



The President and the Rapper



Project Reach students "pay it forward" during Urban Adventure by feeding quarters into expired parking meters.

March 30 was a busy day for the City of Portland. Both President Obama and rapper Snoop Dogg were in town for separate events. So were 8th graders from JMG's Project Reach program (they were there for our annual Urban Adventure event, which is hosted by Unum). Although the students didn't get to bump into either the President or Snoop Dogg, there were plenty of other exciting moments to keep them busy.

The 139 8th graders, from 16 different middle schools across the state, were treated to a workshop by graphic artist Ben Bishop, who showed them how fun and easy it is to imagine and create "superheroes." (You can learn more about Ben Bishop [on his website](#).) The students then divided up into mixed groups for a scavenger hunt in the Old Port, where they had to collect everything from a checking account application to a bus schedule and perform tasks like "paying it forward" (doing a random kindness for a stranger) and getting a signature from a genuine Maine native. When they returned to Unum, the groups created and delivered a presentation about their group strategy to a panel of judges.



After dinner and a sleepover at Unum, the students participated in a series of workshops. They practiced filling out applications and interviewing with volunteers from the business community. They took part in two team-building initiatives, honed their phone skills in a Telephone Techniques workshop, learned how to dress for success, and had an envelope relay.

Finally, the winners of the scavenger hunt were announced, and the kids boarded busses back to their respective schools.

Ms. Chabot and her scavenger hunt group pose for a picture in the Old Port.



Freeport JMG students were able to hear President Obama speak at Southern Maine Community College, where they snapped this photo.

Alas, no one got the President's autograph, but there was some excitement when Mrs. Benson's scavenger hunt group snapped a picture with former Governor Baldacci, and when Ms. Boone's group assisted at the scene of a car accident (her chaperone, a member of the Sanford Police Department, assisted the accident victims until Portland Police could arrive on scene).

Meanwhile, in South Portland, eight Freeport High School JMG students and their Specialist, Jay Harper, had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear President Obama speak at his daytime event at Southern Maine Community College.

"I took a diverse group of kids to the event, all of whom left feeling very good about their chance to see and hear our President speak," says Harper. "It was a wonderful event that we feel extremely fortunate to have experienced. President Obama is a tremendous speaker, and we also heard from Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and former Senator George Mitchell."

The Chamber Scholars of 2011

In the February e-newsletter we featured JMG alumnus Patrick Graham, who was one of the three Maine State Chamber of Commerce Scholarship winners at JMG's 2011 Career Development Conference. Now we'd like to introduce you to the other two scholarship recipients.

Cielle Pomerleau, a former JMG student at LearningWorks in Portland, is in her second semester at Southern Maine Community College, majoring in behavioral health with the goal of becoming a social worker.

She says of college, "I love the fact that it's all up to me to get to my classes, that there is barely any pressure. You do well because you want to do well, not because you have to."

She credits winning the Chamber Scholarship with increasing her self-confidence. "Winning the Chamber Scholarship helped me realize that I do actually have potential, and that I can do something with my life, other than being a mother," she says.

Although she isn't one hundred percent sure of her plans after college, Cielle hasn't ruled out the possibility of working for JMG. "I have many dreams, but I haven't decided on which one I am going to pursue," she says. "I've always said I wanted [JMG South Region Manager] Katy Foley's job!"



Zach White, a 2011 JMG graduate from Carrabec High School in North Anson, is attending Maine Maritime Academy and studying Power Engineering Technology. He enjoys school and appreciates that MMA has a smaller student body because that means more one-on-one time with his professors. After graduation Zach hopes to work for a nuclear power plant, preferably in Alaska.

He says, “Winning the Chamber Scholarship has helped me out by really pushing me to work harder, because I was awarded the scholarship from all the hard work I put into high school. Now I have to push myself a little harder so that I can prove to people that I actually deserve it.”

Freeport JMG Walks for Mary

March 11 marked the 14th year that Mary’s Walk has been held in Saco, and it was the 9th consecutive year that Jay Harper’s JMG students from Freeport High School have raised money and participated in the walk.

Mary’s Walk, which is a fundraiser for the Maine Cancer Foundation (MCF), was started in 1999. According to MCF’s website, the namesake of the walk, Mary Kerry Libby, “was an avid walker along Saco’s Main Street. [She] lost her courageous battle with cancer in 1997, leaving a loving family and wide circle of friends and acquaintances. They resolved to make something good come of their loss and a year later, in 1998, launched a simple walk-a-thon along a route familiar to Mary. Several hundred people came, most of whom knew Mary personally. About \$15,000 was raised.”

The walk is now held on the Sunday before St. Patrick’s Day in conjunction with the Kerrymen Pub 5K road race. Since 1997, over 20,000 people have participated in the event, and more than \$1.4 million has been raised for the MCF to support cancer research and patient services throughout Maine.



Thirty-five of Jay Harper's JMG students from Freeport High School fundraised for and participated in Mary's Walk on March 11.

Harper and 35 of his students participated in the walk, raising a little over \$1,800. “It was a glorious early spring day,” says Harper, “and it is safe to say we all enjoyed ourselves while doing a stellar job helping this outstanding charity. I am very proud of my students, and we have now raised close to \$18,000 for this cause in the last nine years. I want to thank everyone who donated and to also thank the district, which has supported our efforts all these years. What a wonderful day!!! Thank you to my students who understand and respect the value of showing commitment to a cause. You make me very proud!”

When asked how he and his students got involved with Mary’s Walk nine years ago, Harper says, “We raised money for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute my first three years and decided we wanted to help more locally, but my students still wanted to help the fight against cancer. So because I grew up in Saco and knew Mary Kerry Libby, I asked my students if they wanted to participate in Mary's Walk. Gene Libby, Mary’s husband and one the organizers, came to my class and showed the students a video and they talked about Mary and the cause. Since 2004 we have been going to Saco to participate in Mary's Walk. It is now a tradition and an expectation for all my students.”

To learn more about Mary's Walk, please [click here](#).

Partnering with SSB Makes \$ense



When the people at Skowhegan Savings Bank (SSB) say they want to make a difference in their community, they put their money where their mouth is. This year SSB is giving JMG a \$5,000 grant to help provide financial literacy education to JMG students across Somerset County.

Along with this donation, SSB joined forces with JMG to hold Skowhegan Area High School's first-ever financial literacy fair, titled Life's Dollars and Sense. On March 21 more than 150 high school seniors took part in this interactive event that challenged each one to create a realistic budget they could live with.



Skowhegan Area High School students at the Life's Dollars and Sense Financial Literacy Fair

“Other organizations conduct similar financial literacy events for high school students across Maine,” said Karen Hart, Assistant Vice President at SSB. “But, they’ve never come to Somerset County. So this is a great opportunity for us to fulfill a real need for these students.”

Thank you, [Skowhegan Savings Bank](#)!

Behind the Lens

On March 6, Toni Gregoire, a junior in the JMG program at Morse High School in Bath, was able to test out a career as she job shadowed with photographer Mike Nutter of Bath Iron Works.

Gregoire’s JMG Specialist, Maria Morris, says, “Toni played a very important role in documenting the *Michael Murphy* leaving BIW for sea trials and passing by Fort Popham. Some of her work will become part of the permanent historical record of the ship. Mike Nutter was extremely impressed with Toni's maturity, people skills, enthusiasm, and ability to work with a camera with little training.”



Photos of Toni Gregoire, courtesy of Mike Nutter / Bath Iron Works.

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