



U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is '09 Gala Honoree

“Organizations like NYC Outward Bound... provide services that can truly impact student success”



In “Celebrating Excellence in Education at the June 4 gala, we could not think of a more appropriate person to receive our 2009 Educational Leadership Award. The nation’s top education official, **U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan**, is off to an impressive start in Washington, promoting effective change for students in schools nationwide. We spoke with Secretary Duncan, former CEO of Chicago’s public schools, about his educational change agenda, and look forward to hearing more when he speaks at our forthcoming gala.

What are your top priorities in your new role?

I believe that nothing is more important than ensuring that our young people are ready for college, ready for careers and ready to be productive citizens. In order to do that, we’ll be working to make innovative, proven strategies available for all children, not just those fortunate enough to be in effective schools and programs.

What are the biggest challenges you face in pursuing those priorities?

First, we have a long way to go before all kids get the education they need to be successful and competitive in the global economy. We have “pockets of excellence,” so the biggest challenge will be moving to systems of excellence. Our next big challenge, or question, is whether we have the courage, and the political will, to face the truth about our current education system and to pursue fundamental change.

What role do you see organizations like New York City Outward Bound playing in public education?

Organizations like NYC Outward Bound that partner with public schools provide services that can truly impact student success, both inside and outside the classroom. We know how critical elements such as extensive professional development and teacher coaching, included in the implementation of Outward Bound’s Expeditionary Learning school model, can have a dramatic, positive impact on participating students.

How would you define “Excellence in Education” for our public schools?

I’d define “excellence” as kids ready and prepared at every stage of their development. Kids entering kindergarten are ready to learn and to begin learning to read, kids in the eighth grade are ready for a new level of learning, and kids leaving high school are ready for college. ☺

Our annual
gala dinner
takes place on June 4
at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.
For information and reservations,
contact tmevents@inch.com, or 212-972-2268.



President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan visit Capital City Public Charter School—an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound school in Washington, DC.

Points of Pride

Twice this past year, **President Barack Obama** visited Expeditionary Learning schools, singling them out as models of excellence. On February 12, **U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan** accompanied the President to Capital City Public Charter School in Washington, DC. “We’re very proud of what’s been accomplished at this school and we want to make sure that we’re duplicating that success all across the country,” they said. “This kind of innovative school...is an example of how all our schools should be.”



■ Out of 150 Expeditionary Learning schools nationwide, two of our network schools—Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School (WHEELS) and Validus Preparatory

Academy—were chosen to host a **Site Seminar** on April 23-24. Only schools implementing Expeditionary Learning at a high level are asked to lead these Seminars, which showcase Expeditionary Learning structures and practices that the host schools implement especially well.

WHEELS showcased its **Student-Led Conferences**, demonstrations of learning in which students reflect on their progress in meeting learning targets at conferences with teachers and family members. Validus highlighted support of year-round **professional development** by rotating visitors through three practices that the school has successfully implemented: a team structure for teachers to delve into outcome data tied to a particular challenge at the school and to discuss intervention strategies; facilitated time for individual teachers to pose topics and invite others to discuss them; and a protocol for giving and receiving professional feedback.

■ Validus Preparatory Academy is one of four high schools nationwide to receive an inaugural **Blue Apple Health Education Award** from the American Alliance for Health Education (AAHE). The award recognizes programs that are models of excellence in best practices and coordinating curriculum with other components of school health.

Validus’ comprehensive program gives students essential knowledge and skills to face life’s health challenges and make changes in their communities. Freshmen focus on sexuality—relationships, healthy decision-making, contraception, sexual assault, sexual diversity, reproductive systems and reducing risks such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Sophomores study the healthy self and community, including mental health, drug prevention, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, disease prevention and first aid. Juniors examine global health challenges—societies crippled by disease, worldwide health



Science teacher Kelly Doherty and Principal Brady Smith proudly display Validus Preparatory Academy’s Blue Apple Award for Health Education.

care and the global food crisis. Seniors undertake an exit project with major research papers on a specific health topic, a 40-hour internship at a related site and public presentations.


Teachers **Kelly Doherty**, who led the submission of Validus’ 80-page application, and **Darlene Perez** traveled to the joint AAHE-American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAPHERD) Conference in Tampa to accept the 2009 Blue Apple award and present their school’s curricular health approach. Congratulations to Validus, Kelly and the entire health and fitness department! 🍏



■ **Orienting our Schools:** A signature feature of our network schools is the Outward Bound Crew Orientation, offered to all incoming students. During an 8-week period last fall, more than 600 of our students and 75 teachers participated in this multi-day adventure course in Fishkill, NY. They undertook activities such as a high ropes challenge course and backpacking. Crew, an advisory group of one adult and a group of 12-15 students, is a distinctive and critically important feature of Expeditionary Learning schools. Crew connects each student with a caring adult who serves as advisor, advocate and mentor and fosters a supportive peer community within the larger school structure. The Crew Orientation courses develop teamwork, communication, leadership and responsibility, and have proven particularly powerful at jumpstarting school culture and building positive relationships among crew members.

■ **CUNY Honors Orientation:** Each year a NYC Outward Bound program kicks off freshman orientation for the William E. Macaulay Honors College, the City University of New York's program for stu-

dents of exceptional ability. Seven CUNY campuses admit incoming freshman to Macaulay; its students, who are University Scholars, receive full tuition for four undergraduate years, financing for study abroad programs and internships, and laptop computers.

The 2008-09 orientation, led by 44 Macaulay student volunteers trained by Outward Bound, involved 300 incoming freshmen, beginning at El Museo del Barrio and ending in Central Park. On their first day of meeting each other, students participated in exercises that foster community building, collaboration and leadership development, and came to understand that communication, camaraderie and teamwork come in many forms. "Both the students and leaders were an amazing group this year," said course director **Lora Nelson**. "The Outward Bound pod leaders were proud to see student leaders debriefing the activities and engaging the students so well." For 2009-2010, Macaulay has requested a service component to the orientation. 



Macauley Honors College freshmen began this academic year with a day of Outward Bound team-building activities in Central Park.


3 Recruiting Top Teachers

What makes our Expeditionary Learning Schools stand out? Great credit goes to our teacher corps—a bright, caring and dedicated group of highly qualified individuals who bring diverse life experiences to their classrooms, opening the world to our students. But recruiting the best teachers grows more challenging each year, as our schools network adds new sites and existing schools, new grades. We also vie for the best and brightest with other City public schools.

Fred McIntosh, director of recruitment and professional development support, oversees this critical effort. "We look for teachers who genuinely believe every student can learn," Fred explained. "They're interested in facilitating, not lecturing, to let students drive the learning and assessment process. They know their subject mat-

ter well, are rigorous in their preparation and in pursuing professional development." They're team players too, comfortable with the project-based, interdisciplinary nature of Expeditionary Learning. "We want teachers who crave collaboration," Fred added.

Leandra Lockwood joined the Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders this fall as a science teacher. "I come from a science background, having worked as a marine scientist," she said. "As a science nerd myself, I know that there's nothing better than learning from authentic experiences. I'm finding it challenging to fit those opportunities into the state curriculum, but it's a good challenge for me as a teacher."

Our network currently boasts 164 teachers; next year the corps will increase to 220. To find exceptional educators, Fred plumbs various networks—like-minded higher-ed institutions, the City Department of Education, our own principals, and organizations like Teach for America and NYC Teaching Fellows. To build a strong base of black and Latino teachers, men in particular, Fred taps historically black colleges and Hispanic professional organizations. Prospective teaching candidates may contact him at fmcintosh@nycoutwardbound.org. 

Many Thanks

New York City Outward Bound is deeply grateful to our many friends and supporters. The list below reflects contributors in our most recently completed fiscal year, from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. Without the help of everyone on this list, we could not fulfill our mission: to effect positive and lasting change in the lives of New York City's young people and in their public schools.

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We apologize for any errors or omissions.

Saluting Our Staff

Outward Bound USA bestowed its 2008 Joshua Miner III Award on our admissions coordinator **Carmen Luisa Shell** and **Bob Box**, an Outward Bound employee of 34 years, at Outward Bound's annual meeting in October. The award recognizes staff members who exemplify the qualities and character of Outward Bound USA's Founding Trustee **Joshua L. Miner III**, and whose commitment and contributions to Outward Bound have improved the lives of students and staff, and/or enhanced its ability to fulfill its mission. We are extremely proud of Carmen, who first experienced Outward Bound in the 1980s as a student at South Bronx High School. She later joined our staff full-time.

Since her high school years, Carmen has advocated fervently for students participating in Outward Bound in New York City and in wilderness schools nationwide. She revealed her leadership traits early on when, as a student, she conceived, established and led two programs in the South Bronx, "Rebels With a Cause" and subsequently, "Hearts of Power," a youth-run leadership, development and mentoring effort designed to provide younger students with Outward Bound opportunities.

Carmen embodies Outward Bound values and teachings, inspiring both students and her colleagues. She carries on Josh Miner's legacy of increasing and diversifying the students we serve nationwide, giving of her time and knowledge in counseling local students and families. As well, Carmen is a leading Outward Bound medical screener, assuring the screenings' suitability for student enrollment and safety. "I first met Carmen when she was a 14-year-old student in our program at South Bronx High School," said **President Richard Stopol**. "She was amazing then and has grown into an amazing young woman over the years. I'm delighted that the entire Outward Bound system recognized that, and how much she embodies all that Outward Bound stands for."

At our annual holiday reception at The New York Times, Richard presented our Spirit Award to **Janet Redondo**, praising her for endless patience, grace and generosity of spirit in giving technical support to staff, including "Luddites like me." The Four-Pillar Award, created for a great Outward Bound instructor, went to **Meg Kiernan**, who Richard said "shows compassion to everyone and always gives it her all. She is tremendously creative and talented." A special award went to **Greg Farrell**, founder and former president of Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound, who was instrumental in launching NYC Outward Bound more than 20 years ago. 

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Stopol Joins Schools Panel on June 16

Richard Stopol will represent our schools network as a panelist discussing the City's Small Schools Initiative on June 16 from 5-7 pm, co-hosted by the Women's City Club of New York and the Baruch College School of Public Affairs, where it will take place. To reserve a seat, write to register@wccny.org or call 212 353 8070, ext. 200.

Welcoming **Humanities Preparatory Academy**

welcomed a new principal, **Julie Conason**, in September. Julie brings more than two decades in classroom teaching, consulting and professional development for teachers, with an emphasis on writing and literacy learning. Since 1998 she was a teacher-consultant with the City Department of Education's Institute for Literacy Studies/NYC Writing Project, Middle School/High School Program. She holds a BA from Bard College, an MS from Bank Street College of Education in Teacher Education and an MS in Educational Leadership from Baruch College's School of Public Affairs. We welcome Julie to our schools network.



Convening **Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School**

Many 10th graders at the **Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School** began their introductory 10 hours of civic leadership at nearby elementary schools (next year they will do 40 hours and earn one credit). Students tutor and read to youngsters and perform general cleaning-up. It's been enjoyable and "a real motivator for many of our more reluctant readers, who see the influence they can have on young people and so are challenging themselves to be good role models as readers," noted **Principal Matt Brown**.



Tenth graders at the Kurt Hahn School began civic leadership activities this year.

In the school's civic leadership panel speaker series, students heard from representatives of the Mayor's office and local service organizations who described their work and needs for volunteers. Students researched the organizations to come up with questions for panelists, who included **Matt Poland**, an AmeriCorps Volunteer from the BedStuy Campaign Against Hunger; **Abigail Lerner** from JASA (Jewish Association for Services to the Aging); **Sister Kwayera Archer-Cunningham**, founder and president of Ifetayo Cultural Arts; and Principal Brown, who spoke about his years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho.

Exploring **Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School**

Our new **Marsh Avenue Expeditionary Learning School**, with an overflow enrollment of 147 sixth graders, conducted its first Learning Expedition, and the *Staten Island Advance* took notice. The borough daily reported on the 12-week study of physics, and simple and complex machines, culminating in a December demonstration of model amusement-park



projects. Building freestanding carousels and roller coasters required knowledge of levers, pulleys, wedges, inclined planes, kinetic and static energies. The Expedition also included a visit to the Queens Hall of Science and a discussion with firefighters about their everyday machinery. Students recorded it all in journals.

Remembering

The **Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School**

dedicated a plaque to its namesake on January 30 before an assembly with students; presenting it were her husband, **Jonathan Miller**, and brother **Jim McCown**. Gaynor's other brother **John McCown** and her sister, **Robin Mumford**, also attended, with other family members and friends. Appropriately the plaque, designed by Jim, concludes with Gaynor's directive to "Make the world a better place," something she always urged her students to do. Her legacy lives on in the school, which is dedicated to helping everyone in the community reach their potential and make a mark on the world.



Jonathan Miller and Jim McCown presented a plaque to the Gaynor McCown school at a student assembly.

Interning **WHEELS**, the **Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School**

kicked off its innovative internship program last fall. It is in high gear, with all 80 ninth graders taking part. In this program five students share a single, year-long internship, with each one spending one day a week working at his/her internship site for an elective credit. "The internships' main purpose is the opportunity to observe professionals and see adults interacting in a work setting," said **Michelle Shor**, internship program manager.

Michelle lined up 11 nonprofits as sponsors and led a one-week summer camp to instruct students in basics: work attire, eye contact, phone etiquette. Teachers helped structure academic schedules to accommodate student absences. Parents played their part by chaperoning students to job sites in the first weeks. In crews and community meetings, students discuss their internships. "It makes me feel

great, and gives me more energy," said **Brendis Gonzalez**, an intern at TASC (The After-School Corporation). "It helps you know what you have to learn." Site visits and performance reviews size up progress, as interns prepare for paid internships which they will start in 10th grade and rotate through until they graduate. The money students earn will be deposited into individual college savings accounts. More internship sites are needed: If you can suggest a sponsor, please contact Principal **Brett Kimmel**: bkimmel@schools.nyc.gov.

Politicking In the fall of 2008, seniors at **Validus Preparatory Academy** took part in a timely Learning Expedition, “The New Face of American Politics.” Teachers **Jamie Munkatchy** (art), **Caitlin Nellen** (social studies) and **Caroline Pinkston** (English language arts) led the Expedition. Students conducted field research at the Museum of the City of New York’s exhibit of political campaign ephemera, and mounted a performance, taking roles as major candidates. Case studies focused on the efficacy of the Electoral College, the influence of the media on politics, and suffrage movements for women and African Americans. As a final product, groups of students wrote and performed a news report with both objective and biased perspectives of election news. All Validus students voted in the nationwide High School Mock Election October 20-30, using booths set up by seniors in the school atrium. **Barack Obama** won with 88 percent of the school vote. As senior **Stacia Thomas** explained, “The prob-



lems that we’re going through right now, like financial issues, and concerns about college and being able to pay for it, he’s the only candidate who was prepared, ready and willing to help us make a brighter future.”

On March 10 the entire school participated in a day of remembrance and awareness, in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League and New York Police Department’s Bronx Outreach Unit. The day concluded with a school-wide March Against Violence in memory of two deceased Validus students.

Publishing **Elijah Hawkes**, principal of the **James Baldwin School**, wrote an in-depth article for the Spring/Fall 2008 issue of the journal *Schools: Studies in Education*, published by the University of Chicago Press. His perceptive, at times wrenching piece, “Drowning in Itself: the Plight of Adolescence in America,” sheds light on the dangers of being a teenager “in a world of adult adolescents” with an “unhistorical sense and power of forgetting” who relentlessly seek consumption and pleasure. Elijah’s elegantly written essay reveals the pain beneath the violence afflicting young people, and the “chasms that schools cannot close.”



He notes the positives, too—continuity, community and the opportunity to foster healthy change—that schools can offer. Respected New York educators **Deborah Meier** and **Diane Ravitch** commented on Elijah’s article in an *Education Week* blog. [+](#)

I N M E M O R I A M

Bronx Expeditionary Learning High School senior **Justin McWillis** was shot to death on January 18, the victim of continuing gun violence in the South Bronx. NYC Outward Bound extends our deep sympathy to Justin’s family and the entire BELHS community.

Validus Preparatory Academy sustained its second loss of a student in 2008, senior **Nadairee Walters**, who was an innocent bystander at a party in the South Bronx on November 15. On May 24, 2008 **Martin Jackson**, who would have been a senior this year, was also lost to gun violence. Our sincerest condolences go to their families and the Validus school community.

New On Board

Dwayne Andrews, a public policy and regulatory expert with



Blank Rome Government Relations LLC, joined our board in September 2008. Earlier, Dwayne served as

vice president for government relations at Edison Schools Inc., where he provided critical research and analysis of regulations and statutes concerning public schools, particularly the No Child Left Behind Act. During five years with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business, his work included electronic commerce, the digital divide, on-line music and other Internet-related matters. He also served as press secretary to New York **Congressman Floyd Flake**.

Dwayne graduated with a BA summa cum laude from York College, and received his JD from Georgetown University Law Center. He is honored to serve on the NYC Outward Bound board, extending his commitment to help minority and underprivileged children and young adults realize their dreams through the promise of education. [+](#)



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PARTNERS IN IMPROVING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

29-46 Northern Boulevard
Long Island City, NY 11101
Tel: 718 706 9900

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- \$2,500 Support a student's participation in a 2-3 week Outward Bound wilderness course
- \$1,000 Support a year of Expeditionary Learning professional development for a teacher
- \$500 Support a student's participation in a week-long Outward Bound school orientation
- \$250 Provide a day of rock climbing for a crew of 10 students
- \$100 Provide a pair of climbing shoes for students to use on our five-story climbing wall

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Announcing a Partnership

This spring NYC Outward Bound forged a partnership with **Eastern Mountain Sports SoHo**—the company's new flagship store at 530 Broadway (Spring Street).

The outdoor specialty retailer will support our adventure programming for students and raise our visibility in various ways, including gear donations for students, donations of one percent of sales during its 3-day opening weekend, EMS SoHo-promoted climbs at our 5-story climbing wall, and NYC Outward Bound in-store displays. The partnership's official launch was May 8, as part of the store's ribbon-cutting ceremony with **CEO Will Manzer** of Eastern Mountain Sports. For information about the new store, visit emssoho.com. 