BEHIND THE HIVE

VOLUME 1
FEBRUARY 10 2026

"BE THE DREAM"

HBCU EARLY COLLEGE PREP

UNBUNTU
INGENUITY
LEADERSHIP



STARLAH BROOKS

HORNET OF THE MONTH
FEBRUARY

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Behind the Hive

Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir

From Day One: Five Months of History in the Making

September:

On September 4, 2025, the doors to HBCU Early College Prep in Queens, New York, welcomed scholars with pride, purpose, and possibility. This marked the historic launch of the first-ever-HBCU themed high school of its kind, where students will earn their high school diploma, associate degree, and gain guaranteed admission to Delaware State University.

Scholars were warmly greeted by the energy of HBCU pride, including HBCU alumni, Mayor Eric Adams, The Empire Marching Elites, and a community that prides itself on excellence.

Week two came to an end by being visited by Howard University scholars, Mr. & Mrs. Howard University, and the Divine Nine, who spoke on the richness of the HBCU experience, Grambling State University traditions, leadership, and the excellence of the HBCU spirit.

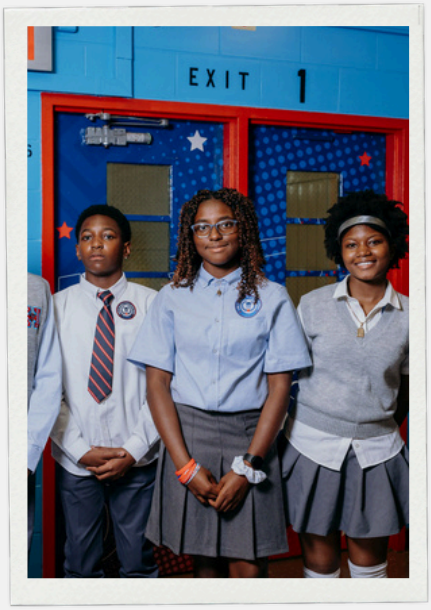
September also brought celebrations and support: the Save the Youth Foundation was able to bless two of our Hornets, Samaya Clark and Maverick Bowes, with $500 scholarships to recognize and believe in their promise and their potential. Additionally, Morehouse College came to the Hive and bestowed wisdom and legacy about what it means to become a Morehouse Man and projected the values of leadership, brotherhood, and excellence.

September installed a powerful, built-in culture of excellence and hope.



Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir


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EXIT 1












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From Day One: Continued...



October:

It has been an exciting month of growth, celebration, and spirit in October. The girls' volleyball season has now officially kicked off, with the team recording an impressive 7-1 record.

Also in mind was empowerment and leadership. This month saw Black Girls Can Inc. visit The Hive, conveying a strong message on what it truly means to be a supportive and confident Black girl and how she finds power. Students were inspired by a guest speaker, Lisa Price, founder of Carol's Daughter products, as she told a story of thriving despite adversity in order to create a successful business in curly hair care products.

As we begin to prepare for Homecoming, the nominees for Mr. & Miss HBCU begin their path to winning for us the first-ever Mr. & Miss HBCU during the Homecoming Dance. As we come to a close for October, we had high energy for Spirit Week with Pajama day, Twin day, Anything-but-a-Book-bag day, Throwback day, and Character day.

October a month filled with pride, empowerment, and unforgettable memories.



Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir

HBCU Halloween



From Day One: Continued...



November:

November marked a historic milestone as the school celebrated its inaugural Homecoming with the crowning of the first ever Miss HBCU and Mr. HBCU, Chance Thomas and Ayden Francis. Scholastic competitions showed outstanding candidates with great school spirit through creative campaigning techniques such as cupcake sales and donut sales. The student population broadened their horizon as the I Am Cultured Program prepared for college trips to Ghana and New Orleans, meeting with a non-profit organization that empowers students of color to be innovative global citizens. In addition, students got to visit Delaware State University as they experienced life among the Greeks with the pinning ceremony.

The school had Homecoming Spirit Week, which filled the Hive with enthusiasm through Culture Day, House Color Day, House T-Shirt Day, and HBCU Swag Day, followed by a pep rally filled with HBCU-style stepping, house chants, dances, and competing house basketball games. Hampton House conquered the basketball tournament, while Howard House conquered the pep rally competition.

The month ended in reflection and gratitude. During Thanksgiving week, the 315th living African American woman architect spoke to scholars about architecture and representation in a presentation given by Pascale Sablan. The celebrations ended in a joyful community Thanksgiving Feast, the HBCU way.

Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir



HARVEST FEST

From Day One: Continued...





December:

It was a month of giving in December. Paula Dofat presented at school, talking about financial literarcy, planning for a college, and creating a game plan for a debt-free diploma, as well as informing scholars about HBCU programs and scholarships. The scholars also engaged in SGA Theme Week, Ugly Sweater Day, and a creative Play Lab, courtesy of Sarita Gates, founder and CEO of Incredible CEOs. Gates enlightened scholars about her journey toward becoming the first Black woman onto a show featuring LEGO, as well as creating iconic 1990s bamboo earrings, a Queens icon.

The month wrapped up with Holiday Pajama Day, followed by a Volleyball Pep Rally in which Hampton won, while special donors ensured every scholar received a gift, ending the year with games, prizes, and seasonal joy.

The month of December was chosen to celebrate leadership skills as Ywunantoua Sevwe had been chosen to join the Chancellor's Student Advisory Council.

Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir

HBCU HOLIDAY

















From Day One: Continued...

January:

January had begun with great academic prospects as students commence their college classes in Spanish and 'Introduction to African American Music' with Delaware State University. Students were able to exhibit their knowledge of physics through collaborating in research in the attributes of 'Crowd Power.' The students worked in groups of three or four members to come up with creative ideas on how to use physics in protecting crowds from injury; hence, creating innovative solutions to this problem, even if some were based on others' ideas, many were completely original.In "Participation in Government: A Policy Redesign Project on Social Justice and Civic Responsibilities," students were involved in a policy redesign project on social justice and civic responsibilities. Guest speaker Attorney Angelo Pinto, a seasoned movement lawyer and activist for social change, assisted scholars with his area of expertise.

Also during the month, the school was visited by Royalty Speaks, an organization that empowers girls and focuses on the empowerment of female high school students while assisting them in building confidence within themselves and focusing on life skills outside the academic sphere of high school. Royalty's mission is "to empower, enlighten, and educate."Kali Williams,Ywunantoua Sewe, and Shemanmoi Adams are honored as change agents with the invitation to participate in The African Union and the Angolan Mission to the United Nations as student leader. The student leaders will be engaged regarding education for peace and human development in Africa. We also celebrate Peyton Hewitt, who was accepted into the highly competitive National Association of Black Journalists First Take Program, recognizing her outstanding talent in journalism, media, and storytelling.

January concluded with Quarter-Zip Friday, fostering a unifying feeling of school pride and scholarship.



Written by : Camille Lee, Julia Johnson, Alyssa Mondesir

Quarter Zip Time







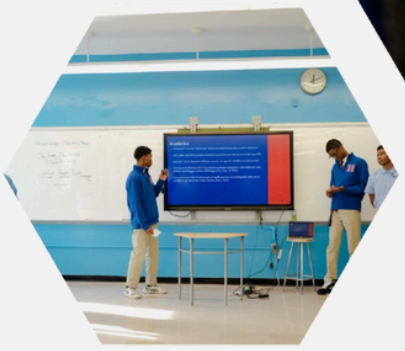














Respect for All

"We are all like puzzle pieces, different shapes, but together formed as a beautiful picture," Bryce Cassonova

As we continue to learn and grow, something we shouldn't forget is respect. Respect is essential to have because it creates the foundation for relationships through its fostering of safety and trust. As fellow students, having respect for each other can help build inclusion where everyone feels accepted and has belonging.

Disrespectful actions shouldn't be tolerated in any way. If an adult disrespects you, that is wrong, If your peer disrespects you it is also wrong. It is very important to call out these actions and begin to set boundaries with people, addressing disrespectful behavior is a great way to form healthier bonds and relationships.

Respect and Maturity

Oftentimes many lack disrespect because of their own limitations this can be found within people who are immature and lack their own self-worth, their actions frequently reflect their own insecurities. So reasonably disrespectful people shouldn't be entertained with your time.

The Taboo Topic

Sex: "sexual activity, including specifically sexual intercourse." (Oxford Dictionary)

Generally the topic of sex is avoided or pushed back, however as teenagers it is important to understand what it is, its affects and experiences they might have. Now, respect exists in all of our actions and practices, so sex is no exception. As a teenager, you must set clear boundaries with yourself and not succumb to anything you feel uncomfortable or unsafe with. If someone tries to pressure you into any sexual conduct or activity and you have already said loud and clear NO then make sure you leave that space and be sure to communicate with a trusted adult about your experience. When your boundaries are set no one should ever feel entitled to cross them and should maintain respect at all times.



Written by : Shemanmoi Adams

Oh SNAP! Where'd the Government go?

"The U.S. government shut down on October 1 as Republican and Democratic funding bills failed to reach the necessary number of votes in the Senate and efforts to prevent a shutdown failed."- Nora Delaney

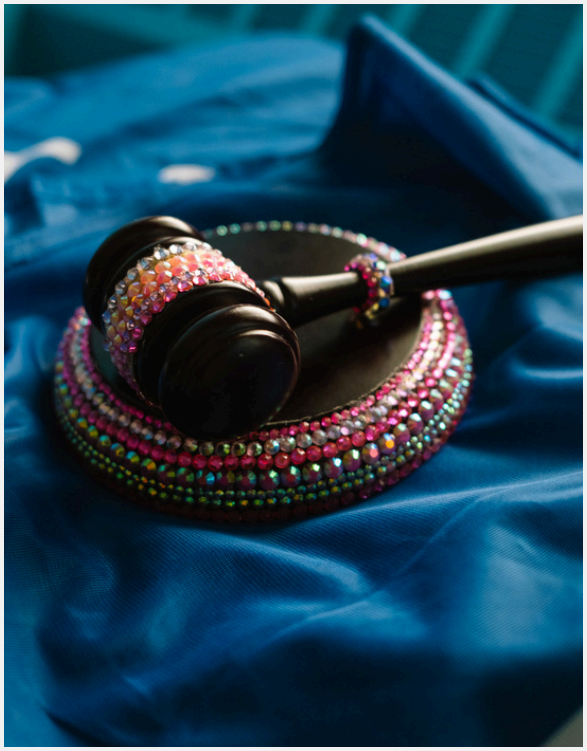
Due to government shutdown many people are unable to rely on the government for essential services such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP during the shutdown

"SNAP provides food benefits to low-income families to supplement their grocery budget so they can afford the nutritious food essential to health and well-being." - Food and Nutrition Service

"SNAP benefits are paid for by the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)" - SNAP and the Federal Shut Down

"On average, there are **41 million** people receiving SNAP benefits, where **1 in every 8 Americans** are participants that are disabled, children or the elderly. In New York 15% of the population (2,926,200) are provided with SNAP benefits. During the GovS New York State was unable to pay for SNAP benefits as money wasn't sent to them by the USDA. However, New York's governor Kathy Hochul did allocate $106 million dollars from an emergency fund to be able to support food pantries but this amount was proven to be insufficient across the State. During the 43 days of the government shutdown (October 1st to November 12th) many people reliant on SNAP instead shifted their reliance to food banks and began to face panic wondering where they'll get their next meal.



Written by : Shemanmoi Adams

1,000 Emotions

Written by : Brooke-Lynn Mortimer

One Student Versus 1000 Emotions

10 assignments vs one heart break
Slowly drained a pain on top of pain
Never ending tears and all you can do is over think
They say sit in class and stay focused
but your head is full with all the trauma you had to cry about last night
They say "we'll work harder "
But you're beating yourself up day after day because society only believes in one sided stories
The times you open your eyes and cried
Not because you were hurt, but you were tired.
You were tired of waking up, overwhelmed
You were tired of suffering at home just to go suffer at school later
You were tired of your parents discouraging you telling you to work harder after you have worked to tears
You were tired of telling yourself to do better and better to make others happy but instead you're making yourself unhappy
You were tired of this never ending cycle of a heavy heart and endless tears
Sooner or later you might let your mental take over and those 80s and 90s you've been pushing for soon turn into 50s and 60s
Not because you're not trying but because you're drained to the fullest
And all that hard work people have been telling you to push for
Has officially killed you, but it's all right because it's all about the grades and what others ask for

One Teacher Versus 1000 Emotions

Overwhelming kids who don't listen
The disrespect you take home after a long day
The times you've cried in your car to heal with the pain
The times you woke up and then felt drained
The times you've sat back and really thought "God, why did I take this job?"
The times you've giving your all
and all you get in return is a side eye as they all walk out the class and don't say bye.
The annoyance you feel as you take step into the room and you never know how it's gonna go for you
Society has painted this picture that a one-sided story is the only thing we need to make an argument
In reality, we're all drained and we're all hurt
We are all trying to get through it
The truth is, we are all trying to fight our own battles
We all go through rough times
We are all tired
We are all drained
We are all fighting our pain to push through and be okay.
Yes we are all slipping but
Why are we all expected to just bleed in silence?
this isn't student versus teachers
this is humans versus society.
A society that teaches us to be weak instead of building ourselves up to be stronger
We all still have feelings
And we are all still fighting
And if that's too hard to believe for the people who think School is more important than my mental health
Then maybe it's the Department of education that needs to be graded itself

Written by : Brooke-Lynn Mortimer

“Exploring a Book Created Through Injustice, Friendship, and Racial Problems: Piece Me Together

by Renee Watson”

Piece me Together by Renee Watson is a novel that follows the main protagonist Jade, a high school junior and one of the smartest students in her class. She helps with her classmate’s homework, test prep, and more. Her favorite subject is Spanish, which she hopes to receive the study abroad program invitation. Everyday, she travels through North Portland to arrive at St. Francis highschool, a predominantly white specialized school. Back in her neighborhood, her mother is a tired nurse who is mostly busy, and her young uncle EJ is an aspiring DJ.

One day, Jade is called to her guidance counselor, Mrs. Parker for a conversation. When she finds out she wants her to join a women’s mentorship program, Jade is disheartened. Mrs. Parker describes it as an opportunity for ‘at-risk’ girls, which makes Jade feel doubt. While she accepted, it made her feel like she was an outcast of her school and needed to join this program to prove herself to others.

Going to the Woman to Woman mentorship program, Jade waits for her mentor, Maxine. She is the only one who arrives late, and she grows impatient, as the other mentors are already waiting.

Finally meeting her mentor, Jade doesn’t sit comfortably with her at first. Over time of their outings, Maxine learns that Jade enjoys art and takes her to art exhibitions. Towards the end of the book, Jade displays and sells her original pieces in a museum, and her Spanish teacher Mr. Flores appoints her for the study abroad program for next year.

This book’s main themes surround hardships through racism, as noted in the case of Natasha Ramsey, a black woman arrested by police. Watson also focuses on friendship and how sometimes they can make or break us, through Jade and Sam’s friendship and quarrel between going to the study abroad program.

Written by : Julia Johnson

Update on Black Girls Can

Black Girls Can is a nonprofit organization, founded by Ms Kenisha Dennis. Dedicated to empowering Black girls and young women by providing free, hands-on, educational, and enrichment programs. Its mission is to help black girls build confidence, leadership skills, and a strong sense of self through opportunities in STEM, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, wellness, and the arts. By connecting participants with mentors, professionals, and real-world experiences, the organization creates supportive spaces where Black girls are encouraged to explore their interests, recognize their potential, and envision themselves as future leaders, innovators, and change-makers in their communities.When Black Girls Can visited HBCU Early College Prep, the experience was both uplifting and inspiring. The visit began with an amazing yoga session that created a calm, empowering atmosphere led by Kelly Green Johnson. Followed by motivational talks from impactful leaders such as Dr. Casey, a board- certified practitioner and founder of Operation Faith Filled, and Lisa Prince, the founder of Carol's Daughter. To close out the day, each girl received a gift bag filled with hair products and other essential items, leaving everyone feeling supported, encouraged, and valued.

Young Black women can stay confident and strong by using personal coping strategies and support from organizations focused on their wellness and growth. Groups like Black Girls Can offer empowering programs centered on confidence, wellness, and leadership, while Therapy for Black Girls connects Black women and girls to culturally responsive mental health resources. Creative outlets, such as Black Girls Art Therapy, use art as a tool for expression and healing, and Black-led wellness spaces like The Honey Pot Community

Wellness promote balance through yoga, mindfulness, and self-care. By combining real-life practices—journaling, setting boundaries, therapy, creative expression, and mindful movement—with these supportive spaces, young Black women can build resilience and move forward with confidence and purpose.

"I FELT LIKE IT WAS A VERY EXCITING EXPERIENCE, IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE WE WERE BONDING AS SISTERS."- AMAURA JOLLY

"I FELT LIKE IT WAS EMPOWERING FOR US BLACK TEENAGERS. I LOVE WHAT BLACK GIRLS CAN DO."- MYA WILLIAMS

"I FELT MADE US CHANNEL OUR INNER THOUGHTS. IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A BREAK FROM THE STRESS OF SCHOOL, TO OPEN UP, & NOT BE JUDGED"- ACACIA DAVIS

Keep up with Black Girls Can:

@ BLACKGIRLSCAN @ RISEBYDESIGN

@ THERAPYFORBLACKGIRLS @ BLACKGIRLSMH

Written by: London Maxwell

BINGO HBCU STYLE

Play Bingo HBCU ECP style. Make sure to pay attention throut the day because you might win big !

More than 5 students in a classroom during lunch	Mr. Bridges telling scholars to go to class	Prof. Devaghn threatens to give a scholar detention	5 or more scholars come to school in their quarter zips	Prof. Payne dancing during class
5 or more scholars in the office during class time	Mr. Brown sitting in the hallway	Dr. J standing outside her office telling scolars to go to class	Scholars doing work in the hallway	Professor going off task during class
Prof. Payne singing in class	Prof. Jenkins talking about Booker T. Washington	BEHIND THE HIVE	Prof. CJ calls someone sweetie or honey	Prof. Evans speaking in rapid Spanish
Professor tells the class to take out Cornell Notes	Dr. J has a meeting during the day	Prof. Requena orders seafood for lunch	Scholar gets McDonalds for breakfast	Scholar in your class comes to school late
Scholar asks to use the bathroom during class	Scholar comes to class late	Mr. Walker standing in the hallway	Scholar drinking from the water fountain	Prof. Wilmot holds MBK during lunch

Created by: Caliya Lowe

Think *You* Have What it Takes?

Play the Impossible Sodoku

				4			6	8
							7	9
			9	7	1	5		
		9		3	8	2		
8		1	4		2	6		3
		4	1	6		8		
		6	8	2	3			
1	8							
2	4			1				

Created by: Caliya Lowe

Can *You* Find the Words?

E Y O H S Z E Y C D Q N L J M X M U V D
E W O O A Q G D E O R F A K M H S M X V
S R J R I Y Q A B Z Y J F J K V J H S P
S H R N S I Q N C G B Y O U V G Z T X R
C P L E D K U C O J T W E H Y Z X L Z O
I D H T R L S E W I H O W I N N N R X F
S B Z S J D E W N L K S N K L Q B L Q V
Y C F X O T O A Q J O F K L V I Q L L E
H L S N H H D V H E A L T H C T T A L R
P L J U N A M E V O Y H A R A I T B A L
P R O F S T E V E N S P A Y N E J Y B E
T W X H O L L L X I K Q W W I H C E T Y
P C V X N E B L S N Z O R U L A F L E A
H I I H A X T A O B L H T F T N O L K C
W J X E G J T I N C G X V V O C R O S B
D B R X Q U P Y X D W C N Q V K P V A X
Z P B O O K C L U B W P H G P C H Z B X
C F J A A A G C R A M H L J R A Y S X J
M B J J K W A D F I N J T D E R Y D T O
C V M Q M J J Y Y D B I X C T T Z Y X L

1. **Prof Stevens Payne** 2. **Health** 3. **Basketball** 4. **Volleyball**
5. **Track** 6. **Prof Verley** 7. **Book Club**
8. **Physics** 9. **DanceWave** 10. **Band** 11. **Dr. John**
12. **Dr. Johnson** 13. **Prof CJ** 14. **Hornets**

Created by: Sarika Forbes

Meet the Team:



I am the Editor-in-Chief of Behind the Hive. I love caring for others and furthering my knowledge. Hope y'all enjoyed our first edition of Behind the Hive.

Peyton Hewitt



My role is the social media and marketing manager. I enjoy being alone and listening/playing music. Thank you for the continued patience and support!

Aniyah Jemmott



I am the section designer. A fun fact about me is I enjoy playing volleyball and love trying new things stepping outside my comfort zone!

Camille Lee



Hello! My name is Torri Gaillot, I am a Gemini, I love to write and learn new things.

Torri Gaillot



I am Behind the Hive's proof-reader and writer specifically for the Real Life updates section. I love learning and improving my community like building awareness about current events impacting our livelihood. These are my main reasons for being apart of Behind the Hive, I hope you enjoy our first edition!

Shemanmoi Adams



I am one of your game designers and proofreaders! I love the fine arts and music. Thanks for reading our first edition of Behind the Hive!

Caliya Lowe



I am one of your photographers. A fun fact about me is that I love to draw and listen to music.Thank you ahead for reading our first issue !

Laila Cummings



My role is photography. I love music, volleyball, and dance is my peace. I hope everyone is ready for the more readings Behind the Hive has to come!

Summer Howell

Meet the Team:



I am one of the hive's photographers. One fun fact about me is that I enjoy playing the piano.

Adrian Blackman



I am a one of your writers and designers. I am a track athlete and I love to listen to music. I'm excited to bring creativity and new ideas into Behind the Hive!

London Maxwell



Hello my name is Alyssa Mondesir and I am one of your writers!I like to read and going to amusement parks.

Alyssa Mondesir



I'm one of your game designers! I enjoy dancing, running, and playing volleyball. Hope you enjoy reading the first edition of Behind The Hive!

Sarika Forbes



Hello, my name is Brooke-Lynn and I am a writer for Behind the Hive. I also specialize in dance and poetry.

Brooke-Lynn Mortimer



I am one of Behind the Hive's section editors! I also take part in doing my own writing for specific sections. I look forward to writing more for Behind the Hive!!

Julia Johnson



I am the manager for Behind The Hive. I play volleyball and tennis and I really like to build things.

Khloe Charles



Hello!, My name is Abigail Cesear. I love to take photos and videos.

Abigail Cesear

Meet the Team:



Hello, I'm a writer! I also specialize in dance and taking pictures.

Acacia Davis



Hello, My name is Summer Johnson. I'm an inspiring writer and photographer.

Summer Johnson



Hello, my name is Madisyn. I am an interviewer, I run track, and I love to eat.

Madisyn Gousse



Behind the Hive is built on one belief: stories matter. As a teacher and photographer, I'm here to help amplify student voices and capture the moments that shape our community. This isn't just a newspaper...this is our story in motion.

Prof. Verley

Thank you for Reading.

See you next Issue!