



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 29, 2009

No. 567

[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)

**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES THAT STUDENTS FROM 12 OF THE 100  
BEST HIGH SCHOOLS IN AMERICA – ALL NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS –  
WILL JOIN HIM TO LOWER THE TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR’S EVE BALL AND  
WELCOME IN 2010**

*Twelve Public Schools in the Five Boroughs Made the U.S. News & World Report 2010 ‘Gold Medal’ List of America’s Best High Schools – More Than Any Other School District in the Country*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced today that he will be joined in Times Square on New Year’s Eve to push the button for the ceremonial lowering of the Times Square New Year’s Eve ball by students from the 12 New York City public high schools which ranked among the 100 “Gold Medal” best high schools in America, according to *US News & World Report*. On previous New Year’s Eves, Mayor Bloomberg has been joined for this moment – which is broadcast live around the world – by luminaries that have included former Secretary of State Colin Powell, actor Christopher Reeve and his wife Dana, United States Armed Forces veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq, and first responders from the NYPD and FDNY who had gone to New Orleans to help with that city’s recovery. Last year, former President Bill Clinton and Senator Hillary Clinton, then the Secretary of State-nominee, joined the Mayor in Times Square. Every borough in New York City is home to at least one of these 12 high schools, and the individual students were selected by their principals to stand with the Mayor because of their exceptional academic performance and community service.

“New York City is the most exciting and important place on earth 24/7, but there’s something particularly special about the last and first few seconds of the year, when more than a billion people around the planet have their eyes on us at the exact same time,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “In that brief window, we get to showcase to the world what’s best about New York, and I couldn’t be more proud that these students – who represent everything we’ve done together to turn one of the nation’s worst public school systems into its most promising – will be there with us.”

“These students represent some of the best schools in the nation, but they also represent the incredible diversity of our city, including recent immigrants and lifelong New Yorkers from all five boroughs,” said Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein. “They are scholars, athletes, artists, and leaders who give generously to their schools and to their communities. I am extremely proud of them, their peers, and the educators whose dedication ensures that our students can look forward to continued success in 2010 and for decades to come.”

*U.S. News & World Report*, which has been ranking the best colleges, universities, and graduate programs in America for decades, first began ranking the best public high schools in the country in December 2007. Six New York City public high schools ranked among the top 100 on that first list. In December 2008, nine New York City public high schools ranked among the top 100 on the *US News* list. This year, 12 schools from the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island were ranked among the nation's 100 best – a 100 percent increase in just two years.

The twelve students and the schools they represent are listed below.

**Christina Gomes** is a senior at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education in Queens. She is a successful student who is on track to earn an International Baccalaureate diploma while participating actively in a broad range of extracurricular and community service activities. She served as president of the student government during the 2006-07 school year and co-founded the school's Women's Empowerment Group. Christina has participated for three consecutive years as an Earth Day volunteer in Socrates Sculpture Park, has tutored elementary school students in math, donated time to support the Salvation Army and the Humane Society, and volunteered as a trailblazer in a Wyoming national park. Her creative interests include belly dancing, writing, sketching, and watercolor painting.

**Sewon Kang** is a senior at Bronx High School of Science where she is very involved in student government. She is a member of the volleyball team, is in the Honors society, and is an active member of her church where she participates in several volunteer activities and community outreach. Sewon was accepted by early decision to Wesleyan University with a full scholarship as a recipient of the Questbridge scholarship, a very prestigious and competitive scholarship program.

**Kwame Ocran** is a senior at Brooklyn Technical High School where he has a 91 GPA and plans to be a pre-med major in college. He has participated in CUNY's College Now program, which allows high school students to earn college credits. He is active in his church and in community service activities, is an officer in the school's gay-straight alliance, and is a member of the Red Cross club and the school's junior varsity football team. Kwame has participated in numerous musical and dramatic productions at the school, and is a leader in the student government organization.

**Karnisa Aya** is a senior and president of the student government at the High School for American Studies at Lehman College in the Bronx. She has a 95 average and has taken numerous Advanced Placement and college-level classes. Karnisa, whose birthday is January 1<sup>st</sup>, hopes to attend Brown University and plans to major in English.

**Samantha Ye** is a senior at the High School for Dual Language and Asian Studies in Manhattan. For the past two years she has been a member of a student group at New York University (NYU) that performs Shakespearean plays, which is especially impressive since she came from China only four years ago and had to learn English. By her junior year, in addition to Advanced Placement classes in English, Chinese, calculus, chemistry and biology, she had already taken classes at CUNY for College Now credits and at NYU. Samantha is president of the Student Council and was instrumental in establishing a student government organization at the school. As a student team leader for New York Cares for the past two years, she recruits students to participate in two community service projects per month which have included volunteering in

soup kitchens, collecting and sorting donated coats, working with senior citizens, and doing arts and crafts in a daycare center. Samantha will attend Cornell University next year on a full scholarship.

**Stephanie Fernandez** is a senior at the High School for Law and Public Service in Manhattan where she ranks third in a class of 175. In the past four years she has been recognized by the faculty and her peers as a young woman who has accomplished a multitude of undertakings. Some of Stephanie's achievements include initiating a volunteer program at the Breast Cancer Research Foundation and establishing the All Teens 2gether Foundation to pair adolescents and children who are struggling with cancer with healthy adolescents, to provide a sense of harmony. She is a National Honor Society member and is the president of the student government. Stephanie will be attending Barnard College in September 2010.

**Fiona Porkka** is a senior at the Queens High School for the Sciences at York College. She is a top student at the school, excelling academically while participating actively in extracurricular activities and holding down a part-time job. Fiona is a member of the ARISTA honor society and vice president of the school's video and photography club. She loves to read and to write fiction. She hopes to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Andre Gardiner** is a senior at New Explorations into Science, Technology, and Math High School in Manhattan, where he has maintained a 96 percent average while being actively involved in numerous extracurricular activities. He is the current president of Model UN and the former president of student government, and he has also served as student representative on the School Leadership Team for three years. Outside of school, Andre is a legislative aide and community liaison with Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh who represents the 74th New York State Assembly district. Over the past two summers, Andre worked in the Manhattan District Attorney's Legal Bound program and served as a research analyst with Mayor Bloomberg's 2009 campaign.

**Miguel Alejandro Peneranda, Jr.** is a senior at Newcomers High School in Queens where he is president of the student government and a member of the school's fitness and tennis teams. Miguel immigrated to the United States from Ecuador in July 2007. He is actively involved in numerous clubs and community service activities including Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, City Harvest, New York City Marathon, and Big Brother, Big Sister. Miguel will attend college next fall and aspires to be a high school teacher, preferably in New York City.

**Henrique Scott** is a senior at Staten Island Technical High School. In addition to managing a rigorous academic course load, he is secretary in the student organization, through which he has been able to utilize and build his leadership skills. Henrique is also a scholar-athlete excelling in the triple jump event for both boys' varsity indoor and outdoor track, and holds the Staten Island Borough Championship title for the 2009 outdoor track season. He is currently the #1 ranked triple jumper in the PSAL for the 2009-2010 indoor track season, and will attend Cornell University next fall.

**Lily Ostrer** is a senior at Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan where she is a member of the school's track team. Lily is also active in numerous clubs and community service activities. She co-chairs the Stuyvesant blood drive and runs both the school food drive and the photography auction.

**Jeannette Raymond** is Senior Council President at Townsend Harris High School in Queens where she has participated in school musical productions for the past three years. Jeannette co-founded the “Malcontents,” a music, art, and literature club and the Students Against Animal Cruelty (SAAC) club. She has spent the majority of her free time caring her for parents. Her mother is confined to the home and requires round-the-clock care. Her father, Chief Master Sergeant of the 143rd Air Tactical Division of the United States Air Force, passed away on December 15. Jeannette will graduate with an advanced Regents diploma in June before heading to college next fall.

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