

The HABETAC Newsletter

Haitian Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center @ Brooklyn College



HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
James Hall 3304J
2900 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11210
Tele. (718) 951-4668
Fax (718) 951-4909

Summer 2006

Nicole B. Rosefort
Director

Marie Lily Cerat
Resource Specialist

Jessie M. Cadeau,
Administrative Assistant

Professor Regine Latortue
Dean Deborah Shanley
Co-Principal Investigators

Advisory Committee Members

Nirva Baudin

Menes Dejoie

Humbert Emmanuel

Berthe Faustin

Dr. Henry Frank

Dr. Regine Latortue

Carlo Mitton

Dr. Jean Pierre Louis

Jean Previllon

Dean Deborah Shanley

Yollette Williams

Message From the Director

Dear Colleagues:

We have buckled another challenging academic year (2005-2006). HABETAC has strived to provide needed assistance to the parents and teachers of our Haitian LEP/English Language Learners (ELLs) and, to collaborate with groups and individuals to improve services for our students. Increased communications, clearer articulation of our shared vision, and a total commitment to better serve this population will afford students, parents, and teachers opportunities to tackle important issues affecting these children's education. In targeting those goals, we will be better able to create more effective programs, address academic deficiencies, and bring about the positive success and outcomes that our community deserves.

The New York State Education Department's Destination Diploma initiative has attempted to address the alarming statistics regarding the high school graduation rate. The ELL dropout rate continues to be a major concern. These factors reduce the chances for college opportunities and optimum participation in mainstream American society.

Being bilingual and/or multilingual are assets in today's global market economy, but not having a college degree in today's America can be a major obstacle to earning a decent and respectable living above the poverty line. Everyone in this nation along with advocacy groups need to urge educational decision makers at the state and city levels, to fund and create solid interventional programs in schools (K-12) to safeguard and promote retention and increase the graduation rate for the high school ELLs and ultimately, turn around the current frightening statistics.

Our nation may be less at risk today, 20 years after that education report (A Nation At Risk, 1983), which catapulted the national standards reform movement that also showed "about 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy among minority youth may run as high as 40%." What to say today of our ELL SIFE and ELL high school dropouts? Let us continue to work together and make every effort for the implementation of quality programs that will ensure the success of our LEP/ELLs. Will we meet this challenge? We can and we must.

Have a great and thoughtful summer!

Nicole Baron Rosefort

The Parent Gallery

Parents Must Tell their Children the Family's Academic Expectations

Parents should have conversations about schools every day with their children. Plans for college should be part of those interactions. All of us have high academic expectations for our children. Similarly, the Haitian immigrant parents come from a culture that places high value on knowledge and education.

Many highly educated Haitians often relate stories about "a mother who sold charcoal on the street corner to send her son or daughter to medical school, and/or support his/her Sorbonne education in France."

New Cultural Realities

Indeed, the US resembled very little Haiti, not only in landscapes and temperatures, but educationally as well. The African belief and practice that the village raises the child is true in Haiti. Adults in the *lakou* or family friends take part in raising the children. Equally true is that the teacher represents the



parents and is given the same respect. Parents in Haiti struggle to find funds to cover their children's tuition and school related expenses.

Here, where education from K-12 is free and more resources are available, parents are expected to play a larger and more active role in the education of their children.

Parents must visit schools at least twice a year for parent-teacher conferences. They receive constant school correspondence to inform them on issues such as, testing, new programs and initiatives by the Department of Education and often are expected to give feedback about programs/services, evaluation or behavior matters concerning their children. Haitian parents are oftentimes overwhelmed: language barrier, work, housing, health, immigration issues.

What Can Still Work?

Like in Haiti, parents can still oversee their kids studying everyday. Talks at home must still include the family's academic expectations and dreams for their children.

College is Important

Haitian parents are reluctant to send their children away to college, at times at the cost of large scholarship money. In general, if they have been taught well, there is no need to fear. In going away to college, our children have the opportunity to learn responsibility, self-reliance, negotiating skills, among others.

PARENTS SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, September 21, 2006
6:00 pm—7:30 pm

Cambria Heights Public Library

Topic: Understanding the Public School System

Summer Fun and Activities for the Family

Prospect Park Bandshell

One of Brooklyn's gems is Prospect Park. One can enjoy the park year around, but the Prospect Park Band Shell stage always sizzles in the summer. You might have missed the June 24 performance of the world-class tap dancer **Savion Glover** (principal actor in *Bring in The Funk/Bring in the Noise*), but there's still time to catch a few great performances:

- **Saturday, July 29 from 2 - 9 PM**
Come and indulge in a festival of Puerto Rican culture. The Park will come alive with performances with the salsa group *Sonora Poncena*, *Joe Bataan* and more.
- **Friday August 4 at 7 PM**

The Latin groups *Los Amigos Invisibles* (Venezuela), *Bellanova* (Mexico), and *Los Tres* (Chile) will perform at the Band Shell Summer stage the first Friday of August.

• Saturday, August 5, 2006

2 - 9 PM

Mark your calendar! Come to a Celebration of African music, food, and culture at Prospect Park. Come hear *Kekele* of the Congo, *Lagbaja* of Nigeria, Madagascar-born and Gabon-raised *Razia*, and performers from Sierra Leone and Tanzania.

REMEMBER

The Brooklyn Museum of Art "First Saturday of the Month" still goes on. The Museum has free events for the whole family. There are also many wonderful exhibits throughout the summer. Don't miss: *Living Legacies: The Arts of the Americas* and *Egypt Through Other Eyes: The Popularization of Ancient Egypt*. The Brooklyn Museum of Art possesses one of the most important collections on Egypt.

Summer Library Fun Times NY State Summer Reading Program

The summer is great for helping kids develop good reading habits as they are reading for fun and enjoyment. New York State runs great summer reading programs throughout all their libraries. Ask your local librarian for information regarding this year's summer reading program:

Books: A Treasure!

There will be all sorts of fun activities related to reading at your local library, and remember to ask your librarian about books in other languages. General information, visit the New York state website:



Freebies and Great Materials for your Classroom

Today, **The United Nations (UN)** represents 191 nations from around the world. This international organization will mark 61 years of existence in October 2006. It was created October 24, 1945 with the collaboration of 51 countries committed to the notion of peace and harmonious cohabitation of world nations. The UN offers a **free** kit about the inside structures of the organization and other educational materials on world issues. Send a postcard to United Nation Public Inquiries Unit, Room GA-57, United Nations, New York, NY 10017. You may also visit the UN website at: www.un.org

American Council on Exercise

Childhood obesity has been weighing heavily on this nation's mind. To curb the frightening rise in overweight children everyone must be involved. Teachers can help

by partnering with ACE, which can provide them with a **free** health and fitness curriculum designed for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. For more information, visit the ACE website at: acefitness.org

U.S. Tennis Association

Tennis has become a more popular sport in the US since the arrival on the scene of the African American sisters Venus and Serena Williams. That new energy along with the need to have young kids more active and athletic, the US Tennis Association offers **free** technical assistance, equipment and teacher training workshops in an effort to introduce students to the sport. For more information, send an email to: jamison@usta.com

Yes I Can Foundation

The Yes I Can Foundation for Exceptional Children awards mini grants of up to \$500 dollars to teachers or related service providers who have a great idea for teaching children with special learning needs. Information can be found at: yesican.sped.org

The NY State Education Dept. Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies

REMINDER: Consult the New York State Education Website at: www.nysed.gov for information and materials on Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners (LEP/ELLs), the NYSESLAT, Bilingual glossaries, Native Language and ESL Standards, Testing accommodations and other useful Teachers' Guides.

HABETAC's 2006 Career Day for Haitian Students

Satisfaction in organizing the Career Day event for Haitian students lies in the year after year positive statements that these students make. "It gives me great hope when I see so many successful Haitian professionals," said a student from Tilden HS at the end of the day. There were nearly 300 Haitian high school students on the campus of Brooklyn College on Friday, April 28, 2006. Many marveled at the beautiful campus and pondered upon a college education as they meet college representatives from several CUNY schools and some private institutions. Many members of the Haitian American Students Association at Brooklyn College, a regular collaborator for this event, were on site assisting in the logistics and other activities. They also held a session titled "College Life" to encourage the students to pursue their college education and to discuss some of the realities of a college life.

High school students came from the suburban towns of Westbury in Long Island and East Ramapo in Rock-

ecture and engineering, visual and graphic arts, and technology and math.



Members of Brooklyn College HASA, talking to Haitian high school students



Below: Nancye Barthelemy, Director Of CST Tech

land. There were some Queens high schools, but the largest representation was from Brooklyn, also home of the largest number of Haitians, living outside of Haiti.

Haitian professionals from varied fields joined the students. There were sessions on health and medicine, education and social services, archi-



Above: Lt. Guy Cethoute addressing the students

Please send your contributions, comments, and questions to:
HABETAC@ Brooklyn College 2900 Bedford Ave., Rm. 3103 James Hall, Brooklyn, NY 11210.
Telephone (718) 951-4668 Fax (718) 951-4909 or Email: habetac@brooklyn.cuny.edu

HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
James Hall 3304J
2900 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11210
Tele. (718) 951-4668
Fax (718) 951-4909

Summer 2006



HABETAC Congratulates You!
HABETAC Di Konpliman Pou Ou!

Nicole Baron Rosefort, Director HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
NYSABE 2006 Antonia Pantoja Bilingual Advocacy Award

Dr. George Cunningham, Chairperson
Africana Studies Department, Brooklyn College

All the Brooklyn College Graduating Haitian American Seniors

Ms. Sandra Clarke, Administrative Assistant
Africana Studies, Brooklyn College

Special Kudos to the following College Graduates:

Maisha Cadet Duval, DePauw University
Kendall Jacques, Virginia State University
Malayika Lemoine, Wesleyan College
Taina Cerat Ligonde, Fisk University
Monica Williams, Hartford University