



# BE YOUR BEST!

**CLASS 701  
AT M.S. 328  
COMMUNITY  
MATH & SCIENCE  
PREP**

**BEHIND THE BOOK | NYC**

**BE YOUR BEST!**

**BY CLASS 701  
AT M.S. 328 COMMUNITY  
MATH & SCIENCE PREP**



**Behind the Book**

Behind the Book's mission is to develop engaged readers and writers in underserved NYC public schools by designing and delivering programs that are multi-disciplinary, culturally responsive, and promote deeper connections to books and their authors.

Visit us at [www.behindthebook.org](http://www.behindthebook.org)

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Due to COVID all Behind the Book programs were provided virtually.

We recognize and appreciate our teachers and students for persevering during this very challenging time.

In the interest of honoring student voice, Behind the Book presents students' work as received from the teacher.

This book was made possible by a generous grant from The Korein Foundation.

# DEDICATION

Class 701 would like to dedicate this book to all of our teachers for all of their support, and for taking the time to teach us and help us prepare for the next grade.

We also dedicate this book to our family members because we wouldn't be here without them. We wouldn't be able to learn all this stuff like showering and providing us care and teaching us as well without our parents' support.

To Denise, and the author of the book for putting the program together, to inspire us to Always be our Best, and to our future lives wishing it success.

# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Despite challenges Ms. Abreu's 701 Class at M.S. 328 are designing their best lives. The process began by reading the book *The Vast Wonder of the World: Biologist Ernest Everett Just* by Mélina Mangal. The book details the accomplishments of Ernest Everett Just, an African American scientist in the early 20th century whose discoveries in cellular biology were groundbreaking. He overcame personal tragedies as well as institutional racism and segregation to become an internationally recognized giant in the field of embryology and cytology.

In the introductory workshop students discussed Everett Just's quote "The environment and organism are one: neither can be separated from the other" and the environment plant organisms need to thrive. Mélina visited the class and described what inspired her to become an author and then to write about Everett Just. She read a rare poem by Everett Just and discussed his research. The students participated in a research workshop that enhanced their understanding of how cells respond to external environments. The class then had a visit from marine biologist Qiyamah Williams, an expert on coral reefs. She shared insights about the needs of marine life and the steps toward pursuing a career in marine biology.

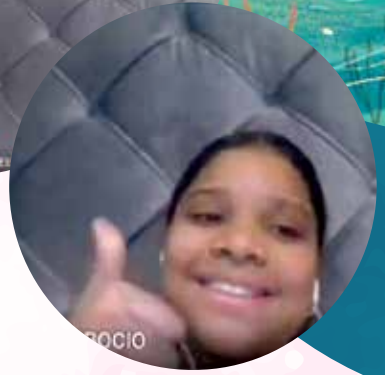
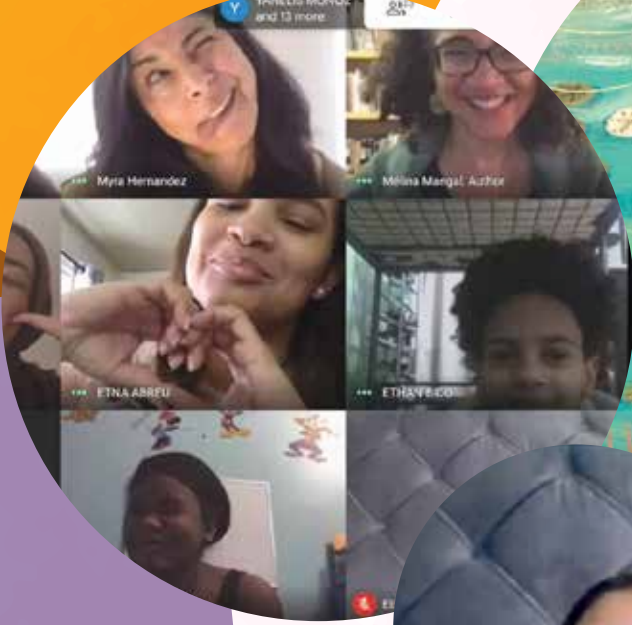
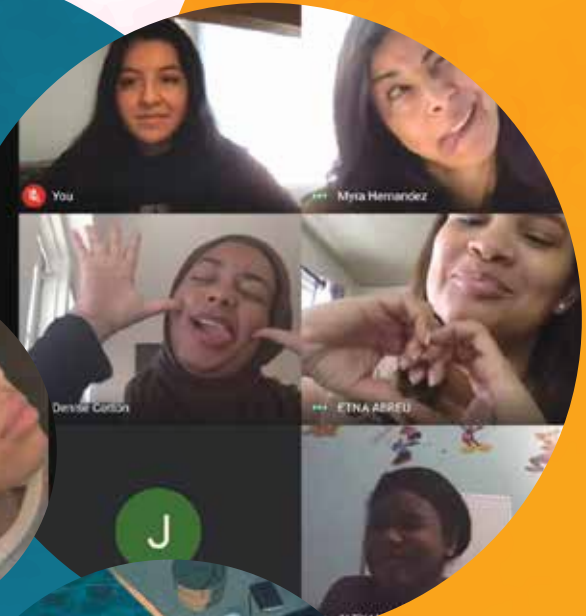
Behind the Book drama teacher Karen Butler led the class in a visualization exercise to identify their ideal environmental conditions. The students then drafted free verse poems in a writing workshop. Behind the Book teaching artist Candice Humphries worked with students to create pop-up cards featuring the ideal conditions they would need to live their best lives.

This book showcases the art and poetry of Class 701. Like the students, we hope all are inspired to tackle life's challenges and work toward designing environments to live their best lives.

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**Environment and organism are one: neither can be separated from the other.**

**Ernest Everett Just**



## ALEXANDRA

I need peace, not war.  
Support, not opposition.  
Love, not hate.  
Kindness, not violence.  
And lastly, food,  
no starvation.



## AMADI

I need wifi, wifi so I can be  
productive on the internet

My cats, so I can hear them purr as  
i pet her soft fur.

A quiet place to just enjoy the day.

Headphones just for total  
concentration with a comfy chair I'll  
enjoy and lay on.

Nice weather, and a little bit of  
rain to end it off, because the  
litter patter of soft rain hitting  
the ground is satisfying.





## CHASSIDY

I need the people I love  
I need my friends  
I need food and drinks  
I need love  
I need animal  
I need plants



## CYAN

I wake up every morning  
with the warm sun on my face,  
a giant star of natural light  
that lives way up in space.  
Time to get ready for the day there's  
just so much to do,  
can you guess how i'm helping the  
environment today  
i'll give you your first clue.  
Conserve resources and find new ways  
to get you where you're going,  
take a walk or ride a bike  
to keep air pollution from growing  
i'll take my seeds to plant a tree  
and over time it will grow  
a tree provides us with oxygen  
in case you didn't know  
we must remember to recycle  
and keep our forest green  
there's something we can all do  
to keep our environment clean.

## EILEEN

What we need for an amazing environment is for people to stop leaving their mess on the sidewalk, or taking drugs and so much more but those are the only ones i could think of.

## ETHAN







## KESIA

I NEED A FOR PEOPLE TO STOP THROWING garbage everywhere because that makes the environment dirty and that's why big rats are all over new york. Also I think if everyone considers others, that would be great for the community. Also if everyone minded their business it would be perfectly fine



## LUIS





## MERLINA

We need to have good sleep and eat good, we need a good environment, it helps.



## NICOLE

“My home is my favorite place in the world, this place is where everybody feels safe and it’s the best place for your emotions. I don’t think that I could choose another place better than home.”



## PEDRO

The environment needs  
to be green.  
the environment needs  
to feel like home.

Not anything that nots home  
Also I need people in life  
People that will help me  
People that support me

Cant have people trying  
to stop me  
Because it will be bad  
I also need a good world  
to live in  
No badd world  
No pollution  
No bad world

## STEPHANY

A perfect life in the  
Beautiful camp

The green of the tree  
will blow my mind,  
The smell of the camp  
will drive in me.  
A quiet camp will make  
me relax  
As a bird.

## YANELIS



## ABOUT THE VISITING AUTHOR



Mélina loves being outdoors! Her earliest memories begin near the shores of Lake Superior, climbing trees, collecting rocks, and listening to birds. She loves writing about nature and its place in young people's lives. Stories from faraway times and places have always captured her imagination as well. She likes to imagine what life was like as she walks along the river, or visits an historical site. She works as an elementary school librarian, introducing students to great books, the exciting research process, and new technology.





## ABOUT THE STUDENT AUTHORS

701 is the best class! We are funny, and confident. We can do anything if we try. We advocate for ourselves. We are kind and sharing. We help each other out. We try our best to do our work and ask for help when we need it. We work as a group, we are very close, we have been through thick and thin. We're smart, we're beautiful, we help each other!

## ABOUT BEHIND THE BOOK

Behind the Book brings authors and their books into classrooms to build literacy skills and foster a community of lifelong readers and writers. Working with classes from Pre-K through 12th grade, our series of workshops is designed to bring books to life and inspire students to reach their full potential. Behind the Book is embedded in the class curriculum, nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence in New York City public school students. All programs meet the Common Core Learning Standards.

# COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS ADDRESSED

## **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.A**

Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

## **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.B**

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

## **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2.C**

Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

## **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.5**

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.



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generation of readers  
and writers by  
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