

BEARCAT BULLETIN

Newsletter of the School District of the City of York



Mordaisha Greer

Talent Search tells its story

*By Jessica Petrie
Penn State Talent Search coordinator,
William Penn Senior High School*

Since 2002, the Penn State Talent Search Program has served students of the School District of the City of York.

Talent Search is a federal TRIO program that identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education.

Currently, in York City, there are 457 students enrolled in the program from grades six through 12.

Because the program is proud of its students, Penn State Talent Search has started a social media project called #IAmTrio. This project focuses on the stories of staff, current students, and alumni of the program through pictures and testimonials. The goal is to promote the program and its successes to the communities it serves, while highlighting stories that show the positive impact the programming has on a student's life.

Over the coming weeks, Talent Search will share these stories on its Facebook page. Nine Bearcats -- including the students pictured to the left -- will be featured. Senior Seth Bernstein's story made the first appearance Jan. 9.

To follow the #IAmTrio stories and to learn more about the Penn State Talent Search program, please 'like' our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/PennStateTalentSearch/.

You can also follow us on Instagram at [pennstatetalentsearch](https://www.instagram.com/pennstatetalentsearch).



Seth Bernstein



Elijah Anderson

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Talent Search Programs

FREE Services

Aliquippa HS - Go Quips!

New Castle HS - Go Hurricanes!

Valley HS - Go Vikings!

William Penn HS - Go Bearcats!

Farrell HS - Go Steelers!

Sharon HS - Go Tigers!

Clairton MS/HS - Go Bears!

McKeesport HS - Go Tigers!

We asked Ms. Petrie, Talent Search coordinator at William Penn Senior High School, for some more information about the program.

Q: How do students enroll in the Talent Search program?

A: Students and parents need to fill out an application. We recruit students in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways, parent teacher conferences and anywhere we see them. Faculty can recommend students, and those students also need an application. To be accepted, a student must have at least a 2.0 GPA, good attendance and good discipline record.

Q: What kinds of services do the younger students (grades 6-8) get from the Talent Search program?

A: Elementary school students receive services related to study skills, financial literacy, self esteem and self development. They also go on field trips. For example, we took them recently to see "Julius Caesar" at the Pullo Center. We also talk to them about preparing for college by teaching them terminology and doing group activities. We also work with the students on career exploration and information.

Q: How does the program serve the older students?

A: We do some of the same programming as we do for the elementary students, just on a higher level, specifically for the 9th and 10th graders. We focus a little more on academic preparation and rigorous curriculum review. We also do career exploration but focus more on staying on the path to college. Once the participants get to grades 11 and 12, we start pushing scholarship info, college tours, essay writing, transition to college, SAT prep, and application assistance.

Q: How does Talent Search complement the district's guidance counselors and college/career advisers?

A: We all work together and have a great working relationship! We are in constant communication with the guidance counselors and help them with their efforts. For example, we help Counselor Eric Schlosser with the 8th grade career portfolios. At William Penn, the college/career counselors and Talent Search recently moved into the same office to facilitate even better coordination. Talent Search provides an intensity of the services and more one-on-one interactions. Guidance and college/career counselors work with many more students, whereas I can focus on individual needs. We also help fund programming like FAFSA night, decision day and field trips throughout the year.

Q: What would you like more people to know and understand about the Talent Search program?

A: I want students to know that the talent we are looking for is not singing and dancing! (I get that a lot.) Seriously though, I want people to know that we are another resource for students to use while they are working on achieving goals. I would also want parents to know that they can also reach out to Talent Search if they have questions about the college process.

For the Class of 2019, it's time to make decisions

On Friday, Jan. 18, William Penn Senior High School will host Instant Decision Day -- an opportunity for seniors to meet with representatives from nine colleges. Some students could walk out of their interviews with an admission offer in hand. We asked College and Career Adviser Raven Charleston about the Class of 2019 and the efforts under way to prepare students for life after high school.

Q: What advantages/benefits does an admission offer on Instant Decision Day provide for a William Penn student?

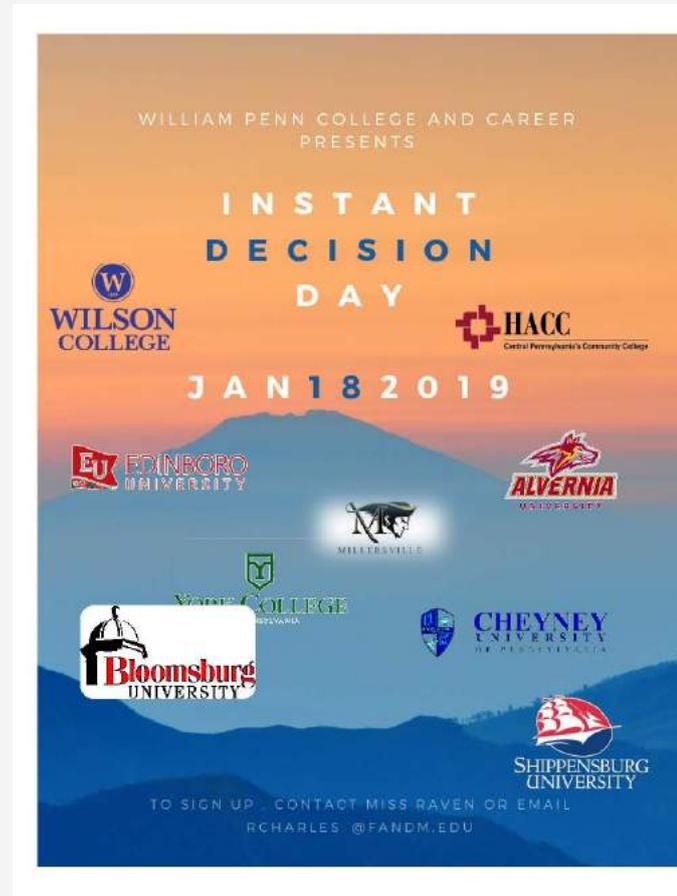
A: If students take advantage of the Instant Decision Day, they bypass the couple weeks it takes to determine college admissions and can walk away that day with an acceptance into college. It really is an instant decision!

Q: What else is happening at William Penn to encourage the Class of 2019 to make some plans for their future?

A: The time for college exploration is coming to an end, and the seniors really should be finishing the FAFSA and submitting their last applications. The next event we will have is another FAFSA completion opportunity. From there our events will be centered around College Decision Day (when students decide from their acceptances where they will enroll) and interpreting financial aid award letters.

Q: If you could give the parents/guardians of William Penn seniors one piece of advice, what would it be?

A: Be involved in the process and talk to someone in the college and career office. The kids don't always share the whole picture or understand the process themselves. So if we can bridge the gap between the students and parents, we can assure that all the ducks are in a row for the pursuit of better opportunities and realistic goals.



Q: Can you tell us about a few students in the Class of 2019 who are making big plans?

A: There are a few students who applied to some of the most competitive colleges in the country, and we are eagerly waiting to hear back on those decisions. Most of our students will be first-generation college students, so the whole process is new to them and their families. This makes it that much harder to ensure everything is in order to get enrolled, but it makes it that much more impressive. The eagerness and determination of the students to open up to new opportunities is really very exciting. Quite a few students have been accepted into York College, and one lucky student will be awarded full four-year tuition through the YCCOSP program there. Can't wait to celebrate with who it goes to!

Q: What makes you optimistic and excited for the Class of 2019?

A: They are a class that encourages each other and wants to succeed. The more acceptances that pour into our office, the more the kids come in asking for help to apply, for essay reviews, for scholarship opportunities. They started off slowly but are building momentum to get the work done and finish strong. I am eager to see where everyone will go!

York Women's Association donates books to Hannah Penn

The York Women's Association recently organized a book drive and donated more than 400 children's books to Hannah Penn K-8. The donation will assist in the re-building of the library collection after it was disassembled in 2012 during the school's closure. Hannah Penn, which educates students in kindergarten through eighth grades, re-opened in 2014.

To find out how you can donate books to Hannah Penn, please contact librarian Meghan Busby at (717) 849-1256.

The York Women's Association is an all-volunteer, nonprofit women's organization with a mission to promote educational and cultural interests, further civic improvements, engage in philanthropic activities, and promote social activities that provide lasting friendships. Membership is open to women age 21 and older who reside in York County. Meetings take place the first Monday evening of each month from September through May. For more information, contact Rosemary Sieffert at (717) 764-0157 or Marie Bini at (717) 428-1764, or visit www.yorkwomensassociation.com.



YDR photo of York guard Sabria Royal

York High basketball season in full swing

The boys varsity basketball team is off to a great start this year! Ranked #2 at the start of the season, the team moved into the #1 spot in the state after 10 regular season games. The team lost its first game against New Oxford on Friday but bounced back Saturday with a win against Bayard Rustin, a District 1 team out of West Chester.

The girls team has greatly improved from last year. They are playing much better as a team and won their first game this season when they beat J.P. McCaskey. The team continues to work hard and receive positive accolades for their sportsmanship.

-- Jeff White, Athletic Director

Bearcats join Red Sand Project

By Victoria Valdes, School Social Worker

On Jan. 8, William Penn students joined forces to support the YWCA's Red Sand Project. Among them were students in the school's Multiple Disabilities Support and Autism Support classes. Also volunteering were students in the Bearcat Aavidum, a club at the high school that focuses on mental health awareness, suicide prevention and building an overall positive culture and climate in the school. Bearcat Aavidum frequently participates in service to its school and community.

The Red Sand Project uses public art to raise awareness of human trafficking and the countless victims who have "fallen through the cracks," locally and globally. More than 40 million people live as slaves in today's world, making it the third largest international crime industry.



Before working with the sand, students gathered for a lesson on human trafficking. They were astonished, not only that it takes place, but also by its frequency. They were particularly interested in the warning signs and prevention techniques.

Visit www.redsandproject.org for more information.

IN BRIEF

Families invited to free 'drop-in' activities at York County Parks

The York County Department of Parks and Recreation has planned several free kid-friendly winter activities to help families combat cabin fever this January.

At Nixon Park, families can stop by any time between 9 a.m. and noon on Wednesday, Jan. 16 for nature play programming. Kids can dress up, use puppets, touch and feel natural objects, explore with short scavenger hunts and be creative. Various play stations will be available inside the nature center to explore. No registration is necessary.

The Nixon County Park Nature Center will host another program during the weekend of Saturday, Jan. 19 and Sunday, Jan. 20.

The Winter Bird Identification Drop-In program is a great introduction to bird watching and perfect for busy families. A naturalist will be interpreting which birds are visiting the feeders.

Stop by any time between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Saturday and noon and 4 p.m. Sunday. No registration is necessary.

Community group offers photo contest to capture kindness

Celebrating York's Unity Through 10,000 Acts of Kindness is inviting York County children and adults of all ages to submit photographs in a contest aimed at capturing kindness in action.

The theme is "What does kindness look like?"

All entries must be submitted by noon on Friday, Feb. 15. Submit photo, original title and statement of context to: tenthousandactsofkindness@gmail.com.

With help from LCBC Church, Ferguson K-8 hosts appreciation luncheon for teachers



The congregation of LCBC Church has been supporting Ferguson K-8 and other district schools with monetary support and supply donations for several years.

This year, LCBC has done even more to support Ferguson by organizing a teacher appreciation luncheon, which was held on Wednesday, Jan. 9. Thank you, teachers, and thank you, LCBC!

Registration open for YMCA sports programs

The York YMCA is now accepting financial assistance applications and registrations for multiple programs beginning in early February.

Group Basketball Training for ages 6-11 begins Feb. 4. A Co-ed Floor Hockey program for ages 11-14 and a Co-ed Indoor Soccer League for ages 4-11 begins Feb. 9.

Girls interested in learning fundamental volleyball skills can join the Intramural Volleyball Program, which begins Feb. 11.

Registrations with payments will be accepted up until two days before the start of the program. To apply for financial assistance, stop by the York YMCA membership desk to receive a financial assistance application form. Return the form no later than five days prior to the start of the program.

Email dmarkel@yorkcoymca.org for more information.

Do you have a story to submit for the Bearcat Bulletin? Are you a professional or skilled amateur photographer interested in volunteering to take photos for district publications like this one? Contact Erin James, district communications coordinator, at jameseri@yca.k12.pa.us.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

BRIDGETTE WILSON

Class of 1988

After graduating from William Penn Senior High School, Ms. Wilson joined the Army. She has served in South Korea, Germany and Nicaragua. She has also served in the National Guard. More recently, Ms. Wilson has had a career in law enforcement -- first as a sheriff and then as an officer in York and Lancaster county police departments. Ms. Wilson currently lives in Lancaster.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR SCHOOL DAYS IN YORK CITY?

In high school I was an athlete and played basketball and ran track, which taught me about teamwork and discipline and kept me healthy and fit. Being on a basketball championship team as a senior remains one of my favorite high school memories.

WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER, AND WHY?

My favorite teachers were Mrs. Bond and Mr. Miller, my math teacher. My athletic and math skills were a big part of my service as a soldier. I was a large machine mechanic, an HVAC specialist, and then an engineer. I appreciated the education I received at York High as I traveled around the world.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

For me success has been about finding out what I was good at and what I loved, and then making them go together. Many people are still surprised to see an African-American woman in law enforcement and as a veteran, but I love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else.

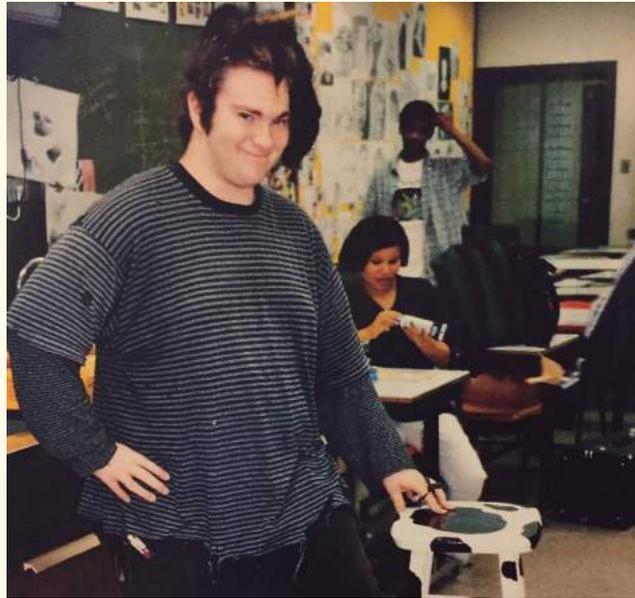
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU WOULD SHARE WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS?

Do not let anyone tell you that something is impossible because of what you look like, or where you are from, or who you love, or how much money you have. Your dreams may take time and hard work, but they are worth it.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



JOHN BECK

Class of 1999

After graduating from William Penn Senior High School, Mr. Beck embarked on a career in entertainment. He toured with a band for more than a decade and logged many years of behind-the-scenes theater work in sound engineering, set building and stage management -- including a stint at the William Penn Performing Arts Institute. He is well-known in the community, especially through the "Free Hugs" project. Now 36, Mr. Beck lives in York City.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR?

I have so many it's hard to name off everything. Touring up and down the East Coast was pretty amazing. Having lunch with Weird Al was pretty incredible too. He's such a nice, down-to-earth guy!

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU?

A lot of people always seem to be shocked when they find out I've never drunk alcohol or done any drugs a day in my life.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR SCHOOL DAYS IN YORK CITY?

One day I was really late for school and it was pouring outside. I was having a really bad morning. I got to school and saw a huge poster-sized printout of my face in the art case in the main hallway. It said I was a great person. I laughed and cried so hard. I had been going through a really hard time with bullies. I'll never forget that moment.



WHY ARE YOU PROUD TO BE A BEARCAT?

I just love the diversity of all of the other Bearcats. We never give up, even at our lowest points, and we love to embrace our highest points even when outsiders don't. I love being an underdog and I love being a Bearcat.

WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL THAT STILL RESONATE IN YOUR LIFE?

Live, breathe, sleep the Arts!