Congratulations to:

- Celia Perlman (T-14) on the birth of her daughter Leah on December 28, 2014
- Nikolina Dabovic (T-14) on her engagement
- Jeanette Kimyagarov (T-14) on her engagement
- Yayan Zheng (T-14) on her engagement

Ms. Merna Porter will be honored at Dr. Artzt’s Annual Mathematics Teachers’ Reunion on January 27, 2015, for being an outstanding cooperating teacher. She will receive the Mary Felicetti Memorial Award for excellence in mathematics mentoring and supervision. In addition to being a cooperating teacher for Queens College student teachers, Ms. Porter generously opens her classroom for observations by TIME 2000 freshmen. Each year, the freshmen class meets with Ms. Porter before and after the observation to discuss the lesson. Ms. Porter was recently interviewed by Carolina Restrepo, T-15, who observed her class in 2012.

Q: Where did you go to college?
A: I attended Queens College and LIU Post.

Q: What motivated you to be a math teacher?
A: I began helping my friends with math at a very early age but never thought I was really good at doing mathematics until I was in my Algebra 1 class taught by Ms. Lorraine Largman at Newtown High School. I thoroughly enjoyed that class. I enjoyed her style of teaching and the fact that she engaged everyone in the lesson. Students would take turns putting up the homework and I couldn’t wait for my turn! She convinced me to take the Regents Exam early, and as she had predicted, I did very well. She encouraged me to take more advanced math courses and helped me to develop confidence in my ability to do math. Ms. Largman inspired me to become a math teacher. I have always enjoyed working with children, so I knew that my career would involve working with them.

Q: How long have you been in the classroom?
A: I have been teaching for over 30 years at the Louis Armstrong Middle School.

Q: What classes and grades do you teach?
A: I teach two eighth grade Common Core Mathematics classes and two Common Core Algebra 1 classes.

Q: What is it like to teach an inclusion class?
A: The class is taught by two teachers who work together to provide the necessary supports for the students who need them. The students are held to the same standards as those in regular classes. I have thoroughly enjoyed co-teaching with a fellow colleague and collaborating to provide a rich learning environment so that all students can learn and succeed.

Q: What are some strategies that you use when teaching your students?
A: All students thrive on success! So helping students experience success in the classroom is important. I use a variety of strategies in my classroom to help students succeed. Students are usually seated in small groups of four. Each student is given a role to play and is expected to work cooperatively with the others in the group to complete a task. I also use Work Stations so students have an opportunity to move around the room in small groups, working on a different but related task at each station. Another strategy I use is Parallel Tasks, where students are given similar tasks and are given the opportunity to work on the task at their level of understanding.

Q: What are some challenges you face and how do you overcome them?
A: There are many challenges in teaching. I feel, however, that the challenges serve to motivate me to become creative, flexible and resourceful. I meet on a regular basis to plan and collaborate with my colleagues. We share strategies that we may have used successfully in the past. We have, on occasion, agreed to change something that may not be...
Opportunities for TIME 2000 Students and Alumni

Fellowship opportunities provide TIME 2000 students and alumni with mentors, professional development workshops and additional resources which contribute to their success as secondary mathematics educators. TIME 2000 alumni share their experiences as they reflect on their respective fellowships.

KSTF  By: Dwaina Screen (T-12)

During the fall of my first year of teaching in 2013, I received an email from Mrs. Weinman listing a few job and fellowship opportunities, including a blurb from the Knowles Science Teaching Foundation (KSTF). Initially, I thought that it was for science teachers, but I was intrigued that the cohorts included science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers (STEM) who were completing student teaching or in the first year of teaching. I decided to apply because I was looking for a post-TIME 2000 support system to help me through the first few years of teaching just as TIME 2000 helped shape my college experience. If you enjoy collaboration and travel, I highly recommend that you apply to this program.

Harry Knowles started the foundation believing that STEM teachers are the backbone of American innovation. Given the necessary resources and time, STEM teachers can improve their practice and give back to their students. Thus, KSTF fellows attend three annual meetings, all expenses paid. In addition, your school is reimbursed for a substitute teacher due to your absence. So far, I have attended meetings in Kansas City, MO and Manhattan Beach, CA. While the travel is certainly an added bonus, what I love about this foundation is the level of dedicated support it affords its fellows. Each cohort has four Teacher Developers who help guide you through the first years of teaching. They are available for Google Hangouts and via email, and I have found they go above and beyond to answer questions and support the members of my cohort.

KSTF provides up to $4000 a year to each fellow for Professional Development (PD) opportunities. This money can be used to travel to PD across the world, invite mentors to your school or order materials that will help you improve upon your teaching practice. I have already used some of my PD money to attend a virtual TiNspire training workshop last summer and am looking to use some of it to attend the NCTM conference in Boston this coming March. KSTF also provides up to $1200 a year for classroom materials, which I used to order TiNspire calculators for my students. The unique feature of the fellowship is that while this money is readily available, it can only be accessed by writing grants. Fellows are required to submit written proposals for approval of expenses. This seems cumbersome at first, but it has already proven helpful when I wanted to write a similar grant for a Donors Choose project that was approved last fall. KSTF also provides one-time financial support for National Board Certification applications and has a Teacher Leader grant available for up to $40,000 for members of the cohort who are looking to engage a larger group of people into projects that will have a wider range of impact (such as an entire department, school, district or community). Program and application information can be found online at kstf.org. When I applied, the application deadline was at the end of October and required three letters of recommendation and a few essays, mostly focusing on how I was looking to become a teacher leader and what I hoped to get out of being a fellow if accepted. After submitting my application, I was not hopeful since this national program is selective (over 200 people apply and approximately 30 are accepted), yet to my surprise I received an email in early December notifying me that I had been selected as a semi-finalist. The next step was a one-hour phone interview with a Teacher Developer. I was asked questions about my teaching experience, work environment, student teaching experience, teaching philosophy and some of the challenges I have faced with my students. Overall, it was a pleasant conversation, but I did not feel confident that I would advance to the final interview round. A month later, I was notified that I was a finalist and invited to attend “Selection Weekend in Philadelphia.” The invitation made it clear that all of my interactions during the weekend would be monitored as they wanted to see how we would get along as a future cohort. I was nervous and instantly overwhelmed at the thought of having to be on such a long interview. From the minute the meet-and-greet started, I could tell that I was in the presence of some impressive new teachers, many who had already received advanced degrees or had experience teaching in other countries. If you apply for this fellowship and attend Selection Weekend, my best advice is to be yourself, fight your nerves and take the opportunity to meet extraordinary people. Towards the end of interview weekend, I spoke with a Teacher Developer who asked me to reach out to her after the weekend even if I did not make it into the program, as she wanted to discuss some interesting points I had made in a group presentation. After the weekend, I also joined several online discussions with other applicants who wanted to continue collaborating by sharing resources via Google Groups and other forums. By early April, I received my acceptance letter to the program and an invitation to attend Orientation Weekend at their beautiful office in New Jersey.

This program has a five-year commitment. In order to be eligible, you must be teaching mathematics or science at the high school level for at least half of your teaching schedule. It is important to note that you do not need to be teaching such a program when you apply, but it is a requirement once you accept a place for the fall. You must attend three annual meetings and take part in required online work. Similar to TIME 2000, they offer recruiting opportunities for you to recruit applicants to the program, and assign you a ‘Big Buddy’ for your first year. KSTF uses the Google suite to keep fellows connected. Often times, Google Hangout is the...
preferred method of contact and connectivity, while Google Drive allows us to share files, even student work around which we can develop inquiry questions. My cohort also decided to set up a bi-weekly Google Hangout on Sunday nights to allow for anyone to catch up, vent, and ask questions or just check in with each other. I have found it a great way to decompress, but also stay on top of the requirements of the fellowship.

All in all, I strongly recommend that TIME 2000 students in their senior year of the program or in their first year of teaching in the fall of 2015 apply for the 2016 cohort. You will not regret meeting all of the wonderful, collaborative and caring staff members or the uniquely inspiring members of the program.

Math for America (MfA) is a nonprofit organization founded in January 2004 by mathematician Jim Simons. Its mission is to improve mathematics education in the United States’ public schools by supporting, training, and retaining highly qualified secondary school mathematics teachers. Math for America created four programs, the MfA Fellowship, MfA Early Career Fellowship, MfA Master Teacher Fellowship and MfA School Leader Fellowship. These were all created to increase the number of mathematically talented individuals becoming teachers. The Master Teacher and Early Career Fellowships became a way to support outstanding mathematics teachers already in the classroom, while the School Leader Fellowship was created to support experienced mathematics teachers who have been promoted to administrative positions in their schools. This program’s main principles are focused around teaching math effectively and so they provide strong support services, including continuing education and professional development. Accordingly, with appropriate incentives it is possible to not only recruit mathematically qualified teachers who might not have otherwise entered the teaching field, but also retain outstanding mathematics teachers who might otherwise have left the field. These incentives include a full tuition scholarship to earn a master’s degree, a bonus of up to $100,000 over five years in addition to the teaching salary, mentoring and professional development services, and camaraderie with a group of teachers who know and love math. But before all of this can happen, you must be selected to the Fellowship. To be selected, you have to be screened through a rigorous application process which includes a standardized test that measures mathematical content knowledge. Once selected you have to commit to a five-year program. In the first year, you earn a Master’s degree in mathematics education and in years 2-5, you have to teach in a New York City public secondary school. Math for America has been so successful it has expanded to other cities including Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, D.C. and Boston. To date, 50 QC alumni are members of MfA New York, 31 of whom are mathematics educators including 12 TIME 2000 alumni!

Maria Leon-Chu (T-9)

I joined MfA as a member of the 2013 Early Career Fellow cohort and I am very thankful for the experiences it has given me. In the monthly meetings, my fellow cohort members (one of whom is Amy Lee (T-11)) and I have learned an incredible amount about how to make math accessible, interactive and enjoyable. The best part is that we share our experiences with each other and grow together as a result. My favorite thing about my first year was having the opportunity to work with my mentor, Liz Garvey, who was an MfA Master Teacher. She visited me monthly in my classroom and we discussed my lessons before and after they were taught. She has truly inspired me with her wisdom and helpfulness. Now that I am in my second year at MfA, I signed up for the Geometry and Calculus Professional Learning Teams, which meet once a month to share resources and strategies. I am fortunate to have learned so much from other teachers at MfA and I highly recommend applying, especially for new teachers.

Trisha Hurtaires (T-10)

I joined Math for America in the fall of 2012. The program is designed for teachers who are looking to improve their practice and are math lovers. In my first year, we were assigned a mentor to observe us and give feedback which was very helpful since my school was in the process of closing and no longer had a math department. In my second year, I chose the Professional Developments I wanted to attend. I have attended a wide variety of different workshops ranging from Common Core Algebra Project Learning teams and a class where we prove the irrationality of e and pi (some of the most beautiful math I’ve ever seen). The program also hosts many events such as a Math Prom, End of Year celebration and Poker Tournaments. I have really enjoyed my time in the program, it is a great community. I am looking forward to my remaining four years as an early career fellow and then planning to apply to the Master Teacher program.
Fighting Stereotypes  
By: Zean Khan (T-16)

The last edition of this newsletter included an article that got me thinking about stereotypes, especially stereotypes regarding what it means to be a “math person.” In the article “Have You Met Professor Dave Miller?” by Kathleen Lyons, Professor Miller was described as an atypical math person because he likes to read. As a mathematics education major who enjoys reading, this got me thinking about myself.

I attended a math and science oriented high school. After two years, I decided that I enjoyed math and science and was never going to understand the likes of Shakespeare and John Steinbeck. Because of my environment, I had unknowingly categorized myself as a stereotypical “math person.” Without giving anything else a chance, I had determined that my future life would revolve around the world of math and science.

Today, I look back and scoff at how naive I was to determine that if I liked math and science, subjects such as history and English would be a bore. I now look forward to my English and history classes as much as I look forward to any of my math classes. I even find writing articles for this newsletter enjoyable, something I would have never imagined possible a few years ago.

Being in TIME 2000 means I am part of a community in which all members share the same goal: to become a qualified math educator able to make a difference in our classrooms for the better. After becoming friends with just a few people, I realized that sometimes our similarities ended right with that shared goal. Although all of us wanted to become math teachers, we each had our own favorite subject and distinct personality. Further breaking away from my stereotypical “math person” notion, I came to terms with the fact that enjoying math has no effect on what subjects a person likes or the hobbies they choose.

In the freshman course Psychology of Learning Mathematics (SEYS 221), we learn about the principles of assimilation and accommodation. Just as we assimilate concepts and ideas in the classroom, we also assimilate people into the categories we have already established in our minds.

One of the goals of TIME 2000, apart from producing impeccable mathematics educators, is to remove any and all preconceived notions of what it means to like math. Sure, there may be people who have the characteristics of that stereotypical “math person,” but that does not mean that every person who likes math needs to be put in that same group. Fortunately, TIME 2000 provides those opportunities to understand that people should never be generalized, and I hope that each student leaves the program with a more open mind. For the sake of our future students, let’s eliminate math-based stereotypes!

Bootstrap Success!

The TIME 2000 Bootstrap work- shop held on campus on January 20 & 21 was a huge success! Bootstrap is a curriculum module integrating computer programming and mathematical concepts. By the end of the workshop, participants coded their own video games.

Information about Bootstrap workshops can be found at bootstrapworld.org

Overheard at the workshop:

“This is amazing!”
“I love this stuff!”
“This should be mandatory for all TIME 2000 students.”
“So worthwhile.”

By: Zean Khan (T-16)