers, cucumbers, strawberries and several varieties of tomatoes, as well as morning-glory flowers and hibiscus. Proceeds from purchases will be reinvested in Amy’s Greenhouse through the PTA, and will help fund materials for future greenhouse projects and events.

To ensure social distancing is maintained, please schedule your visit in advance. Just [click here](#) or on the link in the PDF at the left.



### Poetry Out Loud: Ingenuity on Display Online

Lovers of poetry: Enjoy Poetry Out Loud, the annual celebration of verse from students in grades 3 through 6. It has been posted on the website of the New Rochelle Fund for Educational Excellence.

During a virtual event, students read works they have written about seasons, a sunflower, the beach and a lion on the hunt. They have tackled tough issues and current events including racism, society’s expectations and COVID-19. [Enjoy the entire Poetry Out Loud presentation here.](#)

Poetry Out Loud is presented by The Jeremy Scheinfeld Publishing Center, a program of the NR Fund.

