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## EDUCATION

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# Hebrew Academy students win first in nation for mentoring program

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**The Hebrew Academy (RASG)** High School students competed in the National Conference of Synagogue Youth's Jewish Unity Mentoring Program in New York City and placed first in the nation for their year-long efforts in making positive changes in their community.

The national leadership program allows Jewish high school students throughout the nation to become leaders by creating, planning, and executing their plan to better the community. Each year, the teams meet in the Goldman Sachs boardroom to present their efforts and the impact it had on their community.

The Hebrew Academy students presented their social campaigns and community programs that focused on improving the image of prayer on campus by creating a day of learning for students to voice their concerns, and teaching senior citizens how to use technology through a partnership with the Jewish Community Services of South Florida.

Team members included **Ariella Wolfson**, **Hadassah Bixon**, **Jonathan Malove**, **Ofir Abramov**, **Eden Grosz**, **Elisheva Adouth**, captains **Aliza Posner** and **Malka Suster**, and team adviser **Amy Zuckerman**.

## School for Advanced Studies

**Debora Gonzalez** and **Camille Molas** of the **School for Advanced Studies** were both honored during this month's Miami-Dade County School Board meeting for their academic achievements.

Debora represented the school's Wolfson campus and was honored for her acceptance into **Harvard College** in Massachusetts. Camille represented the school's Homestead campus and was honored for being a Posse Scholar and her acceptance into **Pomona College** in California.

School Board Chairman **Larry Feldman** chose Camille to speak during the meeting on behalf of all 2017 graduates. Her speech touched on overcoming obstacles and community service.

## Gertrude K. Edelman Sabal Palm Elementary School

The Leonore Annenberg School Fund for Children teamed up with The Council for Educational Change to donate \$50,000 in grants to three schools in Florida, including **Gertrude K. Edelman Sabal Palm Elementary School** in North Miami Beach.

The elementary school plans to use the grant to install new educational technology to support the i-Ready Program, which would allow students to have individualized reading and math programs online.

## Miami Dade College top graduates

On April 29, about 13,000 students from Miami Dade College's eight locations will graduate. While all of the graduates represent 190-plus countries and can speak 90 languages, the school's highest performers will be recognized for their leadership, academic achievements, campus involvement, and community service achievements.

Meet the college's 2017 students that are top of their class:

### • Hialeah Campus

**Alexandra Frazekas** was born in the Netherlands and raised in Europe and will be recognized for her leadership in the school's Student Government Association. She hopes to continue her studies at Emerson College, Columbia University, or Syracuse University with a focus in journalism.

**Alina Garcia** is a biological science major and the first in her family to graduate from college. Garcia will be recognized for receiving a 2015-16 Academic Excellence Award in chemistry, participating in the 2017 Phi Beta Kappa Florida Region Essay Competition, being a math mentor, and participating in a mentoring program at Miami Children's Museum.

### • Homestead Campus

**Joy Barnes**, a biology major, wrote an article called "Homeschooling Lays Groundwork for College Success" to share her experience with transitioning from homeschool to college life. Her article was later published in the South Dade News Leader. Barnes will be recognized for receiving the Bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award in 2016. She plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in forensic science and criminal justice.

**Jeffrey Rodriguez's** love for video games pushed him to teach himself how to code, and he is currently a volunteer pharmacy technician at Doris Ison Health Center. Rodriguez will be recognized for being a National Hispanic Scholar, a Chapman House for the Homeless volunteer, and a Relay for Life fundraising coordinator. He also won a \$200,000 Posse Foundation Scholarship and plans to attend Franklin and Marshall College to become a hospital pharmacist.

### • Interamerican Campus

**Reidel Nabut** came from Cuba six years ago to seek better opportunities and is now creating opportunities for others as a peer academic leader that tutors others in chemistry and math. He will be recognized for founding Mathematics Is Everything, a Facebook page that promotes mathematics around the world. He plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in computer engineering and would like to work for NASA in the future.

**Joseph Martinez** is an Honors College student who has published clinical research on Parkinson's disease and is an activist with the Clinton Global Initiative Foundation. Martinez will also be recognized for being a peer leader, a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, the Biological National Honor Society, the Chemistry Club and the Student Government Association. He plans to continue his education and become a neurosurgeon.

### • Kendall Campus

**Gabriel Blanco-Colmenares** is a chemistry major with multiple medals in math competitions and art. Blanco-Colmenares will be honored for his membership in Phi Theta Kappa, STEM Club, SWER Club, and the Dr. Miami Club. The 19-year-old student wishes to become a cardiothoracic surgeon to help provide medical assistance to those in need and has applied to Georgetown, Duke, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins.

In 2013, **Leslie Rodriguez** had a child with special needs, and that pushed her to return to school to study ways to help children with special needs. In 2014, she returned to school and will be graduating with her associate's degree this month. Rodriguez plans to continue her education to become a neonatal nurse or a surgeon.

### • Medical Campus

**Anabella Arria** was one year away from completing dental school when she was forced to leave her native country due to political turmoil and strikes. Arria will be recognized for being an officer of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and for being named to the 2017 All-Florida Academic Team.

**Juan Paredes** joined the U.S. Air Force at 18 and spent four years in the Middle East. He now serves in the Reserves and has participated in the school's open house, Health Fair, and advises high school students about the sonography program. Paredes will receive an associate degree in diagnostic medical sonography and plans to become a physician's assistant.

### • North and West Campuses

**Krystal Lanier** is a 2017 Newman Civic Fellow and served as a Campus Election Engagement Fellow. Lanier took on leadership roles in the Student Government Association, Phi Theta Kappa, and the Political Science Club. She hopes to become a public policy analyst focusing on education or healthcare policies.



**Yvens Duplessis** is a biology major and the first in his family to graduate from college. Duplessis earned the Omega Student Award Endowment, Trio Grant Award, Bank of America Scholarship, American Dream Scholarship, and Scheffler Scholarship. He hopes to conduct research for the World Health Organization and volunteer with the Peace Corps.

**Frank Quintero** was born in Venezuela and lives in Miami, his sister. He is a recipient of the Mirta Penelas Scholarship Endowment and is a Miami Book Fair volunteer. Quintero plans to continue his education at Yale University's Eli Whitney Students Program or Florida International University to study law and international relations.

**Alexa Ovalles** has been a dancer since the age of 5 and volunteered at King Jesus International Ministry. She plans to get her bachelor's in chemistry with a sub-concentration in biochemistry and a minor in psychology.

#### • Wolfson Campus

**Enrique Sepulveda** was homeless when he started at Miami Dade College. He eventually became vice president of the Student Government Association and represented his school in Washington, D.C. He is one of six students nationally recognized as an Achieving the Dream Scholar and received a full scholarship from Educate Tomorrow to study abroad in Indonesia this summer. Sepulveda lives in Camillus House and is graduating with an associate in arts. He hopes to attend Florida State University to study political science to be a voice for the less fortunate.

**Teresa Ricks** was born in Miami and decided to stay here to continue her volunteer work with the Good Hope Equestrian Center. Ricks chose to pursue a career in psychology to help others and plans to continue her education at Nova Southeastern University. She hopes to become a recreational therapist to incorporate animals into therapy sessions.

*If you have news for this column, please send it to Adrienne Richardson at [schoolscenemia@gmail.com](mailto:schoolscenemia@gmail.com).*



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