

OFFICE OF STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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Save the Date

- *January 29 - First day of classes*
- *January 15 - Dr. Martin Luther King Day (College Closed)*
- *February 7 - New Students' Orientation*
- *February 12 - Lincoln's Birthday (College Closed)*
- *February 15 - Classes follow a Monday schedule*
- *February 19 - Presidents Day (College Closed)*

Applications for 2007 Lighthouse Scholarship are available in Shuster



The office of Student Disability Services is looking forward to an exciting Spring 2007 semester. The name

of our office has changed but we are committed to providing you with the courteous and reliable ser-

vice that you expect. We wish you a great Spring semester and remember we are always here to help.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS 2006

The United Nations' International Day of Disabled Persons was commemorated on December 6th with a re-dedication of the Access and Technology Center located in the Library room 215. This year's theme focused on E-Accessibility and Lehman students showcased software, such as Zoomtext, Kurzweil,



Basil Burke

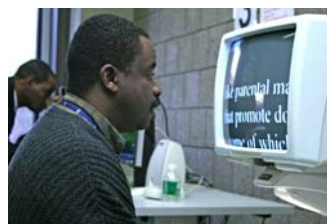
Jaws, and other assistive technology that enable students with disabilities to read articles for class, write papers, and navigate the internet.

Special guest Commissioner Mat-

thew Sapolin from the Mayor's Office of Disabled Persons, delivered an optimistic speech on overcoming barriers. While Merrill D. Parra, director of Student Disability Services, echoed Sapolin's sentiments, she added that although much progress has been made in overcoming physical barriers, computer tech-

nology "brings in a new set of challenges for people with disabilities."

Dr. Christopher Rosa, Director at CUNY's Office of Disabled Services, Jose Magdaleno, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Dean John Holloway were all present at the ceremony and shared inspiring thoughts in celebration of the day's event.



Ronald Harris



Dr. Christopher Rosa, Merrill D. Parra, Dean John Holloway, and Vice President José Magdaleno

THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

The advisory board, which was established in the Spring 2006, has remained active in the Fall 2006 semester. In Spring '06, the board's strong opinion resulted in the office's name change, it's first of many accomplishments. The advisory board, which was created to develop an ongoing dialogue between students with special needs and the administration, recommend ideas that will improve services for this community and identify areas for collaboration be-

tween the campus administration and students.

In the Fall 2006 semester many of the weekly meetings were dedicated to the preparation of the United Nation's International Day of Dis-



abled Persons. The advisory board's efforts contributed significantly to the event's success.

We would like to thank Yvonne Atanacio, Jehu Brown, Jeanine Endres, Leah Herskovits, Stephanie Jefferson, Martha Monroe, Arianny Ramirez, Pat Rauch, Edward Sesay, and Lucas Tosas for their hard work during the semester. Those interested in participating in the advisory board may contact us at (718) 960-8441.

HIGHLIGHTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS: THERE'S NO STOPPING LAQUON JOHNSON

Since Laquon Johnson began attending Lehman College in the fall of 2005 he has made significant strides both academically and personally. In the spring of 2006 a representative from the National Association for the Visually Handicapped (NAVH) contacted



Laquon using a CCTV

Laquon Johnson and asked him if he would like to be featured in an educational video for the organization. The video will demonstrate that people with visual impairments can and do lead productive lives. Laquon agreed to do the video with just one condition, that he be filmed on Lehman College's Campus since he says, "I saw it as the

perfect backdrop to express how I've managed to live an active life with Stargardts" (a genetic eye disease that deteriorates the central vision).

Upon being diagnosed with Stargardts ten years ago, Laquon pondered, "how will I live my life?" He credits the Na-

tional Association for the Visually Handicapped for assisting him in become self-sufficient. As a result, Laquon has successfully completed three semesters at Lehman College while gaining much independence.

The utilization of visual aides like the CCTV, and a device called Quick Look has provided Laquon with the autonomy that he needs to succeed as a college student.

Aside from attending classes Laquon enjoys working out at the gym and plays basketball, proof that having a visual impairment does not deprive him of his independence. He believes that individuals confronted with simi-



Laquon at the gym

lar obstacles "can thrive and be successful academically, professionally, and personally." For more information on the National Association for the Visually Impaired contact NAVH at 212-889-

3141 or www.navh.org

HANDS SPEAK



Lisa Starchie has been a sign language interpreter for five years and has recently embarked on a trip to Nairobi, Kenya where she will offer her services to the local constituency as a volunteer.

Ms. Starchie took an interest in sign language when her friends introduced her to this world, she then became enamored with the deaf and hard-of-hearing culture. This last semester she could be seen on the campus signing for students at Lehman who are

hard of hearing. Ms. Starchie enjoys the variety of settings she can be employed, ranging from medical to academic and more.

She points out that sign language varies from region to region. Variation can even be observed along the five boroughs. There are two widely known languages: American Sign language which has no written form and relies on hand movement and facial expression while Pigeon sign language refers to signed English syntax. At times sign language is not taught to deaf or hard of

hearing individuals and so and they and their families come up with "home sign," which Starchie describes as any gesture or symbol that is used to communicate with others.

At her recent trip, she says she's "working as a volunteer missionary teaching the deaf in Kenya & Tanzania the Bible. It's been a wonderful experience. I'm learning Kenyan Sign Language & Tanzanian Sign Language. Both are very different from ASL." She feels fulfilled and asserts that her six-week stay in Kenya is a way of giving back.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF . . .

Elizabeth Parrilla, who was HIV positive, achieved one of her biggest dreams on June 1, 2006, she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Social Work. Shortly thereafter on a Sunday evening in July she quietly passed away.

In her last days she resided at Palladia, a residential treatment center that provides services in substance abuse,

HIV, homelessness, etc. At the Palladia, she was frequently seen planting at the facility's garden. A month after her passing a memorial celebration was held for Ms. Parilla at the very site where she would garden.

In an interview conducted by POZ magazine she says, "I like to travel-I went to Cancun last year. My man

makes me happy. And I'm the grandmother of four boys. They're darlings."



TRAVEL FUNDS AVAILABLE THROUGH GRANT

Are you short on cash and are required to go the museum or a performance for a class? Do you need to be on campus for a workshop, special tutorial, or perhaps you need to visit a site off campus

as part of research for a paper? Perhaps we can help.

Through a Community Trust Grant awarded to the City University of New York, we have a small amount of funds to cover your travel expenses

to special events and activities. The funds can be used to cover a wide array of activities as long as they are related to some aspect of your school experience. In the past stu-

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TRAVEL FUNDS... (CONT'D)

dents have used this grant to cover visits to VESID, interviews for internships, and other cultural and educational trips.

Generally, students must incur the expenditure and then are reimbursed by mail. To obtain reimbursement you must present a receipt for your expenditure and a copy of an admission ticket or program to the Office of Student Disability Services (Shuster 238). In some instances arrangements with taxi or ambulette companies have provided vouchers. For more information about this grant please contact the office at 960-8441.

PASSANTINO AWARDEE IS ONE OF OUR OWN

When Vinnette Heholt sets her mind to her goals she succeeds at achieving her endeavors. The 2006 Donald and Mary Ellen Passantino Scholarship is what she set her mind on and she obtained it.

The Donald and Mary Ellen Passantino International Students & Student With Disabilities Scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate enthusiasm under extraordinary circumstances. Heholt's enthusiastic ventures includes the Amah Selassie Basic School in Kingston Jamaica, for children of




struggling families, and most recently graduate school, for a master's degree in Health Education and Promotion. Her latest undertaking stems from her compassion to help others. She has a great desire to educate the population of distressed adolescents and adults. As a health educator she hopes to integrate social, cultural and medical anthologies in her schooling.

It is because of Ms. Heholt's zealous attitude and efforts to strive in spite of adversity that the Passantino Scholarship was well awarded.

REMINDER!

If you need accommodation letters, make sure to stop by the office prior to the start of the semester. Letters to the faculty are no longer generated automatically.

 *Office of Student
Disability Services*

*"Full Participation,
Access and Opportunity"*

Lehman College The City University of New York

MEET THE STAFF

Merrill D. Parra—Director

Doreen Patrick—CUNY Office Assistant

Veronica Mason—Note taking Coordinator

Elizabeth Pereyra—Newsletter Editor

Francisco Valverde—Peer Educator

CUNY Email >>>

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