

Transitioning Together

A mentor program for first generation students applying to college

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Fall Focus

On September 19th, the T² Class of 2017 gathered for the first meeting of their senior year. The students, their mentors and parents met over pizza and had an hour packed with information and presenters before Newton North's Senior Parent Night.

The program started with a warm welcome from our new Principal at NNHS, Henry Turner. Dr. Turner set a wonderful tone for the evening. While he acknowledged that everything that goes into senior year can be stressful, he ensured the group that they have plenty of support in school and with T², and that they will be able to access all of the help that they need.

Ms. Hall then talked about the upcoming T² programming and our senior fall timeline. The October meeting will be dedicated to the Common Application, the November meeting will cover the Financial Aid process, and the December meeting will be an open workshop for students to work on pending items with their mentors. T² students and their mentors are also invited to attend three field trips over the course of the fall: Suffolk University, UMass Boston and Framingham State University. Each of these colleges offer unique programming and a different campus experience, so it is a great way for students to see a few different types of schools.

Ms. Hall then turned the meeting over to the guest speaker - Franci DaLuz, UMass-Boston Admissions Recruiter. As a first generation college student herself, Franci told her story of navigating through the college admissions process with parents who did not speak English. As immigrants from Brazil, Franci's family moved to the United States to give her the opportunity to pursue higher education. The lessons that Franci learned along the way that she shared with the group were:

- 1. Ask questions. Don't be shy or ashamed to ask anything that is on your mind.*
- 2. Accept help when it is offered to you. Your teachers, guidance counselor and friends would not be offering assistance if they didn't mean it. Use your network for the support you need.*
- 3. Find mentors in every phase of your life. They may be people assigned to you (like T²) or you may have to go out and find them yourself. Once you find mentors you click with, keep them. It is important to maintain the relationship. These are people who you can rely on your whole life.*
- 4. Take advantage of every opportunity. Want to study abroad? Make it happen. Want to play a sport? Try out. You are responsible for creating your future - be an active participant!*

After Franci's inspirational words, the group joined Senior Parent Night. It was an excellent kick-off to the year, and we cannot wait to see how the year plays out for every member of the Transitioning Together Class of 2017!



T² visit to Suffolk University



See the T² website:

www.nnhst2.org

for our complete calendar of events, important updates, resources and forms.

Check it out!

Summer Spotlight: T² Class of 2017

T² mentees were active in their communities this summer. Below are some of the internships and programs in which our students participated.

City of Newton Mayor's Summer Intern Program

Quinn Etchie, Director of Youth Services describes the Mayor's Summer High School Internship Program as "so much more involved than a regular summer job; students have the opportunity to really see the inner workings of a business or workplace. Additionally, the weekly workshops allow a space for the students to discuss what they've learned, problem solve together, and think critically about issues they are all facing." Ms. Etchie, who ran the Summer Internship Program, heard from many T² students that "they were particularly grateful to be participating in this program because it provided them a unique opportunity to get up close and personal within a professional environment."



The following T² students participated (pictured above):
Isaiah Bowden at the Newton Innovation Center (Meet Caregivers)

Alexus Garcia at Unbound Commerce

Luna Zhang at Big Belly Solar

Mehri Ouerkaxi at the New Art Center

Ashley Rodriguez at the Newton Innovation Center (Superhealos)

Luther Evans at Unbound Commerce

Daisy Cartagena Perez (not pictured) at Newton-Wellesley Hospital

Grab The Torch



Linh Dinh, T² mentee of Class 2017, was the proud recipient of a scholarship to attend a 2016 Grab the Torch (GTT) Summer Institute session. One of the basic principal objectives at Grab The Torch (GTT) Summer Institutes, is to instill the fact that each student holds a piece of the greater good puzzle—each student is challenged to take that unique piece, no matter

how big or small and to find his or her true passion for the puzzle. Over the course of one week, GTT students discover endless opportunities to give back, take action and lead in a philanthropic and ethical way.

Linh shared with us some feedback about her experience at Grab The Torch Summer Institute at Freeport, Maine. "GTT was one of the best weeks of my life. I cherished every single moment I spent there. There was a lesson in every story from all the speakers that came and talked to us. Grab the Torch allowed me to step way out of my comfort zone and I personally gained so much out of just one week. I met such wonderful adults; I still tear up every time I think about how much they have helped me and how much I miss them. I could feel the love they gave us and the effort they put into this program everyday. I became friends with everyone there and each of them have inspired me in their own unique way. We were all from different backgrounds but we bonded and became great friends even before we learned everyone's name. The time I spent at Grab The Torch will always stay with me. I am so thankful to the people who introduced me to this program because I would have missed out on a life changing experience"

Boston University SummerLab

Daniel Babitskiy received a scholarship to Boston University's SummerLab, a laboratory-based program with hands-on learning about biotechnology and DNA Science. Daniel shared this with us about his experience at BU:

"I loved the program and thoroughly enjoyed everything I was taught. I feel as though I have been exposed to a possible future career and am even more interested in the



medical field now due to the exposure I have received. I met so many new people and connected with a bunch due to our mutual interest in medicine. I cannot express enough how grateful I am to have received a spot in this amazing program at Boston University and how beneficial it has been for me in terms of my learning."

Congratulations Class of 2016



| <u>Class of 2106 Mentee</u> | <u>Mentor</u> | <u>Attending Institution</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Eddie Acuna | Joan Balaban | Worcester State University |
| Nicole Algarin-Mojica | Michelle Techler | Bridgewater State University |
| Sharif Aliyev | Tom Mackowski | Emmanuel University |
| Layon Araujo | Dorris Woolery | Massachusetts Bay CC |
| Ana Aroshidze | Laurie Gordon | Regis College |
| Kristen Arsenaault | Diana Rodriguez | University of NH |
| Shawn Ashby | Michelle Kennedy | Newbury College |
| Luiza Barreto | Kathy Choi | Temple University |
| Sydney Beatrice | Sally Anderson | Plymouth State University |
| Madina Bedoeva | Alice Cunningham | Bunker Hill CC |
| Eric Chen | Ruth Comstock | Dartmouth College |
| Ashley Coc-Martinez | Jean DeBenedictis | Suffolk University |
| Kayla Demelo | Katya Salkever | Becker College |
| Mirabelle Espady | Marsha Kessler | Hampshire College |
| Sonia Ferré | Stephanie Gilman | University of Connecticut |
| Jordan Freeman | Melissa Chaikof | Franklin Pierce University |
| Gina Joseph | Debbie Franko | MCPHS |
| Robert Komarovksy | Michael Jablon | UMASS Amherst |
| Trevor Martinez-Tobin | Eileen Morrison | Merrimack College |
| Quynh-Chi Nguyen | Pat McCaffrey | UMASS Amherst |
| Yarieliz Ortiz | Sandy Cobb | Massachusetts Bay CC |
| Bruno Panedigrano | Shawna Giggey | Bridgewater State University |
| Davio Pena | Michael Landman | Bridgewater State University |
| Joyse Pereira | Samantha Mandel | Massachusetts Bay CC |
| Juan Rodriguez | Anne Blumberg | UMASS Boston |
| Nathaniel Roldan | Jenn Pontillo | United States Marines |
| Brenai Rosa | Deb Breen | Westfield State University |
| Yasmin Sayouty | Laurel Sgan Kibel | Becker College |
| Miriam Senin | Gail Stein | Massachusetts Bay CC |
| Lal Senyurt | Stacy Ellender | Boston University |
| Ionie Simms | Vicky Stein | Lesley University |
| Burhan Ud Din | Fred Dalzell | Massachusetts Bay CC |
| Erika Virgil | Isabelle Thacker | UMASS Boston |
| Di Wu | Jen Graham | Tufts University |
| Fiona Yang | Anne Callahan | UMASS Amherst |
| Wendy Zhang | Hong Xu | Case Western Reserve Univ. |

For the third year in a row, every T² graduate was accepted into at least one 2 or 4 year college. We celebrated their successes at our Closing Ceremony on June 1, 2016. Mr. Labeledz, our Alumni Coordinator provided tips for a successful entry into college and spoke about his own experience as a first generation student. Mentors were thanked for their dedication to their mentees for the past year and a half, and mentees received a t-shirt from the college that they will be attending. Mentors also spoke for a few minutes about their mentee and their accomplishments in T². A fantastic night for all!



New T² Partnership: Let's Get Ready and Project Grad Bag!



This summer the graduating NNHS T² Class of 2016 was the benefactor of a generous outreach project from two awesome organizations, “Let’s Get Ready” and “Grad Bag.” Big thank you to Jenny Ganson and Claudia Wu, both members of our Newton community for facilitating this new partnership. Claudia and Jenny were responsible for connecting Transitioning Together with these two helpful non-profits whose missions directly apply to our first generation cohort.

Let’s Get Ready offers services throughout the Northeast, from Maine to Pennsylvania. The mission of Let’s Get Ready is to provide low-income and underserved high school students with free SAT preparation, admissions counseling and other support services needed to gain admission to and graduate from college. Services are provided by volunteer college students who also serve as role models and mentors to the high school students. The Boston office is located downtown near the South Station MBTA stop. Let’s Get Ready invited the NNHS T² Class of 2016 to participate for FREE in a college preparatory workshop. The content of the workshop included budgeting, academics, adjusting to college life, and time management. At the workshop, our T² mentees had the opportunity to meet other first generation students from the Boston area.

The workshop culminated with a fabulous lunch and “Grad Bag” shopping for college supplies. Each student that attended the workshop could leave with \$300 worth of useful, high quality, clean and gently used stuff for their college rooms. The non-profit Grad Bag started in 2012 as a small grassroots effort. The mission of Grad Bag is to collect, clean, package, store and re-distribute dorm room items to soon-to-be college students who might not have the means to buy these things on their own. A total of 18 T² mentees from the Class of 2016 selected dorm essentials organized by Grad Bag this summer.

Thank you to both Let’s Get Ready and Project Grad Bag for your support this summer! The T² Class of 2016 was so appreciative of your essential college resources and services. Transitioning Together is looking forward to continuing this partnership in the future.

Call for Class of 2018

Are you interested in going to college? Would you be the first in your family to attend college in the US? Are you nervous about the whole process? Would you welcome help? T² is here for you. Just go to www.nnhst2.org and click on “APPLY NOW” to access the Class of 2018 Application. You may also fill out a paper application in the College and Career Center. We will contact you shortly after we receive your application, and you will learn news of your acceptance in December.

Important dates for the incoming Class of 2018:

- 1) **Thursday, November 10** : X Block Ice Cream Social - An opportunity for the Class of 2018 to talk to Class of 2017 T² mentees and ask questions about the program
- 2) **Friday, November 18**: T² Application deadline
- 3) **January 23**: First T² Meeting and Junior Family Night
- 4) **February 28**: Class of 2017 Retreat at Mount Ida College



Transitioning Together

www.nnhst2.org

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