

NBHS Young Alumni Association to Send 100 Roosevelt Middle School Students to Visit Brown University, Boston College

The New Bedford High School Young Alumni Association announced that it will send one hundred students from Roosevelt Middle School in New Bedford to visit Brown University in Providence and Boston College in Newton in March 2017.

The students attending the trips are targeted as prospective first-generation college students. The Young Alumni Association will finance the trips from funds received at a fundraiser it held in April 2016. The group was also grateful to Whaling City Transit for its donation of transportation to and from Brown University for Roosevelt students.

The Young Alumni Association will host the trips as part of its mission to provide access to New Bedford students to resources that will enhance their college and career readiness. Co-chair Justin Braga, a 2012 graduate of New Bedford High School, 2016 graduate of Brown University, and a current student at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C., believes that this is a major step towards encouraging students in New Bedford to prepare for college early.

“As alumni who believe that New Bedford Public Schools should be an opportunity-for-all school system with high standards, we believe that all students, regardless of household income or first-generation student status, deserve a real opportunity to be prepared for the college application process,” said

Braga. "I'm thrilled that middle school students from New Bedford will have the chance to visit my alma mater. I'm even more excited to see these students attend Brown and other excellent colleges and universities after graduating from high school."

Students have been selected for the trip based on a lottery of qualifying seventh grade students. The Young Alumni Association has worked closely with New Bedford Public Schools, and the admissions offices of both Brown and Boston College. Students attending the trips will receive a private information session from an admissions officer, a guided campus tour, a chance to dine in the campus cafeteria, and an opportunity to meet with first-generation college students and NBHS alumni attending each school.

NBHSYAA board member Nicholas Lawrence, a 2012 NBHS graduate, 2016 Boston College graduate, and current graduate student at New York University said, "I am so excited to send students from my hometown to visit my alma mater. One of the most important steps in the college application process is to set foot on a college campus. The earlier students are shown that higher education is something that is attainable, the better!"

"It's important to introduce students to the idea of attending college as early as possible. For first-generation students, especially, we want to affirm that the option is attainable if they choose to pursue it," said Rayana Grace, a 2009 NBHS graduate and 2012 Boston College graduate. "For me, my college experience went far beyond academics. It enhanced my critical thinking, challenged, and changed my views on many different subjects, and introduced me to lifelong friends that have impacted my life in such positive ways. I want every student that wishes to attend college to can create their own college journey and I think that these visits are an initial step to make that happen."

Superintendent Pia Durkin said, "We commend the hard work and

the mission of the New Bedford High School Young Alumni Association. Through the efforts of recent NBHS graduates, the organization has garnered support from the community and dedicated their resources toward giving more New Bedford students the opportunity to learn more about college by visiting campuses. Our students are bound for success in college, and being on campus to see college firsthand is crucial to deepening their aspirations for the future.”

In addition, Roosevelt Middle School has organized a follow-up event to discuss what students learn during the college visits. RMS wraparound coordinator Melissa Aviles said, “It is an important part of my job to not only connect but also to engage the families of our students here. We are planning a follow up information session for parents of the seventh-grade students who attended the college field trips, as well as all our eighth-grade students and families.”

According to RMS Principal Dan Bossolt, the purpose of this follow-up session is to share information related to the financial aid and admissions process at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth along with Bristol Community College New Bedford campus representatives.

The information session will include a question and answer opportunity as well as touching upon courses of study and what a college career timeline would look like. This early evening event will be held one to two weeks following the college field trips.

“We have identified a great deal of our students who would be first generation college students,” said Mr. Bossolt. “This is the perfect opportunity for not only our students, but also their families to make attending college a reality by giving them the facts and outlining steps they can take.”

Although the NBHSYAA will be funding the trips, it continues to seek donations to help provide a lunch to each student

attending. The organization feels strongly that the chance to dine aside other college student will make the trips an even more worthwhile experience for the middle school students attending.

Those interested in donating can do so by following the link below to the donation page for the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts and selecting "NBHS Young Alumni" as the donation fund.

<https://www.cfsema.org/donors/donate-to-a-fund/donate>