



WILLIAMSBURG HIGH SCHOOL for ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN



2021 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE



Please attend our Virtual Open House to learn more about our school and our unique and engaging four-year course sequence with a focus in architectural drafting, design principles, and historic preservation.

Open-House dates will be announced soon.



To schedule a private tour, please call our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Chu at (718) 388-1260, Ext. 2273 or (646) 678-1861.

Please contact our Parent Coordinator if you have any questions,
Ms. Chu at (718) 388-1260, Ext. 2273 or lchu4@schools.nyc.gov



WHSAD'S FAQs



*** Who should apply to WHSAD?**

At WHSAD, we believe that ALL students who work hard can achieve their dreams! Whether you are good at math, writing, history, art, science, technology, and/or enjoy doing hands-on work, our program has something to offer you. Therefore, we welcome ALL STUDENTS to apply that have a strong desire to succeed and a particular interest in architecture, engineering, creative design and related fields.

*** If I attend WHSAD, do I have to become an architect?**

Even though our students are exposed to architecture and design techniques and learn valuable skills through required coursework and internship opportunities, our students pursue a variety of careers and college programs post-graduation.

*** When do students start taking architecture classes?**

Students begin taking architecture classes in their freshman year. Our architecture program is a 4 year sequence culminating in the AutoCad Certification Exam.

*** What AP or college level courses to you offer?**

We currently offer 6 AP courses in US History, Environmental Science, English Literature, Spanish Language and Culture, Human Geography and Calculus. Our students also have the opportunity to take college level classes at City Tech through the College Now program.

What afterschool activities are offered at WHSAD?

Each year we plan our afterschool activities around what our students' interests. In the past, our students have participated in volleyball, basketball, track, student newspaper, photography, art, architecture and electrical club.

*** How many students attend WHSAD?**

We are a community of 600, 9-12 graders. Our student to teacher ratio is 18:1.

*** What is your graduation rate?**

Our 2019-2020 graduation rate was 97%.

***What is the percentage of students who attend college after graduating WHSAD?**

83% of Class of 2020 planned to attend college this fall (4 Year – 44%; 2 Year – 39%).

*** What are the school hours?**

Due to COVID19, this year students have the option to participate in fully remote learning or the blending learning plan. Students take 7 classes per semester. The school day is 8:30 AM – 2:00PM. Our remote platform is through Google Meet.

*** Will WHSAD be having an Open House?**

Yes. We will be hosting virtual open houses. **Open-House dates will be announced soon.** To schedule a private tour, please call our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Chu at (718) 388-1260, Ext. 2273 or (646) 678-1861.

*** Where is the school located and accessibility to public transportation?**

WHSAD is located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn on Roebling Street, between N 6th and N 7th streets. We are most accessible by the L train (Bedford or Lorimer stop) or the G train (Metropolitan stop) or the B39, B44, B59 and B62 buses.

Our Program

In addition to the state required Regents courses in Math, Science, English, History and Foreign Language, we offer a unique, four- year architecture sequence aimed at providing students with specialized skills in the fields of architecture and engineering that will allow them to pursue careers in a continuously changing technological environment.

Year 1: Foundations of Architecture and Design I & II

Year 2: Architectural Drafting and Design I & II

Year 3: Architectural Building and Design I & II

Year 4: The Business of Architecture & Advanced Computer Design

Students who successfully complete the CTE sequence of coursework, and pass the AutoCad exam, will earn a CTE endorsement on their high school diploma and professional certification in Autodesk.



Extracurricular Activities

Student Government
Yearbook Committee
Art & Architecture Club
Electrical Club
Music Club
Photography Club
Community Service Club
Cheerleading/Dance Club
Handball
Boys' Baseball
Girls' Softball
Girls' Flag Football
Indoor/Outdoor Track
Boys'/Girls' Basketball
Boys'/Girls' Volleyball

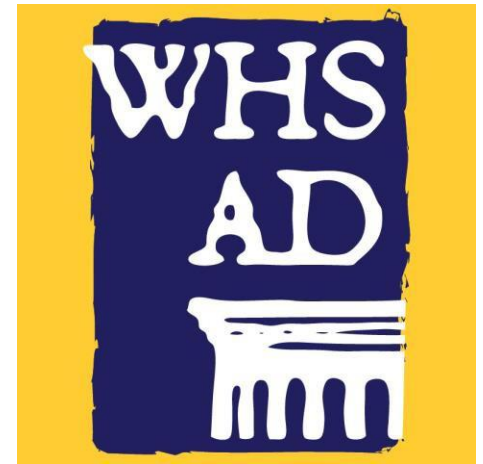


Principal
Gill Cornell

Assistant Principals
Maria Basilio
Kimberley Bruno
Giovanni D'Amato

For more information or to arrange a school visit, please contact our
Parent Coordinator, Ms. Chu at
(718) 388-1260 x2273

Williamsburg High School for Architecture & Design



257 N. 6th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11211
(718)–388-1260
www.whsad.org

What We Offer

Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design (WHSAD) is a small, public high school located in the heart of one of New York City's most culturally invigorating neighborhoods. Our focus is on architectural drafting, computer-aided design (AutoCad), and design principles. Our hands-on approach to architecture, design, and the visual arts integrates college prep, internship experiences, and skills training throughout core academic disciplines, providing students with the education to succeed in the 21st century workplace. Partnerships with local businesses and apprenticeships provide students with job opportunities and internships with industry professionals. Students can earn a CTE-endorsed diploma in Architectural Drafting and CAD, and up to six college credits, upon graduation.



Our Partnerships

Our students are offered valuable experience in the fields of architecture and engineering through our **work-based learning program**. We have developed partnerships with several local institutions and companies. Our architecture and engineering students have the opportunity to work and gain practical experience in the operation and current trends of their chosen fields.



Some of Our Partners

*ACE Mentorship
Architectural Grille
Bushwick Generator
Gensler
Heritage Equity
H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths
Kingsland Printing
Lake Como Environmental Commission
Makeville Studio
New York Cares
New York City Department of Buildings
Park Avenue Armory
Project Witness
School of Cooperative Technology (Co-op Tech)
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)*

Who Should Apply to WHSAD?

At WHSAD, we believe that **ALL** students that work hard can achieve their dreams. Whether you are good at math, writing, history, art, science, technology and/or enjoy doing hands-on work, our program has something to offer you. Therefore, we welcome **ALL STUDENTS** to apply that have a strong desire to succeed and a particular interest in architecture, engineering, creative design and related fields.

Our Graduates

WHSAD's 2019-2020 graduation rate was 97%. Past graduates have been accepted to many colleges and universities and have pursued a variety of programs within those schools. These universities include (but are not limited to):

Alfred State College, The City College of NY: The Bernard & Anne Spitzer School of Architecture, The City College of NY: Grove School of Engineering, Howard University, Hunter College, New York Institute of Technology, New York City College of Technology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, St. Michael's College, Stony Brook University, SUNY Buffalo State, SUNY New Paltz, SUNY Oswego, Temple University, University at Buffalo, Wellesley College, Vanderbilt University and many more...



Our School Quality Snapshot

Overall Rating for Student Achievement

Excellent



The Student Achievement rating looks at students' progress towards graduation, graduation rates, college and career readiness, and postsecondary enrollment.

The overall section rating is a combination of many Student Achievement measures, including those presented here.

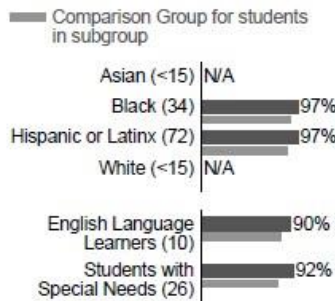
Graduation

4-Year Graduation Rate

98% of the class of 2019 graduated within four years
Comparison Group*: 88%; Brooklyn: 76%; City: 77%

4-Year Grad Rate by Subgroup

(number of students in subgroup is in parentheses)



6-Year Graduation Rate

95% of the class of 2017 graduated within six years
Comparison Group*: 89%; Brooklyn: 81%; City: 81%

Graduation Rates for Students of Different Achievement Levels

Over the past two years, what was the graduation rate for seniors who entered the school with different eighth-grade test scores?

8th-grade test score	Graduated in four years
Level 3 or 4	100% (Comp Group*: 97%)
Level 2	98% (Comp Group*: 90%)
Level 1	97% (Comp Group*: 75%)
8th-grade test score	Graduated college ready
Level 3 or 4	96% (Comp Group*: 90%)
Level 2	78% (Comp Group*: 65%)
Level 1	48% (Comp Group*: 26%)

For Full Snapshot:

<https://tools.nycenet.edu/snapshot/2019/14K558/HS/#SA>

College and Career Readiness

96% successfully completed approved college or career preparatory courses and exams
Comparison Group*: 53%; Brooklyn: 50%; City: 51%

83% graduated college ready (met CUNY's standards for avoiding remedial classes)
Comparison Group*: 62%; Brooklyn: 55%; City: 57%

75% graduated from high school and enrolled in college or other postsecondary program within six months
Comparison Group*: 69%; Brooklyn: 60%; City: 62%

College or Career Preparatory Courses and Exams

(number of students successfully completing out of 123 seniors):

Technical Assessment (118)
CTE Diploma (113)
College Credit Course (44)
Algebra II Regents (37)
Other A.P. Exams (29)
Chemistry Regents (25)
A.P. US History (3)
A.P. Calculus (2)
A.P. English Language (2)

Where Did Students Go After Graduating?

31% CUNY (City University of New York) - 4 year
21% CUNY (City University of New York) - 2 year
7% New York State Public
6% New York State Private
8% Out of State
2% Other

Progress Towards Graduation

Credits

91% earned enough credits in ninth grade to be on track for graduation
Comparison Group*: 85%; Brooklyn: 83%; City: 85%

92% earned enough credits in tenth grade to be on track for graduation
Comparison Group*: 79%; Brooklyn: 79%; City: 82%

Regents

How well does this school help students improve from their incoming proficiency levels and perform on Regents exams?



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Where Are They Now? WHSAD Alumni In College and Careers

<https://www.whsad.org/the-column/the-keys-to-success-at-whsad>



Nathifa Debellotte, WHSAD Class of 2016, graduated with a B.S. in Architecture from Wentworth Institute of Technology in June 2020. She is currently pursuing a post-graduate Professional Certificate in Construction, also from Wentworth, and has created her own design consulting business, specializing in photo and video editing, and textile design. About her time at WHSAD, Nathifa said: "If you can think and design conceptually, you will do great in architecture school ...architecture is a great foundation to learning the other trades such as engineering and construction. Learning the basics can guide and lead you into other trades that you can benefit and grow from."

Ramon Williams, Class of 2014, exemplifies the versatility of architecture skills. Ramon participated in Skills USA in WHSAD and interned at an architecture firm through the school. When talking about his internship experience he said, "It truly was an amazing experience. But one thing I realized was I wanted to be more hands-on. While I was working at the firm, I realized that the thing I thought I loved wasn't really what I wanted. That's what made me change my focus to a physics degree." Ramon studied Astrophysics and Chinese at the College of Franklin & Marshall. What he says made astrophysics stand out was the fact that it incorporates all types of engineering and with it he can work on almost anything. About WHSAD he said: "It gave me my foundation for everything I had to build on."



Russell James, WHSAD Class of 2016, is now an electrical apprentice with IBEW Local 3. Russell got his start in the world of electrical installation when he was an 11th grader in Mr. O'Brien and Ms. Moos' Architectural Building and Design class. Russell continued his studies at Co-op Tech, taking classes in Electrical, Carpentry, and Welding, before joining the union. Earlier this summer, he met up with his teacher and mentor Mr. O'Brien to talk about his experiences. Mr. O'Brien also gifted some electrical tools to his former student to use as he pursues his career.

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Read more
about
WHSAD
graduates:



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WHSAD Senior Receives POSSE Scholarship

January 2020 (Brooklyn, NY)

The Posse Foundation identifies, recruits and trains individuals with extraordinary leadership potential. The Posse model is rooted in the belief that a small, diverse group of talented students—a Posse—carefully selected and trained, can serve as a catalyst for individual and community development.

Each spring School staff or community organizations nominate students who demonstrate strong leadership and academic potential. Starting in the Fall of their senior year, Posse conducts intensive interview and application process known as Dynamic Assessment Process (DAP). This a unique evaluation method is designed to identify young leaders who might be missed by traditional admissions criteria but who can excel at selective colleges and universities. DAP offers students an opportunity to demonstrate their intrinsic leadership abilities, their skill at working in a team setting, and their motivation and desire to succeed.

Jonah Vazquez, a 2020 graduate of Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design was selected as Posse Scholar at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. During an interview with Jonah, we asked how did it feel to find out you were a finalist for the Posse Scholarship. He responded, *"Excited, very, very, excited. The whole process was a huge ego boost, as I got chosen again and again out of many other candidates through the first and second interviews. Being a finalist was like an extra ego boost because you're one of the special selected 20 out of the 3,000 something that applied. Plus, you have the opportunity of going to an elite school, like Vanderbilt, tuition free for four whole years, so, yes, I was absolutely ecstatic."*

Read more of our interview with Jonah at:
<https://rb.gy/1qj2za>



Jonah Vazquez, WHSAD Class of 2020, was awarded the POSSE Scholarship to Vanderbilt University .



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WHSAD Student Wins Walter A. Hunt Jr. Scholarship

June 28, 2019 (Brooklyn, NY)

The Center for Architecture is pleased to announce the 2019 recipient of the Walter A. Hunt, Jr. Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to a high school senior attending a New York City public or charter school who plans to pursue an undergraduate degree in architecture at a NAAB-accredited school within the US. The recipient will receive \$10,000 per year for the first two years of study to subsidize their college tuition and related costs.

The rigorous application process included essays, letters of recommendation, and a portfolio submission. Four finalists were then interviewed by the scholarship jury comprising: Judy Hunt, wife of Walter Hunt; Keith Frome Rosen, AIA; Madeline Burke-Vigeland, AIA; Joshua Katz, AIA; and Leslie Jabs, AIA, all of Gensler.

After careful consideration, Reginald Huggins, a 2019 graduate of Williamsburg High School for Architecture and Design was selected as the recipient of the Walter A. Hunt, Jr. Scholarship. Huggins' remarkable skills displayed in his portfolio, as well as and his thoughtfulness and commitment towards the discipline and his community stood out from among the other applicants. During the interview, the jury was impressed with the breadth of Huggins' interests and passions. In the fall, Huggins will begin the five-year B. Arch program at Howard University. We look forward to following him along his education and career.



Reginald Huggins, WHSAD Class of 2019, graduate wins Walter A. Hunt Jr. Scholarship.



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WHSAD'S Industry and Community Partnerships

September 1, 2020 (Brooklyn)

WHSAD is very fortunate to have the support of a variety of partners who provide WBL opportunities, student mentoring, equipment and materials, curriculum feedback, and more to help us provide academic and extra-curricular experiences for our students.

[ACE Mentorship](#)

[Architectural Grille](#)

[Areaware](#)

Assembly Member Joe Lentol

Aurora Lampworks

Berry Street Garden

Bill Harvey

[Broadway Stages](#)

[Bushwick Generator](#)

Community Board 1

[Construction Skills](#)

[Co-op Tech](#)

CUNY Creative Arts Team

Diana Reyna

[Fidelity Triangle](#)

[Gensler](#)

Grant Associates/CTE ISP

[Green-Wood Cemetery](#)

H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths

[Heritage Equity Partners](#)

Historic House Trust

HWKN

[Kingsland Printing](#)

[Lake Como Development Corp.](#)

[Little Free Libraries](#)

Make STEAM

[Makeville Studio](#)

Moore Street Market

[My Brother's Keeper](#)

Neighborhood Preservation Center

[Newtown Creek Alliance](#)

North Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

North Brooklyn Neighbors

NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso

NYC Council Member Steve Levin

NYC School Construction Authority

[NYC Together](#)

Office of Topography, Brooklyn Borough
President

[Park Avenue Armory](#)

Pei Cobb Freed + Partners

Powerhouse Environmental Arts Foundation

[Powers Street Garden](#)

[Project Witness](#)

[Salvadori Center](#)

[School of Visual Arts](#)

Silman

Skills USA

St. Nick's Alliance

Two Trees Mangement

[World Monuments Fund](#)

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Summer Internships and SYEP Opportunities at WHSAD

September 1, 2020 (Brooklyn, NY)

Since the summer of 2009, WHSAD has offered hundreds of students the opportunity to complete summer internships in architecture, engineering, design, historic preservation, and related fields. Beginning in 2018, WHSAD has hosted school-based SYEP, currently partnered with St. Nick's Alliance, which has allowed the school to greatly expand its summer opportunities.

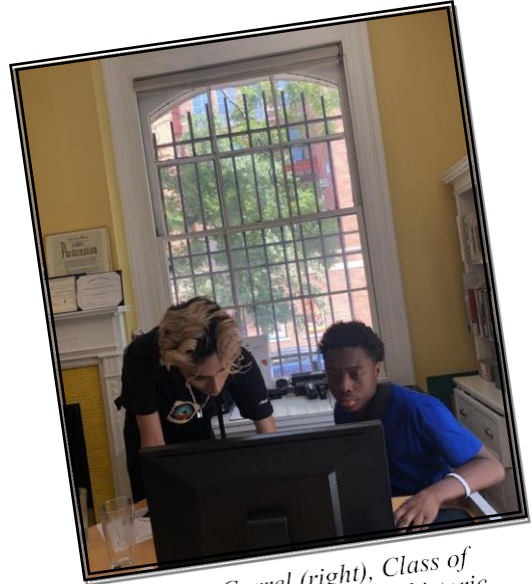
Past Internship hosts have included, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn
- ◆ Silman, Manhattan
- ◆ World Monuments Fund, Manhattan
- ◆ Park Avenue Armory, Manhattan
- ◆ Topographical Bureau, Brooklyn BP's Office
- ◆ Northside Development/Heritage Equity, Brooklyn
- ◆ Neighborhood Preservation Center, Manhattan
- ◆ NYC Department of Buildings, Manhattan Office
- ◆ Sabir, Richardson, & Weisberg Engineering, Manhattan

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunities in the summer of 2020 looked a little different than in previous years. While the traditional SYEP experience was not possible, 50 WHSAD students were still able to participate in the Summer Bridge CareerCLUE Program, sponsored by St. Nick's Alliance and the Salvadori Center. This program provided students with career exploration, skill-building activities, professional networking, community building, and a monetary stipend. One focus of this year's program was a timely discussion about the role of historic monuments and how students can contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding their appropriateness.

Through their internships and other summer opportunities, WHSAD students gain valuable insight into various job opportunities available within the fields of architecture, engineering, design, and preservation, while also building career skills that will be essential to them as they continue their education and prepare for the 21st Century workplace. WHSAD students look forward to hopefully resuming traditional internships in 2021.

You can read more about WHSAD's summer programs, for 2020 and past years, on our website: www.whsad.org



Malachi McGarrel (right), Class of 2020, shares his research on historic buildings of NYC at the Neighborhood Preservation Center with WHSAD Student Correspondent Antonio Perez, during his Summer 2019 internship.



Aedan Schoen Thomas, Class of 2020, works with another intern to unearth a monument at Green-Wood Cemetery during his 2019 Summer Internship.

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WHSAD Students Present Design for Lake Como Revitalization Project

June 5, 2020 (Brooklyn, NY)

In late 2018, the residents of Lake Como, NJ, formed a commission to renovate and revitalize the town's lakefront property. Heather Butts, cofounder of H.E.A.L.T.H. for Youths, suggested they partner with WHSAD. Kevin Higgins, Mayor of Lake Como, and Jon Gibbons, chairman of the Lake Como Environmental Commission, met with WHSAD principal Gill Cornell, and a partnership was born. The goal of the project, titled "Lake Front Fun and Wildlife Park", is to achieve environmental, health, social, and economic improvement in the town of Lake Como.

On Friday, June 5th, 2020, Mahalia Saint-Eloi and Deselle Thompson, both 10th graders at WHSAD, presented their proposed redesigns for Lake Como to the town's committee.

Mahalia: "After Hurricane Sandy, the lake became toxic, and the wildlife degraded. That's why revitalizing the lakefront by adding new plants and creating areas where wildlife can flourish as well as creating a fun but also sustainable environment is important. As a result of being located right next to the Jersey shore, Lake Como is often overlooked. That's why we want to make Lake Como into a hotspot attraction, so that the residents or tourists of Lake Como or in New Jersey itself can see what they're are missing."

When asked to describe the students' presentation in one word, aid Jon Gibbons said "Stunning! Everyone in attendance was bowled over by the extent of the research and the quality of the design, especially as it was carried out by 10 [grade] high school students. Nobody expected this. People were also impressed with the wide educational experiences developed by Mr. Rodriguez during the project."

Deselle said: "The Lake Como Project was a great learning experience for me. I learned how to design a plan that benefits both people and the environment, how to use sustainable alternatives and ways to repurpose waste from a site (the Bradford Pear trees), and even how to multitask and manage my time so I could still do other activities outside of the project. "



WHSAD students present their proposed redesigns for Lake Como to the town's committee.



WHSAD CTE teacher Abe Rodriguez and several students participated in a gardening project at Lake Como over Spring Break.

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WHSAD and SVA Partner on Product Design Curriculum

June 26, 2020 (Brooklyn, NY)

In the Fall of 2018 the School of Visual Arts (SVA), AREAWARE, and WHSAD teamed up to create the Entrepreneurial Product Lab!, or "Incubator" for short. Inspired by the Groundfloor Incubator for graduate students at SVA, the goal of this program is to help students develop skills in designing, marketing, and branding as it relates to their own product designs. Over the course of eight months, instructors came to the school once a week in order to guide the students through each phase of the development process from sketches to prototypes. Students also took trips to visit Kickstarter, the MoMA Design Store, and NYNOW Product & Design Fair to see first hand how they could market their products.

Sinclair Smith, founder of the SVA Groundfloor Incubator, and one of the leaders/instructors of the WHSAD program said: "Our number one expectation and goal is to offer a view of how product development works and how designers move concepts to prototypes. Additionally, we want students to learn the process of imagining a business plan for a product, understanding how much the product will cost to produce, and exploring the different ways to bring the product to the market."

In the fall of 2019, the project pivoted from an after-school program to a component of the AP Human Geography course to introduce students to design thinking principles and practices. By incorporating design lessons and projects into the pre-existing AP Human Geography curriculum, students were introduced to techniques such as ethnographic research, identification of opportunity spaces, mood boarding, sketching, and user feedback. Throughout the year, students used these design techniques to define and redefine problems and solutions related to political participation, food systems, urban living, and sustainable development. Those students are now further developing their designs in their senior year architecture class.



Diego Sernadas and Jonathan Sutchon (both Class of 2020) explore the different puzzles offered by Areaware at NYNOW Product & Design Fair.



While on a field trip to the Museum of the City of New York, students put their design thinking skills to use in the "Future City Lab."

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WHSAD Students Gain Hands-On Experience in Woodworking & Screenprinting

September 1, 2020 (Brooklyn)

Since February 2016, more than 50 WHSAD students have had the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning experiences

after school, working directly with professionals and their teachers in the fields of woodworking and screenprinting. Students were in the middle of a woodworking course when schools closed in March 2020, but WHSAD is looking forward to resuming these experiences when possible.

Students first began learning introductory woodworking at Makeville Studio, in Gowanus, Brooklyn, in February 2016. Supported and sponsored by Powerhouse Environmental Arts Foundation, 6-10 students and two teachers have spent approximately 30 hours each semester working on a targeted woodworking project: mallets, lamps, boxes, and stools. In Spring 2019, a group of 10 students designed and carved spoons using hand tools in preparation for teaching their classmates about it later in the semester.

Based on the success of the Makeville projects, Powerhouse connected WHSAD to Kingsland Printing, a print shop in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and supported design classes in Spring 2018 and 2019, and Fall 2020. Students learned the different machinery and design aspects involved in screenprinting, and were able to create their own poster and textile designs. DeAndre Richards, Class of 2019, was hired to be a summer intern at Kingsland based on his exemplary work during the semester.

Says, Katie Dixon, Executive Director of Powerhouse Environmental Arts Foundation: "Working with WHSAD students and staff has been an amazing experience for Powerhouse. We have learned so much and look forward to developing our partnership in new ways."



Edgar Cruz, Class of 2020, uses the hand saw at Makeville Studio to cut precisely the outline of his spoon.



Dillon Lynch, Class of 2020, presses ink onto fabric during the printing workshop.

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WHSAD Students “Jazz Up” Black History Month Designs

February 28, 2020

For the last three years, WHSAD students have participated in a partnership project with the Department of Buildings to commemorate the contributions of Black architects and designers in New York City as part of the DOB's Black History Month celebrations.

Previous year's projects have included presentations about significant NYC buildings that were designed by Black architects, and student designed light boxes that were inspired by the historic jazz clubs of New York City.

In 2020, students worked throughout the month of February on a series of speeches that they presented at DOB's annual celebration. Mr. Victor Body-Lawson, founder of Body Lawson Associates Architects and Planners, spoke at the event about his experiences founding his own architecture firm in New York City. He was followed by short speeches from a group of WHSAD students about their own experiences attending an architecture high school, and the career paths they hope to pursue.

Students spent numerous hours writing, editing, and practicing their speeches in preparation for the event where they would have the opportunity to connect with a variety of professionals in the NYC architecture field.

Senior Genavieve Ramirez said: "Working on my Black History Month speech allowed me to put my perspective as a Hispanic female. The experience was amazing and a little nerve wrecking. I was nervous that that my point of view wouldn't be heard, but I was assured that it would be. It was a small amount of people to hear my speech but it was still enough to hear a big message. They were welcoming and hearing my classmates give their speeches was comforting as well. My overall experience taught me many new things on Black History and I'm grateful for that."

Visit www.whsad.org to see videos of the students' speeches and learn more about their collaborations with the Department of Buildings:

<https://www.whsad.org/the-column/whsad-students-black-history-month-speeches-at-new-york-city-department-of-buildings>



Keldwin Portes from Architecture Grille and Lisa Lewis from the Department of Buildings pose with several WHSAD students and their projects.



WHSAD students with professionals from the Department of Buildings after their speeches.

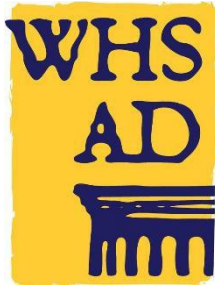
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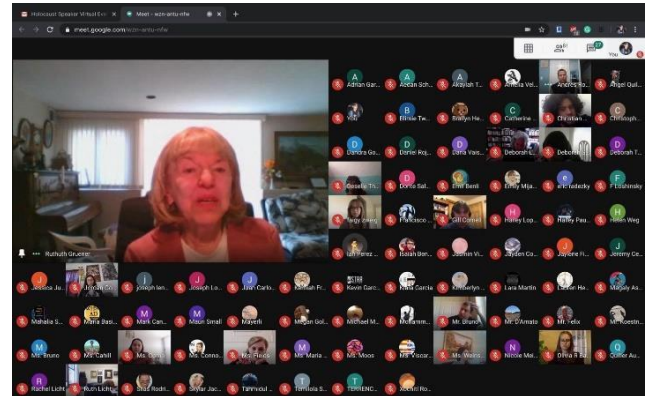
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Project Witness: Meeting with Holocaust Survivor, Ruth Gruener

MAY 18, 2020 BY DESELLE THOMPSON

Project Witness is a nonprofit Holocaust resource center, dedicated to Holocaust education. Their mission is to create a better future, one that has learned from the horrors of the past, through the communication of Holocaust survivor stories. Through Project Witness, the WHSAD community was blessed with the privilege of hearing Holocaust survivor, Ruth Gruener, speak. Organized by the WHSAD Humanities Department, this event was held Wednesday May 13th, via Google Meet, with a plethora of special guests, students, and WHSAD faculty. In a video call lasting a little over an hour, Ruth Gruener was able to share something special with us that greatly impacted the WHSAD community.



Ruth Gruener, largest screen, with WHSAD students, teachers, faculty, and other special guests during a Google Meet session.

Over 50 people took part in the virtual event. Students sacrificed their class time, teachers the same, and superintendents, as well as other educational officials outside of WHSAD, came to be a part of the meeting. I also shouldn't fail to mention the appearance of Deborah Lauter, the Executive Director of Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes as being present as well. Then, of course, there were people from Project Witness; Founder Ruth Lichtenstein, Education Director Deborah Schechter, and Researcher Faigy Zweig who helped organize the meeting. Out of all the great people who joined the Meet, the title of most notable falls to Ruth Gruener.

Ruth is an 87 year old woman who was born in Lvov, Poland in August of 1933. At three years old, she had her first brush with anti-Semitism when Ruth's young nanny referred to her as "Dirty Jew". Despite this, Ruth lived a normal childhood before the war. Her parents owned a candy shop and a nice 3 bedroom apartment. She could sing, dance and practice her religion freely. However, it wasn't long before this was all ruined, by a regime fueled by hate. Her hometown was taken over. First came the Soviets who restricted the people and their ways of life, then, the Nazis who torture, killed, murdered, and massacred. She lived in the ghetto where sorrow was seen and lived on a daily basis. Children could no longer be children. Perpetuated hate forced Ruth into hiding, separating her from her parents, killing the rest of her family, and massacring her neighbors

When she was eight, Ruth was able to hide in a confined space at the Szczygiel family residence for 8 months. This was how she survived. She spent every day in fear, knowing that any moment she could be found and killed, and there was a time when she came very close. But, by her faith and prayer, Ruth survived to tell her story. Ruth is the only member of her Kindergarten class that wasn't killed, and she and her parents were the only ones out of their entire family to survive.

Clearly, Ruth Gruener has seen a lot in her lifetime. She hails from a perilous time when being a particular religion or nationality was sanctioned by death. She's seen the power of hate and lived through despicable atrocities committed in its name. She is of a dying generation who has suffered unjustly from deplorable actions, and know true fear more than anything as they were forced to live it. Yet, Ruth leaves us with the message of peace. She wants us to forget hate because she knows the consequence. She wants us all to find peace with each other to ensure we never let another Holocaust happen again. This was the message that made this Meet so inspiring. When you take into account everything the woman has survived, it's easy to understand her views. No one deserves to suffer. Every day we strive to create a better world and Ruth's story helps us remember why.

Throughout the call, multiple acts took place. We began with Ruth passing her words of wisdom down to the youths and sharing her insights. A few students were then given the chance to ask her questions, which she thoroughly answered. Many students had also prepared pieces of artworks and poems for the meet, but due to the closing of the school, where they were kept, they didn't have access to them. Fortunately, students Mayerli Barzola and Joseph Lorenzo had access to theirs and were able to read them for Ruth, and, it's safe to say that she enjoyed them. I think I speak for everyone in the Meet when I say, it was an honor, to hear the voice of an important generation and testimony of such an experience.

To read more about Ruth and the answers to student's questions go to:

<https://rb.gy/cfyn2s>