

A better way to educate black young men

By HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON and DAVID C. BANKS

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David Banks is president of the Eagle Academy Foundation, which operates schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Harlem and Newark, N.J. (Richard Harbus for New York Daily News)

Brenton James, a young New Yorker, received his bachelor's degree in economics, philosophy and politics from the University of Pennsylvania earlier this month. Like his fellow graduates, Brenton applied his keen intellect and studied hard to earn his diploma.

But unlike most of his U Penn classmates, Brenton's early indicators hadn't pointed to an Ivy League education. An African-American raised by a proud, single mom in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, Brenton faced the fears, challenges and low expectations that young men of color commonly confront.

We know that children need love from their parents, the support of their teachers and nurturing from a community that believes in them. But the challenges faced by young men of color require a special level of response. All too often, black boys grow up without their fathers, leaving a void that impacts their transition to manhood. They are left to face a hostile society, frequently feared, even in their classrooms as little boys where they are suspended three times more often than their classmates. As they get older, they have to wonder, "Can I meet a friend at Starbucks and avoid arrest? Can I rent an Airbnb apartment without the neighbors reporting that it's being robbed?"

Indeed, the odds that young men like Brenton will engage with the criminal justice system are higher than the odds that their schooling will open doors to success and prosperity.

But Brenton beat those odds when he enrolled in the class of 2014 at Eagle Academy for Young Men. There he entered an environment where young men feel physically and emotionally safe, where they take the armor off — a place where they are loved and nurtured, pushed but not feared. Brenton would be accepted by 20 colleges and universities and become the Eagle Academies' first Ivy League graduate.

The idea for the Eagle Academy schools was hatched when the New York City chapter of the mentoring organization One Hundred Black Men read a Columbia University study that — referencing data from earlier research on prison inmates — said that 75% of prisoners incarcerated in New York State prisons came from just seven New York City neighborhoods. This study ignited a response that set out to create quality schools for young men in these communities. Both of us (a then-U.S. senator and a New York City school principal) got involved. In 2004, the first Eagle Academy for Young Men, an all-male, public school, opened in the South Bronx.

The objective was simple: improve outcomes for inner-city young men with a rigorous college-preparatory education, bolstered by strong parental involvement, mentorship and nurturing structures that encourage boys and build brotherhood and community pride.

Today, the Eagle Academy Foundation supports six schools in challenged neighborhoods — five in New York City and one in Newark, N.J. The schools, with grades six to 12, educate almost 3,000 black and Latino young men. Last year, the Eagle Academies registered an 87% graduation rate — 28 percentage points higher than the national graduation rate for young men of color. Ninety-eight percent of Eagle graduates were accepted to college.

Eagle scholars begin their studies in sixth grade, at the age when influences outside school may appeal to inner-city boys.

In effect, Eagle competes with the streets, and wins, by focusing on young men's strengths and challenging them where they struggle. Some 68% of black males are raised in households without their fathers, so Eagle makes sure — with its teachers, administrators, alumni and mentors from the community — that all young men have positive male influences. Eagle has learned that when a young man believes he's on a promising path, with strong role models who will stick by him, he will see the light ahead and achieve extraordinary things.

Brenton is a future leader. Now, in his first job, he'll report for work each morning at Bloomberg LP.

Because of the success of young men like him, our school and foundation get calls from cities and school districts around the nation, asking for guidance in replicating Eagle's methods and outcomes. We join with cities that provide normal levels of school funding while the foundation raises additional resources to supplement programming and partnerships to meet the specific needs of young men.

We recently launched the Eagle Institute to provide training and scale its know-how nationally. Currently, it is working with the New York City Department of Education at nine Brooklyn middle schools, and also with the Los Angeles United School District, to support the newly launched Boys Academic Leadership Academy.

We hope that governments, businesses and citizens across the country will take heed of the Eagle example and make wise investments in the education of young men of color. When we do, many thousands more will follow the shining example of Brenton James and his Eagle brothers into the halls of higher education and on to the fulfillment of brilliant American dreams.

Clinton is a former secretary of state and U.S. senator from New York. Banks is president and CEO of the Eagle Academy Foundation.



Program connects middle school students with mentors



Members of the community helped kick off the Eagle Academy Mentoring Program Saturday in East New York. Education advocates and city officials say a new program will help to transform the lives of young men.

Hundreds of students from nine schools will be paired up with mentors from the Eagle Academy.

All of the mentees are students of color in sixth-grade and they will be paired up with mentors who are either high school upperclassmen, or Eagle Academy alumni in their 20s.

The goal is to empower the students in and out of the classroom. Organizers say it's vital that they'll be able to relate with the young students.

Officials, including Borough President Eric Adams and the newly appointed Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, were on hand to help kickoff the program.

"If you intervene and provide these support systems. You're able to change the ideology these students have about who they are and where they belong in society," said Carranza.

The mentoring program lasts for three years to support students through their time in middle school.



LAUSD DAILY



Boys Academy celebrating growth & brotherhood in Inaugural Year

by [Samuel Gilstrap](#): February 23, 2018

The first-ever boys academy in L.A. Unified is now midway through its inaugural year, and the students and educators alike are riding high on signs of success. “It’s been a huge change since the year started,” said Principal Donald Moorner, who opened the doors of the [Boys Academic Leadership Academy](#) on Aug. 15. “We have young men who came from elementary and middle schools from all across Los Angeles. At first they didn’t know each other. Now, several months later, what you see is a unified group of young men with a strong sense of brotherhood.”

Two years ago, the Board of Education authorized the launch of the academy, which shares a campus with [Washington Preparatory High School](#). Modeled after the successful [Eagle Academies in New York City](#), the school opened this year to sixth- and seventh-graders and will ultimately serve grades six through twelve.

The school’s opening came a year after the launch of the popular [Girls Academy of Los Angeles](#). Like its counterpart, the Boys Academy has a science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) focus and aims to instill leadership skills in its students.

Moorner says the school adopted many tried and true practices of the Eagle Academies while also making it a uniquely West Coast school. “We are part of the District’s efforts to expand pathways for learning,” he said. “We know that not all students are the same and that trying to teach every student the same way doesn’t work. So, we aim to provide hands-on, interactive learning in an open environment where young men are encouraged to explore and understand their world in their own ways.” At the beginning and end of each week, the school day opens with a town hall-style meeting in the quad, where students participate in rituals designed to start the day on a positive note. These include reminders of the school’s ‘Big Five’: resolving conflicts peacefully, using appropriate and positive language, being in uniform, respecting others and keeping electronics invisible and inaudible. At one town hall, several students who had gotten into physical altercations during the week apologized to their classmates for bringing violence into the school.

“This is a peace zone,” Moorner said. “Of course, these are adolescent boys with high energy levels, and conflicts and tensions will arise. But, they learn to deal with conflicts effectively, handling disputes in a gentlemanly fashion.”

As their principal reminded students during the town hall that violence is not tolerated, the students began chanting “grades not fades!” – *fades* referring to a South Los Angeles slang term for goading others into fights. Moorner says they’ve taken the term and turned it into something catchy to help reinforce the school’s values. “When students see a fight breaking out, they will circle around and begin chanting the phrase,” he said. “It’s had a tremendous impact, as we’ve seen the level of physical violence go way down these past few months. Morning rituals also include reciting “Invictus” written

by 19th century poet William Ernest Henley with a message of fortitude in the face of adversity. Students also vie for the chance to pour libations, each adding water to a lemon tree as they say what they are thankful for.

“I think the rituals are great,” said sixth-grader Alexander Figueroa. “We get to watch as the tree gets bigger over time, and we say what we are thankful for. I am thankful for this school, because it’s helping us to get good grades to go to college after we graduate.” While he doesn’t yet know where he wants to attend college, Figueroa has a clear sense of the kind of career he wants to pursue. “I want to be some kind of an engineer,” he said. “Which kind, I am not sure yet. But, I love the idea of working in engineering.” Students compete both as individuals and as teams to see who can accumulate the most merit points each week. The teams are in the form of four ‘houses,’ each named after a prominent male figure who embodies confidence, leadership, resilience and academic excellence: author James Baldwin, revolutionary leader Che Guevara, astrophysicist Neil Degrasse Tyson and legendary boxing champion Muhammad Ali.

Each week, the house with the most accumulated merit points is celebrated along with the student with the most points who is dubbed “King of the Day.” Celebrating a victory this week was the Niel Degrasse House and “King of the Day” seventh-grader Donald Brown. “I’m really proud,” Brown said of his recognition. “Everyone really tries hard to get the most merit points. To earn them you have to stay focused, show up on time and not mess around during class time.” Moorer says that while the points and competition bring fun and team-building to the school, it’s really a bonus. “They really see themselves as a unified school,” he said. “The first half of this year, they have already developed such a strong sense of brotherhood, they look out for another and they congratulate one another on a job well done.” Moorer’s point was underscored as teams of students exchanged handshakes and high fives when the week’s winners were announced.

With about 100 students this year, the school is still relatively small. Sean Williams, father of sixth-grader Charles, says that’s to be expected for a new school in the South Los Angeles community. “Parents can sometimes be skeptical when you offer something new and different,” he said. “But, I have no doubt that when more parents see what this school can do for these young men, they will be pushing hard to get their boys enrolled here.” Getting the word out early had an impact on parents like Williams, who drives his son each day from Downey to attend the academy. Moorer continues to promote the school, holding community meetings, regularly touring elementary and middle schools around the city and even knocking on doors in the nearby neighborhoods. But, he says that the strongest marketing comes from the parents themselves.

“Dads like Sean have been with us since the beginning, helping us to build what you see today,” Moorer said. “Having parents as a strong base of support — and the school’s greatest cheerleaders — makes an enormous difference.”

Williams described Moorer as just what the new school needs. “Mr. Moorer is a great principal and a great man,” he said. “He’s here for these kids. They know he cares, and they trust him to help them succeed.”

The New York Times

A Golf Center Grows in Harlem

A leader of the Bridge Golf Foundation hopes it will be a “model for progressive gentrification” through its work with underprivileged and mostly black adolescent boys.

By PAUL ROGERS AUG. 25, 2017



Two years ago, Juan Cortorreal had never held a golf club. And now here he was, a freshman from the Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem, competing against the top player from the Bronx High School of Science, one of the city’s best teams. As his team’s No. 1 man, Juan had to tee off in the first group, in front of a crowd, at the Mosholu Golf Course in the Bronx, toward the end of the school year last May. Everyone fell hushed as he settled into his stance. With a patient backswing and whiplike follow through, he sent his ball flying up the tree-lined fairway. He outdrove his opponent, a far more seasoned player, but proceeded to lose the hole and, eventually, the match, just as he had every other match all season. Afterward, though, he was practically ebullient. “It was probably the most competitive match I’ve had,” Juan, 15, said. “It was fun; it was really fun.”

Juan and his identical twin, Antonio, are two of 20 Eagle Academy students who are avidly learning the game — and studying science, math and character lessons — with the Bridge Golf Foundation of Harlem. The group’s mission is to improve the lives and opportunities of young minority men through golf. The golf program is the latest in a growing number of organizations in New York and across the country devoted to introducing minority youths to sports traditionally played mostly by whites and to providing mentoring and tutoring programs. Harlem alone has Street Squash; Ice Hockey in Harlem; Harlem Lacrosse; and Dream, formerly Harlem RBI, which focuses on baseball and softball. At a time when Harlem is undergoing rapid change — to the disappointment and outright disgust of some longtime residents — Farrell Evans, the primary architect of the golf foundation, said the program represents a model for progressive gentrification.

“People get too caught up on the idea of displacement,” said Mr. Evans, who has lived in Harlem for 17 years. “We’re an example of how you can make it work for everybody.” The foundation, located on West 117th Street between Fifth and Lenox Avenues, is part of a neighborhood that bears little resemblance to how it looked just a few years ago. A Whole Foods opened at 125th Street and Lenox Avenue in late July, a capstone to a boulevard of restored brownstones where bistros and upscale coffee shops now outnumber the remaining dollar stores and

bodegas. It's not hard to find Harlem residents who lament the influx of wealth and newcomers in a neighborhood that once held the heart of black culture in America. A community effort — backed by Adriano Espaillat, the Democrat who represents the 13th Congressional District — is afoot to thwart the real estate industry's effort to rebrand the area between West 110th and West 125th Streets as SoHa (short for South Harlem).



Mr. Espaillat, who was unfamiliar with the Bridge Golf Foundation, said in an interview that any after-school program that provides academic enrichment, especially in science and technology, could be of great help to students anywhere. But he also said the foundation's mission struck him as being "somewhat paternalistic" in what he considered to be an effort to "take students out of the basketball court and teach them a game where they can brush elbows with the very rich and elite of this city."

"SoHa, Whole Foods, displacement," he said. "Is success coming at the expense of people that are living there?"

The Bridge Golf Learning Center, also the headquarters for the foundation, opened in May 2016. The center occupies a street-level space in the rear of a luxury condominium called the Adeline that was built in 2014. The facility has three hitting bays. Cups for putting are sunk into the carpeted floor. When the foundation isn't in session with the students, the center is open to the public — generally a high-paying clientele — for lessons with golf pros, club fittings, fitness screenings and open play on state-of-the-art simulators that spew data such as club speed and carry distance. Juan and Antonio know all of their numbers. "Today I hit 275," Juan said on a recent afternoon at the learning center, referring to how many yards he hit the ball off a tee with his driver. It was his longest drive yet. Antonio's was 266. Either would be the envy of most recreational golfers. The students at the center are seventh through 10th graders. All of them have enrolled by choice, but as a requirement of enrollment they must go to the learning center at least four days a week after school.

The organization also offers a seven-week summer program. Many of the students spent July and the first half of August preparing for state Regents exams. The twins focused on geometry, Juan in hopes of improving upon a 72, Antonio with the goal of passing. Each passed the earth science exam with ease. Sitting in their fourth-floor walk-up, above a West African grocery and a shuttered pizzeria, the twins' father, Hector Cortorreal, said the golf center, along with Eagle Academy, the public school his sons attend, has provided much-needed focus in their lives. "I always see them doing their homework," he said, gesturing toward the dining table in the narrow apartment. The Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem is one of six schools — one in each New York City borough and another in Newark — run by the Eagle Academy Foundation. The Bridge Golf Foundation chose to become partners with Eagle Academy, Mr. Evans said, because their missions align. Each is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to urban young men of color. He said his foundation drew inspiration from the national movement to better address the needs of this at-risk group, citing former President Barack Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative and the Young Men's Initiative spearheaded by former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Both the Bridge Golf Foundation and the Eagle Academies include character education in their curriculums to encourage students' social and emotional development. This summer, for example, the Bridge students read "The Pact," a memoir about three young black men who, while growing up in Newark, promised one another they would

become doctors and overcame hardships to fulfill their dream. The Cortorreal family emigrated from the Dominican Republic when Juan and Antonio, the youngest of five siblings, were 7 years old. Their father is a porter in a building around the block. Their mother, Marisol, works as a home health attendant. The parents are no longer together, and the boys are living with their father. As talented yet underprivileged young men, the Cortorreals are just the kind of the students the Bridge Golf Foundation was made for, Mr. Evans said. Mr. Evans, a former journalist who grew up playing golf in a black middle-class family, started the foundation with Robert M. Rubin, a retired commodities trader who came from a white working-class background and is now the principal owner of the Bridge, a lavish country club in Bridgehampton.

The two men met in the fall of 2014 while playing golf with a mutual friend in Westchester County. As they strolled the fairways, Mr. Rubin and Mr. Evans shared stories of their backgrounds in the sport. Mr. Evans, 42, grew up in Forsyth, Ga., a small town 60 miles south of Atlanta. He started playing as a youth with an old set of clubs of his father's he found in the family barn. Although his dad no longer played, his extended family was deeply involved in the sport. His uncle, J. P. Evans, was a scratch, or expert, player who in the early 1970s helped desegregate the public course where his nephew would learn the game 15 years later. In high school, Mr. Evans competed in predominantly black junior tournaments in Detroit, Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio. In college, he played on the golf team at Florida A&M University. When he met Mr. Rubin, Mr. Evans was writing about golf for ESPN.com. His connection to the golf industry began when he landed an internship with the PGA Tour as part of an effort to increase opportunities for minorities in the sport. The Tour began the program in response to the controversy surrounding the 1990 P.G.A.

Championship, which had been held at Shoal Creek, then an all-white country club outside Birmingham, Ala. Mr. Rubin, 63, came to golf later in life. The son of an appliance repairman, he grew up in Monmouth County, N.J, with zero ties to the sport. After college, he went to work on Wall Street. Only then did he learn what currency golf has in the business world. Mr. Rubin founded his club, the Bridge, in 2002. It self-consciously shirks tradition. The rolling grounds unfurl across the site of an old racetrack, relics of which, including flag stations and a spectator bridge advertising Chevron gasolines, still dot the property. The initiation fee is \$975,000. When Mr. Evans and Mr. Rubin strolled along the fairways of Westchester County that day, trading stories, Mr. Evans asked him, "Have you ever thought about doing something around golf with kids in the city?" Mr. Rubin was interested. Within a week, Mr. Evans had come up with a plan. The two men established the nonprofit foundation in January 2015. The annual budget is roughly \$1 million, Mr. Evans said. Most of the funding comes from donations, with the major benefactor being Mr. Rubin. His motivation in underwriting the organization, he said, comes from what he considers a growing inequality of opportunity in America. "I think there is a self-reinforcing, protectionist mechanism among the elites, and I'm thinking about ways to crack that," Mr. Rubin explained.

"The system that gave me my opportunity is broken now. So this is a way to create little openings in the armor that the elite have built around themselves." While President Trump, with his gilded private clubs, has become for many the face of golf in America, the foundation reflects a far different mission within the game. Along the walls of the learning center are sculptures made from old leather golf bags by the conceptual artist Charles McGill, who was black (he died in July after a brief illness). The golf bag, he wrote in an exposition on prominent display, is "a very political object due to its historical associations with class inequality and racial injustice." Not only were many country clubs and municipal courses once segregated, so, too, were the ranks of professional golf. The Professional Golfers Association of America, the precursor of the PGA Tour, maintained a Caucasians-only policy until 1961, forcing pioneering black pros, including Ted Rhodes and Charlie Sifford, to play for years on African-American circuits. Sifford became the first black professional golfer to break the color barrier, but although he went on to win two PGA events, his best years were behind him. It was in light of this history, and the ongoing plight of minority men in America today, that Mr. Evans came up with the idea of a youth golf program with an academic track in Harlem. Early on, Mr. Evans recalled, people asked him why he was focusing exclusively on young, male minorities. "I said, 'All you have to do is read the newspaper, look at your nightly news.' It doesn't take rocket science to see what's going on in America."

The Bridge students have examined issues of race through STEM as well as golf. Antonio was part of a team of students who researched the water contamination crisis in Flint, Mich. They presented their findings at a water-themed fair at the foundation in June. The scandal's disproportionate effect on Flint's poor black population made an impression on Antonio. "It just seemed unfair to me that they had to drink that water," he said. The majority of the foundation's STEM lessons are designed around the physics and statistics of golf. The students explore physics principles like the magnus effect, a lift force that determines the flight of a spinning ball. They also design their own experiments to determine, say, mean, mode and median and the correlation between two factors, like a golf club's loft and the rotation of a ball. "You learn statistics in school and you think that it's boring and why the hell are they making me do this?" said Veeshan Narinesingh, a co-leader of the Bridge's STEM program. "But they see it in an actual application to something they care about and it sticks in their head more." The foundation began working with Eagle Academy students in September 2015. The learning center was still under construction, so the classes met at the Harlem Y.M.C.A. The boys swung plastic clubs until the center opened eight months later. "As soon as we put a real club in their hands, they wanted to swing it," said

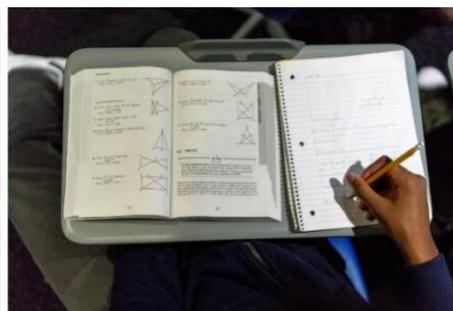
Brian Hwang, one of the foundation's two full-time teaching pros. "And then they started to hit their first shots into the screens. That was it — they loved it." As the only boys' high school golf team in Harlem, one composed entirely of freshmen, Eagle Academy lost every match last spring. Still, the boys said they gained valuable experience. The season produced highs as well as lows.

"Look at this shot!" Randy Taylor, the foundation's other full-time pro, said during the Bronx Science match last spring as a drive of Antonio's flew toward the green at Mosholu's third hole, stopping 10 feet from the cup. Mr. Taylor, 35, grew up in a family of modest means in Bridgeport, Conn., and took up the game at the insistence of his mother, who enrolled him in an after-school program that combined golf and academics. When he was 14, Mr. Taylor met Tiger Woods, then a rising star, who awarded him a scholarship to a Nike golf camp. "I tell the boys all the time," said Mr. Taylor, "that changed a lot for me and put me in a situation where I could learn this game of golf, be good at it and teach it for a living, and pass it on to them."

A few times a year, the foundation hosts the students at the Bridge, Mr. Rubin's club. Their most recent visit, in late July, combined hands-on lessons on how a golf course is maintained with sumptuous food, an instructional clinic and time spent playing on the course.

After a work session in the morning and a lunch of quesadillas, cheeseburgers and push-up pops on the club's patio, the boys limbered up for golf lessons. Then they hiked to the first tee. Zion Smith, 14, hit his opening drive and then took a moment to admire the verdant tableau, with its views of Peconic Bay in the distance. "It's different than every other course I've played," he said. "Everything is just so clean."

Far more than just offering the occasional day in the country or an introduction to golf, Zion said, the foundation has become a second family to him after his father died of cancer. "It's very helpful to have people around to support me, that want me to be successful just like my father was," he said. "They're kind of stepping in as a parent figure in my father's shoes, treating me special. Like I'm someone and not invisible, not being ignored." A version of this article appears in print on August 27, 2017, on Page MB1 of the New York edition with the headline: A Golf Center Rises in Harlem.





www.The74Million.org

The 'unconquerable' young men of NYC's Eagle Academy perform at the DNC, impress Joe Biden, among others

Mareesa Nicosia – July 28, 2016

Fifteen-year-old Kailen Mayfield and his schoolmates were getting ready to rehearse “Invictus” ahead of a Tuesday evening performance at the Democratic National Convention when a familiar looking white-haired man walked onto the stage trailed by Secret Service.

“Hey guys ... Where are you from?”

It was Joe Biden, walking over to shake hands and talk with almost 40 students who’d traveled from the all-boys Eagle Academy for Young Men in New York City to represent their school on the national stage.



U.S. Vice President Joe Biden talks to students from Eagle Academy for Young Men before Day Two of the Democratic National Convention on July 26 in Philadelphia. (Photo by Getty Images)

Chatting with the vice president was one of the heart-stopping highlights of a whirlwind day in Philadelphia, said Mayfield, a rising sophomore from the Morris Heights section of the Bronx.

“If you put in the effort and you live by (the Eagle Academy motto) CLEAR — confidence, leadership, effort, academic excellence and resilience — the opportunities are endless,” the teen said in a phone interview Wednesday.

“Look at me,” he added, “when I was on stage at the Democratic convention with my Eagle Brothers, I just can’t believe ... how many boys who look like me can say they achieved that?”

The students chanted “Invictus” for Biden — one of his favorite poems, the vice president told them, which he’d taught to his son Beau, who died last year — a preview of the performance they’d give before the full convention hall later that evening.

*“Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.”*

The title of the poem by the English writer William Ernest Henley comes from the Latin “undefeated” or “unconquerable.” Nelson Mandela drew strength from it while in prison, Eagle Academy President and CEO David

Banks said, and Eagle Academy students recite it daily as a rousing reaffirmation of their own courage and dignity as they confront challenges.

When the first Eagle Academy opened in the Bronx in 2004, with Banks as its principal, it was the first-of-its-kind all-boys public school in New York, Banks said.

That school year, 2004-05, only 30 percent of New York City high school students graduated with a Regents diploma. Even more staggeringly, 75 percent of New York state's entire prison population at the time came from just seven New York City neighborhoods, according to Banks.

"If you were one of the young men growing up in these areas, the odds were stacked against you," he told the convention.

He explained to the convention audience how Hillary Clinton's support was crucial in the years leading up to the school's establishment. In 2001, then-Sen. Clinton co-sponsored a provision of the No Child Left Behind Act that provided federal funds to single-sex public schools, spurring local school districts across the country to experiment with gender segregation.

"She was our earliest champion," Banks said. "One leader who understood that addressing the crisis facing young men of color in our country required innovative measures."

The school was established through a collaboration with the nonprofit One Hundred Black Men, and Clinton helped encourage then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg and then-Schools Chancellor Joel Klein to support the public-private partnership, according to her website.

Like all public schools, Eagle Academy receives taxpayer funding; it also has an active fundraising operation, the Eagle Academy Foundation, which helps support an extended school day and Saturday programming, Banks said. Today it serves about 3,000 young men, mostly of color, at six locations — one in each New York City borough and one in Newark, New Jersey. Since its first graduation in 2008, which Clinton attended, the academies have graduated about 1,000 students. Roughly 83 percent of students graduate and 98 percent are accepted to college, Banks said.

His students' televised appearance at the convention, Banks said, served as an important reminder to a populace that is far too often awash in negative images of young African American and Latino men.

"Today we have young men who are confident, future leaders who are resilient. Just look at them, America," Banks boomed, drawing applause. "They are brilliant and full of promise."

April 29, 2016

Hillary Clinton embraced as keynote speaker at fund-raiser for all-boys Eagle Academy she helped establish



Hillary Clinton was welcomed with roaring applause Friday at the Eagle Academy Foundation's fifth annual "Soaring Beyond" fund-raiser breakfast.

Clinton was a driving force in the opening of the first Eagle Academy school in the Bronx in 2004, said founder David C. Banks.

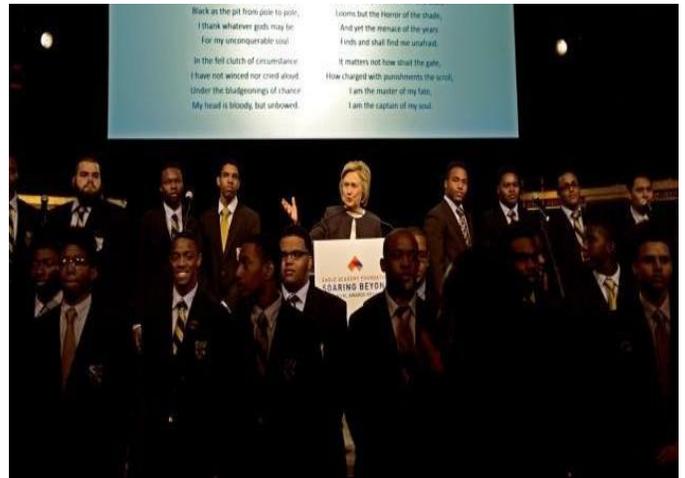
The academy comprises six New York City all-male public schools founded in response to the low graduation rate of African-American boys.

The college acceptance rate for Eagle Academy grads is currently 98%, according to the school's figures.

"None of this would have been possible if it was not for the efforts and support of Hillary Clinton," Banks said.

There had not been an all-boys public school in 30 years in New York City he said — and the first champion of the idea was then-Sen. Clinton.

"We had a series of meetings with her and she was fully supportive. She introduced it to Mayor Bloomberg. She came and visited our school during the very first year and after that she agreed to speak at our graduation four years from that," said Banks.



Clinton, currently the Democratic presidential front-runner, gave a beaming speech to the Eagle scholars who attended the breakfast.

"You have succeeded despite setbacks. Your success was not given to you — you earned it," she said.

She also echoed the advice given to public high school seniors by First Lady Michelle Obama earlier this week.

"Never, never be afraid to ask for help," Clinton said. "I love how [the First Lady] said that."

Proceeds from the Midtown event at Gotham Hall will go toward funding Eagle Academy extracurricular activity programs, Bank said.

The president — recalling that Eagle Academy was created in response to a national crisis of low graduation rates for young black men — said he thrilled with how the school had progressed since its beginnings in 2004.

"I feel great but my feeling even for a day like today is always tempered by the fact that thousands of boys around this country are still suffering," Banks added.

"My heart still aches for so many young men who are not getting this high level of support which is something we're trying to work at," he said.

Jamal Trotman, 19, a senior at Eagle Academy in Ocean Hill, Brooklyn, said his high school experience saved his life.

Trotman immigrated to the U.S. from Guyana in 2005 and now lives in Brownsville.

"My future had no certainty growing up," he said. "Being a part of the Eagle family made me save myself."

Trotman said he got a chance to speak to Clinton backstage.

"She's a great person," he said. "The world is very sexist. To have a female president would be a great accomplishment for the United States."

Trotman said he has been accepted to 10 colleges.

He plans to attend either Howard University or the City University of New York.

Donte Jones, 13, an eighth grader from Harlem Eagle Academy, said his school has given him so much he wants to give back once he graduates.

"It has inspired me so much that I dream about becoming a teacher at Eagle after college," he said. "I want to do for others what they've done for me."

DAILY NEWS

Brenton James, this year's valedictorian at Eagle Academy for Young Men in the Bronx, had an eye-popping 21 college offers

James, 17, chose the University of Pennsylvania, becoming the first Eagle Academy student to enroll at an Ivy League college

BY MICHAEL J. FEENEY JUNE 24, 2014



Brenton James, the Class of 2014 valedictorian at the Bronx campus of Eagle Academy for Young Men, was accepted to a whopping 21 colleges. He chose the University of Pennsylvania. David Banks is president of the Eagle Academy Foundation, which operates schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Harlem and Newark, N.J.

This Eagle has landed.

A soon-to-graduate Bronx high school student was accepted to a whopping 21 colleges.

And he knows exactly where he's going. Brenton James, the valedictorian of the Eagle Academy for Young Men in the Bronx, has decided to attend the University of Pennsylvania, becoming the school's first student to enroll in an Ivy League college, school officials told the Daily News. "It was a tough decision, but I'm confident in my choice," the 17-year-old said, noting that Penn and a second Ivy League school that also accepted him, Cornell, were at the top of his list. "I feel excited about it," James said. "It's surreal." He said he visited both Cornell and Penn, but selected the Philadelphia school because of its city atmosphere. James was also accepted to Syracuse University, the University of Virginia and numerous SUNY and CUNY schools, the school said. "They've been preparing us for college since day one," James said of the Eagle Academy. The school opened in the Bronx in 2004, with a focus on improving the graduation rate among young men of color. "The entire Eagle family is so proud of Brenton James, who embodies what the Eagle mission is all about," said David Banks, president of the Eagle Academy Foundation.

The Eagle Academy started off in the Bronx, but now operates schools in Brooklyn, Queens, Harlem and Newark, N.J. The 2014 class has a 100% college acceptance rate, a school spokeswoman said.

James praised his teachers, but said it was his single mother, a Jamaican immigrant, who stressed the importance of college. "Education was the one thing that she pushed for us," James said, adding that his brother also graduated from college. "She's excited that I got into an Ivy League School," he added. "Now, she can brag about it." James, who will address his graduating class of about 75 students this week, is hoping to see future Eagle students follow his tracks. "I'm glad I get to be that role model to show students that anything is possible," he said. "I want to come back next year, and see how many students are going to be Ivy Leaguers."

The graduation ceremony is set for 2:30 p.m. Wednesday at Hostos Community College in the Bronx.

The Washington Post

In New York City, all-male public schools aim to help at-risk boys



Seth Wenig/AP - Students write a response in a humanities class at Eagle Academy in New York, Oct. 23, 2013. The all-male model of the academy, once seen as sexist and outdated, has been resurrected to serve a population of youths who advocates feared were likelier headed to prison than to college.

By Karen Matthews, Published: November 17, 2013

NEW YORK — Once seen as sexist and outdated, the all-male educational model has been resurrected to serve New York City's poorest boys, a group feared to be more likely to go to prison than to college.

The Eagle Academy for Young Men was the city's first all-boys public school in more than 30 years when it opened in the Bronx nine years ago.

"It's a movement to try and save our sons," said David C. Banks, the founding principal of the first Eagle Academy, who is now president of the Eagle Academy Foundation, the network's fundraising arm.

Banks just opened his fifth Eagle Academy, in Harlem, and hopes to open two more New York City schools for a total of seven serving 4,000 students, all in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Aimed at the most vulnerable student population, low-income boys, the Eagle Academies have shown above-average results. The four-year graduation rate in 2012 for the Bronx Eagle Academy — the only location that's been around long enough to have had a graduating class — was 67.5 percent. The citywide average that year was 64.7 percent but only 59.9 percent for boys.

Graduates have gone on to colleges including Syracuse, Skidmore and Fordham. Banks said as many as 4,000 students apply for every 100 Eagle Academy slots at schools in Brooklyn, Queens, Newark and Harlem.

Banks said the school's performance comes despite a challenging student body: virtually all black or Hispanic, most from low-income families, and a higher-than-average special-needs population. And, of course, all male.

He says he has been invited to start Eagle Academies in other cities in the United States and beyond but would prefer to help others start their own all-boys schools.

Single-sex education has long been available to wealthy children in private schools, but it remains controversial in U.S. public schools. The American Civil Liberties Union argues in its “Teach Kids, Not Stereotypes” campaign that efforts to separate the sexes in the classroom are often rooted in outdated gender stereotypes. ACLU representatives did not respond to calls for comment about all-boys schools.

Michael Kimmel, a Stony Brook University sociologist whose work on gender studies has been cited by the ACLU, said research has not proved that single-sex schools exert “an independent positive effect on education outcomes.”

But he said anecdotal evidence supports schools for at-risk boys such as Eagle Academy. “They are obviously doing some real good,” he said.

Like the British boarding schools they are modeled on, each Eagle Academy is divided into four houses — at the Bronx campus, they’re Obama House, Malcolm X House, Roberto Clemente House and Che Guevara House.

Students win points for their houses by scoring well on tests or by performing community service; the points are a matter of pride for the houses.

“I feel proud I’m in Obama House, the first black president of the United States,” said eighth-grader Elijah Landsman, who wanted to make it clear that his house is outpacing the others. “Right now Obama’s in the lead; I’d just like to say that.”

School days begin with a town hall meeting where students share burdens such as a mother’s health scare and then recite “Invictus,” the Victorian-era poem about overcoming adversity that proclaims, “I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.”

Donations from corporate and philanthropic supporters help pay for such extras as after-school programs, mentoring and trips to visit colleges.

Juan Rijfkogel, a 2008 Eagle Academy graduate who now works as a derivative analyst at Credit Suisse, said the mentoring helped him succeed — and the all-boys environment helped, too.

“At that age, hormones are buzzing,” he said.

Elijah, the eighth-grader, said he’d rather go to school with girls, “but my mother says there is less distraction.”

Of the city’s 20 single-sex public schools, 19 opened during the administration of outgoing Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg (I). They include girls’ schools such as the Young Women’s Leadership Schools, a network that’s parallel to Eagle Academy.

Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio championed educational programs such as universal pre-kindergarten during this year’s campaign but did not address single-sex education.

Single-sex believers include Melanie Harmon, whose sixth-grade son, Aaron, just started at the Harlem Eagle Academy after struggling with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at his previous school.

At an opening ceremony at her son’s school, all the adult men in the room were asked to stand up and show the boys how to tie a tie.

Harmon said Aaron is learning to focus without the added distraction of girls. She added: “They teach them to become responsible. They’re teaching him basically how to grow into a man.”