PEP Newsletter
Quarter 4

Celebrating Transition
June 7, 2018

Meet Our Graduates!
End of the Year Reflections  
From Micah Stein-Verbit  
PEP Coordinator

As we reflect back on the 2017-2018 school year, PEP students and staff continue to have a great deal to be thankful for. The amount of kindness and generosity exhibited from the community forever impresses us. Below are some highlighted examples of individuals and companies that have partnered with PEP in order to enhance the hands-on learning experiences that will be with our students for years to come:

- PEP’s annual Transition Fair was held at the Army Navy Country Club thanks to their generous offer to host the event.

- Arlington Community Foundation grant for the amount of $10,000. This grant went towards items in our Office Squad and Brown Box Kitchen and were funded by the Fund for Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities and the Julie Dickson Brown Memorial Fund.

- Blair Bullock, from Community in Schools, connected PEP with The Ritz-Carlton at Tysons Corner and an ongoing partnership was immediately forged. This past February, a select group of PEP students received a VIP tour of several kitchens, various hotel rooms and lesson on dining etiquette. This upcoming September, staff from The Ritz-Carlton will once again meet with PEP students to review food safety and laws.

- Mrs. Donna Parry, wife of late JC Parry (who was a PEP supporter and long-time staff member at the Arlington Career Center as the Aviation and Engineering teacher) graciously covered the cost of a much needed printer in Office Squad. Mrs. Parry also participated in our annual Mock Interview this past May.

- PEP formed a new partnership with Cherrydale Health & Rehabilitation and this has allowed students to learn work related skills in a variety of areas such as physical therapy, interpreting, shadowing nurse practitioner, office work and food preparation.

- Our very own award winning Brown Box Lunch program celebrated its 10th year serving the community delicious salads, wraps and sandwiches.

Thank you to all of our PEP fans and supporters that play such an significant role in our success year after year! Congratulations to the PEP class of 2018!!!
Congratulations Graduates!!

Marco Beltran Lanwglois

What are you doing next year?
I'll be working, studying, trying to talk to recruiters from the military so I can enlist and go to school as part of my military service.

What is your favorite memory from PEP
My favorite memory from PEP was going to the bank and learning how it works. I also liked going to apartments to find out how to apply for an apartment, and getting experience on interviews. Going to internships and getting job experience will be useful in the future. Asking questions of the staff and getting the answer helped me learn more about things I'm interested in.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
Study and don't get distracted in class. Don't let anybody change your mind on what career you want to do and ignore if they try to convince you. If PEP isn't working out go to talk to your counselor and see what they can help you with. If you need help on subjects go ask your teachers or counselor to see what they can help you with and come with a plan. If you're getting distracted from studying go to your counselor or teacher and sort out the problem. Try to get along with the class and if you can't then stay quiet and respect what people say and keep your thoughts to yourself. Don't be afraid to ask questions to anyone in the building even if you don't get along with person because they could have the answer to your questions. Choose a internship that you would enjoy and also learn from.
Anannya Biswas

What are you doing next year?
My plans for after graduation are going to college, getting my associate’s degree and getting a well paid job. Also getting a nice car so I can drive to places where I need to and use it to go to college especially. Also I want to get enough money in my bank so I can help out my parents in grocery, bills, and rents.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
My favorite memory at PEP was going to the mall with my class. It was fun, I really enjoyed it and the way the teachers let us go around the mall and do things on our own. I felt good. We never had this in our regular high school so I was surprised how we got the chance to do it here. Also, I had the opportunity to learn how to cook and made so many types of dishes and brought it to the teachers. Also, I did an internship in Brown Box Cafe on the ACC campus. I made salads for teachers, that was fun too.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
The advice I would give the other students that will come to PEP is they should work hard on their assignments when they are given. Take good advantage of the internships or other work related to college. The good thing about PEP is we get to choose our own internships and learn more about world of work. It helps us to choose our career and decide if we will stay with that career in the future.

Alexis Castelan-Romero
Shane Clark-Winston

What are you doing next year?
   Next year when I graduate from PEP I will look for a high paying position in the food industry and gain more experience.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
   My favorite memory of PEP was when I first started my first year of PEP last year.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
   One piece of advice that I would give to the new PEP students is to take advantage of this program while they can because this program will lead you to high paying jobs, good colleges, and to better your future.

Shane Clark-Winston

What will you be doing next year?
   Working.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
   Helping friends.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
   Help others.
Jason Coreas

What will you be doing next year?
I hope to attend NOVA, live at home for a little bit, and attend church.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
There are too many, but one of my favorites was the D.C. trip to the African American History Museum.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
I would say, whatever you are pursuing in a career, keep going, don’t give up, and try new things.

Abigail Hall

What are you doing next year?
Going to the Woodmont Weaver’s.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
When the Recycling group got to see Echo, the Animal Science cat.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
You will like the PEP program.
**Mahfuj Haque**
Mahfuj will continue to work at Wendy’s after graduation. He hopes to work in auto collision repair in the future. He studied auto collision repair at the Career Center.

**Elisa Herrera**
*What will you be doing next year?*
I will be working at The Weavers.

*What is your favorite memory of PEP?*
Spending time with my friends and teachers.

*What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?*
Be prepared to learn. You will learn new job skills. Make sure that you listen and follow the rules.

**Santos Lemus-Campos**
*What are you doing next year?*
Santos has been working for Hadeed Carpets while attending PEP. He hopes to continue this job after graduation. In the future, he hopes to become a delivery truck driver.

**Kevin Leon**
What will you be doing next year?
I will be working at Linden Resources.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
I am going to miss working at Costco, Ft. Myer bowling alley, APS Human Resources and Ft. Myer Officers’ Club. I like coming to the Career Center.

What is one piece of advice that you have for new PEP students?
Practice your math, your writing and recycling. Learn about street safety.

Nam Mai

What will you be doing next year?
After I graduate from the PEP Program in June, I will plan to go to Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) starting in the fall. I plan to take a course related to IT (Information Technology), since I’m interested in computers. Additionally, I will start to look for a job while I am in college, with the support from organizations such as DARS and CSB. I hope to someday get an internship, probably at a nursing home like Culpepper Garden or Cherrydale.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
One of my favorite memories of PEP is the time when, last December, we went to see the movie Star Wars: The Last Jedi at the AMC theater in Shirlington. Going to the movies was a magnificent experience for me and the rest of the students who came that day. I had only been to the movie theater twice in my lifetime (seeing Thor in 2011 and The Smurfs 2 in 2013), but this experience was one that I will remember forever!
What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?

If I could give one piece of advice for any new students who are coming to PEP, it would be this: “You’re entering a new phase of your life, so don’t be afraid of what’s next. The only way for you to navigate this new phase is to stay calm, be yourself, plan ahead, and figure out what’s in store for you.” Other than that, just be comfortable adjusting to this new phase of your life!”

Sofia Marquez

What are your plans after graduation?

My plans after graduation are to attend NOVA, Northern VA community college. After my 2 years in NOVA, I plan to attend a university that has a teacher training program because it will benefit me in a great way. Then, work even harder for my doctorate degree.

What is your favorite memory of your time at PEP?

My favorite memory of being in PEP was when the whole class went to go learn more about poetry with Mr. Green. He was really funny and nice. It was an amazing experience.

What advice would you give to students who are coming to PEP in the Fall?

My advice to the students that will be going to PEP in the Fall is to make sure they take advantage of the program. PEP has great benefits for each student. Be ready to experience internships that will help you gain more knowledge of the major that you want to pursue in the future.

Giselle Mercado
**What are you doing next year?**

I will be attending NOVA Community College in the fall and I will continue to work my part time job to pay for school.

**What is your favorite memory of PEP?**

My favorite memory in PEP was when we had the Thanksgiving celebration. It made me feel like I was a part of the Career Center.

**What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?**

The advice I would give the PEP students will be not to judge the program before you give it a chance. When I first came into the program I didn’t like being here, I wanted to be in college with my old friends. They were teaching me things that I already knew. So give it a try because you may end up liking it like I did.

*Sheridan McClure*

**What will you be doing next year?**

I will still be working as a host at a restaurant, Mike’s Deli in Falls Church VA.

**What is your favorite memory of PEP?**
I'm really going to miss all the fun activities and fun field trips we do.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
  My advice is don't be nervous, you will enjoy PEP.

Ben McGann

What are you doing next year?
  Rowing.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
  I like going to art.

What is one piece of advice you have for the new PEP students?
  At PEP you have to work hard.

Janee McCoy

What will you be doing next year?
  In the future I want to pursue a career in the fashion industry. I hope to study retail merchandising. I also have a passion for modeling, a career which I will develop in college. My plan is to enroll in the NOVA Annandale
Campus for the fall semester of 2018. The course I will be taking is retail management. I am very eager to learn more about every part of the fashion industry such as management, marketing, sales, and advertising. This is a one year course and I will earn a certificate. NOVA will open a path for me where I can learn new skills and will push me to succeed so that I can apply my knowledge and skills to my future career. I want to further my education by attending George Mason University to earn a bachelor's degree in the fashion field while creating goals that are reasonable and easily reachable and which will continue to grow my knowledge of the fashion business.

*What is your favorite memory of PEP?*

My favorite memory of being in PEP is when Mr. Green came to teach the whole class about expressing their feelings when writing poems and learning more about quotes. That was an amazing experience for me.

*What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?*

My advice to the students that will be going to PEP is to take a lot of advantage of the program. PEP will help the students to explore opportunities in the field they want to pursue. PEP will also help students open a path where they can learn new skills so that they can apply their knowledge to their career which will push them to succeed in college. Also students will take CTE classes at the Career Center and they will receive professional training and gain experience that they can apply to their resume.

**Marie Ottinger**

Marie will be working with a job coach from The Choice Group to find employment. Her dream job would be to work at the American Girl doll store.
William Ramirez

What will you be doing next year?
After graduation, William plans to seek an apprenticeship in either HVAC or electricity. He completed Electricity I and II at the Career Center.

Dayana Saravia

What will you be doing next year?
Next year, I will be going to NOVA at Annandale, taking class in ASL (American Sign Language). I will also be working with Jada from Service Source to help me find a part-time job. If I have free time, I may come to the Career Center for a visit, for example, before the holidays.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
I have plenty of memories of my time at PEP. One of my favorites was field trips such as the African American History museum, the tour of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving as well as going shopping to Target to buy clothes that I will wear for college.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
I would suggest that you try doing one thing at a time so that you don’t feel overwhelmed. I would recommend that you join the Order of Self-Determination so you can learn about self-advocacy.

Cristian Ventura

What are you doing next year?

My plan for next year is attending Northern Virginia Community College to get a Multimedia Design Certificate. The main reason why I want to get this degree is because I believe this will help me to be in a job that I’m very passionate about. I will also be in a new program called called Choice Group and they will help me to find a job in order to pay for my classes for NOVA.

What is your favorite PEP memory?

My favorite memory of being a part of the PEP Program is being able to be with my teachers and friends. I’ll be honest, being in PEP made me think of this place as a second home because these people did two important amazing things that only I can explain. My teachers were able to help me with moving from a certain part in my childhood that I kept in my heart through my whole life and my friends were able to fill the void in my heart from missing a certain person who meant so much to me. Thanks to them, I was able to be happy for once in my life. Which is something that is very important to me in my heart and which I’ll never forget.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?

My one piece of advice for the next generation of students for the PEP Program is use it as a stepping stone to work on your skills and to prepare for your own future because if you ask me the PEP Program helped me in many ways. The PEP Program allowed me to make new friends and see old familiar faces. I was even able to learn from my
teachers about the real world and these lessons and memories are what I had to do as an individual. Most of all, I was able to develop skills that will help me to walk on the right path of success and I’ll use these lessons that I learned from them in order to make my dreams come true. That’s what you should do as a PEP student.

Cassandra Zeballos

What are you doing next year?
Next year I will be enrolling at Northern Virginia Community College to major in Business Administration.

What is your favorite memory of PEP?
My favorite memory of PEP is a time I was able to participate in field trips on independent living and career interests.

What is one piece of advice you have for new PEP students?
The one piece of advice I have for new PEP Students would have to be if you want change in your future you’ll make it work and push forward.

End of the Year Thoughts From Our PEP Teachers
First of all, I would like to say Congratulations to all of our PEP graduates. You have worked very hard for so many years and this is your reward. As you build new skills and experiences in the future, do not forget to look back into your past education and the people that were there with you and for you, to guide you and help you develop into the responsible adults you are today, including your parents, teachers, mentors and other significant adults.

Have a wonderful summer. Please, come visit us as often as you can. My door will always be open for you.

Love, **Ms. Mili Rosario**

Congratulations to the PEP graduates of 2018! I wish you all the best of luck as you look for satisfying work in the next months! I hope that PEP has prepared you for the challenges and opportunities of the years ahead.

A special shout out to Ms. Erin’s and my students who are leaving us. We will miss Sheridan, Abigail, Jason, Shane, and Marie. It has been a joy to be part of your learning experiences. Each of you has unique gifts to share with others. May you continue to live your lives with the enthusiasm and integrity you have shown in our room. The best of luck to you all!

Love, **Ms. Rosemary**

Congratulations, PEP class of 2018! It has been such a pleasure to work with all of our fabulous students and staff this year. This time of year is always bittersweet as we get to celebrate the many accomplishments of our students but have to say farewell to so many awesome young adults at the same time. This is the biggest group of graduates that I have had the joy to work with, and I will miss each and every one of them! I am inspired by their hard work and determination and I am certain that they will all find success and happiness in your next adventures. To the graduates - Congratulations again! Enjoy your summer and don’t forget to come back and visit!

- **Ms. DiNardo**
Dear PEP students, families and staff,

“All good things must end”, somebody smart once said. And so it is with careers. One day you realize it’s time to move on to the next phase of life. For me, that will be retirement which ends a most challenging and fulfilling part of my teaching career, here at PEP and the Career Center.

During my four years here it has been wonderful to watch the program grow and feel that I was a part of that growth. I have never worked with a more skillful or more dedicated group of educators than my fellow “Peppers”. Each and everyone brings something unique and creative to our classrooms and internships. Each and everyone goes above and beyond every single day (and some nights, too!)

There have been ups and downs, there have been laughter and tears and, always, there has been chocolate! I must say thank-you to my PEP family for your support, patience, and understanding. I must say thank-you to the students, for as is sung in one of my favorite old Broadway musicals, “The King and I”, “if you become a teacher, by your pupils you’ll be taught”. This is truth. I am humbly grateful for the many lessons you have taught me, I hope I am a better person for it.

Congratulations Class of 2018, I will see you at the beach!

Karen Shimkus

A Sincere End of the Year Thank You to PEP’s Wonderful Support Staff
Nakia Arnold
Oumar Jarso
Elizabeth Key
Aaron Herrera
Carmen Labrador
Leticia Poliquit
Dalis Williams
Kayanna Jones

**Plus the Specialists who support us all!**
Laura Jacobs--Speech and Language Pathologist  
Dr. Deborah Gilman--School Psychologist  
Laura Cunningham--Teacher of the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing  
Mel Demissay--Teacher of the Visually Impaired  
Susan Clark--Occupational Therapist  
Lisa Styles--School Counselor  
Naghmeh Merck--School Social Worker  
Patricia Ganger--Orientation and Mobility Specialist

**And just one more final shout-out to our exemplary administrators.**
Thank you for always supporting PEP and for creating an atmosphere in which we can thrive and grow!

Principal Margaret Chung  
Assistant Principal Jessica Baker  
Assistant Principal Erik Healey