

# CHARACTER MATTERS

HYDE  
LEADERSHIP  
CHARTER  
SCHOOL  
NEWS



**MASSARAN CISSE**  
SENIOR, PICTURED WITH HER SISTERS

## Hyde Senior Is Awarded \$50,000 In Scholarships

Senior, Massaran Cisse is going to college for free after winning \$50,000 in scholarships. Not only did she win the competitive Martin Luther King Scholar Program scholarship, a program for first-year applicants from ethnic and racial backgrounds historically underrepresented in U.S. higher education, valued at \$25,000, but she was also awarded the prestigious Dell Scholarship that includes \$25,000, a Dell laptop, and a mentor.

The application process for both scholarships was a huge undertaking. College Counselor, Keveney McCrillis became one of Massaran's main cheerleaders. She helped Massaran summarize her writing in clear and concise ways. "There was never a time when I went to Ms. McCrillis for help applying to the Dell or the MLK scholarships where she said she was too busy to help me; she always dropped what she was doing," Massaran said. She feels that without Hyde's help and motivation she might not have applied for the scholarships. "The work ethic that Hyde gives its students is truly amazing," she said.

To the Cisse family, who immigrated here from the Ivory Coast, Massaran's achievement represents all that is possible for their children in America. "To go to college is a great honor. I'm setting a precedent for my siblings too because I am the oldest," she said. Massaran also credits her parents as being an inspiration. "I watched them study so hard for their citizenship test. When they got their citizenship, it showed my siblings and me that we can do anything."



Massaran with her mom

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# Message from Our Executive Director

As a parent, I continually wonder about my children's unique potential and the many influences that inspire their commitments and interests and special capabilities. As is the case with the stories of the Hyde students in this edition of Character Matters, my children's unfolding stories are rooted in the inspiration of a few special people who shared, witnessed, and cultivated my child's special qualities. I think of a basketball coach, Martha Neubert, who saw my daughter Lizzie's fierceness under the basket, shared her love of telling the stories of the games, of what strategies were in play, and how the contest was decided. Martha saw Lizzie for who she is and joyfully held up Lizzie's unique potential so that Lizzie could see it too. To this day, Lizzie remembers 9<sup>th</sup>-grade basketball as her athletic beginning, a story that now includes four years of Varsity Lacrosse in college and a life-long interest in running and weightlifting. Beyond the benefits of being an athlete, Lizzie's story of unique potential built a foundation of confidence to push herself to develop in other ways and to embrace new activities and be open to the influence of different kinds of people.

While there are as many varieties of unique potential as there are people on earth, the development of one's unique potential always involves the inspiration of a few key people like Lizzie's coach Ms. Neubert, or teachers like Mr. Fusco, Mr. Rodriguez, Ms. McCrillis, or Ms. Ramos. Hyde's Character Education program is rooted in our commitment to fostering the unique potential of our students. Through shared experiences of intense interests, Hyde teachers also gain special vision into the character and capacities of our students while also sharing their own in a meaningful context. As family members and parents, each of us also has the capacity to pursue activities that take us and our young family members into a discovery zone that will engage curiosity, concern, integrity, leadership, and courage. Each of us has that leadership capacity to build the character of our family members and colleagues. What is your special passion that you will share?

Sincerely,

THOMAS K. STURTEVANT  
*Executive Director*



ANYELEE PEREZ AND KAROL BANEGAS  
EIGHTH GRADERS

## A Passion For Math

Anyelee Perez and Karol Banegas are eighth graders with a passion for math. Because of Hyde's commitment to developing the unique potential of each student through community partnerships, last summer, Anyelee and Karol got to spend three weeks at Union College with Bridge to Enter Advanced Mathematics (BEAM) doing what they love most.

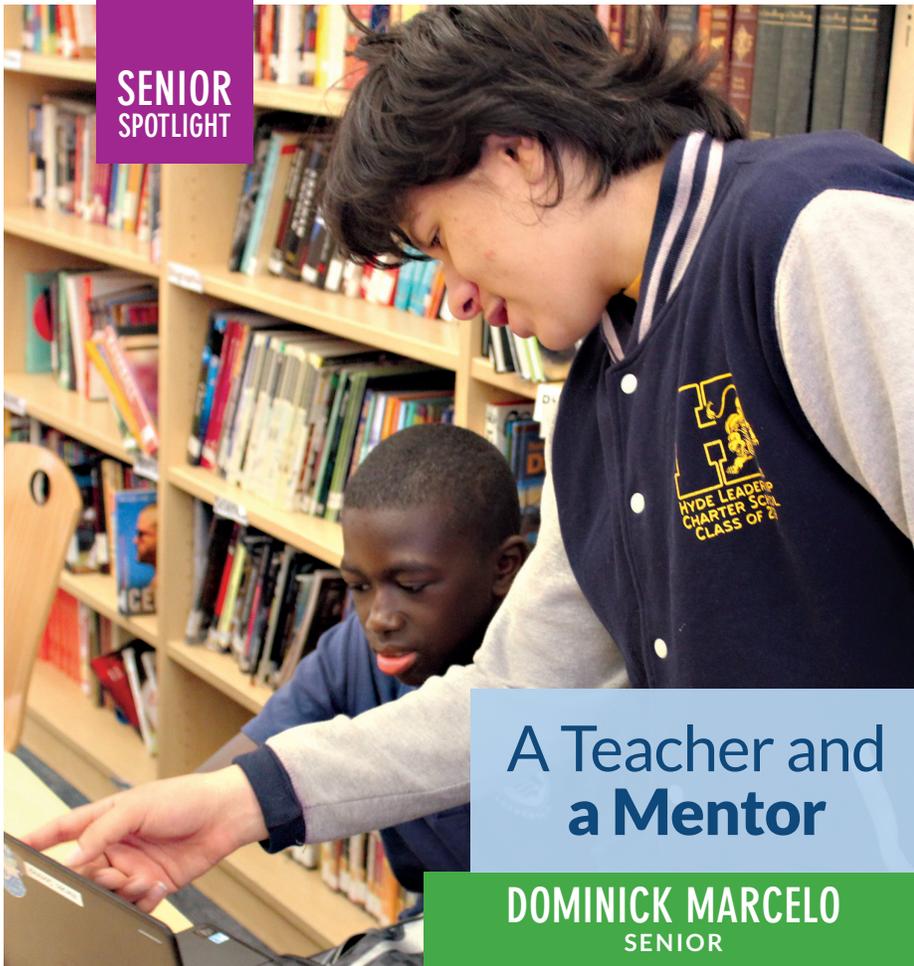
Anyelee and Karol got to extend the reaches of their passion by taking theoretical and college level courses. "BEAM taught us that we have way more potential than we thought we had," Anyelee said. "I decided that if I don't go into an educational career, then I will definitely go into an engineering one."

In 6th grade math class, students took a test to determine if they qualified for the BEAM opportunity. The test included reasoning and theoretical math problems. Anyelee and Karol scored exceptionally high, and were offered a spot in the program.

Karol and Anyelee's favorite class from the summer program was a class called Solving Big Problems. In that class they were often presented with problems so huge that they would take days to solve. "We had to use every tool we had to solve the problem," Anyelee said.

Anyelee and Karol continue to hone their skills every Saturday morning with BEAM. With Hyde and BEAM's support, Karol sees all she can do in the field of mathematics. "I'm excelling at all they give me," Karol said. "It makes me feel like I can accomplish anything."





## A Teacher and a Mentor

**DOMINICK MARCELO**  
SENIOR

Dominick Marcelo is only a senior in high school, but he can already call himself a teacher's assistant. When Dominick found out that English Department Chair, Mark Fusco, was offering a film studies class this year, he took the initiative and spoke to Mr. Fusco about assisting with the class. Soon, Dominick became a co-planner of the course and is now delivering his own lectures on techniques and symbolism in film.

Dominick's passion for film began in 8th grade when his older brother Charley, a Hyde alum, showed him a Martin Scorsese film. After that, Dominick watched every classic film he could. Now, he is helping his peers discover their own unique potential through film and teaching. In the course, students are assigned homework based on the films they watch, and Dominick has been consistently impressed by the movies they make and the essays they write. As a teacher, Dominick is friendly, patient, understanding, and helps translate material for his English as a New Language students.

For Mr. Fusco, having Dominick as a co-teacher has been, as he said, "the greatest gift of the year." "Dominick will give analytical lectures on the movies we watch and when he's speaking, the classroom is silent," he said. Students see Dominick as a peer mentor, someone not much older than them, who has harnessed his unique potential. Film has given Dominick a real love for teaching. He said, "Through teaching I am able to expand my own knowledge of film, and that makes me even more passionate."

Senior Megan Alicea was faced with a very unique decision to make: should she go to Cornell University or Barnard College? Megan's road to this decision was initially not an easy one.

College Counselor, Keveney McCrillis, first met Megan when she was a freshman and was struck by Megan's work ethic and ability to always rise to a challenge. Throughout high school, Megan challenged herself by taking nearly every Advanced Placement course Hyde offers. Megan knew she wanted to apply early to Cornell University. However, when the decision was returned, she found she had been deferred. At first she was discouraged, but as usual she rose to the challenge. "Hyde taught me about perseverance. So that's what I did: persevere," she said.

Then Megan got into Barnard College. And the acceptances kept coming. Finally, in April she got accepted to Cornell. "Without Hyde, this whole process would have been tough," she said. "At Hyde, I found myself because I learned how to develop my character."

Initially, Megan says she was uncomfortable talking about her needs and asking for help. Her senior year, however, after her class retreat she realized she needed to reach out to Ms. McCrillis for help and guidance. Megan said that she used to think that rejection would mean the end of the world, but after the support she received from her Hyde community, Megan sees that a closed door isn't a locked one. Ms. McCrillis says she can't wait to see all the wonderful ways that Megan will change the world.



**MEGAN ALICEA**  
SENIOR

## To Cornell University and Beyond

**RADLEY CIEGO**  
ALUMNI

Leadership  
around  
the world

After graduating from Hyde in 2015, Radley Ciego hit the ground running! After starting at Fordham University, Radley was determined to make the most out of it. He admitted, however, that in the beginning he really missed the deep relationships he'd cultivated with his friends and teachers at Hyde. He wanted to find a way to make an impact and expand his unique potential. Radley joined Fordham's Global Outreach Program, a student-led program that facilitates service and learning immersion experiences for students. It was through that program that Radley spent the winter of his freshman year building relationships in India, learning about social justice initiatives in South Africa the summer after his sophomore year, studying Arabic in Morocco his junior year, and eventually leading a trip back to South Africa his senior year. Radley graduated from Fordham in May of 2019 with a B.A. in Political Science and Urban Studies, and a minor in Arabic. Radley said that it was always crucial to him that he be involved with his community through engagement. During his junior year he interned for Senator Kristen Gillibrand, and during his senior year he interned at the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy as well as Open House New York. Radley said, "Hyde taught me the value of curiosity and through curiosity you discover your unique potential."





**ROLPHY SANTANA**  
SEVENTH GRADE

This past January, Hyde launched our first ever J-Term. J-Term, short for January Term, are courses where students are able to immerse themselves into a single subject, often outside school walls. J-Term is the vision of Middle School Director, Lex Zain, who particularly enjoyed J-Term while studying at Middlebury College.

For his J-Term course, Carlos Rodriguez (pictured on the left), the Middle School Math Coach, decided to teach a class called Automobile Care 101. During classroom time students would watch videos and read manuals of different kinds of cars to prepare for the labs, where they learned basic car maintenance.

The class especially proved to be a transformative experience for 7th grader, Rolphy Santana. "Through J-Term, I discovered that cars are my passion," he said.

J-Term fits into Hyde's focus on the unique potential of a child. Students had to step out of their comfort zone and engage in new experiences with little knowledge of the class they signed up for. Through new experiences, students began to see in themselves what their teachers had seen all along. Mr. Rodriguez always believed that Rolphy had the potential to be a leader, but it wasn't until J-Term that Rolphy began to see it too. "J-Term was special for me because I discovered my unique potential," Rolphy said. "I saw how much Mr. Rodriguez believed in me and it made me want to step up and be a leader, especially to the younger students. J-Term taught me that I'm an excellent leader."

## Hyde Launches J-Term





**NATASHA RAMOS**  
FACULTY



## Faculty Fellowships Fuel Unique Potential

Every Monday and Wednesday morning, second and third-grade students arrive at Hyde 30 minutes early for choir practice. Elementary School Academic Dean, Natasha Ramos has always used songs to teach and bond with students. After winning a Faculty Fellowship this fall, Ms. Ramos was able to fund her passion and team up with elementary school music teacher, Joe Alfano and performing arts teacher John Swader, and start a choir for second and third grade students. The Hyde Faculty Fellowship is an initiative designed to fund passion projects from our faculty and to nurture unique potential in not just students, but teachers as well.

Choir has been especially transformative for third grader, Joseas Sosa (upper-left corner). Joseas plays the violin, but he didn't have an outlet to explore the depths of his unique potential. Ms. Ramos encouraged Joseas to try out for choir, and at first he was skeptical. "I didn't know how much I loved to sing before choir," he said. "I tried out and I found out that I'm really good."

For their end of the year showcase, Ms. Ramos taught the choir "La Bamba," with Joseas singing a solo! "In the beginning, Joseas was very shy," Ms. Ramos said. Ms. Ramos watched his confidence soar and his voice become even more powerful. "Singing is the best way for me to express my feelings," Joseas said. "I love to sing."



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Preparation for Life



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## DEVELOPING A CHILD'S CHARACTER IS AS IMPORTANT AS DEVELOPING A CHILD'S MIND



Hyde Leadership Charter School's mission is to develop the deeper character and unique potential of each student. Through our distinctive K-12 family-based character education program and thanks to your support, Hyde's Class of 2019 is 100% college bound and are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

