



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



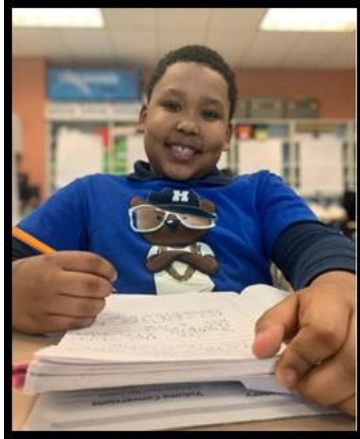
# Great things are happening at New Haven Public Schools

*December 14, 2019 - December 31, 2019*

*We believe that all kids can learn, achieve, and rise to a bright future. Our purpose is to provide an outstanding education that extends beyond graduation and prepares our students to be the next generation of leaders, innovators and problem-solver.*

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# Wexler-Grant Service Based Learning Community School “Paying it forward”



Scholars and staff donated a \$1.00 to dress down and all proceeds are going to Toys For Tots.

Teachers sharing their craft by hosting a Holiday Sip (Cider) and Paint.



## Holidays Around the World

In order to engage our students in diverse cultures and provide them with a global perspective of holidays celebrated this time of year, Wexler put together “Holidays Around the World- Door Decorating Contest.” With their students, teachers chose a country and a holiday celebrated within that country to represent. Teachers put together various activities to immerse their students in the culture and holiday traditions of their chosen country. A team of mystery judges scored doors based on holiday theme, visual appeal, student involvement, student presentation. We had a first place winner for each category. After judging, classrooms were able to view all the wonderful doors that were created and get a snapshot in the lives of others during this time of the year.



Mr. Oji' Class and Amity pen pals explored technology in Wexler Grant's Maker Space.

Student explored the tangrams, letters and number concepts together with their high school partners.



### **Performing Arts**

Wexler Grant students are performing in New Haven. On December 5<sup>th</sup> Choir students performed on the New Haven Green for the city’s Tree Lighting Ceremony. Theatre students performed the world debut performance of “Trials of the Century: A Christmas of Trials and Presents”.



### **Pajama donation**

Amity High school students donated pajamas to our students

## Worthington Hooker School and Season of Giving



Worthington Hooker School Students Council and Running Club hosted a Toy Drive Thank you to everyone who donated a toy to the toy drive. We delivered almost 250 toys.

Congratulations to the following Worthington Hooker students for completing Sunday's Run for Children 5K: Claude Saunders, Sophia Zhang, Saki Tomita, Sierra Miller, Holden Miller, Gabe Forstrom, Elijah Brown, & June Lanpher.

Thanksgiving Drive run by Student Council help over 500 people attain warm clothing, toiletries and non-perishable food. Our student council walked over emptied a car full of generous donations

## **Congratulations to Erin Palmer of Ross Woodward School**

On Saturday, December 7 2019, Erin Palmer (7th Grade) auditioned for the Connecticut Music Educator Association (CMEA) Southern Region Middle School Choir.

This week he learned that he was accepted. She was selected from a pool of students from the entire southern region of the state. She will participate in a culminating festival/concert on March 6-7 at North Branford Intermediate School.

This concert will feature the finest middle school concert in the southern region of the state.

# Untold Black & Latinx History Surfaces

by CHRISTOPHER PEAK | Dec 10, 2019 3:40 pm  
[\(13\) Comments](#) | [Post a Comment](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)  
Posted to: [Black History](#), [Immigrants](#), [Schools](#), [Wooster Square](#)



CHRISTOPHER PEAK PHOTO | Teacher Nataliya Braginsky talks through primary sources.

Alyssa Washington couldn't stop thinking about the multi-colored map of New Haven on her classroom wall: the narrow green around Prospect Hill and Westville; the swathed yellow, like a waning moon, from Beaver Hills to City Point; the foreboding red around Dixwell and Fair Haven — each section of the city walled in by fixed black lines.

The Metropolitan Business Academy student was looking over a mid-1930s assessment of [the credit-worthiness of each New Haven neighborhood](#), in which [the government-backed Home Owners' Loan Corporation deemed areas with more ethnic minorities "hazardous."](#)

The map of New Haven's "redlining" was just one of the 34 picture print-outs covering the walls of Metro's Room 204 on Thursday morning, all giving different views of America's borders, for social-studies teacher Nataliya Braginsky's new class on African-American & Latinx History.

"These are things we haven't learned at all in middle school or high school. These are the things behind the screen," said Ana Velez, a Metro student in the class. "It shows us the real truth in where we live, that we should have knowledge of, but that a lot of teachers don't have the time to teach us because they're not expected to."



Alyssa Washington responds to pictures.

Students across the entire state could soon be signing up for a similar class. Prodded on by [testimony from New Haven high-schoolers with Students for Educational Justice](#), state legislators passed a law that will eventually require every high school to offer [an elective on African-American and Puerto Rican studies](#).

Local activists have been pushing for a [“culturally affirming curriculum”](#) throughout city schools. They want lessons that are more relevant for its diverse student body, that don’t leave out so much history, as [one Latina student recently told the Board of Education](#).

Metro students said their middle-school classes had covered the same topics ad nauseam: the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Civil War, World War II, they rattled off. “I’ve learned the same thing over and over again. I know this already. Please tell me more; go in depth,” said Elana Fletcher.

“I think [the teachers] only tell the textbook part, because that’s all they’ve been taught. They don’t really know the real truth.”

Nyasia Rivera said she didn’t know why teachers avoided the difficult realities of America’s past, especially since there’s not the same reticence to talk candidly about how the Nazis systematically killed millions in the Holocaust.

She called that “super hypocritical.”

Amarion Coleman said he even felt like he'd been told "a lot of lies."

"We looked at George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Christopher Columbus. We were told they started America, when in reality there were all these indigenous people already here and they took their land," added Kaleeah Ramos. "They claimed it as something it wasn't."



Ana Velez, Elana Fletcher, Kaleeah Ramos, Amarion Coleman, Nyasia Rivera and Angel Rovira.

But Metro is getting a head start on changing that with Braginsky's class — one that could eventually be a model for even wider changes in how history is taught in New Haven.

"Honestly, I believe — and I think the administration here agrees — that this course should've existed here and in other schools long ago," she said. "Seeing students, some of whom were from Metro, fighting for this [at the capitol] made it very clear that it was necessary. Even though the legislation doesn't go into effect until 2022, we decided, Why wait?"

This past Thursday, about 40 Metro students in two sections got a chance to do that, as Braginsky opened up a new unit on "moving borders" with a brief lecture about a century of American immigration history, a lesson that had particular resonance in Donald Trump's America, where [a Wilbur Cross student is facing deportation](#).

She talked about the wars in the mid-1800s that initially grabbed territory from Mexico and reintroduced slavery in what's now Texas, connecting African-American and Latinx histories. What did the border look like back then? Braginsky asked.





African-American & Latinx History in Metro's Room 204

“A big brick wall.”

“People trying to cross it.”

Coleman finally got it right: “An imaginary line.”

Braginsky showed them a magazine article from 1909 talking about drivers taking “joyrides” into Mexico and only knowing they’d crossed the boundary when the roads started to wind. But that border firmed up after World War I, Braginsky went on, as the federal government formalized its immigration policies, especially with the [Undesirable Aliens Act of 1929](#).

Over the next decades, it alternated between invitations in and repatriations out, depending on how the economy was doing, she said. Sometimes those even [overlapped](#): Amid labor shortages on farms the 1950s, [the bracero program](#) allowed Mexican immigrants in at the same time [“Operation Wetback”](#) was deporting Mexican immigrants out, she said.

“This country’s disgusting,” Washington said. “It’s a shame to be from here; I’m being honest.” “I hear you,” Braginsky said, pausing. “Well, it’s important that we know the history, the shameful history because that’s the only way that we’re going to be able to change it moving forward. We need to know the past to know where we’re going, right? We can go in a different direction.”

“Definitely, so it doesn’t repeat again,” Washington said.

[Darlaney Chanthinith leaves a note about Wisconsin’s gerrymandering.](#)

Then, students walked around to look at the pictures Braginsky had taped to the walls with paragraph-long descriptions. They left Post-It note reactions and replies to each other, like an analog Instagram.

There were cartoons, photographs, poems and articles. There were [Jacob Lawrence paintings](#), gerrymandered maps of [Wisconsin’s legislative districts](#) and [Hooker’s attendance zones](#), pictures of fences dividing [Arizona from Sonora](#) and [Hamden from New Haven](#).

Braginsky asked them to talk in small groups about how they felt about the images. Washington said she felt disturbed by the redlined map. “That’s crazy how they did that,” to write off entire neighborhoods based on the skin color of their inhabitants, she said. “The audacity the government had.”

“It didn’t just happen in New Haven. In a lot, if not all, major cities, the government created these classifications,” Braginsky said. “It really impacted neighborhoods. They couldn’t get loans or insurance. They weren’t able to sell their homes for profit, so they didn’t have the same wealth as these white families.”

[The gallery walk includes documents from New Haven’s history of residential segregation.](#)

At the end of the hour-long period, Braginsky asked students to answer two “core questions.” She does that every class, to get a sense of whether students understood the content without the pressure of a quiz and to give them a chance to share their reactions to what they’ve just learned. This time, she asked: “How have borders been used as a tool of oppression and discrimination? And how is crossing them an act of survival and liberation?”

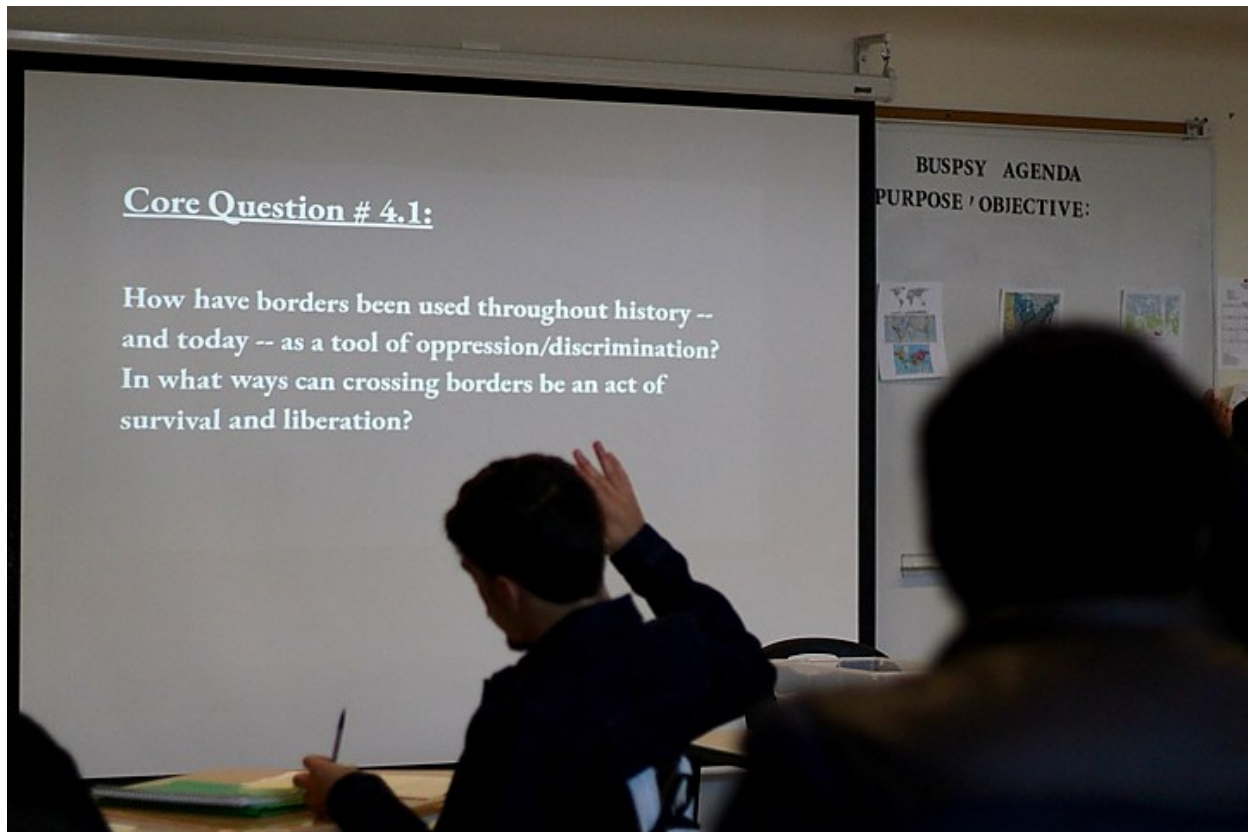
Folded into those questions is the guiding premise behind Braginsky’s entire curriculum: For as long as there has been repression, she points out in each lesson, there has also been resistance. “There always has been a response,” Braginsky said. Throughout, she said she’s trying to find a balance between talking about “white supremacy and racism” and “Black and Latinx joy and beauty and power.”

Metro students said that the class had created new heroes for them. They cited [Mum Bett](#), [Richard Allen](#), [Frederick Douglass](#) — all former slaves who led the abolition movement. In middle school, “they made slaves seem useless, never defending themselves,” Coleman said. “But all along, they were really trying to fight. They did everything in their power to be equal.”

Before, “we just learned that they got put on a boat and they came here,” Rivera said. “But in this class, we learned about the strategies they used to fight back and protect themselves, how some of them jumped off the ships because they didn’t want to live that life of a slave. It’s crazy how we hand it all up to this one person” — Lincoln — “a white man, who didn’t even want to free them, when all he wanted was to unify the country.”

Even if they did talk about the resistance to slavers in middle school, it was often only as armed uprisings, Fletcher added.

“They painted slaves as just angry, but after really studying, you see they used different strategies: with the law, with the church,” she said. “These people really used their minds. There’s a stereotype that Black people are angry all the time, how they fight their way out of things. This slams that into the ground.”



Angel Rovira gives his answer to the class’s core questions.

Braginsky’s syllabus began with a debate about the terms for Black and Latinx people and the way race-thinking began. It covered the early history of Africa and Latin America, before moving on to slavery and abolitionism.

After this unit on borders, students will study the postbellum Reconstruction era and then work on a research paper about the “legacies of resistance” that will be presented at Metro’s annual social justice symposium.

Braginsky had previously taught American studies at Metro, but she asked if she could switch to a new course on African-American and Latinx history this year.

To prepare for this class, Braginsky said she read a lot of books, finding Paul Ortiz’s “[An African American and Latinx History of the United States](#)” particularly helpful. She took courses with the [Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute](#). She surveyed Metro students, who told her, “Ugh,

we don't want to learn about slavery," and she met with Students for Educational Justice, who also told her to avoid "fun facts" about obscure inventors.



Braginsky.

"The stakes feel high for this class for me," Braginsky said. "It's a privilege to teach and a responsibility to teach it right."

Growing up in the Cleveland suburbs, Braginsky said she'd been "sorely miseducated," mostly by what her classes left out. In English class, every book was written by a white man, except one by a white woman, Carson McCuller's "The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter," which became her favorite.

"I was ill-informed about what other people had suffered at the hands of white supremacy. I knew nothing of the resistance. I didn't even know the 'fun facts,'" she said. "It creates less justice in our country when people don't have this history."

Braginsky said she hopes the class instills a passion for history and education in her students. "I love the idea of them out in the world educating other people: their peers or even professors," she said. "And I love the idea of them becoming historians and teachers. I hope this course inspires them to do to that, especially because we need more Black and Latinx teachers in New Haven and across the country."

That's already true for some of her students, who say they have a newfound appreciation for history.

"I think it's great that we're finally putting this into a curriculum, to teach kids of color about their history. It should empower them to be the new leaders," Rivera said. "I wasn't always interested in history, because it was the same old thing told to us over and over again. The way this class is, it's storytelling almost: you're very immersed in it, you feel like you're there, the emotions these people are feeling. It makes you feel like you're part of this history."

Braginsky, though, might not be there by the time her former students return to Metro to teach classes like this. Lately, she's been thinking about how much longer she should keep working in New Haven.

She said she feels a "responsibility" to teach these lessons in Connecticut's suburbs, where she doesn't think it's "particularly hospitable" for teachers of color to talk about the same truths. "As much as I hate the construct of whiteness, they are my people," Braginsky said. "I have to get right with them."

Tags: [Metropolitan Business Academy](#), [Nataliya Braginsky](#), [culturally responsive teaching](#), [Black History](#), [Latinx history](#)

# Wilbur Cross High School

The Wilbur Cross Athletic Hall of Fame Committee cordially invite you to celebrate the induction of eight (8) new members, and one (1) team into the Prestigious Wilbur Cross Athletic Hall of Fame on April 9, 2020 at 6:00pm at CASCADES Banquet Hall in Hamden, Connecticut.

Tickets are \$60 each, and can be purchased directly from the honoree.

This year's honorees are as follows:

Barbara Thaxton: Girls Basketball State Championship Coach.

Neal Eley – 1994 Track and Field

Ron Moye - 1986 Basketball

Troy Streater – 1989 Football

Kevin Miller - 1962 Swimming

Donny Brassil – 1962 Hockey

Dan Hardy - 1969 Boys Basketball

Bill Reeves – 1967 Boys Basketball

1979 Wilbur Cross Boys Basketball Team State Champions

We hope you can join us.

Edith Johnson, Principal  
Wilbur L. Cross High School

Engineering and Science Magnet School



# ESUMS

*Congratulates*

# DIAMANN JONES

-ESUMS Student, Grade 9

**On Her Apprentice  
Appointment with  
World-Renowned Visual Artist  
Titus Kaphar**



**Engineering & Science University Magnet School**

Imagine, Investigate, Invent

ESUMS' Freshman student Diamann Jones. She was selected to participate in a paid internship at NXTHVN. Below is a brief synopsis of the organization and its apprenticeship program.

Founded by Titus Kaphar, Jonathan Brand, and Jason Price in 2015, **NXTHVN**, currently in development, is an ambitious art space housed in a former manufacturing plant in the Dixwell neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut. Our mission is to cultivate a sustainable creative community that attracts and supports talent within and beyond New Haven.

Each year, NXTHVN welcomes seven emerging artists, two curators, and five high school apprentices to participate in its highly-competitive Fellowship and Apprenticeship programs. With a focus on mentorship, professional development, and hands-on training, the cohort works collaboratively to cultivate their practices within the context of New Haven's creative community.

Please join ESUMS in congratulating Diamann Jones on this great accomplishment.



# Help Us Make the Holiday Happy

For our friends at Quinnipiac Real World Math S.T.E.M School. Please donate a new, unwrapped toy to ESUMS annual Toy Drive 12/6-12/20. A drop off box will be available in the main office for your donations. We appreciate all of your efforts in helping us share the gift of giving.

The Toy Drive is organized by the  
Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC)  
STEM toys preferred

**#GivingSeason**

## High School in the Community

Last Week at Floyd Little Athletic Center, at an assembly commemorating the 71st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Emani Servance won a \$300 first place award in a district-wide essay contest.

Be sure to congratulate her if you see her; attached is her award-winning essay responding to the prompt:

"Imagine a world where no one respected the rights of others and people did not show common courtesy to one another. Would you be free in such a world?"



# High School in the Community Jazz Band prepares for Biggest Gig Yet

By Brian Zahn Dec. 5, 2019  
Comments



From left, High School in the Community music director Michael McGinley, along with student jazz band members Kaila Bolden on bass guitar, Angel Alvarez on keyboard and Thomas Sabin on the saxophone. Photo: Arnold Gold / Hearst Connecticut Media

NEW HAVEN — Many bands with dreams of performing for sold-out crowds might never play a single concert hall before disbanding; a jazz band quartet in New Haven is doing just that before three of its members even reach their senior year of high school.

High School in the Community’s jazz band will play from the lobby at College Street Music Hall Saturday for concert-goers entering to see duo She & Him as they tour their album “Christmas Party.” The jazz band has prepared 10 holiday songs for the occasion, something members had to rehearse and prepare on top of their regular coursework.

## The Holidays Arrived at Roberto Clemente

December 14th, Roberto Clemente hosted Breakfast with Santa! Students met Santa and did arts and crafts! Thanks to Read To Grow for donating a book for each student!

Thank You to Lanita Holmes and the Clemente Team for planning and organizing a memorable event!







## John Daniels Supporting Our Veterans



Our Stockings for Soldiers

Partnership with coordinator Lisa Seidlarz and the West Haven VA came to a celebratory ending with a special visit from Army veteran John L Daniels( distant cousin of former mayor John C. Daniels).

John served in the Army during the Vietnam war and shared his experiences with JCD students ( K-8th gr.).

Our students, parent and teachers did a most commendable job making our Stocking for Soldiers gift drive a tremendous success!

# Court Delay Keeps Cross Student In ICE Lockup

by CHRISTOPHER PEAK | Dec 12, 2019 12:51 pm  
(2) Comments | [Post a Comment](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)  
Posted to: [Immigrants, Schools](#)



CHRISTOPHER PEAK PHOTO | Cross students hear an update about Mario Aguilar’s asylum claims at a Thursday morning assembly.

A New Haven high-schooler will be stuck in federal detention for at least another week, after an immigration judge held off on issuing a decision that could lead to his deportation.

Mario Aguilar Castañon, an 18-year-old student at Wilbur Cross High School, is seeking asylum, a special form of protection for people who’ve faced persecution in their home countries, after fleeing from gangs in his native Guatemala that threatened his life. His lawyers had argued Aguilar felt targeted specifically as an indigenous Mayan, an ethnic minority in the country.

The judge said he wasn’t ready to decide the case yet, according to Cross’s assistant principal, Ann Brillante, who was in Boston for Thursday morning’s court hearing. She sent that news in a text message, read to nearly 500 students awaiting news in the high school’s auditorium.

“We did not get a ‘yes’ and we did not get a ‘no,’” Kris Mendoza, who teaches English for speakers of other languages, read aloud from Brillante. “It could be a week or it could be longer.

Typically for people in detention, the lawyers are saying it could be about a week.”



Dalia Fuleihan, Aguilar’s attorney, did not respond to a phone call and text message on Thursday morning.

Aguilar has been in federal detention in a Massachusetts prison for three months. Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested Aguilar in September outside the Milford courthouse, where he had shown up to dispute state charges related to a traffic accident. The immigration judge denied his request to post bond.

Brillante said that Aguilar’s lawyers have appealed that denial and feel “confident” they’ll win. If they do, she added, a new bond hearing could take place within the next several weeks.



Vanesa Suarez explains how policing is tied up with immigration enforcement.

On Thursday morning, hundreds of high-schoolers went to an hour-long assembly to hear about Aguilar’s case and how it fit into a wider context of the criminal justice system.

Students from Cross in Action talked about why and how they got involved in immigration activism. Vanesa Suarez, an organizer with Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance, talked about how contact with police can lead to deportation. And students asked questions about how the immigration proceeding would go.

Can they use his his arrest on drunk-driving charges against him, even if the police didn’t give him a breathalyzer? a student asked.

They shouldn't be able to, but they are, Suarez said.

What are his chance of staying in the country? a student asked.

It's not easy to win an asylum case right now, Suarez said.

What can we do for Mario? a student asked.

You've already done so much, Suarez said, but the courts still need to hear that there's people in New Haven who care about him, who won't let him be thrown away.



Principal Edith Johnson.

Edith Johnson, Cross's principal, said that she agreed to hold the first-ever assembly on Aguilar's case to have a space where students could think critically about the country's immigration policies, especially in a school that has so many students from across the globe.

Cross students have sent in hundreds of letters and fundraised more than a thousand dollars.

They organized rallies across the region: in front of [New Haven's city hall](#), [Milford's courthouse](#) and [Boston's federal building](#). And their activism made [national news](#) on CNN.



Anthony Barroso talks with students from Cross in Action about their next steps.

“Youth have power, and we believe you can make a change,” Anthony Barroso, an organizer with Connecticut Students for a Dream, told them. “It’s not the news we wanted to hear. It shows that the system does not care about us.” He added, “We will not stop fighting until Mario is free.”

Students closed out the rally by fanning across the stage and leading a chant. “No justice, no peace!” hundreds of them yelled. “We want Mario released!”

## **Mario has been Released!**

Greetings Team Cross,

Today is a great day. MARIO's lawyers and advocacy group held a press conference to provide an update on Mario's asylum status and to continue to fight for Mario's release from detention.

I was just informed that MARIO has been officially released from ICE detention and is on his way home to New Haven.

It is my hope that we see Mario soon. Thank you to our entire Cross & New Haven community who gave a voice to our students. I am so proud of all the work our C4D kids have done.

Here is the link for the gofundme for Mario,

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-wilbur-cross-student-in-ice-detention?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-wilbur-cross-student-in-ice-detention?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

<http://gf.me/u/w8yy95>

Have a wonderful New Year!!!!!!

Edith Johnson  
December 31, 2019



*Happy New Year!*

Colleagues, as we welcome the beginning of a new decade –

**2020**