April 23—more than 300 young men from eleven local high schools gathered at the Mintz Auditorium on the Bronx campus of Monroe College for the College's annual Male Empowerment event. This year's Male Empowerment was themed: Stand... for Epic Impact!

Monroe's empowerment events are designed to inspire young people to achieve in school and in life. Renowned educator and TV personality Dr. Steve Perry delivered the keynote and WCBS-TV news anchor Maurice Dubois delivered a motivational speech.

Despite the celebrity of the speakers, maybe the most important moments of the event were remarks by students from the College's Empowerment Institute (EI), composed of 50 young men who had participated in previous male empowerment events and now are highly-motivated and successful Monroe College students.

“Our EI students embody what male empowerment is all about,” says Director of Admissions, Dr. Cecil Wright, who founded the College's empowerment events. “They were high school students who attended our events and now they have a sense of direction, a sense of purpose, and are bound to be personally and professionally successful. We're hoping we inspired hundreds more at the event this year.”

At the event, the discussions revolved around character, scholastic achievement, community service and mentoring. These role-modeling sessions bring together professionals who are matched up with groups of young men for intimate dialogues on the value of education. By participating in productive discussions regarding fatherhood, relationships and other subjects, male empowerment events ignite efforts to combat the issues that keep young men from succeeding.

Monroe's EI students are mentored throughout their college careers and beyond. They participate in a variety of enrichment activities, tutoring and numerous other supports.

“It has proven to be an incredibly successful program,” Dr. Wright says.
Monroe College Students Spend Spring Break on Medical Mission to Jamaica, Providing Health Care and Education to Rural Community

Students and faculty from Monroe's School of Allied Health Professions traveled to Moneague, Jamaica during spring break to provide medical assistance and health education to local residents.

Nine students and two faculty members went to a small rural community in the northern region of Jamaica that is home to some of the country's most vulnerable residents, including the elderly and those with significant physical and mental disabilities. The community, named Jacob's Ladder, is the only one within the island nation that specifically caters to the needs of adults with heightened medical and social challenges.

The Monroe students provided practical information on hygiene and healthy living, as well as educating older children and teens about HIV; how it's spread and the precautions those infected must take to mitigate the risks to others. They also conducted essential wellness screenings at the local clinic, such as checking blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels and conducting eye exams. Additionally, they participated in other critical community activities, such as painting, building repairs, planting crops and helping care for the local livestock.

Professor Tasha Valentino, who accompanied the students with faculty member Dr. Desmond Poyser, worked with the community's medical staff to ensure that they are utilizing the latest lifesaving and first aid techniques.

"The Medical Mission is a highly sought-after opportunity among Monroe students looking to help people without easy access to the type of basic health information and medical care that many of us take for granted," says Dr. Jerry Kostroff, Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions. "We are extraordinarily proud of the number of Monroe students who seek to participate each year," he noted. "It speaks to the caliber of compassionate, caring healthcare professionals they will assuredly become one day."

This year's medical mission was conducted in cooperation with Mustard Seed Communities, a U.S.-based, non-profit organization that operates Jacob's Ladder, the 100-acre community in Jamaica, as well as other communities for vulnerable populations in Nicaragua, Dominican Republic and Zimbabwe.
Monroe Culinary Rolls on at Spring Culinary Classic in Schenectady, NY

Monroe Culinary earned 12 medals at the American Culinary Federation sanctioned competition held at Schenectady County Community College. Christina Karuso, first-year baking and pastry student, led all medallists with a gold medal for her Tres Leches cake with Dulce de Leche and Mango Salad. Three Monroe Culinary seniors competed in professional categories. Food and Finance HS and C-CAP students Lay Alston and Rashadi Rivera earned professional silver medals for dishes featuring Stuffed Hybrid Striped Bass with Shrimp, Scallop and Lobster and a Roasted Pork Loin with Red Chile Adobo, respectively.

Seared Bass with Spicy Bacalaitos. August Martin C-CAP student Hipolito Torres earned a bronze medal for his Pan-seared Striped Bass with a similar dish.

“IT was a pleasure watching the Monroe students compete; it is a testimony to the hard work they put in and the excellent coaching they have at Monroe,” commented Michael Stamets. Chef Instructor at Schenectady and one of the six ACF judges who presided over the competition. “The pupils have come closer to the milestone of 600, just 27 medals to reach that goal—in what has been a banner year for the competition program—highlighted by the 2015 state championship and five gold medals at the Northeast Regionals. On hand to support the team were coaches Chef Eric Pellizzari and Chef Shamel Donigan. Graduating senior, Rossella Cangialosi, who will be competing this summer for national student chef of the year, served as the team manager for the competition.

Chinese Student Association

The College is pleased to announce the establishment of the Monroe College Chinese Student Association (MCSCA) and to welcome it to the Monroe Family! MCSCA was established in March 2015 and is dedicated mainly to students from China, but also welcomes people of all backgrounds and nationalities to join our organization and participate in its activities. Currently, it is composed of approximately 55 members with an elected president. Other executive positions will be added as the organization continues to grow. MCSCA aims to provide Chinese students overseas with useful assistance to help them quickly adapt to Monroe College and life in the United States, at the same time promoting Chinese culture. It helps foster an intimate connection between new students and their upper-class peers, who act as mentors.

The organization has sponsored a 2015 Chinese New Year Gala at the New Rochelle campus and also the first Shabushabu Dinner party on March 20. The snow did not diminish the enthusiasm of the 35 students who came to the party.

On April 23, the Monroe College Toastmasters Club had an award dinner at Gaddis Hall in New Rochelle to honor those participants who have helped to make the club a success.

Sloley spoke of her journey from being a Toastmaster member to becoming an officer at the organization. “I was always afraid to speak publicly. I could not have done this without the mentors along the way!”

Toastmasters is a non-profit organization that operates clubs worldwide for the purpose of helping members improve their speaking and communication skills. Many people have benefited from the monthly meetings. Richard Mushie, ’15, was a finalist this year in the area competitions. Richard Harris was chosen to be the Keynote Speaker at the Monroe College graduation last year at the Javits Center. Monroe President Stephen Jerome, a guest at the meeting says, “I have never seen anyone speak in front of 7,000 people with no notes! He was the best speaker we have ever had.”

On A pril 23, the Monroe College ALPFA Chapter Executive Board attended an ALPFA Leadership Retreat hosted by the public accounting firm, Ernst and Young, in its New York City offices. The retreat was also attended by students from other colleges in the Northeast region.

The purpose of this retreat was to allow the ALPFA student chapter leaders from the different schools to share ideas and to help the chapter leaders refine their leadership skills to create a more efficient, productive and successful process of club administration. The students in attendance also got an opportunity to network with students in other chapters to expand their contacts, learn more about the accounting profession and develop a deeper understanding about what corporations expect from students and recent graduates.

The students also learned about programs and employment opportunities at Ernst and Young. The Monroe ALPFA student leaders in attendance were: Carolyn Bruno, Lamesa Golding, Armando Solis, Willy Nguyen, Kadehim Cooper, Terhon McCall, Kandria Franklin, Ilana Rozens Liz and Jacques Mapango.

Monroe College Toastmaster’s Club Award Dinner

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Greg Scotland, ’06, current President and Richard Harris, ’08, Vice President of Education, planned and presided over the events.

Ameil Sloley, ’03, was the Master of Ceremonies and introduced the Keynote Speaker, Jennifer Chan, the Lieutenant Governor of Education and Training. Her topic was: What is Your Legacy?
Student Activities Office Hosts Women’s Luncheon

In celebration of Women’s History Month, the Student Activities Office hosted its first Women’s Luncheon. On March 10 in the Mintz Auditorium the event was opened to female staff, faculty and students. The theme for the event was Letting go of the Past so you can Capture Your Future.

To help the students have a better understanding of this theme, the Student Activities Office invited motivational speaker, Akilah C. Thompson, along with 27 inspirational Monroe College staff and faculty mentors. The 27 mentors were named The Women’s Support Network. The Network was assembled with the goal of providing additional resources and support to our female students. Each mentor was assigned to a table consisting of seven students. This gave them the opportunity to introduce themselves and engage in small discussions.

Edith Banks, director of Student Activities, gave the opening remarks and reminded the students that The Women’s Support Network Team is committed to their success. Lakita Dale, a Pharmacy Technician major, enthused the audience with her poem, Be You.

It was evident that the Keynote speaker touched hearts with her piercing words of encouragement. Some students nodded in agreement; some cheered while others momentarily shed tears. She constantly reminded them of the positive affirmations women should never forget.

The event came to a close with a great performance by the Monroe College Dance Company. The Student Activities Office extends sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this event such a success. We’re positive that the students left feeling renewed, inspired, motivated and most of all: supported.

Florida Office Visit

During March, President Jerome, Mrs. Jerome and Senior VP Roberta Greenberg had the opportunity to visit the Monroe College Florida Office to meet with the staff.

“The day was pleasurable, it was so exciting to have them meet with us. It was also very productive,” said a member of the staff. The staff provided insights as to how the Florida office works. They discussed how to continue to provide enrollment support to the college as well as diversifying the outreach efforts for the Florida high schools, building corporate and employer partnerships in the area and nurturing the Monroe alumni who have made Florida their home.

It was an enjoyable opportunity for all!
This semester, the Monroe College Honors Program reinstated a tradition—participating in joint projects with other Honors Programs. On March 7, students from the College’s program worked with students from Point Park University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The students divided into seven groups; each of which was assigned a New York City landmark (including the Empire State Building, Grand Central Station, Rockefeller Center, New York Public Library and others). Their mission was to learn as much as possible about the landmark and discuss why it's a necessary part of the fabric that makes New York City an important city. The students were expected to learn about each landmark in a variety of ways. They described the distinct characteristics of each landmark in terms of its physical and architectural characteristics, origin and its special features or claims to fame.

As they traveled on foot or via subway to their destinations, they had to complete a 10-item scavenger hunt (which included taking a picture with a police officer, having a stranger sign a MetroCard, using an actual payphone and more). The group to finish the scavenger hunt, collect data on their landmark and return to Times Square first won prizes. Pizza was enjoyed in the middle of Times Square while the students shared their experiences. It was certainly a great adventure!

Monroe student, Keyla Zapata says, “A multicultural experience is exploring the city of New York and meeting students from another part of the country. I found myself discovering New York and interacting with those wonderful students, who are like me, a part of an Honors organization. What else to do on a Saturday, then to go downtown and meet new friends?” Point Park University student Chase Barron says, “I really enjoyed the experience. New York City is definitely not Pittsburgh and rushing through the city with a bunch of old and new friends really helped me adapt to the insanity. We enjoyed great weather, beautiful sights and most importantly, free New York pizza, which was delicious!”

Approximately one month later, ten student representatives and Professor Kathryn MacDonald attended the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference from April 9-12 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The students had the opportunity to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the Civil War, specifically the Battle of Gettysburg. Coincidentally the group arrived on the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. Aside from sightseeing, the students networked with Honors students from across the Northeast. Additionally, each student presented work from an honors course taken in the last two semesters. Topics ranged from the issue of privacy and technology, to finding a job after college, to the fall of the Berlin Wall and more. The group did a wonderful job representing our Honors Program and the participants had a wonderful educational and social experience.
Monroe Mustangs Shine at Roadrunner Invitational

The Mustangs traveled to Ramapo College to compete in less-than-ideal weather conditions. Once again, the men and women started off strong with victories in the 4x100 relays. At the Danny Currin Invitational the previous week, the Women’s team ran a nationals-qualifying 48.47 result and the Men’s team won with their 43.06 result. Both teams bested their times this week, with the women clocking in with a time of 49.30 and the men winning with a 41.58 result, one of the faster times in the country.

That was just the start of the successful meet for the Mustangs, two of whom would be triple winners that day. Denesha Ransome, who anchored the sprint relay was also victorious in the 100m (12.32, 12.24 in the trials) and the 200m (25.56). Christopher Belcher dominated the sprints, winning the 100m in 10.49 (10.46 in the trials) and the 200m in 21.11, besting his own school record of 21.40 set just the week prior.

On the Women’s side, notable performances were turned in by Ernestine Conteh, who ran on the 100m in 12.61 and the 200m in 25.83; J’renda Rivera, who ran the 400m in 58.96; Atara Segree, Ernestine Conteh, who ran the 100m in 12.61 and the 200m in 21.11, besting his own school record of 21.40 set just the week prior.

For the Mustang Men, Jovan Swaby and Elzise McDonald finished first and second, respectively, in the High Jump (Swaby the Hammer with a throw of 50.06m. placed second in the Discus with a throw of 36.83 and second in qualifying for Nationals. Over on the field, Ksenia Safonova

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In addition to making the All-American second team, Breana was also named the Regional Player of the year for her outstanding play.

Will Tavares– All American Honorable Mention

As a freshman, Tavares exhibited great talent and provided a huge boost to the Monroe Mustangs basketball program.

This season, Breana Bey– Second Team All-American

FOLLOWING an exceptional season that saw both the men’s and women’s basketball teams reach their respective NJCAA National Championships, three players have been recognized as All-Americans:

Breana Bey– Second Team All-American

This season, Bey demonstrated why she is one of the Mustangs’ best all-round players: she’s a scorer, rebounder and tough defender. Devastating around the basket, she undoubtedly played a key role the Mustangs’ success this season. In the process, she made her name as one of the strongest and most versatile forwards in the NJCAA, with an average of 13.2 points per game for a total of 480 points, 172 rebounds, 72 assists and steals.

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Aaliyah Mercer– Third team All-American

After her freshman All-American campaign, Mercer came to her sophomore season even more determined to succeed—and she did, proving her worth as a top-flight point guard. Dominating in open court, Aaliyah averaged 11.5 points per game and recorded a total of 425 points, 92 steals, 116 assists and 153 rebounds. Now with an additional year’s experience under her belt, she will be challenged to maintain her own scoring prowess and simultaneously improve the play of those around her.

Atendra Rivera, who ran the 800m in 2:22.21 and the 400m Hurdles in 1:06.54, qualifying for Nationals. Over on the field, Ksenia Safonova placed second in the Discus with a throw of 36.83 and second in the Hammer with a throw of 50.06m.

For the Mustang Men, Jovan Swaby and Elzise McDonald finished first and second, respectively, in the High Jump (Swaby winning with a leap of 2.00 meters). Justin Sapini won the Triple Jump on his last attempt by three centimeters with a jump of 14.06 meters. Mark Ramshey was victorious in the Shot Put, heaving the metal ball 17.03 meters and Fabeon Tucker placed third in the Discus with a throw of 46.34m.

The team scoring, the Mustang men were meet winners with a total of 130 points and the Lady Mustangs finished fourth on their side with a total of 74 points.

Three Monroe Basketball Players Named as All-Americans

More good news for the Mustangs programs, two of its athletes have been named by the NJCAA among its Region XV Athletes of the Month for March.

The two selected players were Shania Johnson (women’s basketball) and Ronaldo Ball (track and field).

Shania Johnson

Freshman Shania Johnson, a talented guard and true “floor general,” continues to utilize her diminutive size, speed and sheer athletic prowess to outpace her opponents.

Johnson was integral to Monroe’s success throughout the Mustangs Championship run. During the National Championship tournament, she recorded a total of 70 points, 20 assists and 12 steals. Accordingly, she was named as a First Team all-tournament player.

Ronaldo Ball

Ball’s talent as a runner is undeniable and this latest recognition follows his recent USTFCCCA Atlantic Region’s Men’s Track Athlete of the Year Award

It’s been an incredible season for Ronaldo who, most notably, took home gold in the Men’s 1000m run at the NJCAA National Indoor Track & Field Championships in March. Additionally, he was part of the 4x800 relay team that secured first place at the Ramapo College Roadrunner Invitational earlier this month.

Congratulations to both Mustangs on these well-deserved accolades!

Two Monroe Mustangs Named Region XV Players of the Month

Mention

As a freshman, Tavares exhibited great talent and provided a huge boost to the Monroe Mustangs basketball program. A crafty and controlled ball handler, he capitalized on his size and height to make plays over the defense on a consistent basis. Tavares averaged 10 points per game and had a total of 326 points, 32 steals, and 43 assists. Very athletic and great in transition, he’s also poised to make plays in the half court— truly the caliber of player able to provide immediate impact to a basketball program.

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