

The Fund for the City of New York and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
congratulate the winners of the

2017 Sloan Awards for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics

Celebrating Extraordinary STEM Teachers in New York City Public High Schools



Wendy Dunson-DelValle
Living Environment, Environmental Geology
Brooklyn High School of the Arts

Wendy DelValle entered college planning to be an opera singer, but decided to pursue her interests in science and teaching instead. Since 2002, with degrees in Biology and Secondary Education, Ms. DelValle has taught science at Brooklyn High School of the Arts. She brings the scientific world to her classroom through guest lectures and innovative experiments. She teaches students that science is a field where not all questions have answers and that scientific knowledge is essential for all human endeavors. Says an Assistant Principal, "Wendy is creating globally educated, scientific citizens." But, she is also providing her students with the science to affect change locally. Says senior Timothy Johnson, "She is great at arming her students with the scientific knowledge necessary to be strong change-makers in our own communities."

Jason Garofalo
Algebra 2

The Marble Hill School for International Studies

An innovative math educator and a Math for America Master Teacher, Jason Garofalo creates a collaborative environment in his classroom. Students work together on engaging problems to explore mathematics while developing their understanding of the subject. For his students, many of whom are English Language Learners who speak Spanish, Yemeni, Bengali or West African dialects, his classes are part seminar and part mathematical workshop, where the focus is not on the right answer, but on robust comprehension. Says one student, "My brain often hurts in that class, but I feel better for it." A recent graduate, who received a four-year scholarship to Hamilton College, notes "I came to the US when I was 14 from the Dominican Republic. To find someone in my first year in high school who was ready to believe in me was a special gift."



Martina Gately
Algebra 1
James Madison High School

A math teacher in Dublin, Martina Gately came to NYC in 2002, planning to stay only a short time. She was hired to teach math at James Madison HS in Brooklyn, a large high school with 4,000 students. After six months, she knew she had found a perfect fit and has been there ever since. "Her classroom is simply magical," says Principal Jodie Cohen. "Students undergo transformations from shy, quiet, and shakily-confident to active, confident and able mathematicians." Notes John Wolfe, AP for Math, "Martina is a stand out, from her ability to reach students, to her openness as a department collaborator, to the way she is willing to try new things as an educator." A former student, Steven Herbst, who now teaches chemistry at James Madison, says, "I want to be the kind of life-changing teacher for my students that Ms. Gately was for me."

Erica Guzmán

AP Calculus AB, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus
Civic Leadership Academy

The second youngest of six children, Erica Guzmán was born and raised in East New York, Brooklyn to immigrant parents from the Dominican Republic. She earned her BA from City College and became a NYC high school math teacher in 2005. Now at Civic Leadership Academy in Queens and a Math for America Master Teacher, Ms. Guzmán assigns students to work in groups that change daily, depending on who needs what. Says a current student, "When we walk into class, we know the first thing we have to do is check to see where we are sitting. It keeps us on our toes." Ms. Guzmán reflects, "If I can convince students that hard work and dedication are what gets you far in life and that natural talent or circumstances alone will not do that, my class will have been a success. Helping a student who has struggled to succeed is all the motivation I need."

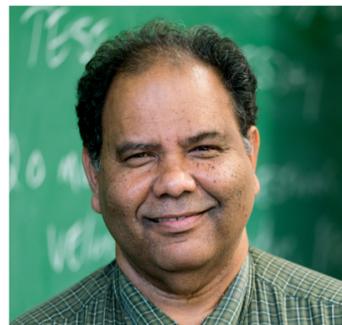


William J. Lynam
Environmental Science, Agricultural Science Internship Program
Gotham Collaborative High School

"Bill's class is like the lair of a mad scientist," notes a student at Gotham Collaborative HS in the Bronx. William Lynam, a former Urban Park Ranger and Peace Corps Volunteer with a BA in Wildlife Management and a MS in Forestry, has taught science for over 20 years. He says, "If you do not experiment, if you do not have a connection to what you are learning, your view of science is skewed to thinking it belongs only in a textbook." The crown jewel of his course is the 3-acre garden and orchard he created from an abandoned lot. It has over 250 fruit trees, an organic vegetable garden, and chickens, rabbits, bees and mushrooms. With his rigor and seemingly endless patience, his students learn first-hand about biodiversity, botany, sustainability and the principles of biology and chemistry. They also learn the skills needed to succeed in life.

Krishna Mahabir
Physics 1, Robotics, Geo Hazards
Grover Cleveland High School

Described by a colleague as "...the most revered teacher I've ever worked with, revered by students and teachers alike," Krishna "Maha" Mahabir has taught science for 18 years at Grover Cleveland HS in Queens. Originally from Guyana, Mr. Mahabir, a trained geologist, has fostered student interest by reviving science competitions and opening them up to the school's large population of newly-arrived immigrants. The results have been spectacular. In the NYS Science Olympiad and in the City Regional Bridge Building Competition, Grover Cleveland has consistently won against students from elite schools. Says one student, "The competition gave me a sense that I belonged. Maha taught me how I could take on scary challenges with confidence. His class is not something we had to attend, but a place we were privileged to visit day in and day out."



Hyungmin Park
AP Physics 1, AP Physics C
New Explorations into Science, Technology and Math (NEST+m)

Hyungmin Park was born in Seoul, South Korea, and immigrated to Queens at the age of 4. An excellent math and physics student, Mr. Park graduated with honors in physics from Caltech and has dedicated himself to sharing his love of learning and physics with high school students. After earning an MS in Science Education in 2011, he began teaching at NEST+m. He prepares students for success through hands-on projects and popular after-school tutoring sessions: 96% of physics students pass the Regents Physics exam as 9th graders, and his students' AP score average is 1.3 points higher than the global average. Mr. Park says, "Although I am a science teacher, my main motivation is to create critical, self-sufficient learners who have the skills to question everything around them and to learn how to find answers on their own."

Photography by Sarah Shatz



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