

# THHS AMBASSADOR

THE PTA OF TOWNSEND HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL • FEBRUARY 2005

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## PTA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Parents,

**O**ur Townsend Harris High School students have been studying and working very hard and achieving some great accomplishments. Our January PTA meeting featured student presentations on research work and community service. The two student Intel Semi-Finalists and students of social science research gave us a remarkable glimpse into their research projects, amazing parents. Two student volunteers shared specifics of their community service, an important aspect of being a Townsend Harris student.

Tremendous creativity fueled some great musical and dancing performances in *Sing!* And yes, the guys were break-dancing. And yes, surprise! The seniors won! Great fun was had by all at the Winter Carnival and the clubs earned some extra funding.

Just as our youngsters gear up, they'll have an entire week off. Our children will appreciate the well-earned Mid-Winter Break. Our Townsend Harris Legislative Breakfast will have been served by the time you read this. Our legislators have been very supportive and the partnership of Townsend Harris with Queens College and the neighboring community will continue to build.

I hope that we as parents never lose sight of how much effort our children make to maintain the high standards at Townsend Harris. They are each like a unique diamond facet and add their own irreplaceable sparkle. Please consider taking some time this vacation to savor this fleeting age.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Schnee  
PTA President

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

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Dear Parents,

**I**t doesn't seem possible that this fall 2004 semester has come to an end at Townsend Harris High School. We continue to garner awards and accolades in a variety of areas because of our wonderful teaching staff and outstanding student body.

I would like to share with you several examples of our successes.

- Maria Wojakowski and Padmavati Sridhar were selected as 2005 Intel Science Talent Search semi-finalists. Maria's study is titled "Nest Site Microhabitat Influences Nest Temperature and Offspring Sex Ratio of the Diamondback Terrapin". Padma's paper is titled "Computational Identification of Eleven Candidate Small Nucleolar RNAs in the Region of Human Chromosome Fifteen Associated with Prader-Willi and Angelman Syndromes".
- Misha Jemison was honored by Mayor Bloomberg on January 17th for winning a borough-wide speechwriting competition commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr.

• Anika Anam, Alyssa Chase, Danielle Drinkman, David Joseph, Christina Tzeng and Jason Wu were selected as semifinalists in the 1005 Merit Scholarship Competition.

• Sharon Lim (violin) and Lara Torgovnik (soprano) were selected by the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) to perform at its All State Conference in Rochester New York.

• Teachers Mariet D'Souza (LOTE), Rosemarie Eaton (Science), Adel Kadamani (Science) and Aliza Sherman (Social Studies) were honored by their students in the 2004 edition of Who's Who Among America's Teachers.

I am pleased to share this snapshot of life at Townsend Harris with you as we begin an exciting spring term for the 2004-2005 school year. I look forward to seeing you on Open School Night, April 7, 2005, or on Open School Day, April 8, 2005.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Cunningham  
Principal

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## FROM YOUR THHS PARENT COORDINATOR

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

**H**ope everyone is well. You will probably be seeing this after February 1, when the new semester begins. That first week or two in the new semester can sometimes seem a little chaotic with the new schedules. Hang in there with your students and tell them to put in any program changes they need to the guidance department. The Guidance counselors work hard to make

sure everyone's schedule is the best for them and that it fits into the schools ability to program.

Lots of events are scheduled for the spring semester: The PTA will be sponsoring the Alumni/Student Dinner in March (exact date not know yet) and we'll need volunteers to help serve the food. Also in March will be the Festival of Nations, one of the best-attended events of

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the school year. Make sure to get tickets before hand. There will also be a Spring Concert, school play and more. Keep checking the school's website for the latest information on events, schedules and news.

Filing your Taxes? Make sure to check if you are eligible for the EITC; Earned Income Tax Credit. If you have at least 1 child and your household income was less than \$35,000 you probably qualify for the credit. For further information call the NYC general helpline at 3-1-1 or check online at [www.nyc.gov/eitc](http://www.nyc.gov/eitc).

One of the major changes in the Department of Education restructuring was the creation of the Community Education Councils, which replaced the Community School Boards. Candidates who were elected last year served a one (1) year term. Elections for these councils will occur again this May and candidates will be elected for a two-year term. There is a special Citywide Council on High Schools, which has one representative from each of the city's Regions. If you would like more information on the Community Education or Citywide High School councils check online [www.nycenet.edu/councils](http://www.nycenet.edu/councils) or contact [councils@nycboe.net](mailto:councils@nycboe.net). Get involved and have a voice in your child's education.

Join us at our THHS PTA meetings... it's a great place to find out what's happening and also to meet with other parents. Hope to see you all there!

Telephone: 718-575-5580 ext 344  
Cell: 347-563-4509

Regards,  
Winnie Hallex, Parent Coordinator

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## NOTES FROM THE COLLEGE OFFICE

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BY ANTOINETTE TEAGUE  
College Counselor

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High school students begin to prepare the image they will portray on their college applications in the 9th grade, refine their choices in the 10th grade, and complete the picture that will be presented on their applications in the 11th grade.

Everything counts — grades, course selections, extra-curricular activities and community service. Students should take a rigorous course of study, develop their strengths, show continuity in their activities and demonstrate growth in ways that define their uniqueness. After the initial application is submitted, 12th graders must continue to do their best in all endeavors. Most colleges require midyear reports and, if a decision is pending, this will make or break the deal. Final transcripts are sent to the colleges students will attend and must remain indicative of good/excellent performance if the acceptance is to continue to be in effect. Remember, everything counts!

**REGISTER TO RECEIVE PTA ANNOUNCEMENTS via E-MAIL**

**Click the PTA Link on any page of [www.thhs.qc.edu](http://www.thhs.qc.edu)**

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## FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

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BY JANET SOLOMON  
Assistant Principal, Pupil Personnel Services

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We are pleased to be offering small-group counseling during lunch bands beginning in the Spring term. Our skilled and caring counseling staff -- Marc Duke, Jonathan Hirsch and Cheryl Kramer -- will facilitate each group based on the topics that are of interest and importance to the students. Groups will meet one day a week. Children who would like to attend a group should speak to their guidance counselor.

### Save these dates:

- A meeting for all Freshmen will be held on March 28th from 1:45–2:30.
- A meeting for all Sophomores will be held on April 19th from 2:45–3:30. Topics to be covered will include college preparation, community service, and the Townsend Harris Honor Certificate, as well as other topics to be determined in consultation with staff members and grade leaders.
- An Elective Assembly is scheduled for Wednesday, March 23rd. At that time, all ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students will have an opportunity to hear about their rich variety of elective course choices for the Fall, 2005 semester. Online registration will begin the following day.
- Report cards will be distributed on Thursday, March 17th. They are to be handed in, signed by a parent or guardian, on the following day March 18th. The second marking period Report Cards will be distributed on April 21st and are due back, signed, on April 22nd.

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## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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BY SUSAN BRUSTEIN  
Assistant Principal, Science & Technology

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### SCIENCE RESEARCH

The Science Department proudly congratulates Padmavati Sridhar, (*Computational Identification of 11 Candidate Small Nucleolar RNAs in the Region of Human Chromosome 15 Associated With Prader-Willi and Angelman Syndromes*), and Maria Wojakowski, (*Nest Site Microhabitat Influences Nest Temperature and Offspring Sex Ratio of the Diamondback Terrapin [Malaclemys terrapin]*), Townsend Harris' 2005 Intel Science Talent Search Semi-Finalists. Each student will receive a \$1000 award, and the school will receive matching funds to purchase research equipment.

### TECHNOLOGY—Improving School-Home Communication

It is an ongoing goal of our administration to improve our ability to communicate with our students and their

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parents. We are expanding our use of our web-based administrative server to enable us to provide up to the minute information via email to your students, our web site ([www.thhs.qc.edu](http://www.thhs.qc.edu)) and through various information modules available to your students at [register.thhs.qc.edu](http://register.thhs.qc.edu)

- **Email System:** All students have been issued both Townsend Harris email accounts and usernames and passwords. Students who do NOT check their Townsend Harris email daily should enable mail forwarding to an email account that they use. To enable mail forwarding students should log into their email accounts at [email.thhs.qc.edu](mailto:email.thhs.qc.edu) select email forwarding under the options link, and follow the online instructions.
- Scholarship and contest information is now distributed via email, as is programming information.
- Notification of the cancellation of Zero-Band Labs due to teacher absence has also been disseminated via the email. Students should check their email before leaving for a zero-band class. Notification of cancellation will be made before 6 am where possible.
- **Indicating Programming Preferences:** Students submit their elective choice requests online from any computer connected to the Internet, and, within a window of opportunity set by the Guidance Department, can change their minds.
- **Checking College Admission Statistics** (of the previous year's senior class) enables students and their parents to make better choices of appropriate college programs.

New modules will be developed over the next several months providing ever better opportunities for communication. We will, of course, keep you informed.

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## FROM THE L.O.T.E. AND FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

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BY LISA MARS  
Assistant Principal, Instructon,  
Languages Other Than English, Art and Music

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The Japanese program enjoyed learning from several guest lectures this semester. Mr. Cunningham presented a photo lecture to the Japanese classes about his recent visit to South Korea. A student from Japan, Rei Kudo spent two days at Townsend Harris. She is here on a scholarship through Youth For Understanding. Applications for this and other scholarship exchange programs are available in the Language office room 437.

In collaboration with the Animé Club, students have initiated two fund-raising events to purchase books on Asia for the THHS library. The events include sales of Origami crafts and a Japanese Movie "Waterboys" We have thus far raised \$300. In addition, students sent a set of one thousand origami cranes, which symbolize healing of mind and body, to a children's hospital last year, they will make another set of thousand cranes this year.

The Spring Semester will be even more exciting and full of activities. We have received a proposal for an exchange program from Hibarigaoka HS in Kanagawa, Japan through the Baba Foundations. Plans for students' visits from and to Japan are underway. Other activities

will include Japan Society Haiku Competition, Ito-en Haiku Competition, Japanese National Honor Society inductions, class trips to Urasenke Japanese Tea House, Japanese restaurant, Japanese bookstores and the Spring Festival at the UN International School. We have also received an invitation from the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Locust Valley to participate in their enrichment program on the Japanese garden and its Zen-influenced culture.

The Advance Placement Spanish class which is an intense language course covering all aspects of language acquisition: oral, written, audio comprehension and grammar, will take two trips this year. The first will be at the end of January. The class will go to see the acclaimed Aztec exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum, enjoy a typical Spanish lunch at Cafe Español and finish the day off on a sweet note, visiting the Jacques Torres chocolate Haven.

The second trip will be to the Museo del Barrio, where the class will enjoy 2000 years of portraiture throughout Latin America and Spain. They will also take a dance class and have typical Puerto Rican lunch. To finish off the day they will visit the studio of a local artist, James de la Vega, who has inspired countless artists both within the community of Spanish Harlem and beyond.

Several of our Latin 5 students participated in the Boston University Latin Scholarship competition. Congratulations are extended to these students and their teacher, Ms Laderoute. The Latin and Greek Classes are gearing up for the National Latin, National Greek and Medusa Mythology competitions. Registration for the Medusa Mythology will begin on February 1, 2005. Students may contact their classics teacher or Ms. Mars for more information.

The Hebrew Program is extremely grateful for the support received from the Alumni Association. Their generosity has afforded the Hebrew classes to implement a new textbook series.

Ms D'souza and a group of students will visit France and England during the Spring break.

The Festival of Nations will take place on March 16, 2005. In an effort to avoid overcrowding of this most popular event, tickets will not be sold at the door.

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## ART DEPARTMENT

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The Art History Class enjoyed meeting the MoMA museum educator, Max Weintraub, who visited their classroom to introduce the students to the works of modern artists prior to their scheduled trip to the MoMA. The class was privileged to visit the museum on a Tuesday when it is closed to the general public. At the museum the students explored various art works focusing on the theme of landscape and discussed their ideas with Max Weintraub.

The Independent Photography class was introduced to large format printing in our very own darkroom. Mrs. Wischerth was pleased to receive a donation of 16 x 20 photographic paper which enabled her to convert the darkroom into a haven for large prints. The students' works

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were displayed at the Winter Art Show and caught many off guard due the size of the printed image, not to mention the remarkable subject matter. One of our photography students submitted a graphic design to the ACTEA Contest and received an Award of Merit for his submission.

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## MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The Music Department will offer an Independent Studies in Voice Ensemble coached by Mariko Sato. The course contents will include singing great music of all genres as well as sight-reading and notation of music.

On February 15th, our Jazz Clinics continue in association with the Aaron Copland School of Music.

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## FROM THE HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

BY SUSAN GETTING  
Assistant Principal, Humanities

The Humanities Department is looking forward to the arrival of the month of February. No, not just because it includes our Mid-Winter break, but because for the first time we are collaborating with Queens College in celebrating Black History Month. Queens College has created a month long list of activities on campus, available on line at [www.qc.edu/BHM](http://www.qc.edu/BHM), which focuses on the Black Freedom Movement, 1954–1968. Our students will be directly involved in several of the activities and may attend any others that fit into their schedules. On February 2nd junior Misha Jemison and sophomore Krystal Hartley will perform dramatic readings related to the civil rights movement in the QC ballroom. Misha will read her prize winning speech, *I Have a Dream: Revisited* while Krystal will give a dramatic reading about the life of the late Shirley Chisholm. Mr. Scardino's AP Government and Politics class has been busy reading Alice Walker's *Meridian*, and will participate in a Presidential Roundtable focusing on the book and other topics germane to the civil rights movement. The ongoing activities which include a Film Festival, Panel Discussion, library displays, musical concerts and Town Hall meeting will be a welcome addition to the classroom projects and literature based discussions that take place at THHS. What an exciting and meaningful way to celebrate the lives of those African American who struggled and continue to strive for equality for all.

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## FROM THE MATH DEPARTMENT

BY ELLEN FEE  
Assistant Principal, Mathematics

The Math A Regents was administered on Tuesday, January 25 to over 200 students and we are happy to report that 100% passed and over 80% achieved mastery (a score of 85 or better). We believe our mathe-

matics program offers a very rich algebraic foundation for the advanced courses our students will be taking later and that our training far exceeds the state expectations for 10th graders.

The Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society induction is on Pi Day! (March 14th or 3.14 for those of you that didn't know when Pi Day occurred each year.) Mu Alpha Theta is a national organization dedicated to inspiring keen interest in mathematics, developing strong scholarship in the subject, and promoting the enjoyment of mathematics among high school students. THHS students who have completed Math A and B with at least a 93 average in all math classes and at least an overall average of 90 will be invited to be a member.

This Spring we have two opportunities for THHS students to compete in Mathematics contests. The first is the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC), dedicated to strengthening the mathematical capabilities of our nation's youth. Their goal is to identify, recognize, and reward excellence in mathematics through a series of national contests called the American Mathematics Contest 10 (AMC 10), the American Mathematics Contest 12 (AMC 12), the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), and the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO). The AMC contests are intended for everyone from the average student at a typical school who enjoys mathematics to the very best student at the most special school. We will be administering the AMC 10 and 12 on Wednesday, February 16 during 9th–10th bands in our Student Dining Hall. Students scoring above 100 are automatically entered into the AIME given in March.

The second event is another math contest on Friday, March 4 — especially for seniors, sponsored by the THHS Alumni Association-Florida Chapter. They are offering cash prizes for the 3 top-scoring seniors! The contest will be 1 hour and consist of problems similar to contests taken by the Math Team (which meets Tues. and Fri. mornings before school). The awards will be presented at the Baccalaureate in June.

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## THHS PARENTS SUPPORT FUNDRAISING DRIVE

We have been very successful so far this year in our fundraising efforts. Since September we have raised \$56,000, up from \$45,000 last year. Our fundraising drive continues throughout the year. A second mailing has gone out for those who have not yet made a gift and would like to contribute. If you receive a second notice by mistake due to a recent gift being sent, please disregard the mailing. Thank you for your generous support and the help of the fundraising volunteer committee for making phone calls and helping with mailings.

Mr. Cunningham is meeting with faculty members to determine the projects that are most needed and would benefit our students.

Bernadette Lavin, THHS PTA Treasurer  
Susanne Felder, PTA Fundraising Chair