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October, 2018

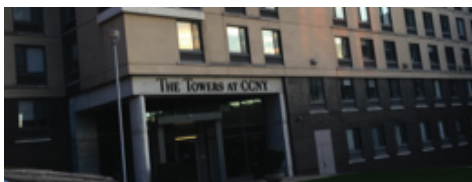
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Bronx, New York

Dreamers Persist Against Threat of DACA Termination



Dreamers and DACA supporters march in an event organized by Antonio Alarcon to protest against the elimination decree. Photo courtesy of Lidiya Kan. [Page 3]



NEWS

CCNY Campus Goes on Lockdown After Another High School Shooter Scare

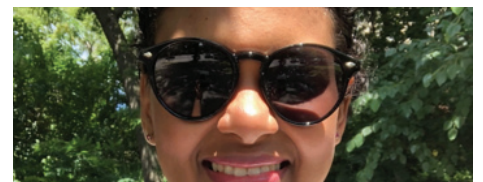
[Page 4]



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Fifth Lil Wayne Album Marks Artist's Victory over Label Clout

[Page 6]



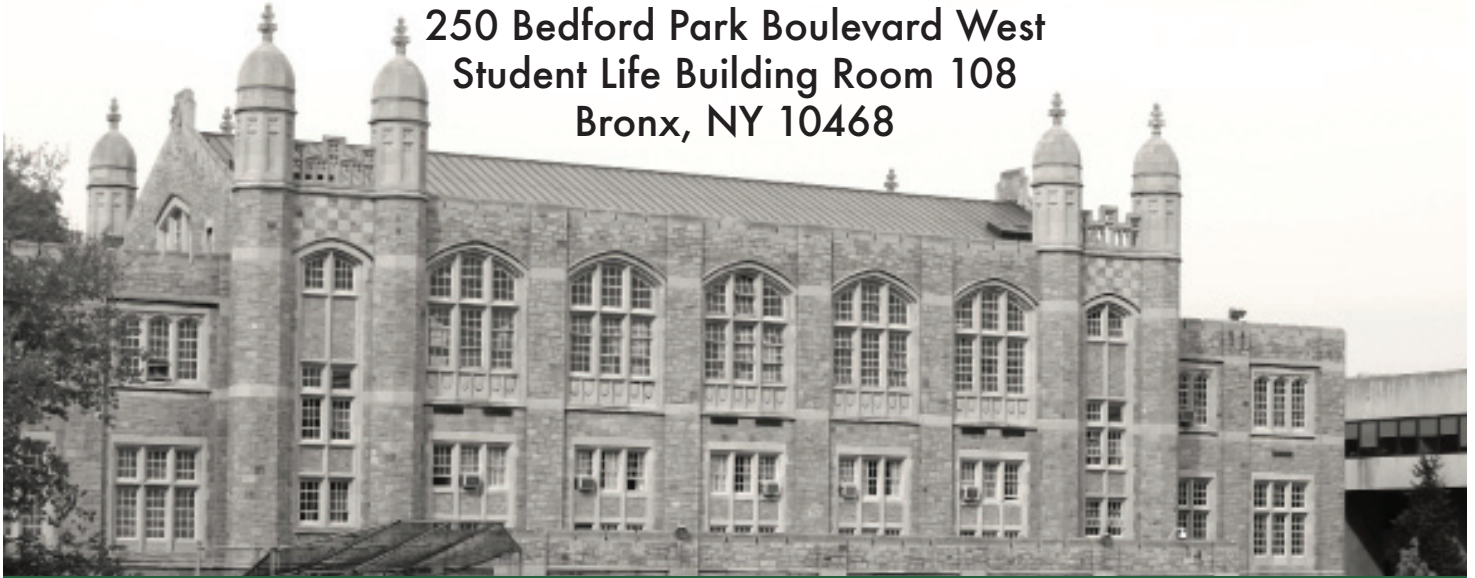
LIFESTYLE

Lehman Student Wins Fight against Cancer

[Page 11]

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Dreamers Persist Against Threat of DACA Termination

By Perla Tolentino



Dreamers on DC, spreading a message of hope after Trump's order to end DACA was made official. The protest was one of the many events organized by Antonio Alarcon as part of his community work to help immigrants fight for their rights and to defend the program. Photo courtesy of Ricardo Acá.

Trump's attempt to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, has yet to reach a solution either in Congress or the nation's courts. On Oct. 17, according to the AP, the Justice Department informed the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that if the court does not rule on the case by Oct. 31, it will request that the Supreme Court do so. DACA's termination would result in the loss of jobs, education, and life plans for more than 800,000 dreamers whom the program guarantees the same rights as naturally born U.S. citizens. While their futures hang in the balance, CUNY Dreamers are redoubling their commitment to their goals and communities.

"I feel extremely safe at Lehman and in NYC in general. I have been living here for four years and always feel comfortable talking about my status in class," a female Lehman DACA recipient told the Meridian on the condition of

anonymity. The student, an English and History double major, praised Lehman as "a great sanctuary school where I can be myself and not be scared about my status."

She also believes that Lehman should advocate more on behalf of DACA students, and offer them more

"DACA provides students with federal grants. It gives them a nation they can feel a part of."

- Lehman Latin American and Latino Studies professor, John Paul Gonzalez

opportunities such as financial aid, scholarships and funding for master's or Ph.D. programs. "We are hard-working Americans who know no other home but this one," she said. "I really want DACA

to get legalized, that will ensure that me, my sister and our friends can work, live and study without fear of deportation."

"DACA provides students with federal grants. It gives them a nation they can feel a part of," said Lehman professor, John Paul Gonzalez, from the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies. "Most dreamers who graduate obtain degrees in challenging majors such as medicine and social work." Describing DACA as one of the best opportunities ever created, he accused Trump of "playing political games. His whole plan is an act of racism."

According to data released by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the program has seen the number of applicants drop by nearly half. Numbers from the fiscal year of 2018 show a total of 286,247 applicants, which is only 51.78 percent of last year's total. One reason may be that according

to the USCIS website, after Trump's order to halt the program, only renewals would be able to remain in the U.S.

However, DACA recipients have won many victories, including that of 24-year-old activist and dreamer Antonio Alarcon. Alarcon has been in several documentaries and his work inspires many dreamers and immigrants to continue to fight with hope and dignity. Besides joining the Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute at Lehman from 2016 until 2018, Alarcon has been working to help immigrants since the age 14 as part of a non-profit organization called Make the Road.

"I worked for ten years organizing events and coordinating funds to help immigrants," Alarcon told the

Meridian. "We helped them with college applications and lawyer representation for their immigration cases." He also pointed out that Trump's new Oct. 31 deadline would move the case to the jurisdiction of a more conservative Supreme Court. "Brett Kavanaugh, who is an anti-immigration conservative figure is now to decide for DACA as the new judge," he said.

Meanwhile, Lehman seeks to keep enrolled DACA recipients informed about new updates and their possible benefits through weekly conferences held every Friday to aid dreamers, and address immigration barriers. Lehman also hosted a Constitution Day Event to educate students on laws used to fight for DACA on Sept. 18, 2018 at the Lovinger Theatre.

"Thanks God I'm in college," said another DACA recipient and Lehman student who also requested anonymity, "but I have so many friends and family members who can't go to college because we don't get enough support." The student, a 21-year-old Spanish major, also suggested other ways Lehman can support Dreamers.

"Mostly everyone at Lehman is open-minded and I love that, but I think there are also people who might not want us dreamers here. Lehman should bring the Dream Team back permanently, and provide scholarships for us, since they are very hard to find in other places. DACA shouldn't be the only thing we have. It is amazing to have it, but what about everyone else who doesn't qualify and has big dreams?"

CCNY Campus Goes on Lockdown After Another High School Shooter Scare

By Emmet O'Boy



The Towers at CCNY rest just a day after the school went into lockdown. Photo by Emmet O'Boy.

On the afternoon of Oct. 18, students and residents of the CUNY City College of New York (CCNY) Towers were told via email to stay indoors after students at the adjacent A. Randolph High School reported a possible shooter on campus. According to the New York City Police

Department (NYPD)'s Twitter account, the male suspect, a student at the high school, had brought a toy gun onto the campus. After a female student reported seeing the gun, the NYPD was notified, and both campuses were sent into lockdown mode.

"The thought of [a shooting] is actually scarier than the situation itself, as I felt numb," said Joseph Dankman, a senior at the Grove School of Engineering at CCNY. Dankman was sitting in class when he was notified of the possible threat. He added that students remained calm throughout the lockdown. He told the Meridian, "God forbid something were to happen, I would have had my guard down."

Although the scare proved to be a false alarm, it marks a worrying trend -- American students are all too familiar

with the event of a school shooting. According to Cable News Network (CNN), in the first 21 weeks of 2018, there were 23 school shootings, averaging more than one per week.

Despite these statistics, minors are still able to get their hands on weapons, real and fake. As of 2014, the Washington Post reported that there are 30 states where a child is still legally allowed to own or be in possession of a gun. With strong political views on both sides of the table, gun control continues to fuel debate across the U.S. Meanwhile, American students have to go to school every day facing the possibility that it may be their last.

Dankman said, "People use [these incidents] to defend the Second Amendment, and it can even be used as an empathetic route to get votes."

Journalists Offer Advice to Lehman's Aspiring Journalists

By Hector Bello



Enthusiastic MSNBC journalists Daniela Pierre-Bravo, Devyn Rafols-Nuñez, Lauren Coffelt and Leonor Ayala with Director of Student Life, Michael E. Sullivan after the panel discussion. Photo by Hector Bello.

Tell new stories and be unstoppable -- this was some of the advice that three MSNBC journalists had for Lehman students hoping to work in media. Daniela Pierre-Bravo, Devyn Rafols-Nuñez, Lauren Coffelt and Leonor Ayala visited Lehman on Oct. 11, where enthusiastic students flooded them with questions about diversity in the industry and strategies for getting entry level positions.

"One of the most important things that journalism students should know is that they can create their own narratives. The question to a journalist should be what is something new that you can bring to the table," said Daniela Pierre-Bravo,

the booking producer for MSNBC's "Morning Joe." "It's more about making your own story more than anything, and pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone. Even though there are obstacles, there is no way that you should not make it in the journalism industry."

MSNBC associate producer for NBC Nightly News Devyn Rafols-Nuñez emphasized the importance of writing: "The opportunities for writers in MSNBC are huge! However, it's more pushed to the digital side nowadays but it's the same principle. The company just hired 50 new journalists only to write. You definitely need to know how to write as a journalist."

Founded in 1996, MSNBC also owns Telemundo, which is a strong platform for bilingual students at Lehman. However, according to the Pew Research Center, in the last decade, "newsroom employment declined 23 percent," a trend which might cause anxiety in college students trying to succeed in the industry.

The Chair of the Journalism and Media Studies Department Thomas O' Hanlon, who worked for NBC for several years, explained that the panel could help students overcome these worries. "Information is valuable. It's a new field for people that are graduating from college and to have an inside perspective such as this...is a tremendously useful thing," he said. "Journalism is a profession that is gradually evolving. It serves a vital function in our society. I think it is exciting that there are many new opportunities in journalism and I look forward to seeing our students rise to that opportunity."

Lehman student Natalia Quinones, 23, a film and TV studies major, said she found the panel, "very informative. As a student majoring in film and TV studies, I found it very useful to learn more about areas in my field. I am glad that Lehman did this panel because it helps people like me."

Director of Campus Life, Michael E. Sullivan said, "The goal was to bring people from the journalism and media fields and have them hear the stories, know what it's required to make it in the industry and just know what it takes to be a journalist. It was a great event for prospective journalists and Lehman took full advantage."

Fifth Lil Wayne Album Marks Artist's Victory over Label Clout

By Matthew Mallery



Lil Wayne and Birdman perform at the 2009 BET Awards. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

New Orleans rapper and Young Money label head Dwayne Michael Carter Jr., a.k.a. Lil Wayne dropped “The Carter V” on Sept. 28, 2018. The fifth installment of the Carter series matters because it represents the end of a tumultuous legal battle between two titans of the hip-hop world, Wayne and label head Bryan Christopher Williams, or Birdman (a.k.a. Baby). The album had languished in production for four years. Now, after an incredibly fiery public beef between the two and an equally bitter legal battle, Wayne has emerged victorious, debuting at number 1 on the overall Billboard charts.

The conflict goes back to 1991 when 9-year-old Wayne was already writing and recording verses. This intrigued Birdman, who started a record label, the now eponymous Cash Money

Records, the same year. While Wayne progressed through several rap groups, eventually carving out a solo career as Cash Money’s marquee artist, Birdman was building the infrastructure. By 2008, Wayne was synonymous with hip-hop success, and crossovers with pop artists. That year, his album “Tha Carter III,” was named the top selling rap album of the year, and won a Grammy for Best Rap Album.

This might seem like a happy ending to a tale of two people who struggled with poverty, crime, and the lure of gang culture. However, their very success led to the dissolution of their partnership and a new beginning for Lil Wayne.

Their conflict stemmed from the fact that Wayne also founded his own label, Young Money Records, credited with

discovering major artists like Drake and Nicki Minaj, two of the highest charting and selling artists of the last decade. Though he created it with Birdman’s blessing, the question of who owned the rights to both Drake and Nicki’s catalogue of high-charting songs eventually became a main point of controversy. In 2015, Wayne sued Birdman for these rights along with unpaid contract advances promised to Wayne and his Young Money artists.

This suit delayed “Tha Carter V” which was originally slated to be released in 2014. With Birdman unwilling to release “Tha Carter V,” Wayne began to voice his displeasure with his boss in the media. Wayne told Rolling Stone magazine in 2014 that he “and his creativity were being held ‘prisoner...’” by Birdman and Cash Money Records. In 2015, Wayne

took his grievances to the studio and the courtroom, suing Birdman and Cash Money Records for \$51 million in damages. He also released the single, “Sorry 4 Tha Wait 2,” referring to his delayed album, both to hold over fans clamoring for more music and to send some shots Birdman’s way.

In January of 2017, Birdman made a first push to reconcile with Wayne. He told hip-hop magazine XXL that “Tha Carter V” was “definitely coming out” and that “Wayne is one of the best artists ever to do the game, and I want to see him continue to do what he been doing, and I’m going to support whatever he’s doing.”

Finally, in June of 2018, Wayne was released from his contract with Cash Money Records. According to Lil Wayne’s attorney Ron Sweeney in a statement given to Billboard, Wayne received a purported lump sum of \$10 million, as well as the rights to his music. His lawyer said, “My client is happy. He is his own man, a man that owns his assets, his music and himself.”

Wayne references his dominance over the rap game on the third song, “Dedicate” where he raps, “I started this shit, they borrowed this shit/I thought of this shit, they thought it was it.” Wayne also brings along a cast of characters from the current rap game

to provide guest verses on “Tha Carter V,” with heavy hitters Travis Scott, Kendrick Lamar, Nicki Minaj, and the late XXXTentacion, who made waves in hip-hop in 2017-2018.

Birdman and Wayne seem to have reconciled. They appeared together at Lil Wayne’s Lil Weezyana Fest in New Orleans, where Birdman gave an earnest apology. This is victory for artists over their labels, who possess far more money and lawyers. This was also a personal victory for Wayne and his fans, who have waited 4 years an album release. Lil Wayne fans -- the drought is over, and Wheezy is going nowhere.

Gaga Wows Audiences in ‘A Star Is Born’ Remake

By Michael Omoruan

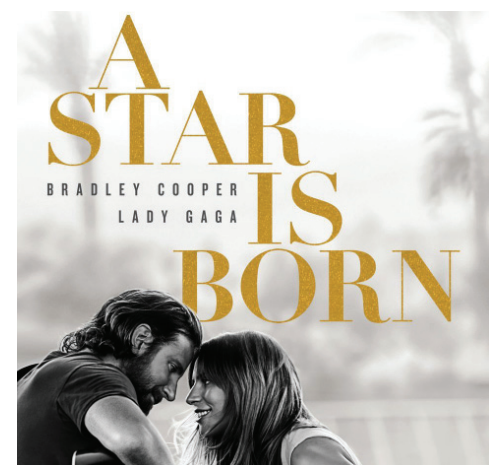
The film, “A Star is Born” tells a great, compelling story brought to life by its extraordinary cast and outstanding soundtrack. Released on Oct. 5, the movie was co-written, directed, and produced by Bradley Cooper, who also stars in this modern remake of the 1937 film which featured Janet Gaynor and Fredric March. In his updated version, Cooper, known for his lead roles in “American Sniper” and the “Guardians of the Galaxy” movies, plays a rock and roll superstar named Jackson Maine who stumbles upon Ally Campana (Lady Gaga), in a drag bar.

Aside from cameo appearances in Robert Rodriguez’s “Machete Kills” and “Sin City: A Dame to Kill For,” this film marks Gaga’s first starring role, alongside acting legends Sam Elliott and Andrew Dice Clay. Maine and Ally develop feelings for one another as the film progresses and their chemistry builds. However, Maine has a problem with substance abuse which starts to cause conflict in their relationship.

With little to no dialogue, Cooper is able

to evoke emotion. In a scene with Rez, Campana’s agent, Maine is faced with a tough ultimatum and his internal conflict is evident. Cooper also sings well himself during the concert scenes, with his gruff, old timey rocker voice shifting to belt out vocals that shock the audience. Gaga, whose real name is Stefani Germanotta, gives an Oscar-worthy performance as Campana, whose nervous, uncertain nature seems relatable and realistic.

Cooper’s directorial debut also draws Oscar-caliber performances from the rest of his cast, which includes comedy legends Eddie Griffin and Dave Chappelle. They play old friends of Maine who show up in a crucial moment of the film. Chappelle’s character, Noodles, offers advice from his time in the spotlight to guide Maine on the right path, displaying great dramatic chops. Sam Elliott plays Maine’s brother Bobby with just enough subtlety, sharing amazingly intimate scenes with both Cooper and Gaga. One of his lines summarizes a core theme of the film, “Music is essentially any note between twelve octaves... It’s the same



The promotional poster for the film. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia,

story told over and over. All that the artist can offer the world is how they see those twelve notes.”

In its realistic showcase of romantic relationships, while at times satirizing the entertainment industry, “A Star is Born” is comparable to 2016’s modern musical “La La Land,” which also has a great soundtrack. If you enjoy emotional, heartfelt romantic films, definitely check this one out at your local movie theater.

Annual Medieval Festival Brings the Met Cloisters to Life

By Brittany Aufiero



Kathleen Finnegan strums a Celtic melody on the harp. Photo by Brittany Aufiero.

Tens of thousands of medieval history enthusiasts from across the five boroughs flocked to Upper Manhattan on Sunday, Sept. 30 to enjoy an afternoon of free festivities at Fort Tryon Park. The sprawling forest was transformed into a market town straight out of a medieval fantasy world -- complete with crafts, vendors, and foods common to the Middle Ages. Festival-goers embraced the theme, many of them choosing to dress in peasant robes or knightly armor, immersing themselves fully in the experience. In the evening, the events concluded with a group of knights jousting on horseback on the tourney field.

Fort Tryon Park is home to The Met Cloisters, a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that specializes in European Gothic and medieval architecture. The museum occupies four acres of land, and its castles and bridges are visible to all guests at the fair, adding to the authenticity of the event.

This year's festival was jointly sponsored by the Washington Heights and Inwood Development Corporation (WHIDC) and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. The WHIDC is a private and publicly supported not-for-profit corporation which has successfully kept the Medieval Festival alive in Upper Manhattan for over 34 years. According to their website, for the past five years attendance at the event has averaged 60,000 people.

For many businesses and performers in New York, the festival is an opportunity to advertise their crafts and services, and to bring awareness to the public about

different cultural expressions of art in order to enrich communities. One such business is UrbanGlass, which used their platform at the festival to bring attention to their outreach program, The Bead Project. According to their flyer, the free program “was created in 1997 to serve economically disadvantaged women living in the New York Area.”

At another booth, Fordham University advertized their Center for Medieval Studies program. Displaying replicas of manuscripts and handwritten texts from the Middle Ages, the school used the theme of the festival to highlight course offerings most likely to appeal to attendees.

One of the festival performers, Purna Shakti, is a member of the Mystical Muses, a belly dance duo which performs internationally and displays different forms of traditional dance from India and Egypt. Hosting their show right outside the entrance to the Cloisters, the Muses drew inspiration from the folk dances such as tanoura -- which is derived from a spiritual Egyptian dance in which the performer wears a colorful, weighted skirt -- as well as Indian gypsy veil dances, in creating their routine. Following each performance, they posed for photos and provided hands-on instruction to spectators.

Shakti, describing her experience as a performer at the festival, said, “We love to perform! The crowds are great, and it’s fun to be able to introduce them to new forms of dance that they may not have witnessed before.” The Mystical Muses have performed at the Fort Tryon Medieval Festival for three years and expressed their wishes of returning next year.

Kathleen Finnegan, a harpist, celebrated her tenth year playing at the Fort Tryon Fair this September. Though she travels to many different states throughout the U.S. to play, most of her time is spent in Florida and New

York. When asked whether she believes the yearly event makes a difference within the community she said, “I have had patrons of the fair, who didn’t come to the neighborhood in the past, tell me that they come at other times of year now because they see the beauty of the park and how much the [Cloisters] has to offer.” She added, “Of course, they use the businesses in the area several

times a year because of that.”

Through good food, dancing, music, and the arts, Fort Tryon’s Medieval Festival strengthens communities by supporting local businesses and exposing New Yorkers to traditions and practices that are foreign to them. It is a hub of cultural exchange that looks to continue for many years to come.



Anatolia Fire Goddess of the Mystical Muses performs an illusion act. Photo by Brittany Aufiero.

Professor McCabe Brings Jesus to Lehman

By J. Manuel Rivera Cortes



Jennifer McCabe's headshot. Photo courtesy of Lehman College.

"Jesus Hopped the A Train" rolled into Lehman Oct. 17 thru 20, directed by veteran actor and assistant professor, Jennifer McCabe. "As a director I get everything from my actors," she said. "I am 100 percent an actor's director." Having grown up in the theatre, McCabe explains it is a second family to her, and she brings the strength of that bond to her directing.

McCabe has over 30 years' experience within theatre. The child of thespians who lacked child care, she began

watching her parents' rehearsals at the age of two.

At 13, she joined their world, and began acting onstage while playing soccer for her school team. The latter would garner her a scholarship to college, where she slowly found that theatre was her love and motivating force. To pursue it professionally she earned an MFA from the Actors Studio Drama School at The New School. After graduation she worked for a majority of the playhouses on Theatre

Row, and this motivated her to become an educator.

Junior Shantelle Watkins, theatre major and business minor, said of McCabe's directing style, "She makes sure we have a full background. Her technique helps us analyze and go deeper."

Senior Christine D'Onofrio, a theatre major in the Adult Degree Program, said, "She makes us feel safe. She is able to pull things out of us. In this play, the character work is so important, we give meaning to it with Prof. McCabe guidance." Both agreed that McCabe has brought them and their classmates into the creative process, and made them molders of the drama.

McCabe explained the idea for the production came to her in conversation with Professor Richard DesRochers, Director of the Multimedia and Theatre programs, who encouraged her to direct it for the Fall 2018 semester. For her, the most memorable scene of her most recent play is Act 2, Scene 4. "This scene feels like the final countdown. It is very tense, and every player helps to build that tension." She hopes that this production sheds light on what it means to take responsibility and on the extent to which we have become desensitized and disillusioned in our society. It addresses the state of the criminal justice system, faith and forgiveness.

McCabe advises anyone interested in pursuing an acting career to know that there are many ways to participate in theatre that will help students to become better actors. "Theatre is collaborative! Therefore, you have to know how to work well with others. Stay educated on the subject and its trends and purpose in society."

Lehman Student Wins Fight against Cancer

By Kimberlee Mendez



Reyes when she started growing back her hair. Photo courtesy of Elvia Reyes.

"You feel like the world is coming to an end," recalled Lehman psychology major Elvia Reyes, of the day a doctor told her she had breast cancer. On average in the U.S., according to breastcancer.org, 12 percent of women, or 1 in 8, will develop invasive breast cancer. Reyes, 31, a financial aid advisor for Christine Valmy International School, was part of that 12 percent.

"Around October of 2016, I first noticed the lump in my breast," said Reyes. "I was concerned and decided to call the doctor in December, but it wasn't until February that I got an appointment." To receive a diagnosis, a patient has to undergo a variety of examinations to create a pathology report. This report helps doctors determine a diagnosis, what stage the cancer is in, and whether a recovery process can begin.

"In March of 2017, I was meant only to have the biopsy report, but the doctors wanted to do more tests after learning my mother had breast cancer, too," Reyes said, "but when I was tested for a gene where it could transmit from my mom, I was negative." Her doctor told her to expect her tests results after one week, but she received them within a few days.

"My cancer had already progressed to stage 2," said Reyes. Tumors are generally categorized based on five stages of progression, from stage 0, a fixed tumor that will not spread throughout the whole body and can be easily removed, to stage 4, which means that the cancer has progressed and spread to other parts of the body.

Although anybody can get cancer, it is most common in women over age

50, according to the Susan G. Komen foundation. The website also states that in the U.S., fewer than 5 percent of women diagnosed with cancer are under 40, with the highest rate seen in women over 70. Reyes, however, was only 30 when she was diagnosed. "I was so young when my cancer developed, the doctors were surprised," she said.

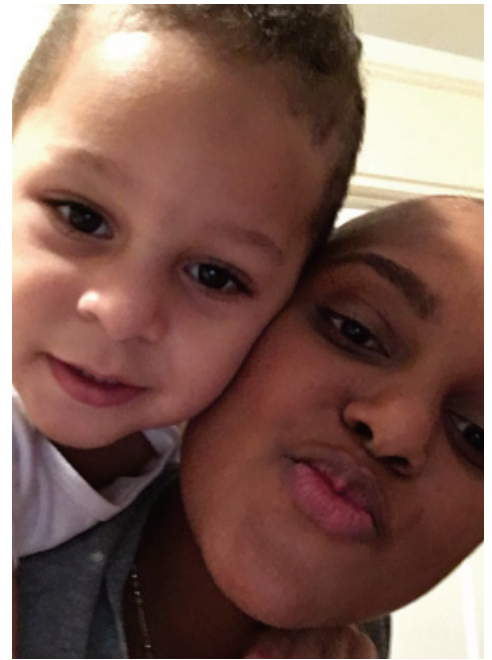
When the doctors found out her tumor was stage 2, she immediately started treatment, which consisted of surgeries and two different types of chemotherapy. Side effects from chemo can include fatigue, early menopause, weight gain, and even heart problems -- according to the Susan G. Komen Foundation -- and can last even after the treatment is concluded.

"When I was going through chemotherapy, I knew I was going to lose my hair in the

process, so I shaved my whole head," said Reyes about starting treatment. She explained she was never discouraged through treatment, and always kept a positive mind.

In May of 2018, after a year of chemo, a nurse told Reyes, "You are cured. No more treatment." According to the American Cancer Society, the five-year survival rate for stage 2 breast cancer is 93 percent.

"When I went to my last treatment, I was relieved," Reyes said, "but I still feel tired even now, with everything over and done." She remains grateful for her family's support, and the constant presence of her son and husband. "I was very fortunate to have my family by my side," she said, "and they were my motivation."



Elvia Reyes with her son when she started chemotherapy. Photo courtesy of Elvia Reyes.

Lehman Women Embrace Natural Hair

By Kimberlee Mendez

"A lot of people inspired me to go natural," explained Bre'Ann Newsome, a junior at Lehman, on her choice to wear her natural hair. "I had this friend who had a much looser curl pattern and she stopped straightening her hair," Newsome said. "She used to come to my house all the time and she would tell me 'oh you need to stop getting perms,' and I'm like what do you know? Then seeing my cousins and my best friend embrace their natural hair made me want to do it to. Embrace what I have."

For Newsome, who went natural in July of 2016, the transition was daunting but satisfying. "Before I went natural I always permed my hair and used harsh chemicals which I've done for 10 years. My hair has always been processed, I

did all of it," she said. The defining moment for her was when she had to wear short hair, although at first, she had trouble adjusting to it.

Newsome is not alone in her choice. According to curlcentric.com, the demand for organic hair products is rising, with sales amounting to more than \$750 million between 2012 and 2017, while sales of hair relaxers has dropped by more than 25 percent in the same time period.

Lehman senior and music major Amber A. Milan, who has been natural for five years, was inspired by such products, through a salon that goes by the name DevaCurl. "My aunt found this salon that specializes in my hair texture and

any other natural curly and thick hair. So, the fact that a place like that exists took my breath away," said Milan. With DevaCurl, she found that she was able to use products that made her hair stay curly and stylish.

For Dominique Drumgool, a Lehman alum who has been natural for six years, it wasn't a person who inspired her to go natural, but a diagnosis. "What made me go natural in 2012 was when I got diagnosed with alopecia areata, but it was not a severe case," she said. Alopecia areata is an autoimmune skin disease which causes hair loss in the scalp area, face area, and also occurs in other parts of the body. "I wasn't too happy about it, but it inspired me to start my journey to having natural

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Photo courtesy of Dominique Drumgool.



Photo courtesy of Bre'Ann Newsome.



Photo courtesy of Amber A. Milan.

healthy hair.” Drumgool finalized her decision when she tried a perm and found “it didn’t work out for me, so I decided on doing the big chop.”

Drumgool’s time at Lehman, away from her mom who previously had taken care of her hair, also contributed to her managing her own hair.” “In college I basically understood my hair

“I realized my natural beauty is all I needed.”

**- Dominique Drumgool, a
Lehman alum**

more. And how to take care of it,” she said. “So, I braid and style it on my own, and have a procedure for washing

and overall taking care of it.”

Ultimately Drumgool found a greater sense of autonomy and independence in her choice. “The moment I defined my hair and said to myself this is my hair now is when I realized I didn’t need my hair to be straightened, permed or pressed,” she said. “I realized my natural beauty is all I needed.”

New App Means No More Lines for Lehman Students

By Shaiann Frazier



Students using the computers at the renovated IT Center that has freshly painted blue walls. All photos by Shaiann Frazier.

A new app, LehmanQ, has made it easier for students to access the IT Center and the Financial Aid office this fall. LehmanQ is a mobile scheduling tool that allows students to avoid the hassle of long lines beyond making online appointments with these offices from anywhere using their mobile phone, computer, or a nearby kiosk center.

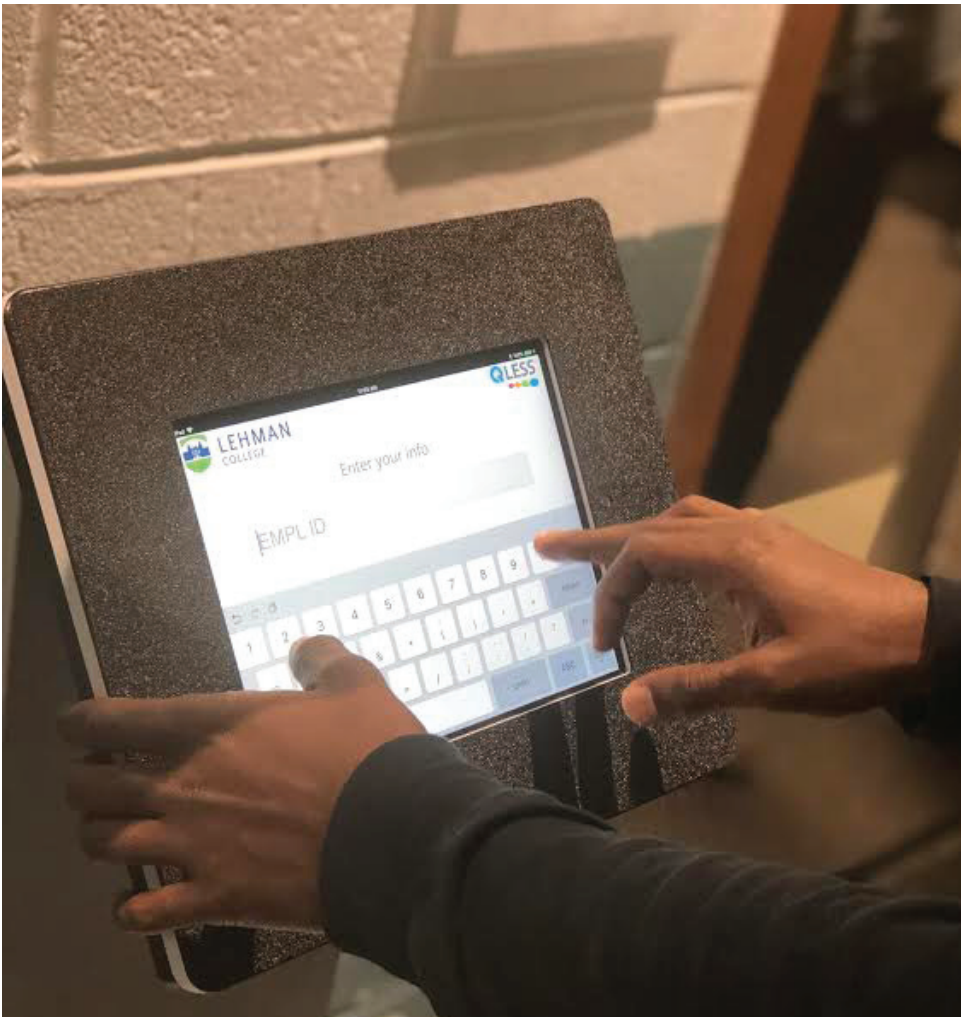
On the first day of classes, many students were pleasantly surprised to find the

Lehman IT Center in Carman Hall with freshly painted blue walls and the new kiosk center for making appointments.

Likewise, students visiting the Financial Aid Office were happy to realize they could make appointments online rather than having to take a ticket and then wait for service. The previous system relied on an outdated system known as Qmatic, which resulted in students sometimes waiting for over an hour in

long lines at the Financial Aid Office and the IT Center.

The new system, LehmanQ, is mobile friendly. Instead of going to a kiosk or using a nearby computer, students can download a free QR code reader from the App or Google Play Store, allowing them to make an appointment from their mobile device. Once an appointment is made, students receive text alerts notifying them about their wait time and



A current Lehman student using the kiosk center located outside of the Financial Office.

place in line. At any time, students can cancel their appointment, request more wait time, and even update their text alerts to voice calls.

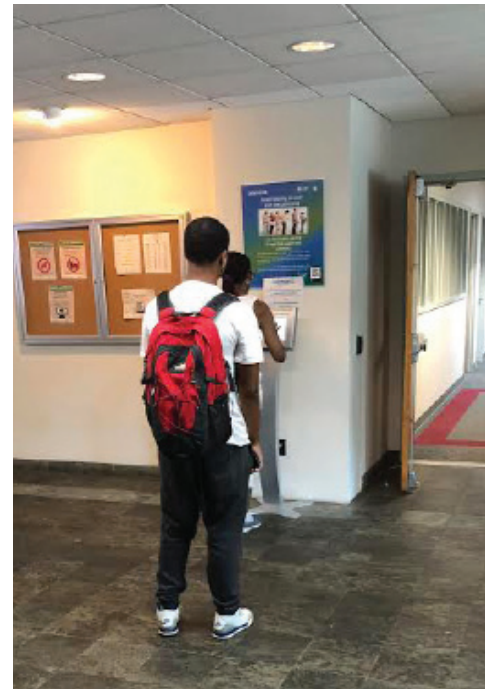
Lillian Rivera, 21, a speech pathology major said, "I think the new system is easier, and more efficient, and less time consuming, because in the summer you had to stay on the line. But at least with the app you can do it on your phone, do something else, and come back," she said. "It saves more time and it's less of a headache."

Vera Senese, Director of the Financial Aid Office, explained that the change of systems was student-driven. "The students came up with the idea and reached out to Ronald Bergmann. They weren't happy with the financial aid system," she said. "I jumped at the idea of a new system. It was something that I wanted to do for two years."

After being presented with various models from vendors, the system, "QLess," was collaboratively chosen with the help of various Lehman departments and staff. "The model QLess seemed to have most of what we needed," Senese said. The name was subsequently changed to "LehmanQ."

LehmanQ was first introduced into the IT Center in the Spring of 2018, where it helped nearly 5400 students, but it wasn't implemented into the Financial Aid office until this August. The upgrade makes a great difference there, since approximately two-thirds of Lehman's nearly 14,000 currently enrolled students -- 66 percent in 2017 -- 2018, according to Senese -- received some form of financial aid.

Raul Rosario, 23, a digital design major said, "A lot of people come to the financial aid office. It's not just sitting



Students making online appointments at the Kiosk Center to receive assistance from the IT Help Desk.

here as before with the tickets where you had to sit and wait for a long time. Now you can do other stuff while waiting."

Maria Garcia, the IT Center's day shift supervisor, said, "Our goal is to help the students as much as we can. We want to mainly help the flow of students who go to the help desk," she said, "It's very helpful. The students just have to adjust and get used to it."

Ediltrudys Ruiz, Assistant Vice President of the Division of Information Technology, said, "The model is to empower students. And to help them use their time effectively and efficiently, and for students to take advantage of the time we are putting back into their hands."

Donald Taylor, 20, a transfer student and business administration major said, "I find that it's easy, and I like how it texts you when you're up next."

Janelle Kirven, a Westchester native, and accounting major said, "I think it's good because we can see where some of our school fees are being utilized regarding the school and them trying to modernize student engagement activity."

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