A Message from our Executive Director

Greetings Freedom Prep Charter School Families!

Voting takes place this week. What an exciting and important time of year! I want to personally encourage all members of our community to take advantage of the right to vote and this opportunity to impact the trajectory of our nation.

As civics engagement is such a core component of the work of our school, each grade level has incorporated a civics lessons within relevant classes and advisory periods during the month of October. As a school, we registered 35 of the 38 students eligible to vote in the election this year. They will vote for the first time this week! Middle and high schools students also made postcards to remind our neighbors of the importance of voting on November 3rd. Congratulations to Alejandra Sandoval, from the high school and Jasmin Ventura Popoca from the middle school who won our Get Out the Vote Postcard Campaign this year. While the presidential election takes place this week, Freedom Prep’s work to promote civic engagement will continue.

If you would like to learn more about our efforts and offer additional suggestions pertaining to civics and other school initiatives please consider joining our Family Advisory Committee. Our next meeting will be held on November 10th. If you would like to join us please contact Fatimah Dale, Family Enrollment and Engagement Senior Manager, at fatimah.dale@democracyprep.org.

It is my privilege to partner with you.

With gratitude,

CONSTANCE FAITH HORTON
Executive Director || constance.horton@democracyprep.org

The Principal’s Corner

Greetings Freedom Prep Community!

Democracy Prep Public Schools was founded with the explicit mission of preparing our responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship. As we approach Election Day, we have an opportunity to significantly impact the social, political, and economic climate of our community. Over the past few weeks, we’ve rallied our students, staff, and community leaders to register and vote for the candidates and policies of their choice. By utilizing this right and choice, we empower the residents of Camden to lead the charge against policies and systems which continuously seek to harm our community and undermine our efforts.

November is also a time which calls for appreciation and thankfulness to all those around us. We’d like to take a moment to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, siblings, and friends that have partnered with us during these trying times. Since March, you have worked tirelessly alongside our team in the name of learning, collaboration, and growth. While it has not been easy, our community is strengthened by your commitment, and we are motivated each day to work hard for our city.

Thank you for your continued support, and please stay safe.

Latoya Pearson, FPE/FPA Principal

Joshua Rivera, FPH Principal

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

this month’s focus:
CENTERING THE INDIGENOUS

The month of November, we celebrate Native American culture and contributions to the United States. One of the most important contributions Native Americans provided the U.S. of is the love and respect of the land! Native Americans live in harmony with nature and their farming techniques are presently used in everyday life. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, many of the foods we eat, games we play, and words we use come from Native Americans. Even the idea in which we’ve built our democracy was borrowed from the system of government used by the Iroquoian League of Nations.

This month will begin with FPCS scholars and staff using townhalls and advisories to acknowledge the First People who inhabited the land that we now call home. As a network and society we have rightfully stepped away from Columbus Day to honor the true discoverers of the land.

"The fire of hope almost went out; We have to rekindle it."
- Chief Red Cloud
(Mahpiya Luta), Oglala Lakota

Responding to Results

THIS ISSUE of the Freedom Forecast comes at a historic time. The results of the 2020 Election will be announced or are soon forthcoming.

The year 2020 has been unprecedented. With COVID-19, racial divide, and political turmoil, we have all been pushed to new limits which requires that we recalibrate.

While the uncertainty may add an element of angst to our lives, we have to find a way to hold on to or rekindle our hope. Perhaps not in systems but in ourselves.

But how do we do that if we have limited resources and time? We rally ourselves around good causes – ones that uplift our community and create positive changes not only in the lives of those closest to us, but to our individual selves. Even if that is as small as taking 60 seconds to take a deep breath. Rekindling our hope requires that we kindle the life and breath in ourselves.
tying it together:
Teaching, Tolerance, Technology, Treasure, and Thankfulness

VIRTUAL TREASURE HUNT
October’s Civic Event
Each month, FPCS will be hosting 2 events related to priorities set by our region and our network.

On the 19th of October, we hosted our version of a scavenger hunt, a virtual treasure hunt. Scholars were given facts about Native American Heritage followed by 60 seconds to find a related object in their homes. The first few scholars to return to their computers with object in hand received points that were tallied at the end to determine the winner!

Shout out to Mr. Lugo (FPE/FPM) and Ms. Wheatcroft (FFH) for leading the event in their schools.

Make sure to check out and attend all of our monthly events. Details can be found in each newsletter, social media, and/or local school based staff!

A New Form of Literacy
Shannon Julius, Freedom Prep Middle School History Teacher

The virtual world has brought forth a number of challenges that Middle School students continue to both embrace and conquer. Scholars are finding ways to interact and engage with their classes through a computer, and are becoming better students for it. Many are taking ownership of their grades and are more independent than ever before.

Most importantly, a lot of scholars are becoming computer literate individuals by taking advantage of opportunities to use a variety of computer programs as part of their daily routine. Computer literacy may not have been prioritized in this way if we had not had a virtual year, and scholars will take these skills with them into the future. These skills become more and more important each passing year.

One day scholars [may] look back upon this turbulent time with a sense of gratitude, because they will have realized how strong they were at such a young age. They will realize how adaptable they are, and how resilient they are. Most of all, they will recognize that they are able to overcome and combat many of the problems they will face, both personally and globally. Let’s hope we are able to be thankful for these struggles that truly highlight our strengths.

Thankfulness: A Continued Theme
BY AMANDA CUMMINGS, FPE TEACHER AND GRADE LEVEL CHAIR
As fall stretches on, a continued theme in the our classroom, University of Texas, is thankfulness. As we read fall books, explore seasonal changes in science, and discuss traditions we often come back to how appreciative we are of things in our lives. One scholar mentioned that they were thankful for virtual learning, because we can all be together through the computer even when it is not safe to be in our classroom. As a class, our scholars made a list of all the technology that has brought us together that we are very happy to have in our lives. Zoom lets us see our friends and teachers even when we are at home. Google Classroom allows us to complete classwork and homework even without paper. Apps like PearDeck let us all work together on an activity. As we continue with remote learning through the fall, our scholars have an appreciation for the technology that has brought us together. Scholars in the University of Texas mentioned that there were many things missed - farm field trips specifically being one - but are very appreciative of the learning that continues to happen through technology.

The Truth about Thanksgiving

Most texts and supplementary materials portray Native Americans at the gathering as supporting players.

They are depicted as nameless, faceless, generic “Indians” who merely shared a meal with the intrepid Pilgrims. The real story is much deeper, richer, and more nuanced.

The Indians in attendance, the Wampanoag, played a lead role in this historic encounter, and they had been essential to the survival of the colonists during the newcomers’ first year.

The Wampanoag were a people with a sophisticated society who had occupied the region for thousands of years before it was “discovered.” They had their own government, their own religious and philosophical beliefs, their own knowledge system, and their own culture. They were also a people for whom giving thanks was a part of daily life.

Check out more information using the QR code.

DID YOU KNOW?

Let’s [be hopeful that] we are able to be thankful for these struggles that [they may] truly highlight our strengths.

Shannon Julius, Freedom Prep Middle School History Teacher
Each Wednesday in advisory, scholars are focusing on different aspects of identity, wellness, and social-emotional development. Our Upper Academy History teacher and wellness guru, Ms. Schnitzer, has designed lessons for scholars, and advisories are eager to participate every Wednesday! Every week, advisors and scholars have access to a "classroom" of digital Wellness activities.

**THE ART OF AFFIRMATION**

More recently, advisories created affirmations for their daily homeroom meetings.

Ms. Wooden’s (9th and 10th grade Visual Arts) advisory’s affirmation: "I am grateful for my health. I am determined; I will not give up. I am a fighter; I am strong. I can do it; I am smart. I will give it my all."

Mr. Latini’s (11th grade ELA) advisory’s affirmation: "Here’s why I am awesome: I am wise, determined, grateful, creative, and caring."

Ms. Schnitzer’s (11th and 12th grade US History and AP History) advisory’s affirmation: "My thoughts impact my actions. Make someone smile. My choices matter. I make a difference. I believe in you."

**Art as Activism: Virtual GOTV Showcase Competition**

Artistic Activism is known to be a dynamic practice that combines the creative power of the arts to move us emotionally with the strategic planning of activism necessary to bring about social change.

Under the direction or Ms. Wooden and Ms. Cooke, scholars at Freedom Prep Middle and Freedom Prep High created digital design projects that have been mailed out to Camden residents encouraging them to vote.

**& THE WINNERS ARE...**

JASMIN VENTURA-POPOCA & ALEJANDRA SANDOVAL

Jasmin and Alejandra will have congratulatory calls with their school principals, our Executive Director, and receive gift cards. Way to go!!
Shout out to Mr. Knight for being an exceptional staff member at Freedom Prep. Since the beginning of this year, Mr. Knight has gone above and beyond the typical tasks completed by a culture team member, which the school community greatly appreciates. These are just a few of the examples of the reasons why we appreciate and value Mr. Knight’s work for the 2020-2021 school year!

Mr. Knight jumped in to help support the four days a week that critical child care is needed at Freedom Prep. Mr. Knight is always willing to support a variety of scholars and is often observed helping to support other teammates in the building. Mr. Knight also helps to support all FP staff with approaches and strategies to best support struggling scholars. Mr. Knight has also been an integral part of Freedom Prep Charter Schools distribution of laptops and materials. As Mr. Knight completes daily phone calls, he identifies families who may need technology assistance or support, which has led to a majority of scholars obtaining the materials that they need to be successful during remote learning. Mr. Knight also played a large part in the collection of HIS forms and offered to go into the community to set FP up for success in this area. Mr. Knight typically communicates with a large majority of our scholars’ families throughout the day. During these touchpoints, Mr. Knight will frequently go beyond the cultural aspect of the phone call, and leverages academic data points in these conversations. This has allowed for robust and meaningful communication with all stakeholders. Mr. Knight may seem all business, but is always sure to include cultural and academic highlights with families during these calls, building investment. Mr. Knight has also demonstrated that he is consistently seeking ways to build scholar buy-in. This was observed with the creation of our Scholar of the Week initiative that allows scholars to be celebrated by the school community weekly. Mr. Knight, we appreciate your commitment to our staff and scholars!

-Ms. Pearson

FPCS was happy to join in on the fun at PGCS’s Camden Appreciation Day and Back to School Fall Festival events! During both events our school staff interacted, engaged and connected with families in the Fairview and North Camden neighborhoods as well as all the great organizations who attended.

FPCS also spent a weekend engaging the families in our own neighborhood of Liberty Park with Mrs. Dawn Lewis at the “Shoes for Your Soul” event which was held at 1st Nazarene Baptist Church. Mrs. Dawn founded the “Shoes for Your Soul” organization in January 2020 and has been successful at organizing events to gift the children of Camden free shoes and socks. To learn more about “Shoes for Your Soul” go to www.shoesforyoursoul.org!

UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

OPPORTUNITIES

FPHS Advanced Placement: This year for the first time, FPHS is offering TWO Advanced Placement courses. These courses are designed to prepare students for the rigorous work of a college course and to help them save tuition money by earning college credits in high school! The high school’s current AP courses include AP Literature and AP US History. We are so excited about the addition of APUSH to our catalog! But there’s more! AP Lit is now a dual enrollment course! This means that students who pass the course will earn college credits from Rowan College at Burlington County before leaving FPHS! We look forward to adding more AP courses to our catalog as we continue our work with the best students in Camden!

Family Advisory Committee: FPCS is organizing a Family Advisory Committee. Become a member of the Family Advisory Committee and work collectively with other families and school leaders to stay actively involved in the education and academics of your child and other Freedom Prep scholars! To become a member, contact Fatimah Dale, Family Enrollment and Engagement Senior Manager at (609) 471-4531.

THE FREEDOM FORECAST

ISSUE 2 | NOV. 2020

Follow us!

@freedompreppnj

Save the Date

KOREAN “STREET” FESTIVAL

한국 축제

NOVEMBER 23, 2020

No School on Election Day

Tuesday, November 3

No hay clases en el Día de Elección

Martes, Noviembre 3