

ON HUDSON

flowers, which usually are done by Ms. Newman's students during class, were a lot harder to get done," Liana said.

"We had to do the flowers by ourselves at Ms. Newman's house with Ms. Spana and Ms. Newman's daughter's help."

The event's features included a choir that sang "Amazing Grace" before the meal, an arts and crafts table for kids, and, downstairs, games of basketball and football. Students concurred that the dinner was a complete and often enjoyable success.



the dinner.

"Although this year was run a little bit differently, the dinner itself went just as well if not better than it always does," Senior Michael Rudd said. "It was really a success and as far as I could tell everyone was

having fun, myself included." The turnout also impressed those responsible for the dinner.

"Seeing a full house in this transition period was really fulfilling," Allison said.

As the night drew to an end and the busses of people left, the seniors could not help but feel a bit nostalgic, knowing this would be their last Project S.H.A.R.E. dinner.

"It is one of the things I'm going to miss the most about the school next year," Senior Alex Carmody said.

The students involved event hope that such participation will continue past their own graduations. Project S.H.A.R.E. has a long-lived legacy in Hastings High School and the willingness to help those who are less fortunate astounds year after year.



Putting Rumors to Rest and Defining H.A.S.P.

By HANNAH MURPHY & REAH SIEGEL

When asked what H.A.S.P. was, Junior Analena Alcabes replied, "I think it's an alternative program in the high school." Analena's guess was not far off, although what exactly does this program mean or entail?

There are many misconceptions about H.A.S.P., the Hastings Alternative School Program (for instance how some might think it is simply that program involved in school field trips). In fact, there are a variety of aspects that contribute to the H.A.S.P. family community that is created for its students.

"There is a stigma that comes with alternative school," said Gregory Smith, the director of the program. He believes students are quick to judge that term, "alternative school."

H.A.S.P.—a "school within a school," as it's defined on its website—is really a place where students learn the same curriculum under academic and social situations best suited for them. Rather than learning in large classes, students can work in smaller groups and receive individual attention from their teachers. Because of the small classes—less than ten per room—both students and teachers acquire a closeness that creates a relaxed environment in the classroom.

Once every two weeks, all H.A.S.P. students and teachers come together for a community meeting to discuss issues and concerns they have with the programs. In addition to classes, students

have a chance to meet with counselors and are assigned an adult mentor. (Mr. Smith says these bi-monthly meetings might be a reason the program could benefit from more time, as the "community meetings" take away time from class.)

"I like it because it's smaller classes and you get more done, more one on one teaching," said Senior Seth Snyder, who is currently enrolled in the program. "I feel I get to know my teachers better."

Students can be recommended to apply to the program but are never forced to enroll in the program. Those who do choose to apply must undergo an application process and interview to show that they desire to improve academically. Because H.A.S.P. is a voluntary alternative, students do not have to participate during all four years of high school.

Graduation is also a very important component to the program; while still graduating with the senior class, the H.A.S.P. students have a chance to graduate from their program during a separate ceremony. This provides students with a time to share their H.A.S.P. experiences and show their development as students. All H.A.S.P. seniors deliver a graduation speech during this ceremony.

"It's really powerful—you can really see the growth of each student," said Ms. Edwards, a counselor for H.A.S.P.



A H.A.S.P. class in session.

author named Sherman Alexie, fresh off a National Book Award, came to Hastings High after three months of arrangement.

It actually goes back to a couple of years ago, according to Mr. Abrams, who was a key player in getting Sherman Alexie to come to HHS, after a Spirit Committee was formed in response to a school bias incident.

his reservation into a white school. Tied down to a tradition of fighting words with fists, Alexie gave a hilarious account of punching a boy in the face who had taunted him. He explored the issue of race, often and accurately referring to Hastings as a school that consisted of a somewhat white, liberal majority. He talked about childhood diffidence, informing us that

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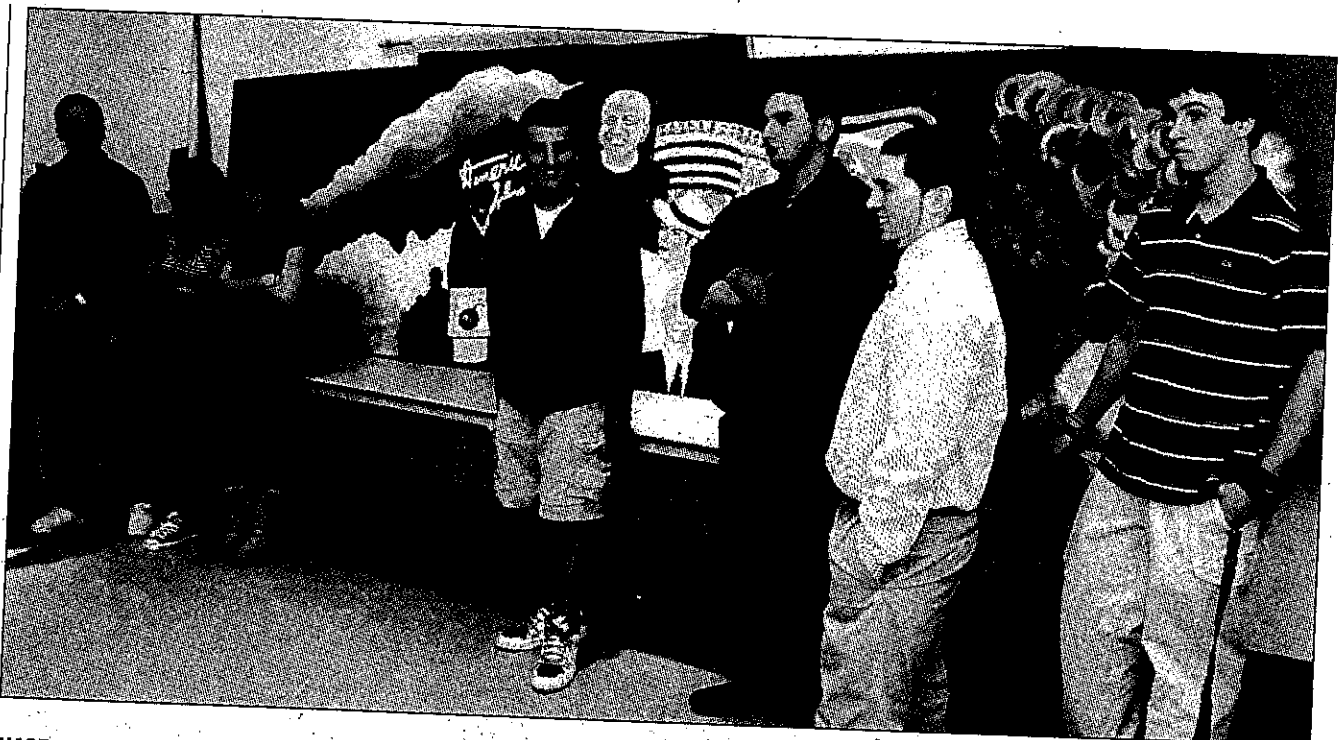
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HASP students unveil their mural during the ceremony on May 13.

JIM MACLEAN/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

HASP crew memorializes decade in mural

By Dina Sciortino

The seven seniors in the Hastings Alternative School Program (HASP) were determined to leave a lasting imprint on Hastings High School as a form of gratitude for the impact HASP has had on their lives. For the last three months, these students — known as "the crew" — toiled during and after school to complete a 16-by-14-foot mural to be displayed in the school long after they graduate.

The mural reflects the first decade of the 21st century through the eyes of Evan Bottiglieri, JP Esposito, Peter Meyers, Chris Paquette, Leandra Rivera, Sofia Sabogal, and Brendon Rasulo, and will be mounted outside HASP Director Greg Smith's classroom, number 229. It was unveiled last Friday in a packed John J. Russell Lecture Room in the Farragut Complex, which houses the middle and high schools, during an emotional HASP commencement ceremony attended by Schools Superintendent Robert Shaps, HHS Principal Lou Adipietro (a.k.a. "Mr. A"), Assistant Principal Melissa Hardesty, and several teachers, students and parents. The students will receive their diplomas with the entire HHS Class of 2010 on June 24.

"We realized how important HASP was for us and how badly we all wanted to give something back to it for helping us grow," Rivera said before the mural

was unveiled.

"We figured let's do something special, and leave something that people will see for a long time," Esposito told the Enterprise.

HASP is the district's option for students who thrive outside a traditional high school setting. Students must apply to the program, which is aimed at individuals who are struggling academically, are chronically truant or late, or have social issues. HASP students enjoy a close-knit atmosphere with one-on-one

teacher support in classes of 10 students or less. There are currently about 30 students in grades 9-12 enrolled in the program.

"If you are going to compare this to anything, compare it to a family," Paquette explained at the HASP graduation.

Smith, who has taught history at HHS since 1999 and has been the HASP director since 2002, put it this way: "When I talk about these kids I talk

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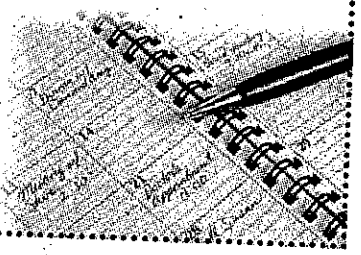
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HASP mural

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

about them with the same pride as I do my own."

The mural depicts what the seven seniors have lived through in the last 10 years, for better or for worse. Painted over the mural's royal blue background are smokestacks illustrating the causes of climate change, a shadow of a kneeling soldier commemorating those Americans fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a computer with a picture of a bomb symbolizing the Y2K scare.

Popular culture is also represented through the "American Idol" logo, which depicts the show's three original hosts underneath. The mural also records the death of pop superstar Michael Jackson, the presidency of George W. Bush, and baseball's steroid scandal, depicted by an image of Major League ballplayer Barry Bonds hoisting a giant needle over his shoulder. The mural refers to the most solemn event of the decade with the smoking Twin Towers of the World Trade Center just prior to their collapse on September 11, 2001.

One of the key components of the project is a smiling portrait of former Hastings High School Principal Thomas Fazio, who led the high school for 19 years before his death in January 2009.

"When he passed last year the kids felt it — especially the HASP kids," said Smith. "They really wanted Dr. Fazio in it [the mural]. They felt this would be a beautiful way to remember him. He was always a great friend to HASP. He always had a special place for them [the HASP students] as a principal."

The crew's official "signature" is

found at the bottom of the work — photos of each student and Smith.

This mural is one of three in the school. Smith, or "Smitty," as he is referred to by some students, was warned by HASP's founder and former director, Mike Rossi, in 2002, after the last mural was made, that making a mural was a painstaking endeavor that one would be foolish to take on. Smith heeded the warning and never suggested a mural to students. The crew asked Smith if they could make a mural in their junior year, and since they kept bringing it up, Smith finally relented.

In January, he was awarded a grant, for around \$700, from the Edith Winthrop Teacher Center in Hartsdale. Smith used the grant to hire Jeanne Newman, a Hastings resident who taught art for 23 years in the Hastings district and worked with HASP on past murals.

"Even though the standing joke was that we'd never do another mural, the bottom line is I would do another one in a heartbeat," Newman said. "What a privilege it was for me to work with them. It was such a gift they gave me."

The students seem to be just as fond of Newman. "You're one of the sweetest people I've ever met in my life," Rivera said during her commencement speech. Students were impressed by Newman's artistic skill, as well as her baking skill — Newman would often bring in goodies for the students.

"I know exactly how you motivate kids. Food is a motivator," Newman explained. "Food is love."

After spending time brainstorming and researching what would be included in the mural, students spent one or two class periods a week working on the model — first finding pictures to repro-

duce in the mural. A mock-up using the pictures was created, and afterwards the mural was given a base coat. As work became more intense during the last month, students began spending many weekday evenings drawing the images first, then painting them before adding a final topcoat. "There were a lot of erase marks on that thing. We didn't know what it was going to look like," Esposito said. "It wasn't easy, but at the end it was really powerful."

Smith doesn't regret the undertaking, and said at the graduation that he would be informing Rossi, who cautioned him against the project, that he was indeed wrong. "It was really big for me to see them work on something that wasn't academic," Smith said. Smith was glad to see the students get to know each other more and enjoy their time eating pizza and blasting music while dedicating themselves to finishing the mural in the evenings after coming back from sports practice and other after-school activities.

The students cherished the experience as well. "We all became so much closer," Rivera said. "I think this was really a great way to put all our differences behind, because all of us wanted to leave something memorable behind so badly."

The students' pride was evident as all seven of them stood in front of the covered artwork on May 13. After most of the tears had been shed while listening to speeches about the students' struggles and their gratitude for teachers, parents, and friends who helped them make it to graduation, the students collectively pulled off the black sheet to reveal their creation as a Michael Franti song played in the background echoing a phrase students repeated over and over again during their graduation: "I love you, I love you, I love you."

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SCHOOL

Hastings Alternative School Program Graduation

by David Dayan
Managing Editor



Graduating HASP Seniors

HASP Graduates (from left to right): George Callas, Maia Curtis, Joseph Harpur-Reid, Karen Espinoza, Melissa Moscoso, Jackie Gibbons

The first 2017 Hastings High School graduation event occurred on May 11. The school celebrated Jackie Gibbons, Karen Espinoza, Melissa Moscoso, Joseph Harpur-Reid, Maia Curtis, and George Callas, all a part of the Hastings Alternative School Program (HASP).

HASP started in 1985, with 17 eleventh grade students. It eventually became a program that involved all grades of high school. The program has had over 500 students since its inception. HASP is currently run by Mr. Smith, along with many other teachers.

HASP is a part-time alternative school. It consists of smaller classes, with up to ten students in HASP English and History classes. The rest of their classes in their schedules are with their grade. In addition, the HASP program goes on trips, has a "court system" and meetings.

Each year since 1985, there has been a graduating HASP class within the graduating class of the school as a whole. The HASP graduates also participate in a separate graduation ceremony in addition to the school's graduation ceremony.

Each of the students gave a speech about their experiences in HASP and the impact the program had on his or her life. This aspect of the graduation ceremony is quite different from the school's graduation ceremony, in which only a few students give speeches. According to Mr. Smith, every year the students are "totally mortified" to make these speeches.

Many of their speeches were prefaced with something along the lines of "Oh wow, I'm nervous." Despite the anxiety of speaking in front of a crowd of 50+ teachers, administrators, and family members, the students' speeches were all fantastic, each shining a light on the student's unique experiences in HASP over the past few years.

The full video of the HASP Graduation ceremony, can be found on the district homepage.