5-12-2017

Events & Outreach; 2017-05-12; Say Yes Graduation Gala

Catherine Collins

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**Dr. Catherine Collins**

Table 4
Dr. Catherine Collins, New York State Board of Regents

I was born and raised in Buffalo and what I’ve accomplished in my life is a testament to the opportunities that higher education can provide. Because of my degrees I’ve served as a nurse, educator, administrator, professor, author and community leader. What is going on today in the City of Buffalo where our public school students have the opportunity to earn a postsecondary degree tuition-free is a gamechanger for this region and I’m so proud to be a part of making it possible. I am a proud graduate of Buffalo’s public schools including Lafayette High School, and have also earned degrees from Trocaire College and the University at Buffalo. I am the New York State Department of Education Regent for Western New York and I AM SAY YES.
Thank you for your support of the Say Yes.

I am a 2nd year at Trocaire College where I am studying Nursing. I also enjoy going to church, playing sports and singing. I hope to be a great Nurse when I graduate from Trocaire College. I am thankful to say yes for helping me to achieve my goal of being the first in my family to graduate from college. Thank You!

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Thank you to the 2017 Graduation Gala Honorary Chairs!

HON. BYRON W. BROWN
City of Buffalo

HON. TIMOTHY KENNEDY
New York State Senate

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James H. Cummings Foundation

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NYS Board of Regents

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Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship Board

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Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

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New York State Assembly

DR. BARBARA SEALS NEVERGOLD
Buffalo Board of Education

STEPHEN SWIFT
BlueCross BlueShield of WNY

MARIA WHYTE
Deputy Erie County Executive

LIVE FEARLESS
WITH THE CARD THAT OPENS DOORS IN 50 STATES.
CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2017
SAY YES BUFFALO
SCHOLARS IN ATTENDANCE
You represent the hundreds of Say Yes Scholars graduating this year!

Manar Al Sbaikhawi  
Alexis Archie  
Dymone Barnwell  
Tricia Buchwald  
Mikayla Davis  
Deboraliz Dip-Hernandez  
Sarah Grunzweig  
Nicholas Irion  
Dwight Jackson  
Dominique Jones  
Kawanna Kershaw  
Cheyenne Ketter-Franklin  
Shanasia King  
Tanayzha Lumpkins  
Kham Sian Sang  
Terrance Stevens  
Fadi Suboh  
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Keiara Wilson

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Scholarship Board members Blythe T. Merrill, Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker and Say Yes to Education President Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey.
OPERATING COMMITTEE
The Say Yes Buffalo Operating Committee meets every three weeks to review progress, challenges and opportunities related to Say Yes Buffalo and its work.

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President, Buffalo Council of School Supervisors & Administrators

DR. KRINER CASH
Superintendent, Buffalo Public Schools

GENE CHASIN
Chief Operating Officer, Say Yes to Education, Inc.

DR. KATHERINE CONWAY-TURNER
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CLOTILDE PEREZ-BODE DEDECKER
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JACK QUINN
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President, District Parent Coordinating Council

MOLLY HIRSCHBECK
Communications Director, State Senator Tim Kennedy

PHIL RUMORE
President, Buffalo Teachers Federation

DAVID RUST
Executive Director, Say Yes Buffalo

DR. BARBARA SEALS NEVERGOLD
President and Member-at-large, Buffalo Board of Education

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
Comprised of more than 60 elected officials, business leaders, educators, parents, District officials, community leaders and faith leaders, the Community Leadership Council is charged with monitoring and facilitating the progress of Say Yes Buffalo. The Council is co-chaired by:

HON. MAYOR BROWN
City of Buffalo

HON. CRYSTAL PEOPLES-STOKES
New York State Assembly

DR. CATHERINE COLLINS
New York State Board of Regents

DR. BARBARA SEALS NEVERGOLD
Buffalo Board of Education

HON. TIM KENNEDY
New York State Senate

MARIA WHYTE
Erie County

ALPHONSO O'NEIL-WHITE
Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship

Community Leadership Council Co-Chair and Operating Committee member Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold with Chief of Intergovernmental Affairs, Planning & Community Engagement Dr. Will Keresztes and Operating Committee and Scholarship Board member Blythe T. Merrill as they visit a Say Yes Buffalo Summer Camp site.
ABOUT

SAY YES BUFFALO

Say Yes Buffalo is a landmark partnership that brings together the Buffalo Public School District, parents, the Buffalo Teachers Federation, the Buffalo Association of Administrators and Supervisors, higher education, the City of Buffalo, Erie County, Say Yes to Education, Inc., and a diverse group of Buffalo area corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations to organize people, time, money and resources to provide holistic, year-round support to Buffalo Public School District students throughout their K-12 years and beyond. Say Yes Buffalo and its partners believe every student can graduate high school and college when given the proper supports, resources and opportunities.

Say Yes Buffalo partners facilitate comprehensive supports, including locally funded tuition scholarships to one of more than 170 colleges and universities for those who meet residency, graduation and admission requirements. These supports are aligned with what research indicates is needed to enable every child in the program to achieve his or her potential and include:

Social services and family supports, after school and summer programming, mentoring, health care, mental health care, legal services, college preparation supports, college scholarships, and paid internships.

When it was launched in December 2011, Say Yes Buffalo became the second Say Yes chapter to partner with an entire city school district. Other Say Yes chapters are located in Cambridge, MA; Hartford, CT; New York City, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Syracuse, NY; and Guilford County, NC.

THE SAY YES BUFFALO IMPACT DASHBOARD

is a collection of data points that the Say Yes Buffalo Partnership identified collaboratively to measure the impact of their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE</th>
<th>COLLEGE MATRICULATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012: 49%</td>
<td>2012: 57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016: 64%</td>
<td>2015: 67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **K-6 Summer Camps**
  Students who participated had NO summer learning loss

- **Preventive Services Program**
  Students who received services increased their school attendance rate by an average of 6 percentage points

- **Mental Health Clinics**
  Served 650 individuals in 2015

- **Legal Clinics**
  1,000 individuals helped; 70 local attorneys volunteered services

- **Mentoring Program**
  94% of matched students matriculated into college.

- **Internship Program**
  40 internships created for Say Yes Scholars
THANK YOU SAY YES TO EDUCATION
and Congratulations on Celebrating 30 Years
of Systemic Community Revitalization and
Launching the Weiss Institute

It was 30 years ago that money manager George Weiss launched Say Yes to Education with a promise to 112 Philadelphia sixth graders that if they graduated he would pay for their college tuition. Today in addition to Buffalo, Say Yes is active in Harlem, Philadelphia, Syracuse and Guilford County, NC and has helped tens of thousands of students access a higher education.

To expand on its mission, a new partnership with Colin and Alma Powell's America's Promise organization was announced in April to create the Weiss Institute. An applied research and technical assistance center, the Weiss Institute will bring together the best thinking, latest research and community-tested strategies for the benefit of communities seeking to help more students get on a path to adult success.

Say Yes to Education launched the Buffalo chapter in 2011. Since the chapter's inception, Say Yes to Education has been the supportive backbone to Buffalo's agenda of providing its youth access to a college education. The support and partnership of Say Yes to Education has been invaluable to the Say Yes Buffalo Partnership!

Thank you George Weiss, Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey, Gene Chasin and the entire Say Yes to Education Team!
We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organizations for your many contributions to the Say Yes Buffalo Graduation Gala. From our 2017 student scholars to our financial and in-kind donors, this celebration would not be possible without your dedication, generosity and support. All proceeds benefit the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship. Thank you!

-SAY YES BUFFALO STAFF

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Manar Al Sbaikhawi
Alexis Archie
Dymone Barnwell
Tricia Buchwald
Mikayla Davis
Deborahiz Dip-Hernandez
Sarah Grunzweig
Nicholas Irion
Dwight Jackson
Dominique Jones

GALA VOLUNTEERS
KeyBank
Say Yes Buffalo Administrative Staff
Say Yes Buffalo Family Support Specialists
Say Yes Buffalo Community School Staff
Thank you for your support of the Say Yes. I am a sophomore at Buffalo State where I am studying Mathematics with a minor in Economics. I also enjoy music and hanging out with friends. I hope to get a job with my degree when I graduate from Buffalo State. I am thankful to Say Yes for helping me accomplish my dreams. Thank You!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

INDIVIDUALS
Anonymous (19)
Jeffrey Adams
Dr. Kevin Ahuna
David Alfred
James and Kristin Allen
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Monica Angle and Sam Magavern
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Glenn Arthurs
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Carol Anne Whitaker

Dr. Harry and Phyllis Newman in honor of Mary and


Scott and Mary Newman in honor of Harry and Phyllis White

Judson T. Price Jr. in honor of First Shiloh Baptist Church

Linda Ray, in honor of Mark Gawronski

Rich Products Corporation in honor of Kathy Gardner

Benjamin M. Zuffranieri, Jr.
The Reverend Vicki Zust
Dr. Mary Schohn in honor of Betsy Behrend
Drs. Mary Schohn and Larry Lantinga in honor of Ruby June Behrend
Thomas Tomaka in honor of David and Jeri Brooks
Thomas Tomaka in honor of Patti and Dominic Montaldi
Beth Vandenberg and Dennis Walczyk in honor of Luke Bradley Rust
Debbie and Michael Walsh in honor of Emily Wyckoff

SAY YES BUFFALO

LEGACY SOCIETY
Anonymous (5)

IN MEMORIAM
Jeffrey Adams, in memory of Clarence E. and Audrey C. Adams
Daytuan & Betsy Antonetti, in memory of Ines Serrano Rivera & Alberta Gibson
Mrs. Beverly Blue in memory of Mr. Sandree Blue
In Memory of Janet Board
Sue S. Gardner, in memory of Arnold B. Gardner
Cutler and Julie Greene, in memory of Finley R. Greene, Jr.

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Sinatra & Company Real Estate congratulates the 2017 Say Yes Buffalo Scholars

Education allows us to see the world through our own lens...

Sinatra & Company Real Estate is proud to support Say Yes To Education Buffalo, and other local organizations.

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Thank you for your support of Say Yes. I am a Senior at Fredonia where I am studying Psychology and Biology. I also enjoy play on the Women’s Club Volleyball team. I hope to be an Autistic Therapist when I graduate from Fredonia. I am thankful to Say Yes for helping me to achieve my goals. Thank you!

Sincerely
Sade Hellams
Committed to a successful future

At Wegmans we've long believed that by caring for our employees, they in turn will take care of our customers. The success of our Scholarship Program is a reflection of the genuine respect we have for our people.

In the last 32 years, over $105 million has been awarded to more than 33,000 employees. Visit us at wegmans.com to learn more about the scholarship program and what else makes us a great place to work.
MEET
CHEYENNE
KETTER-FRANKLIN

Cheyenne Ketter-Franklin is a true Buffalo booster! Born in the city of Buffalo, Cheyenne has lived in the same North Buffalo home since she was a few months old. Most importantly, she has little intention of leaving, plans to move back here if she ever does, and wants to work for a local company that is assisting in the revitalization of Buffalo.

Cheyenne is currently enrolled in the University of Buffalo's 3+2 Masters of Business Administration program, with a concentration in Marketing. Her coursework in business began during her years at the Bennett High School' Business Magnet program. "In that program, I was able to take an array of business classes that provided a strong foundation and information that I still find useful today," said Cheyenne. "I was also able to participate in the Virtual Enterprise class, which allowed me to work with my classmates in a way that simulated starting our own business." Cheyenne also placed 10th in the international DECA competition, an organization that prepares students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. Cheyenne participated as an individual in the organization's Human Resources Management competition.

Cheyenne graduated from Bennett in 2013 as her class valedictorian, and never stopped achieving. "My parents never forced me or my siblings to go to college. They allowed us to make our own decisions, but impressed upon us the importance of being happy in whatever choices we make," added Cheyenne. "This flexibility gave me the opportunity to find my own way and has truly been a reason behind my drive and passion to succeed." During Summer 2015, Cheyenne served as a research intern at the Patrick P. Lee Foundation, a foundation that provides funding for organizations committed to improving mental health services and education. From 2016-2017, she held a student assistant position at the UB Wellness Education Services Center. In this role, she researched the various programs and strategies that colleges implement to help students handle stress. Her research resulted in uncovering some new options for stress management, and helped assist in the decision to move forward with the "Stressbusters" program that will be implemented in the near future at UB. Currently serving as the director of recruitment for the UB Marketing Club, her days are busy with speaking engagements, ensuring member happiness and promoting events.

Cheyenne was introduced to Say Yes Buffalo in 2012, and has since consistently acted as spokesperson at meetings, conferences, and helped to spread the word on what Say Yes means for the future of Buffalo – both on campus with the University at Buffalo’s internal Say Yes Committee and off campus in the community.

In the future, Cheyenne hopes to find a career in the marketing field. "I've always been drawn to marketing because, when effective, it can help deliver much needed products and services. I know the local marketing community is vast and highly engaged in the Buffalo community, so I'm excited to get out there and join the ranks," added Cheyenne.

As the youngest of five college-educated siblings to interracial parents, Cheyenne isn’t afraid to work hard. "My parents encountered many hardships in their life, but have instilled in me so much passion, confidence and energy to do well. I'm an outgoing person, but I wouldn't be the person I am today without all the people, such as teachers and guidance counselors, and organizations who have helped me along the way," said Cheyenne. "Say Yes is one of these organizations and I'm proud of all that they've done for myself and my peers. I would like to congratulate Say Yes for truly investing in the future of Buffalo and I look forward to the growth and impact it will have moving forward."
Nicholas Irion is a young man who serves in many different roles. He is currently studying Music Education at Buffalo State College, and hopes to pursue a career in teaching upon graduating. A musician of many talents, Nicholas has been singing and playing the piano and trombone since age six. His love of music began in the church, and his mother sending him to music lessons. He started off singing in the choir, then began taking trombone and piano lessons in school. As a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, he mentors young men and participates in community service activities. If that isn’t enough, in June, Nicholas was named Pastor of the Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church. He previously served as the youth pastor at the St. Luke A.M.E. Zion church.

Nicholas graduated from Hutch Tech as an Engineering major. It is here where he furthered his passion for the art and gift of architecture. He also was an active member of the concert and jazz bands playing trombone. He was a member of the drama club and served as the coordinator for the basketball, track and football teams.

Beyond his work in the classroom, Nicholas interned with Buffalo Public School Superintendent Pamela Brown from 2013-2014. “By shadowing Superintendent Brown I was able to gain firsthand knowledge about the education system and the many roles of public school administrators,” said Nicholas. “It was a great experience and I learned about the issues facing our schools, and different methods of working them out,” added Nicholas.

A wise young man, Nicholas truly understands that it takes a village to raise a child. He credits his mom for instilling strong values and telling him to finish what he starts and always chase your dreams no matter what may come in your life. He has also been inspired by the work of former Buffalo State College President Dr. Muriel A. Howard. “She is such an accomplished professional. I had an opportunity to work with her and I found myself in awe of her work at Buffalo State and University at Buffalo, and now in Washington D.C where she continues to advocate for American universities. She loves what she does and it shows through how hard she works,” added Nicholas.

I am so happy we have made it from June 2013, where we walked across the stage to receive our high school diploma. Now we are here in May 2017 to receive our college diploma. There is so much work to be done in our community and across the world. The time is now ours to pick up the banner and keep the work going. The time is now ours to take to another level what our ancestors have left for us. Congratulations classmates, I wish you well in all your endeavors!
KEIARA WILSON

Keiara Wilson is a dynamic young woman! She's currently studying Business and Psychology at the University of Buffalo and works for Campus Life at UB. She is a member of the school's African Student Association, and an intern in the community relations department at BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. She currently works as a part-time sales representative at Nabisco Foods, and works as a seasonal guest service ambassadors for The Buffalo Bills.

Keiara’s resume tells the story of success, and shows someone who is on the road to great things! However, the road to who she is today hasn’t always been ideal. She credits her family, support system, and open-minded and adventurous personality for who she has become today.

Keiara is the youngest girl of nine. At the age of three, she was placed into foster care. At the age of seven, she was adopted by Hazel Wilson. Her adopted mother provided much needed support through the transition and challenges that accompanied these changes in her life at such a young age. “She really pushed me to succeed, encouraged me to problem solve and find answers because I was a very inquisitive child,” said Keiara. While Keiara felt support and love at home, she also felt uninformed about the many resources available throughout the community. This lack of knowledge inspired her current course work and future career aspirations. After graduating from UB this May, she plans to pursue a master's degree in Social Work and Business Administration, with a concentration in Foster Care and Adoptions and Healthcare Administration respectively.

“I want to provide foster kids with access to opportunities, information and resources that I think are currently lacking,” said Keiara. Originally, Keiara intended on becoming a neonatal nurse so that she could get involved with adoptions from the moment children are delivered. Now, she intends on serving as a community liaison to hospitals so that she is able to make an initial connection and follow the children throughout their life. “I want to provide these children with support and resources through each milestone and stage of their life,” added Keiara. “It’s a big career goal, but I’m determined to find a way. My current volunteer work and course load are providing the framework, but I know that there’s a long road ahead.”

When asked how she would describe her upbringing, Keiara will tell you that it had its rocky moments, but that she has come out of her shell to become a social butterfly. She credits UB for pulling out her inner-extrovert, and appreciates all that Say Yes has done to assist her and provide connections to her future career goals. “Without the Say Yes internship with BlueCross BlueShield, I would not have learned the skills needed to be successful in the professional world. You need to know how to present yourself and communicate in different environments. The internship experience has also guided me to grow and develop personally and professionally,” added Keiara.

“I would like to congratulate Say Yes on its success and wish my fellow classmates well in all their future plans. I truly hope and know that Say Yes will continue to thrive and provide assistance to students and families in Buffalo! My life motto is, if I’ve never done it, I can’t say I don’t like it. I credit Say Yes and my upbringing for this outlook on life and hope everyone can find inspiration in it,” said Keiara.
Congratulations to the Class of 2017
Say Yes Buffalo Scholars

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Daniel Lewis

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Thank you for your support of the Say Yes. I am a Junior at UB where I am studying Music with a Graphic Design minor. I hope to be a Music Producer when I graduate. I’m thankful to Say Yes for helping me be more exposed to greater opportunities. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Karim
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Thank you for your support of Say Yes!
I am a Senior at Medaille College where
I am studying Psychology. I also enjoy
playing soccer, history, and helping people.
I hope to be a Mental Health Therapist
when I graduate from my Master’s program
at University of Buffalo. I am thankful
to Say Yes for helping me to improve my skills,
myself, and others. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Tanaysha Lumpkins

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HELP US INVEST IN OUR FUTURE LEADERS.

The mission of the Say Yes Buffalo partnership is to strengthen the Western New York economy by investing in the education of Buffalo's future workforce. Through this gamechanging effort, the school district, parents, teachers, administrators, state, city and county governments, higher education, community based organizations, businesses and foundations have come together to increase high school and postsecondary completion rates.

We invite you to join the thousands of Western New Yorkers who have linked arms to do the hard work necessary to support our city's young people, strengthen our public schools and grow our regional economy. Visit us at InvestInSayYes.org.

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