

Student Farmer Frontline

What's Up With TUPS?

edited by Angelyn Ansah, Grade 12



Pictured: Miss New Jersey Derby Chukwudi, student leaders from Union High School, and Superintendent Dr. Benaquista in celebration of the MLK Day of Service.

UHS Students Came to Volunteer!

by Leo Panes, Grade 11

Annually, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who organized and led the civil rights movement, is celebrated on his birthday, January 15th, which was declared a national holiday on November 2nd, 1983 to honor his legacy.

The Township of Union and several organizations take part in volunteering to clean the parks, sort donations, and winterize the gardens every year. Thanks to the new Board of Education Superintendent, Dr. Benaquista, the event was held in Jefferson School, where many inspirational speakers shared their thanks to the volunteers and the greatness that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has done for equality.

Mrs. Guerra-Frazier was one of them, a Spanish teacher at Burnet Middle School, who is now also a committee

member for the Township of Union; she made sure to share her thanks to the students and the residents from "different backgrounds", for attending and volunteering on a day-off to remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who once said, "volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy".

Many officers and members from the Union High School's Key Club, National Honors Society, Interact Club, Asian Student Alliance, History and Civic Debate Club, and Peer Ambassadors from different backgrounds came together in 30-degree weather for the "Day of Service" and Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. However, it was all worth it in the end, as they were served with delicious warm soul food.

Student leader's Q&A about the event:

Can you share with us about your experience in this event and how did you hear about it?

"I heard about the MLK Day of Service from our very own Key Club President, Leo Onday Pane. From raking the leaves to picking up bags of trash in the cold, it was a humbling experience to honor MLK with an act of service," said Interact Club president, Key Club treasurer, and Drum Major of UHS Marching Band, Marjorie Piansay.

Would you recommend students from Union High School to volunteer next year and why?

"Yes, it's a nicely set up event and a good way to spend the day off-- and like they said at the event MLK isn't a day OFF it's a day ON," said Key Club Lieutenant Governor of Division 14, founder/president of Red Cross, National Spanish Honors Society treasurer, Roots Black Excellence treasurer, and National Honors Society secretary, Oseka Balogun.

What was the best part about the event?

"The best part about the event was the food. When we came back after hours of freezing in the cold and cleaning up our respective parks, the event organizers prepared a feast out of the goodness and kindness of their hearts to thank us for coming together as a community and cleaning up in appreciation for MLK Day. The food was delicious, there was so much that we were able to come for seconds and take some home. I love that we can sit down as a community and enjoy ourselves, laugh, and make connections on this wonderful day" said Social Skills Club president, Newspaper Club's social media manager, Key Club's vice president, Peer Ambassador emissary and UHS twirler, Adaora Ike.

Students who are interested in volunteering next year, make sure to join the clubs mentioned before, it'll be shared among the clubs for next year.

Thanks to Miss New Jersey, Derby Chukwudi, for allowing the student leaders from Union High School to take this image with her! (as seen on front cover of newsletter)

Mathnasium Partners with District Math Nights

by Samantha Frederic, Grade 12



Pictured: Mathnasium in Union, NJ

Mathnasium is changing the way elementary school students regard math education through its Math Nights. These events showcase learning by using fun math games, making education an enjoyable and memorable experience for children.

The events are straightforward: Mathnasium organizes Math Nights at various township elementary schools a few times each month, inviting students and their parents to join. At these events, tables with different stations are set up, each featuring engaging math games. After completing a game at a station, children earn a star on their card and move on to the next one. Upon filling up their card with stars, they receive a goodie bag.

By incorporating playfulness into the learning process, Mathnasium aims to create a positive mindset towards math. Students discover that math is not just about problem-solving but also about creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration, building confidence along the way.

Math Nights also bring together the community in a collaborative environment. National Honor Society members from Union High School volunteer to teach the games and provide guidance to the children, creating a connection between both young and older students alike.

Mathnasium's ultimate goal is to bring a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. This year, Mathnasium has hosted nights at Washington Elementary, Livingston Elementary, and Battle Hill Elementary. Hannah Caldwell Elementary has one coming up in March, so be on the lookout!

Embracing Change: Dr. Christopher Faraone

by Jeremy Rosero, Grade 12

This past February, Union High School bid a grand farewell to Dr. Faraone, who spent the last eighteen years teaching at UHS. Dr. Faraone graduated from Union High School in 2000 and has been an integral part of the school community since. As he enters a new phase of his career, the UHS community takes time to appreciate his presence and remarkable career. When interviewed prior to his departure, this is what Dr. Faraone had to say:

What are some challenges that you've faced teaching social studies at both the Honors and AP level?

Some of the challenges that you face in the Honors and the AP level are obviously trying to get students to take the test and do well on it, evaluating the data every year to try to figure out where the shortcomings are while trying to figure out how to tailor the curriculum to the strengths of the students so that you can (decrease) their weaknesses for the AP test. That typically tends to be the challenge.

What's been the best part about teaching at UHS?

The community. It's a wonderful community with very supportive administrators and great colleagues to work with, and the students themselves; they're great people with passion and interest... and just compassion. It's fun to come to work every day and be around such interesting and driven people. It's fun, it's just a fun environment.

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What's your best memory from UHS?

There's a lot of them. I don't know if there's one that I can say is particularly the best memory I've had at UHS. I've had a lot of good memories---they are all different and every year is different. Just being a part of the community and enjoying different activities. When I was a younger teacher, we did student-faculty football games and interacted with students that way. As I've gotten older, just being around my students---hearing their stories, and helping them get ready for college has always been a good time. I've had the opportunity to work with some administrators and supervisors on creating new curriculum, which has been fun. And again, just different activities over the course of the years, whether from professional development activities to just spending time with my colleagues. So, I mean, I really can't isolate one that's been profoundly greater than the other, they have all been relatively good.



Pictured: Dr. Christopher Faraone, former UHS History Teacher

10 years ago, where would have young Mr. Faraone envisioned his career? Would it be this? Did you anticipate leaving UHS at one point?

I don't know, that's a tough call. I mean, when I was younger I wanted to get into school administration, but as time has gone by, I've enjoyed the classroom more. My motivation for that has changed. So, it's kind of hard to say where it was ten years ago. I mean, ten years ago I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do ten years later. It's been a whirlwind. Life is funny, it's a bit of a whirlwind. I'd say I didn't imagine coming home, to my highschool, to the town I group up in, and being here for as long as I have. That being said, you know, it's been a positive experience. Like I said, it's produced challenges, but at the same time, has also created some levels of contemplation about what is next over the

next ten years from now. Obviously, the previous ten years have been more of a journey. Ten years ago, I was just so... succumbed by the setting I was in, that I didn't even really think about the future. I just thought, you know, it'd (UHS) be a place that I thought that I would be forever at. I didn't really think too much more than that, to be honest with you.

How do you feel about UHS during your final days?

I mean again like, I don't know what everyone else's experience is in Union. (But) I have great students and a great schedule. I experience the best Union has to offer, I never really have a bad day. Even these last few weeks have not been bad days. As I prepare to depart Union High School, I'm not departing for negative reasons. You know, after eighteen years, nineteen years of the same work, I just wanted to challenge myself in a different way. That was really it. There has been nothing here that has created a push toward something or (anything) negative. Like I said, my last few weeks here have been as consistent as the previous few years, with great people, good memories, great conversations, great dialogue, and good students. It really, really was a positive experience, even the last few weeks.

What inspired you to become a teacher at UHS, specifically a social studies teacher?

Well, I never went to school to be a teacher. When I was trying to figure out my career, I was brought back to be a long term sub, and eventually was offered a position as a teacher. I was just so.. I felt so in place in this building and in this community that I just kind of flowed with that. I learned a lot of strengths and weaknesses through my time teaching about myself. It allowed me to address some of the things that I needed to do better as a teacher and an educator. It provided me with a career and goals and an opportunity to shape the world. That opportunity, as it grew in front of me, was attractive. So, I remained in it. It wasn't some kind of lifelong dream or something like that. Why social studies? Well, I have a passion for government. I mean, I have always had a passion for government, I have a degree in it. To have the opportunity to teach it, it's just a lot of fun. When I was interning at Capitol Hill, I always used to say, if I ever got the opportunity to teach people about why they (were) calling into the office... so they understood what they (were) asking in their phone calls, that it would be a better use of my time than simply just answering the phone and spewing off policy. So, having the opportunity to do that was really fulfilling. Like I said, as that was unfolding in front of me, it was something that I just kind of continued and enjoyed.

Is there anything more you would like to say to your past and present students at UHS?

Just thanks for the memories.

New Year, New Me!

by Belicia Pinkrah, Grade 12

For many people, January means pushing away old year woes and planting the seedlings for various New Year's resolutions. And sometimes, in order to plant that very seed, one must share their burning resolution to the world.

The Tomorrow's Teachers course decorated a bulletin board for the month of January reflecting just that. Using the taglines "This is your year to..." and "All students have a dream! What's yours?", students were invited to write down and share resolutions and life dreams (commemorating the late Dr. King) on little post-it notes stuck on the board,

Such examples from others include wanting to exude more positivity and aspiring to become an ultrasound tech when older. Though the board hadn't received much engagement from fellow students, it still stands as an important representation of many resolutions and dreams that have yet to be fulfilled by a lot of UHS students. But hopefully they will, one day.



Tomorrow's Teachers January Bulletin Board

BMS Clubs Make Great Progress Throughout the Year!

by Deborah Calderon, Grade 10

Speech and Debate Club at BMS

Recently revived, the Speech and Debate Club has greatly impacted BMS students. The club participated in the National Speech and Debate Association's Springboard series in which students presented poems based on specific topics. Students also receive immediate feedback from judges, other schools, and states. Ysalba Tejada

placed first in the Rising Star Division for Declamation. Chemyne Adekoya and Temi Falayi placed second and third in Rising Stars for Original Spoken Word Poetry. These amazing achievements have prompted more students to join the club. We are so excited to see what the future holds for this talented group of students!



Pictured: BMS Clubs

The News @ BMS

The Burnet Middle School podcast club has been active since last year when they interviewed multiple students and staff on the dress code. But this year Taylor Hodges-Freeland, Davis Redd, Doel Santana, and of course the one and only, Mr. McGown bring a whole new topic to the table. This podcast series focuses on news going on in the school with some mentions of local and national news. To help support the students, listen to "The News @ BMS" on Spotify!

UHS Presents Its Annual Fashion Show

by Ayanna Wilson, Grade 12

**This article was written prior to the event on February 28.

Get ready for an exciting display of style and diversity as Union High School gears up for its Fashion Show on Wednesday, February 28th, in the small gym. Orchestrated by Student Council and their teacher advisors, this immersive event promises to showcase the undeniable characteristics that define Union High School.

Kicking off the runway is the Barbie Dream Barn section, a fusion of Barbie beauty inspired by the Barbie movie and barn boldness. The glitz and glam will then segue into the Blast from the Past segment, where over 10 students will transport us back in time with their nostalgic outfits, reminiscing about the origins of fashion. But that's not all! Last summer's vibes were more than just Barbie pink, but were also marked by the



Pictured: One of the student models from the UHS Fashion Show 2024

chrome metallic signature, courtesy of Beyonce, which will take center stage, ensuring that the fashion show encapsulates the essence of popular culture.

What truly sets Union High School apart is just how rich in diversity it is with a myriad of languages, ethnicities, nationalities, and religions. The Cultural section of the fashion show, a fan favorite, celebrates this diversity. Students representing countries like Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, China, Costa Rica, Ghana, and more will proudly showcase their cultural attire, accompanied by music that will transport everyone to different corners of the globe.

Expressing individuality is essential at UHS, and the Glimpse of U section aims to spotlight the unique styles and personalities of the students. To add a touch of glamor, the fashion show will end in the Tux and Tiaras, Old Hollywood section, where students will pop out in their finest attire as if gracing the Oscars red carpet.

With fun skits, entertaining hosts, and a lively atmosphere, the UHS Fashion Show promises to be a thrilling and personality-packed event, embodying the spirit that makes Union High School truly one-of-a-kind!

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Kawameeh's Presents Moana Jr. On Stage!

by Denae Johnson, Grade 12

This year, Kawameeh's Musical is Moana! Directed by Ms. D'Achille, conducted by Ms. Cino, and stage-managed by Ms. Arrieta, Moana is set to premiere this coming next spring. Based on the Disney movie of the same name, Moana follows a teenage girl, Moana, and her demigod friend, Maui, on her journey to become a master way-finder and learn more about her island. Moana avenges the missions of her ancestors and goes through a journey of self-discovery. Featuring Zareen Munir in the title role and Ehinose Ehikioya as Maui, the musical includes catchy songs like "You're Welcome" and "How Far I'll Go", and will be a lovely watch for families! Check out @kmsmoanajr on Instagram for more details!

UHS Wrestlers Take On States!

by Isabella Beaumont, Grade 12

At the latest Regions 4 and Girls North 2 Regions Tournaments for wrestling, hosted by our very own Union High School, three UHS students accomplished the amazing achievement of qualifying for the 2024 NJSIAA Individual State Wrestling Championships in Atlantic City: Alissa Alcindor, Gabriel Hargrove, and Christine Pierre-Louis. Our Union County Champion in the 175 lbs. weight class, senior and captain Daniel Collin, also placed 5th at Regions.



Pictured: Alissa Alcindor finishes as 2nd in Nj State Championship Finals.

Alcindor, Hargrove, and Pierre-Louis made Union proud in Atlantic City with their amazing wrestling skills. Hargrove described the incredible experience, stating "States, along with the entire season, was just an unforgettable experience." He went on to say "There's nothing like competing with your family; this team has huge things on the way."

Much success arrived for the UHS community as Alissa Alcindor made it to the State Championship Finals in the 235 lbs. weight class and finished 2nd in the entire tournament! Union High School and our entire township could not be more proud of our wrestlers and wrestling department, headed by Antonio De Bellonia. We hope the wrestling department continues to flourish as the 2023-2024 wrestling season comes to an end. We look forward to seeing all of your amazing accomplishments next school year!

Spotlight of Tomorrow's Teachers Program at UHS

by Denae Johnson, Grade 12

Tomorrow's Teachers, a course offered for Juniors and Seniors at UHS, is an immersive course for those students who are planning on having a career in education. The program was brought to the school by Joseph Daly in the 2019-2020 school year and partners with Kean University to award students with 3 free college credits. Students have the opportunity to visit other schools in the district and shadow a teacher for the day. Tacara Russ, a UHS junior, describes the experience as "educational" and "very interesting". She feels lucky to have the opportunity to have a glimpse into her dream job. Students currently in the class plan on becoming Elementary/Early Childhood Education Teachers, High School Teachers, and even School Psychologists. If you are a rising Junior or Senior at Union High School and have an interest in the field of education, consider enrolling in Tomorrow's Teachers next school year!

UHS Opens Farmer's Cafe!

by Angelyn Ansah, Grade 12

The Farmer's Café at Union High School in Union, NJ, celebrated its opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, attended by Mayor Manuel Figueiredo and school officials. The café serves as a work-based learning site for students with disabilities, offering them the opportunity to acquire skills for employment in the community. Special education teacher Lauren Kohn explained that students are involved in various aspects of the café, including reading recipes,

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measuring, baking, packaging products, making drinks, and operating the register. The initiative was praised by Superintendent Dr. Gerry Benaquista and Union school board member Nancy Minneci, who highlighted the positive impact on the district and its students. The café operates from 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., providing both staff and students with the chance to visit throughout the day.



Students working at Farmer's Cafe.

Allied Health Teacher Shares Final Moments With Students

by Deborah Calderon, Grade 10

After several years of teaching Allied Health at Union High School, Brie Benaquista spent her last day with her students on January 31, 2024. Allied Health is a three-year course offered at UHS that allows students to learn about the medical world and become CPR certified. Mrs. Benaquistas' students worked together to make a memorable day for their teacher. During period 5, Mrs. B was surprised by her current and several of her graduated Allied students, with a going away party, where they sang the retirement song, ate, and played a game where the objective was to find the balloon with their name independently and then work as a team. She was also given several recorded messages from past students. The most memorable moment was when Mrs. B gave a speech, expressing how proud she is of her students for their accomplishments and how she wants them to continue to prevail in the medical field and emphasized kindness. She also spoke about the impact her students have had on her life, some of whom she has known since middle school.



2024 Allied Health Class at Union High School says goodbye to beloved teacher.

Throughout the years, she has watched her current senior students grow into well-rounded, knowledgeable individuals. The current junior Allied Health students regard Mrs. Benaquista as an amazing and dedicated teacher, while her current seniors view her as a second mother figure who has furthered their passion for something remarkable. Although sad to see her leave, Mrs. Benaquistas' students will forever value the wisdom she provided them with!

UHS Key Club Ends Year at DECON 2024!

by Leo Panes, Grade 11



Union Highschool Key Club just attended their 78th annual education conference, DECON 2024, at Hyatt Regency Hotel in Princeton!

Officers of Union High School Key Club for the service year of '23-'24 were recognized for their handwork and determination in keeping their club success. Officers Marjorie Piansay, Sneha Mexon, Kaiya Koonhow, Adaora Ike, and Leo Onday Panes received this award .Not only that, but Key Club also won a gold single service award and placed 2nd place on an essay contest, won by Chinemerem Ejike, our first ever

award to ever won as a club. Union High school Key Club has proudly represented our school in the district level of NJ Key Club. Let's go U!

UHS Dance Team Season Highlights

by Ava Soares, Grade 10



The UHS Dance Team ended this competition season with a bang! They brought three routines to each competition. At Headliners their Hiphop routine, "The Jump Off" placed first overall, and their jazz routine "Lady Marmalade" placed third. Both dances scored a high gold with their contemporary, "Stay" scoring a gold. At their second and final competition of the season, DreamMakers, all three dances received 5 stars. The girls are happy to close off their season on such a good note and are extremely grateful for their coach, Ashley Carr, who choreographed their award winning dances. They can't wait for next year!

