Change and Growth for TC’s Cahn Fellows Program has a new director and is expanding to include participants from Chicago, adding to its base in New York City and Newark. Krista Dunbar, who led the Cahn Fellows Program for six years, has become Senior Director of Recruitment in the Office of New Schools of the New York City Department of Education.

Dunbar is succeeded by Nora Heaphy, who previously spent seven years at the Colin Powell Center for Leadership and Service at the City College of New York, serving as Director of Service Learning and then as Deputy Director. In both of these roles, Heaphy led the launch of several new leadership fellowship programs for City College students, and worked with dozens of faculty to improve student learning outcomes through service-learning. “I was drawn by the Cahn Fellows Program’s clear focus and proven track record in making direct, positive change in city schools,” she said.

Last year, the Cahn Fellows Program enrolled its first Fellows from Newark and the 2012 cohort will now include two Chicago principals—Alan Mather of Lindblom Math & Science Academy and Tara Shelton of South Loop Elementary School. The expansion to Chicago and all other Cahn Fellows activities are now in the hands of Heaphy, who has spent her career working at the intersection of education and leadership development from almost every angle. “Chicago and New York City have many similar issues,” Heaphy added, “And Chicago is experiencing a lot of reform with a focus on leadership—on principals and superintendents.”

Initially a special education teacher in Berkeley, California, Heaphy has also served as Executive Director at Refugee Transitions, a San Francisco-based non-profit that provides ESL services to refugee and immigrant families, as well as an ESL and science teacher in the Peace Corps in Lesotho.
October might seem a long way off, but it will be here before we know it. Just as you’re revving things up in your schools, the Cahn Fellows Program Fall Summit will invite you to slow down, take a look around, and get reacquainted with people and ideas from the Summer Leadership Institute. Whether the weather is sunny or not, the setting will be ideal for conversation, reflection, and even a bit of relaxation.

The Fall Summit is our first opportunity for Cahn faculty advisors to meet with their Cahn Fellow advisory groups. We’ll spend some time getting to know each other and sharing basic information about schools and the year ahead. As a faculty mentor, I can say that this is kind of like the first day of school – we’re excited (and a little nervous!) to begin working with the new cohort of Fellows and Allies.

We’ll revisit some of the topics and perspectives introduced during the Summer Institute. You’ll work on the “Four Column Exercise,” prompting you to look more deeply into your own motivations and aspirations. You’ll have a lot of time to think about your Challenge Project, creating an “elevator speech” version that will help you solidify your ideas and ensuring that your project is “data-informed.”

Third and probably most importantly, the Summit will whisk you away from your busy work lives and give you a chance to reconnect with people who share your commitment to school leadership and to bettering the lives of children and youth. Hopefully you’ll leave with a renewed commitment to the crucial work you’re doing, and a deeper appreciation for the friends and colleagues who are here to help you in your efforts.

As a former Girl Scout, I love and appreciate the setting for the Summit - the Edith Macy Conference Center - sometimes known to scouts as the “university in the woods.” To me, Macy exudes the core values and deep traditions of scouting: an emphasis on learning, appreciation for the natural world, and promoting the value of working together. This year marks the 100th anniversary of girl scouting in the USA. Unfortunately, though, October isn’t the time of year for Girl Scout cookies.

See you at the Fall Summit!
The 10th Cahn Fellows Cohort has assembled 23 champion leaders from the tri-state area and Chicago to descend upon Teachers College at Columbia University. Unlike the Olympics, everyone is bringing home gold. The knowledge provided by the program, its faculty members and presenters make winners of us all.

Our journey began in Gettysburg where we saw and felt first-hand what our great nation endured during that pivotal battle. We gained a perspective that none of us will soon forget. The experience shed light on the struggles leaders face in making monumental decisions each day that impact the lives of so many. We could not help but draw connections between our daily work as principals, and wonder how to help our school children overcome the daily battles they face each and every day. Back in New York City, we revisited the battle of Gettysburg as a way to gain a deeper understanding of factors that impact outcomes in our schools.

We spent the next week learning about our own thinking preferences and styles through the lens of four quadrant brain theory. We applied this theory to our own experiences as school leaders to better understand the how and why of our own leadership decisions. Our learning continued as we peered into the future through scenario planning. The process allowed us to identify future trends in public education and how these changes may impact our schools. We also took time to share some of our successes as leaders, and we unpacked some of the best practices that led to those accomplishments.

As each day passed, we grew to understand the connectedness of our work and how each of us manage feelings of isolation as school leaders and principals. We gained strength in numbers and in the knowledge that we are all striving to achieve the same goal: to bring our students the understanding of the world that only the flames of knowledge provide.

We practiced listening and we practiced laughter as we learned how to laugh at ourselves. I have no doubt that our lives will be permanently altered by the Cahn Fellowship as we continue to gain a greater perspective for the profound nature of this intense work of school leadership.
In May, the School Leaders Network (SLN) honored several Cahn Fellows at its annual celebration of School Leadership. Over 75 principals, DOE administrators, partners, funders and friends of SLN gathered at the picturesque Water’s Edge Restaurant in Long Island City for a celebration of the success and collaboration of SLN Principals. Career SLN principals shared how they have persevered through constant change to relentlessly pursue high-quality learning environments and increase student achievement in their schools.

Opening remarks were delivered by SLN President and CEO Elizabeth Neale, SLN Board Chair Peter McNally, Cluster 2 Leader Charles Admunsen and NYCDOE Chief Academic Officer of the Office Leadership Anthony Conelli. The panel discussion featured four Cahn Fellows and New York City Principals who were also honored for over 10 years of service to the students, staffs and families of their school communities. 2007 Cahn Fellow Joseph Zaza (Leon Goldstein High School), 2008 Cahn Fellow Sana Nasser (Harry Truman High School), 2005 Cahn Fellow Betty Gonzalez-Soto (C.S. 211) and Ingrid Mason (P.S./M.S. 174) inspired and informed their colleagues with authentic stories of their challenges and triumphs as school leaders.

2011 Cahn Fellow Magalie Alexis and SLN cohort #6 Principal served as the dynamic Mistress of Ceremony. Outgoing Cahn Program Director, Krista Dunbar, now NYCDOE Senior Director of Recruitment, was acknowledged for her tremendous support of leadership development. The program closed with SLN Principals sharing testimonies about the impact their participation in SLN cohorts has had on their personal leadership and the progress of their schools.

The mission of School Leaders Network (SLN) is to expand educational opportunity for all students by transforming school leaders into empowered, highly effective change agents who improve school climate and culture and drive increased student achievement. SLN has 6 cohorts across the City in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. SLN continues to expand its services and is now accepting applications for principals to join our cohorts. Seize the opportunity to continue your leadership development and improve your school by joining an SLN cohort of your peers and experience a rigorous, supportive community of excellence focused on the relentless pursuit of achievement for all students. For more information, please email the NY Regional Director, Dr. John R. Jenkins at jjenkins@connectleadsucceed.org or on the web at www.connectleadsucceed.org. Dr. John R. Jenkins at jjenkins@connectleadsucceed.org.
Over 50 Cahn Fellows and Alumni attended the July Teacher Evaluations Panel Discussion, co-hosted by the Cahn Alumni Network (CAN) and Scholastic’s School Classroom and Community Group in New York City.

The 2012-2013 school year marks the implementation of the new teacher evaluations. The panel discussion identified the need for a more evaluative system of rating teacher performance as it affects student outcomes. The reform requires educators to be evaluated for effectiveness using the following measures: 20% based on student growth on state assessments, 20% based on student growth and achievement on locally selected measures, and 60% based on classroom observations, lesson plans, environment, and progress towards professional growth. The feedback derived from this model of teacher evaluations will encourage teacher self-evaluation and improvement.

The panelists included six outstanding leaders in education: Dr. Betty Rosa, 12th District New York State Regent, New York State Department of Education; Leo Casey, Vice President of Academic High Schools, United Federation of Teachers, Anthony Conelli, Deputy Chief Academic Officer for Leadership, New York City Department of Education; Beth Peller, Director of Curriculum, Executive Leadership Institute, Council of Supervisors & Administrators; Aaron Pallas, Professor of Sociology & Education at Teachers College, Columbia University; and Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York and Cahn Fellows Program Board member.

Resources to assist with the implementation of the new teacher evaluation model are available at www.engageNY.org. EngageNY is a teaching and learning site designed for New York’s teachers, principals, administrators and Network Teams. Additionally, Essential Voices: Including Student and Parent Input in Teacher Evaluations, a June report issued by Advocates for children is available online at www.advocatesforchildren.org. Advocates for Children of New York is an organization that supports children that are at the greatest risk of academic failure.
In Principal’s Office, a regular feature of SchoolBook, a city school principal is interviewed for insights into school management and the life of a school leader. What do you think makes a good principal? Join the conversation below.

Rashid F. Davis, 41, is principal of Pathways in Technology Early College High School, a new school that opened in Brooklyn with a unique six-year plan that offers students an associate college degree upon graduation. The school began this year with 103 ninth-graders and plans to add a grade every year.

Davis, who began his career as an English teacher on Long Island, spent several years at John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx, working there as a teacher, a small learning community coordinator and an assistant principal before becoming the principal of Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy. He left there last year to lead P-Tech, as the new school is called.

P-Tech has an emphasis on science and technology, and partnerships with I.B.M. and the City University of New York. Davis, who has written about his experiences and his ideas on SchoolBook, talked about the challenge of preparing his students for a rigorous science and technology curriculum, and college-level classes, even though many of them came from middle schools that may not have adequately prepared them. This interview was edited and condensed.

Q. You're almost at the end of your first year. What will you do differently next year?
A. The first class did not have the opportunity to do a summer bridge. This will be a six-week summer school here on our site, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The students will have the opportunity to take geometry. Since we’re adding more students it will be an opportunity for incoming students to bond with the existing students.

Q. Will it be mandatory?
A. As much as we can make anything mandatory. Some people are not happy, but the reality of it is, we’re not an academically screened school, so we have to take every opportunity to make our students academically stronger. Summer learning loss is a huge issue. We can’t just pretend that if a student is already behind that it’s O.K. for them to just have fun in the summer. We’re trying to defy the odds by having students complete an associate’s in applied science degree, as well as earn a high school diploma, so we have to use every available resource. We’re also starting two college classes for our Year 2 students, speech and electrical mechanical engineering technology.

Q. What other changes are you planning to make?
A. We’ll definitely do some different things with parents, to help them understand the cost savings that this program with its free associate’s degree can mean. It’s important for them to see this so they can understand what sacrifices need to be put in place now in order for their children to be successful.

Q. Where do your students come from?
A. From all over the city, but 85 percent are from Brooklyn and 35 percent come from District 15. They attended 95 different middle schools.

Q. What are some of the things that worked right this year?
A. Our nontraditional calendar. We start at 8:35 a.m., and 10th period ends at 4:06. Enrichments are from 4:10 to 6 o’clock. Having a longer school day allows them to have an opportunity to really strengthen their skills. Every middle school that our students came from has a different academic culture. We’re trying to build one culture, to have the students learn new habits.

In Year 2 our students will be expected to take two college courses and before they can, they must take the Regents, and they must score a 75 or higher on the E.L.A. or an 80 or higher on Integrated Algebra. So for us that test is a different beast.
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE NAMED NOTEWORTHY SCHOOL

2010 Cahn Fellow Bill Bassell Celebrates First Year as AAS Principal

Story Excerpts from Inside Schools

On a rainy day in May, students file into the former sewing machine factory that houses half of the Academy of American Studies. The teens are noticeably polite as they greet their principal, remove hats and earplugs, fold down umbrellas and funnel calmly into a hallway as narrow as two single file lines.

For the most part, students don’t seem to mind the cramped quarters. “It’s small,” said a junior, “but we get more attention.” They also get to take history-oriented trips: to Plymouth, Massachusetts when they study the colonial period, to Boston to walk the freedom trail, to Washington D.C. to see the Constitution, and to Gettysburg, for a unit on the Civil War. Even during school, movement is a feature of many lessons. “Do I look like a pilgrim?” asked a girl, in a long black skirt and a white scarf, ready to act out a scene from the Crucible. “We bring history to life,” said assistant principal Mark Solkoff.

The school was founded in 1996 with support from The Gilder Lehrman Institute, a foundation that seeks to bolster the study of American history in public schools.

In addition to trips and skits, history is explored through student-made posters, timelines and charts. Much more than textbooks, students use original source documents, art, letters and political cartoons from the period. They read memoirs, graphic novels and watch films. Trips are not always directly related to history. In the journalism class, students had a chance to visit the New York Times printing plant and to sit in on an editorial meeting at People Magazine.

Students come from all over the world, and they are motivated and articulate about their goals. “I’m going to the University of Buffalo to study Biomedical Science,” said a senior. Although science and math are not a major focus at the school, there are limited Advanced Placement offerings in both. The school has a range of clubs that foster leadership and self-expression – Student Government, Debate, Eagles in the Morning (a radio team), College Discovery, and Improvisational Theater.

Those with special needs are integrated and also have a voice. Skits are a good way for everyone to feel like a part of things, said a co-teacher in one of the Integrated Co-Teaching classes, which have a mix of general and special needs students. In geometry, a blind child calculated the mid-point of a triangle, like her sighted peers, but she used Braille shapes created by her unobtrusive adult assistant. Students can get extra tutoring help during and after school.

William Bassel became principal in 2011 after many years as principal of Long Island City High School. He plans to expand the number of Advanced Placement courses and is an advocate of infusing art into academics. Teachers said there is more structure under his leadership – no visible hats, cell phones, or iPods, and more formalized teacher meetings.

The school has two campuses separated by a quiet residential street. Rooms in the south campus feel packed and can get warm — although noisy air conditioners help — and hallways, offices and classrooms have pockets of clutter. In fall 2012, Academy students will have access to science labs and more space in the north campus, a building they share with Newcomer’s High School. Only seniors are allowed to go out for lunch but on nice weather days everyone has access to a large asphalt yard with handball and basketball courts. There are seven sports teams. The Newcomers band is campus-wide.

College admissions: College representatives visit the school. SAT test prep is offered in the spring. Many graduates attend CUNY and SUNY schools, Syracuse, Boston, NYU, and Penn State, among others.

Admissions: The school admits three-quarters of students via the educational option method, a formula designed to attract a mix of high and low achieving students in which half of the students are selected by computer, the other half by the school. The remaining one-quarter of the students is chosen based on their grades and test scores. Tours are offered in the fall.
FIELD TRIP FROM RIO
Brazilian Educators Visit MS 233 Principal and 2007 Cahn Fellow Ramon Gonzalez
By TC Record’s Barbara Finkelstein

During a recent visit to Brazil, Brian Perkins, director of Teachers College’s Urban Education Leadership Program (UELP), told Rio de Janeiro Secretary of Education Claudia Costin about a Bronx middle school that’s achieving great things under its principal, Perkins protégé Ramon Gonzalez.

In January, when Rio rewarded 39 of its most effective teachers and principals with an all-expenses paid vacation in North America, Costin personally phoned Perkins to ask if he could arrange visits to the school – The Laboratory School of Finance and Technology (MS 233) – and to Teachers College itself.

Perkins obliged, and the trips to 120th Street and 145th in the Bronx became the undisputed centerpiece of the group’s North American idyll.

“We were amazed at the cooperation we saw between the pupils and teachers” said the group’s ad hoc translator, André Luis da Silva, Jr., a teacher from Paquetá Island 10, about 10 miles northeast of Rio. “But the truth is, we were asking each other, ‘Is this school too good to be true?’”

Miracle on 145th Street
It’s an understandable question. Between 2003 and 2010, student math proficiency rates at MS 233 rose from 13 to 60 percent and English proficiency rates from 10 to 30 percent. If those numbers still seem low, consider that, as The New York Times wrote in an April 2011 feature story about Gonzalez (a graduate of the Cahn Fellows program, and a TC doctoral candidate), they nevertheless have established MS 233 –as the 10th best middle school in the entire city.

But even more impressive to the Brazilian educators, many of whom also wrestle with the consequences of crime, drug abuse and poverty, is 233’s culture. The visitors had special praise for 233’s emphasis on financial literacy – particularly the “school bucks” program, which encourages sixth, seventh and eighth graders to save up for books, pens and computer peripherals, teaches math concepts and entrepreneurship. Students also have an option to invest in a student-run bank that pays out ten percent interest. As described in a story in The Wall Street Journal, the program promotes the five values the school seeks to reward: teamwork, compassion, relentlessness, scholarship and reflection.

“We were amazed by this program,” Mr. da Silva says. “In fact, it is similar to something I have been doing with my students.”

An educational meeting of the minds
On Paqueta Island, a popular tourist stopover, some of da Silva’s students drive “ecological taxis” (bicycle-powered carriages), charging visitors nominal fees for trips to the beach and other tourist spots. “They are making a little money now, but they are also learning some basic English words along the way,” says da Silva who calls this way of learning both “painless” and “powerful.”

By helping the children of Paqueta Island “invest” in the English language, da Silva, like 233 Principal Gonzalez, is preparing his students to participate in a high-tech global economy. Indeed, educators and economists around the world increasingly point to a “mobility gap” that threatens to limit educational and vocational opportunities for children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and perpetuate poverty from one generation to the next. Schools that integrate academic subjects with “core” social values seek to give children the opportunity to advance in a world where a college degree opens doors to a life of self-sufficiency and success.

Changing the present-day reality
The Brazilian educators also appreciated their visit to TC, where Perkins provided them with an overview of the American education system. Members of the group seemed to implicitly buy into TC’s philosophy that public schools can help coordinate a range of educational, social and healthcare services – or even, like the schools at New York City’s famed Harlem Children’s Zone or the new Teachers College Community School, act as the point of service delivery. Gonzalez is so committed to this model that he hopes one day to turn MS 233 into a community boarding school.

“Ten years ago, it was too dangerous to walk down the sidewalk on 145th Street,” says Perkins, who has authored several research studies about urban school climate. “Today you get a sense of order and hope the moment you set foot inside MS 233. That tells you that change really is possible, despite the obstacles along the way.”

His Brazilian guests welcomed the message. “School executives tremendous importance even in the roughest Rio neighborhoods,” da Silva said. “People believe that only through education will we start to change the present reality of the streets.”
A Borough Park public school hopes a budding chess curriculum will one day help its students checkmate the competition.

Starting next year, every student at Public School 160 on Fort Hamilton Parkway will be taught to play chess. Administrators at the school believe the new chess course will give kids an intellectual boost and motivate them to rack up championships — like students at chess powerhouse Intermediate School 318 in Williamsburg.

“We can be one of the top chess schools. We’ve gone so far in the last two years.” said P.S. 160 Principal and 2008 Cahn Fellow Margaret Russo.

Last month, 12 members of the school’s chess team took second place at a national tournament in Nashville, Tennessee, the school’s first out-of-state chess competition.

Russo got the idea to bring chess to the school four years ago, and since then students on the chess team have been competing in local tournaments on weekends.

The school’s first floor hallway is adorned with trophies and plaques that students have won in competition.

So far, only third- and fourth-graders have been taught chess as a course at the school but Russo hopes that training the staff to teach chess to the entire student body will help uncover a new slew of grandmasters.

“We’re just scratching the surface,” said Russo. “We’re going to go deeper and deeper.”

Every teacher at the school was given a crash course in chess as part of their developmental training. Teachers who never learned how to play were taught the rules of the game, as well as strategies to help their students crush the competition.

P.S. 160 students who have been waiting for chess to have a bigger role in the curriculum said they love the new addition.

“Sometimes when I capture the pieces, I don’t even need to checkmate — they (opponents) just resign,” said Zhou.

Third-grader Nick Feng, 9, said he was taught how to play chess by his father and uncle and hopes to make the chess team next year.

“Chess makes me focus and it makes me happy,” said Feng. “I have fun when I play.”
NYC SERVICE AND NYCDOE ANNOUNCE
SERVICE IN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE
Story Excerpts by 2011 Cahn Fellow and Bronx Center for Science and Math Principal Edward Tom

Over a half of a million New York City public school students in 1,402 schools have performed 8,237 unique service projects to improve their communities as a part of Service in Schools, an initiative of NYC Service and the Department of Education. NYC Service, the New York City Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development hosted a celebration for Service in Schools participants.

NYC Service in Schools supports the expansion of service and service-learning programs in New York City public schools. A partnership between NYC Service and the Department of Education allowed students to complete unique service projects in the 2011-2012 school year, ranging from teaching elementary school students sign language alphabet to the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics’ sustainable organic farm, which was chosen for its National Award.

The program began in 2009, when 400,832 students worked on service projects, and expanded during the 2010-2011 school year surpassing goals by engaging 572,229 students in service. This school year, the Administration aimed to engage 600,000 students in over 1,700 service projects. In order to achieve that goal, schools were offered a range of resources, including resources to development service plans and the opportunity to attend a three-day, City-wide training for schools. Surveys were conducted throughout the year to gauge progress of each school against its stated plan. Additionally, 30 schools were recognized for excellence in engaging their students in service.

* University Neighborhood Middle School
* P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island
* Pace High School
* The High School for Language and Diplomacy
* Baruch College Campus High School
* Urban Assembly Gateway School for Technology
* High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry
* P.S. 096 Joseph Lanzetta
* Mott Hall Bronx High School
* Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics
* P.S. 105 Senator Abraham Bernstein
* One World Middle School at Edenwald
* P.S. K77
* P.S. 132 The Conselyea School
* P.S. 335 Granville T. Woods

* P.S. 316 Elijah Stroud
* P.S. 160 William T. Sampson
* P.S. 119 Amersfort
* J.H.S. 189 Daniel Carter Beard
* P.S. 62 Chester Park
* John Adams High School
* J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage
* P.S. 78
* P.S. 3 The Margaret Gioiosa School
* Tottenville High School
* P.S. Q23 @ Queens Children Center
* John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School
* Bronx Alternative School
* Flushing High School
* P.S. 115 Glen Oaks
As a new alumnus of the Cahn Fellows Program, I understand the huge investment that was made in our leadership skills in order for each of us to complete the program. I know that I have become a better leader because of the things I have learned as a 2011 Cahn Fellow and because of the people that I have met during my fellowship year. I am grateful to Chuck Cahn, former program director Krista Dunbar, and everyone at Cahn, to have had this opportunity.

Ever hear the expression “Paying it forward?” It is used to describe the concept of asking that a good deed be repaid by having it done for others instead. Well, I donated my stipend to The Cahn Alumni Network to “pay it forward” and continue the investment of supporting wonderful, caring leaders who are leading our schools. I hope that the rest of the Cahn Alumni Network might follow my lead and contribute their yearly donation to the program. Go to www.cahnfellows.org/donate today. Your support will mean another terrific year ahead for the Cahn Fellows Program!
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It’s in the CAN See you in the next issue! Second Friday of January