



**MISSION COMPLETE**

# HOME INSTRUCTION SCHOOLS **GRADUATING CLASS OF 2022**

**Tahmid Abid (Manhattan)**  
**David Aini (Manhattan)**  
**Itzel Bello-Larios (Manhattan)**  
**Khendra Rachel Daniels (Queens)**  
**Livan Fernandez (Bronx)**  
**David Flatsousis (Manhattan)**  
**Yaris Geraldo (Queens)**  
**Giovanna Jaquez (Manhattan)**  
**Richard Jimenez (Bronx)**  
**Oumou Kamate (Manhattan)**  
**Abe Kirellos (Brooklyn)**  
**Stephanie Martinez (Bronx)**  
**John McLaughlin (Bronx)**  
**Sanjidual Mowia (Brooklyn)**  
**Nicole Kelli Nieves (Queens)**  
**Chinedum Ogbonna (Bronx)**  
**Brinn O'Leary (Bronx)**  
**Gabriella Noel Quinones (Queens)**  
**Joseph Rodriguez (Bronx)**  
**Raphael Rodriguez (Bronx)**  
**Qu'T'eion Santiago (Brooklyn)**  
**Justin Santiago (Brooklyn)**  
**Mario Smith (Manhattan)**  
**Lully Then-Alvarado (Bronx)**  
**Elon Valdez (Manhattan)**  
**Keanon Velez (Bronx)**



## **Our Assistant Principals**

**Queens:** Mr. Bill Cornelius, Ms. Sharon Fennessy, Lervan Atticot

**Bronx:** Mr. George Lombardi, Mr. Robert Walpole

**Manhattan:** Mr. James Maresca, Mr. John Curcio

**Brooklyn:** Ms. Geraldine Langella, Georgia Campbell

**Staten Island:** Mr. Joseph Paternoster, Lauren Oellerich

**AP for Curriculum Development and Data:** Todd Alessandro

## **HIT Advisor:**

Maura Kane

## **Our Principal**

Ms. Ramona Pizarro



**\* Special thanks to Todd Alessandro,  
Evelyn Jordan & our WONDERFUL Principal  
Ramona Pizarro for all their help in producing this  
2022 Graduation issue!!**



# GRADUATING CLASS OF 2022



**David Aini (Manhattan)**  
**Teacher: Alycia Siegel**

I have grown so much over the years as a student and a person. I have learned to communicate better, to make friends and be dedicated. I have struggled my whole life with mood swings, difficulty with social skills and focus. At age 2 I was diagnosed with autism. However, I believed in myself and pushed through my inner demons and it's all thanks to my amazing teacher, Alycia Siegel and Mr. Maresca who made it happen. Over my 18 years of life, I've experienced

an emotional ride of highs and lows. Mr. Maresca is a hardworking and loyal assistant principal. He believed in me and gave me courage. He was there when I needed him the most. My teacher, Alycia showed me love, compassion, devotion and swept me off my feet when I was down and gave me skills. From the bottom of my heart, I owe it all to her. I appreciate her dedication towards me. Alycia helped me grow as a student and as a person if it weren't for her, I would be nowhere. She is more than a teacher. She gave me everything.

What is most Important is to believe in your dreams, and to push through your struggles. That makes you a winner in life. As we go forward, I want to work

toward certification in animation and voice acting and have already begun the process. I am almost finished with my first semester at Kingsborough College, and I was just in a musical.

I also want to say a thank you to Ramona Pizarro, the principal for visiting me with her busy schedule and encouraging me to be my best.

In conclusion thank you to all who helped me on my journey towards success, you gave me courage and was there when I needed you the most.





**Itzel Bello- Larios**

**(Manhattan)**

**Teacher: Solange Louis**

I have been receiving Home Instruction services for many years! Due to some personal health issues, I could not attend my regular school, Esperanza Preparatory Academy, even though I kept crying to my mom about wanting to go back. I missed socializing with my friends and felt alone. When the teachers started coming to my house, I felt a little bit better. Then, the COVID-19 Pandemic forced schools to go completely remote and the

teachers could not come to my house. Once again, I felt isolated and did not like working on Zoom. I am a social person and like to talk and be around other people. So, when Mrs. Melina Lake included me in the Power Up Social Emotional Learning support group with other students like myself, it helped me a lot. I learned to deal with change and what to do when I feel stressed.

During Home Instruction, I enjoyed completing projects with my teacher, Ms. Solange. I remember when she prepared a math lesson that involved making tacos. That was my favorite. I always mention it to her. It's also one of the times Mr. James Maresca came to observe me while in class. I also liked when Ms. Solange we made Ambrosia salad together. Those were some happy in-person times 😊

I need to thank all the people who encouraged me when I was feeling down, Ms. Ramona Pizarro, Principal of Home Instruction Schools, Mr. James Maresca, Assistant Principal, Laura Casas Gutierrez, Martha Charles and Edwin Hernandez for translating in Spanish. There are so many other people I would like to thank but can't remember all their names. Most of all, I would like to thank my family, my big brother Martin, my little sister, Michelle, my dad, and especially, my mom, who always works so hard to make sure I have everything I need. She is the MOM-IN-CHIEF of the house!

Finally, now that I have completed my years with Home Instruction, I hope to enroll in an adult program that would help me to continue to improve my skills so that I can contribute whatever I can to my family and the world! With support, I can do and become anything I want!

Teacher's note: Itzel has a golden heart. She is kind, thoughtful, cooperative, respectful and just so loving. She is inquisitive and curious. There were times when she asked certain questions which required parental permission before I could provide detailed explanation and engage in further conversation about a subject/topic. Izzy, as she liked to be called, is funny, when she becomes comfortable with the adults around her. Itzel has said things that just made her mom and I laugh. Though I was helping her, she helped me by providing so much comic relief just when it was needed.

Itzel always did her best, even when she said, "I can't, it's too difficult." My response was, just try. She would say, "Ok," pick up her pencil and attempted to complete whatever task was required of her.

I would like to thank Itzel's extraordinary family for their tremendous support, kindness, patients and cooperation. It was not an easy transition for Itzel to make, going from in-person-to remote instruction. However, with the amazing group assistance provided by the family, we made it work. I am amazed and filled with gratitude! One last thing, my Spanish speaking skills did improve a bit. I remember when I initially called to introduce myself to the family, mom's first question to me was, "Do you speak Spanish?" Si, senora, un poco☺





**Khendra Rachel Daniels**  
**(Queens)**

**Teacher: Valerie Conklin**

Khendra Rachel Daniel is a young lady known to have one of the most indomitable spirits. While attending PS 177Q, Khendra began receiving daily home instruction and worked diligently with Ms. Carvey to hone her academic skills and grew to be more confident in her abilities.

Khendra's personal growth and awareness became especially evident when she discovered her own musical talent, her passion for solving puzzles and word searches in record time, and her acute online navigation and technical skills.

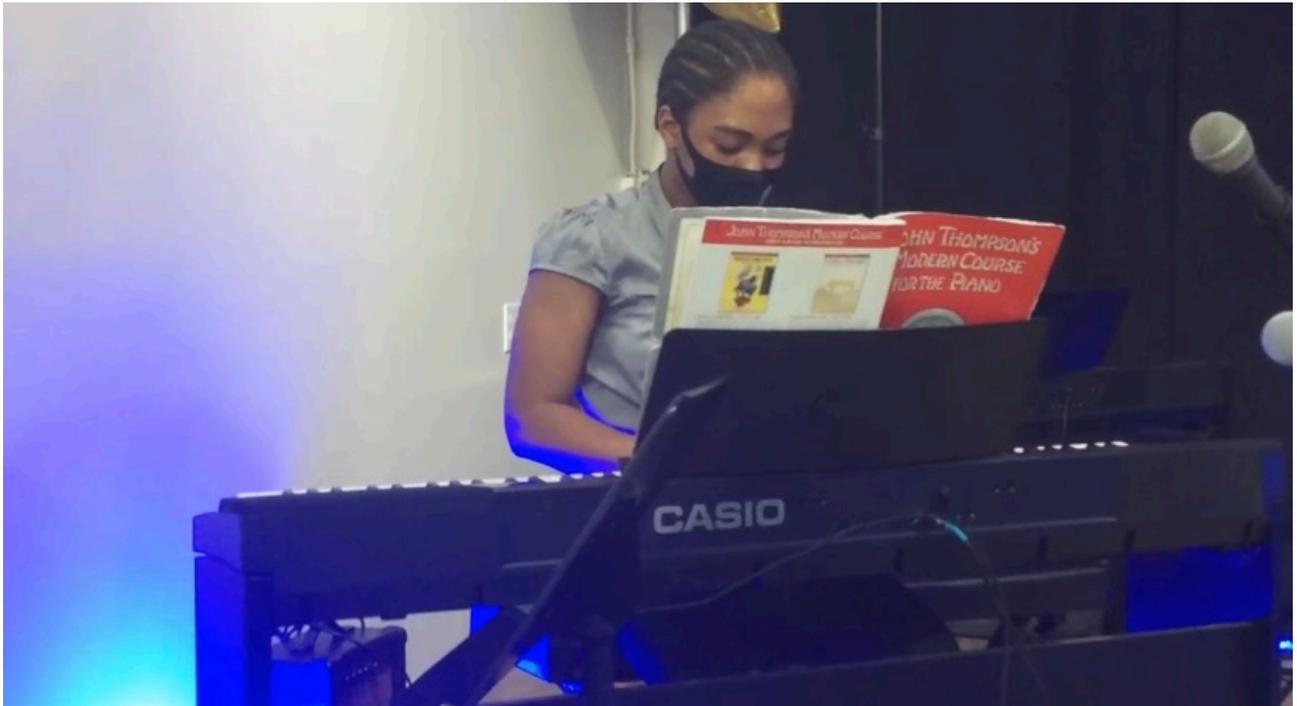
When home instruction transitioned to an online format, Khendra began working with Ms. Conklin whose creative and engaging style was transformational. Ms. Conklin intuitively knew how to tap into Khendra's strengths so she could continue to flourish in her academic and life skills- they were like kindred spirits. Khendra became a contributor of word search puzzles to the online magazine and joined the online book club. The usually reserved Khendra was excited to hear stories vividly come to life by Ms. Evelyn, Ms. Shenika and Ms. Christine and was eager to participate in the question-and-answer period.

Today, Khendra has developed into a more independent and purpose-driven individual and with much autonomy, calculates her money, orders from a menu, does grocery shopping and cooks, among other things.

Khendra is on the path to continued success and finds joy in playing the piano and participating in piano recitals. She attends weekly horseback riding and will participate in her first equestrian show this summer. Together with unconditional family support, Ms. Conklin and the book club instructors, Khendra applied for and was selected to participate in the NYC summer jobs program!

In the meantime, Khendra's steadfast at trying to beat her previous record at solving puzzles fueled by an abundant supply of puzzle books from Ms. Fennessy.

Khendra's a champion at heart!

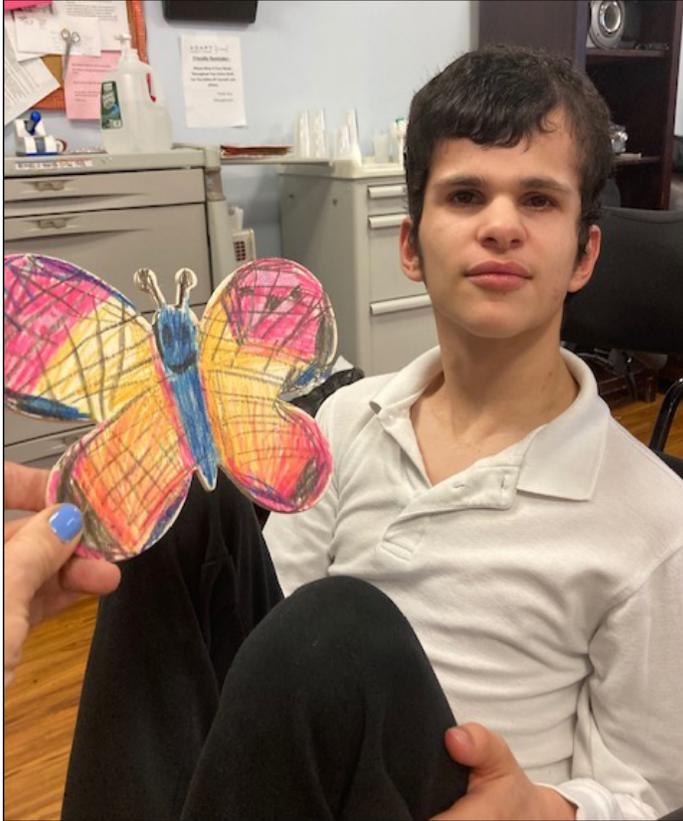




**Livan Fernandez (Bronx)**  
**Teacher: Sissy Reynoso**

Anything is possible – all you must do is believe in yourself. Livan, you are an extraordinary student. I was mesmerized by your contagious sense of humor and positive way of seeing life. I know your family is as proud of you as I am. I wish you all the best in what lies ahead and good luck.





**David Flatsousis**

**(Manhattan)**

**Teacher:**

**Susan Blanchard**

David loves music and moves to the beat. He also participates in many craft activities with his teacher. He smiles big and brings joy to those around him. He is an important resident in the Adapt Community Network where he lives. He is grateful for his amazing helpers who keep him happy and looking very stylish. David especially

loves visits from his family. After graduation, he will participate in a day habitation program where he will volunteer as a greeter and share his big joyful smile.





**Yaris Geraldo (Queens)**

**Teacher: Jiyoung Cha**

I'm Yaris G., and I'd want to introduce myself. I was born in the year 2003. I grew up in a lovely household of four in Queens, New York. I prefer to stay in shape both physically and mentally. I enjoy going to the gym and eating a balanced diet. I am currently a member of the 2022 graduating class. My ideal career would be to work as a labor and delivery nurse or as a traveling nurse. I enjoy pleasing people, and it is something that comes naturally to me.





**Giovanna Jaquez**  
**(Manhattan)**

**Teacher: Alycia Siegel**

Giovanna Jaquez celebrated her 21st birthday this year!! Her teacher and loving mother and brother could not be more excited that she is graduating this year.

Giovanna loves to watch videos, dance and listen to music. Taylor Swift, and Bette Midler are two of her favorite artists. Giovanna's was also recently in a TikTok video with her teacher and

nurse to the song, Fight Song by Rachel Platten (which her mother choreographed and filmed while enthusiastically cheering Giovanna on). "Fight Song" has great meaning in Giovanna's life because, with the support and advocacy of her loving mother, Giovanna has overcome so many medical complications and still maintains a sweet smile and loving demeanor. Giovanna's mother often describes Giovanna as a "true miracle who exudes radiance that only an angel from God would bring to this world" and tells me that she chose the name Giovanna because it means "Gift from heave; gift from God" in both Italian and Hebrew.

Giovanna brings joy to everyone when she happily reaches her arms out to greet people. Giovanna loves participating with her mom in many fundraising and walkathon events for people with special needs and breast cancer. As her mother says, Giovanna is a social butterfly. At the Home Instruction STREAM

Fair, Giovanna instantly smiled with new teachers and students she met. More than anything, Giovanna loves day trips with her family to Fire Island, Central Park, Bronx Zoo, museums, and restaurants, to name a few! Or, sometimes she just likes to spend a quiet evening playing family games or listening to her little brother read to her and tell her about his day. Giovanna is also a total girly girl. She loves getting pedicures and massages at the nail salon and is always dressed with bows and cute dresses.

Congratulations Giovanna! May your life continue to be filled with love, joy, strength, adventure, and new friends!





**Richard Jimenez (Bronx)**

**Teacher: John Dean**

2022

*In Loving Memory of*  
**OUMOOU KAMATE**

*March 23, 2001 - June 4, 2022*



**Oumou Kamate (Manhattan)**  
**Teacher: Susan Blanchard**

Oumou lived a happy life and will be missed by all. She was very musical. She moved, squealed and rocked to music and she was very vocal. Her favorite songs were "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and "Down by the Bay." When she heard these songs, she immediately expressed excitement causing anyone around her to immediately feel her joy. Oumou was grateful to all her caretakers and her mom who visited her often where she lived.



**Abe Kirellos (Brooklyn)**  
**Teacher: Katherine Smith**

I was 5 years old when my family left Egypt to come to America and I haven't been able to see my grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins since then. Shortly after moving to Brooklyn, I started Kindergarten and I remember being so scared because no one else spoke Arabic. My kind teachers and amazing friends welcomed me with open arms and helped me learn English quickly. The priest at my church taught me a lot of valuable lessons, the most important of which is that I always have someone willing to help me no matter where I step foot on this earth.

I participated in many activities with my friends in school and church until the Covid lockdown. Right

after that, I enrolled in Home Instruction due to 3 herniated discs in my spine which cause extreme sciatica pain that travels down to my toes. I went from attending high school and playing basketball every day with my friends to being home alone because I can't even get out of bed sometimes.

Even though I'm in a lot of pain, I consider myself blessed since my situation gave me an opportunity to meet so many health professionals devoted to helping me feel better. I am inspired to join their ranks and pursue a career in medicine. I

am thankful to my neurosurgeon, my amazing Home Instruction teacher, Mrs. Smith, and most of all to my extremely caring family.

My parents show their deep love to me without measure in more ways than I can count and my little sister, Angela, is always next to me bringing me whatever I need to be as comfortable as possible. It is because of my family's sacrificial love and support that I am on the right track to achieving my dream of helping others. I plan to start taking classes towards my goal at the College of Staten Island this fall. God willing, one day I will graduate as Dr. Kirellos!





**Stephanie Martinez (Bronx)**

**Teacher: Micenis Garrido**

Stephanie Martinez is 21 years old whose family hails from the beautiful island of Puerto Rico. She currently resides with her mother and brother in the South Bronx, NY. Stephanie's favorite color is pink. She enjoys baked ziti and spending time with her family and friends. Her favorite subject is ELA, as she is an avid reader and enjoys writing. Outside of school, she loves watching The Walking Dead and playing with her Nintendo Switch. Stephanie is kind, respectful, and always helpful. Stephanie faces all obstacles with determination and a smile. Her goal is to work in the maintenance field or assisting others in some capacity. We wish her the best in all her endeavors.

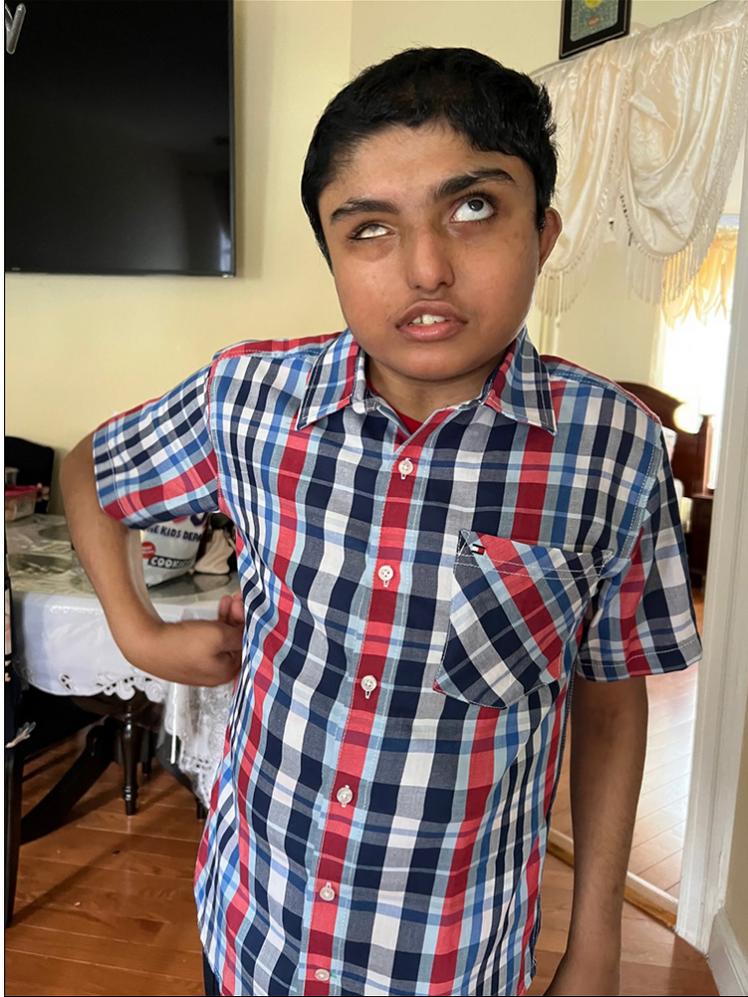




**John McLaughlin**  
**(Bronx)**  
**Teacher:**  
**Henry Kaufmann**

Congratulations to John McLaughlin on his accomplishments this year. We wish him the best of luck in the future and continued success attending Lehman College!



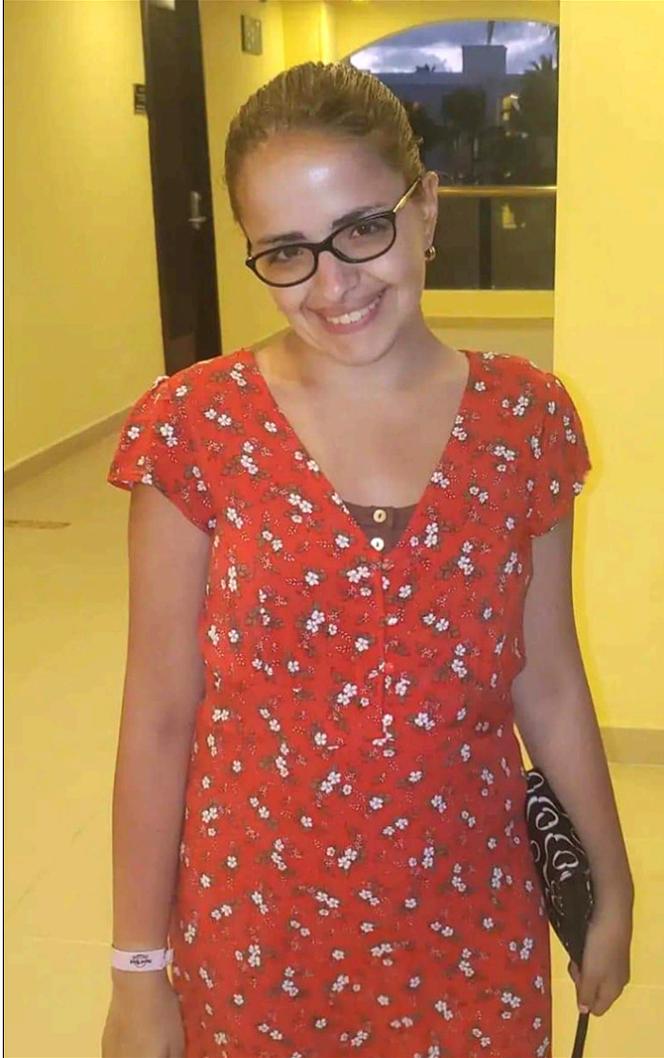


**Sanjidual Mowia**  
**(Brooklyn)**

**Teacher: Keith Karon**

Sanjidual Mowia is a hard-working young man who has been with HI since 2005. He is able to complete many chores. He lives with his parents and brother and sister. He likes Home Instruction and looks forward to it every day. He will be signing up with Vesid, a work training program. He makes his family proud every day. He is a fine young man. Good luck graduating Sanjidual!





**Nicole Kelli Nieves**  
**(Queens)**

**Teacher:**

**Jean Marie Bocchino**

Hello. My name is Nicole Kelli Nieves, and I am so proud that I am a 2022 graduate of Home Instruction. I want to thank my Mom, Luvy, Titi, Miss Lainie and my Mrs. B. for all their help.

I am a daughter, granddaughter, niece, cousin (like a sister), friend and student. I love my family and friends so much! I am proud of all the things I've accomplished in my 22 years, but I'm mostly proud of how I help take care of my Papa.

It's hard to write about yourself, so I wrote a list of the things I'm proud of, things I learned in Home Instruction and the things I love.

I'm proud that Elban and Titi are my godparents, and that Rosie was my sponsor at my Confirmation. I'm proud that I was a bridesmaid at my cousin Stephanie's wedding. I'm proud that I am still friends with my first classmate and that through him I've made other close friends. I'm proud that I danced on the stage at Lincoln Center with Dancing Dreams. Finally, I'm proud that I'm teaching myself sign language in hopes of someday helping children with disabilities.

I learned so many things on Home Instruction. My favorite project was the Human Body. I love working with our life size felt body. I loved reading the

Chronicles of Narnia (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is my favorite book - just like Mrs. B.). I created Narnia with toys and paper dolls. I even wrote book reviews for the H.I. magazine. I also loved reading the Little House series. I truly loved interviewing my family members. I learned a lot about each of them (including what they were like at my age). I treasure the essays I wrote about them. Finally, I love my art portfolio. I am so proud of my Draw So Cute pictures. I did so many H.I. magazine covers that I was named an editor this year.

What do I LOVE? Family #1! I love holidays. I love decorating with my cousin Michael. I love parties. My Mama worked so hard to give me the best Roaring 20s Sweet 16 (the BEST day of my life) and a great 21<sup>st</sup> birthday/graduation party. I love travelling. I've been so many places - California/Disneyland, Florida/Disney World, Puerto Rico (family reunion), Punta Cana (destination wedding), Las Vegas, Massachusetts, and 2 cruises. I also love New York and baseball – the Yankees are my team. I love Broadway, too. I've seen The Little Mermaid and Aladdin. Obviously, I love Disney. I also love my dolls (mostly American Girls), listening to music and watching TV shows & movies on my iPad.

I will miss my 8:30 - 10:30 H.I. sessions, but I look forward to the next stage of my life. I know I will do something to make our world a better place.





**Chinedum**  
**Ogbonna (Bronx)**  
**Teacher:**  
**Roseann Auletta**

Chinedum, or Ned, is a handsome young man who is compassionate and strong with a keen sense of humor and sharp intellect. Ned was born into a wonderful Nigerian family in 2004. Still, life has not been easy. Due to a rare medical condition, Ned has undergone 11 major

surgeries; the first at 6 months. However, he does not complain nor feel sorry for himself. His resilience is inspiring. His mom noted that his name Chinedum means “God is leading me” in the Nigerian IGBO language, and God has been leading him. He entered Home Instruction while dealing with these multiple surgeries in his first year at Bronx Academy of Health Careers. Ned is attending Bronx Community College in the Fall and plans on pursuing a career as a Radiology Technician. He is vociferous reader who enjoys a good mystery novel, enjoys running outdoors and bike riding, and playing online games.





**Brinn O’Leary (Bronx)**  
**Teacher: Jennifer Reilly**

I never imagined my high school years to be on Home Instruction, but with the love and support of my family and amazing teacher I was able to complete all my courses and graduate on time. I’m very thankful for Home Instruction. I will be attending Iona College in the fall as a nursing major, and I cannot wait to start my next journey.





**Gabriella Noel Quinones**  
**(Queens)**

**Teacher: Jessica Kear**

Gabriella is soft spoken and quiet but, incredibly passionate when it comes to the people and things she loves. Gabby's big heart allows her to love all kinds of animals especially her own dog Bella. Her compassion for animals might lead her to becoming a veterinarian. Gabby values spending quality time with her big group of family and friends when she can.

Gabriella enjoys musicals and loves spending time at the theater watching them. She's an amazing writer and has such a way with words. Like writing, she also likes to read a lot. She enjoys comic books and magazines. However, Gabriella's favorite pass time is probably video games. From a young age gabby has loved playing all kinds of games whether it's adventure or action games like the Legend of Zelda or relaxing life simulation games like Animal Crossing! But retro games like sonic and Mario will always have her heart.

But most of all Gabriella is a determined strong willed young lady and whatever she proposes for her future I am sure that she will attain it!!!





**Joseph Rodriguez**  
**(Bronx)**

**Teacher:**

**Dawn Reyes**

Joseph is 21 years old and very good at building large structures with Lego. He is very focused when he is using Lego and can build for very long stretches of time. He loves playing on his iPad and watching TV in his spare time. He

lives at home with his mom, and he helps her a lot around the house. He is very good at cleaning. Recently, he has gotten over a fear of dogs, and now he loves his new dog Rocky! Joseph loves living at home with his mom, and he loves his brother Miguel who sometimes comes to visit. Joseph is very kind. He understands both English and Spanish. Congratulations, Joseph!





**Rafael Rodriguez**  
**(Bronx)**

**Teacher:**  
**Jennifer Reilly**

From what my parents tell me, I have been facing obstacles since the day I was born. I was what they called a twenty-six-weeker, weighing only two pounds seven ounces at birth. My mom always tells me as small as I was and with all the complications I faced, I was a fighter. Fast-forward fifteen years later, to November of 2019, is when I really began to realize how much of a fighter I am.

These past two years most people, I am sure, have faced many challenges, setbacks, and failures due to the Global pandemic and I am one of them. I became very ill and no one seemed to know why. After many trips to the emergency room, and countless tests, I was diagnosed with Berger's disease, also known as IGA Nephropathy. This diagnosis presented me with many physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Throughout these past two years, I have had many ups and downs but I created time for myself, thinking about ways to get my life back on track. One thing is for certain, I know that I have people around me who are willing to help, and that I don't have to work on things alone.

I have learned that there will be many things thrown at me as life continues but it is how you overcome the difficulties that will help you grow. You cannot let situations that are out of your control stop the way you live life. I have come to the conclusion that though my disease is lifelong, I will not let it take control of me. This journey is teaching me that I am a fighter and that with hard work I can be successful. I look forward to the next chapter of my life at SUNY Plattsburgh.





**Qu'T'eion Samuels**  
**(Manhattan)**

**Teacher:**  
**Susan Blanchard**

Qu'T'eion Samuels is college-bound and will be attending Iona College, where she will be studying Criminology and Psychology. She hopes to be a Criminal Attorney and give back to the community. She likes to listen to music, shop and draw. Her participation in art class with Ms. Blanchard gave her a different way of expressing her feelings and ambitions of accomplishing all her goals throughout this last year of high school. She would like to acknowledge

and give special thanks to Mr. Divino and Ms. Blanchard for working with her throughout the semester.



## **Who I Am?**

**By Qu'T'eion Samuels (Manhattan)**

**Teacher: Susan Blanchard**



**I am from the 21st century, from a busy city, an island where everyone is in a hurry. I am from the neighborhood with a lot of music playing throughout the day, especially on a warm day.**

**I am from a country who believes everyone is equal and has a right of freedom of speech and is considered one of the wealthiest countries in the world.**

**I am from a world, where based on your social class and race is based on what type of treatment and lifestyle you would receive**

**I am from a family, who experienced prejudice and discrimination based on their skin color**

**I am from a family that migrated illegally to receive better resources and benefits to provide a better life for their children**

**I am from ancestors that marched in the black panther movement because experiencing segregation...and not having equal rights**

**I am from a family that is mixed with different cultures and last names who are diverse within a country between dark and light brown**

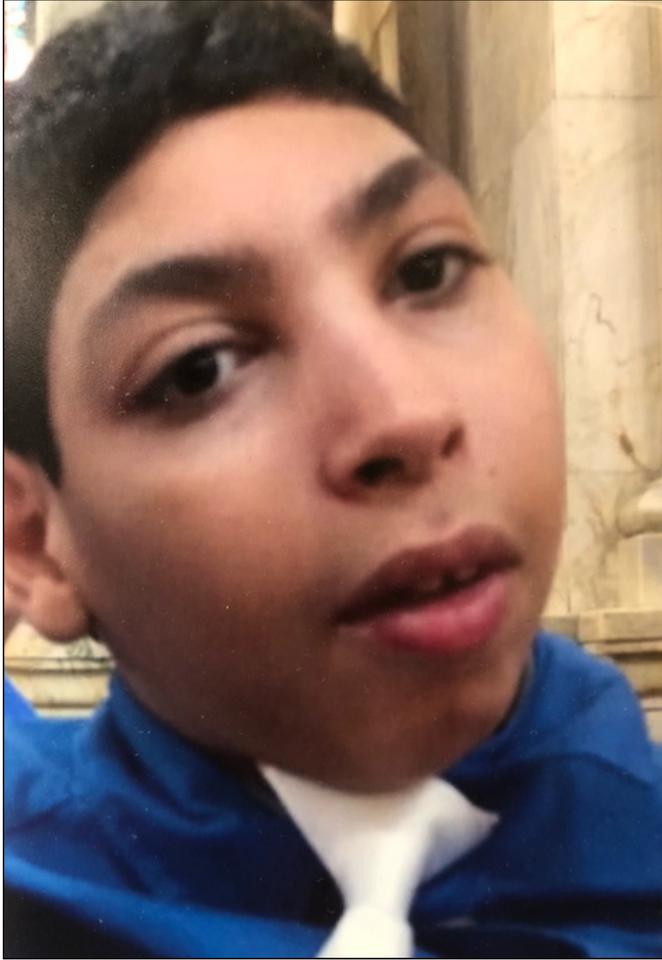
**I am from a city, which is known for its skyscrapers, pizza, and parks**

**I am from a community, that believes in unity and love, who support each other's dreams and businesses**

**I am from a great Uncle Grandfather, who provides a family trait of 12 fingers and a grandmother who was so strict that didn't allow boy cousins to play with girl cousins.**

**I am from a grandfather, who was born and raised in Alabama and walked to New York to be able to be with his siblings instead of his parents.**

**I am from a mom that only decided to have one child at the age 25 and left me without any siblings to play by myself**



**Justin Santiago**

**(Brooklyn)**

**Teacher: Shnique Clark**

Hi, my name is Justin Santiago and I am 21 years old. I am easy going, kind and loving. I love interacting and connecting with people. I develop special bonds with the people closest to me—including my teachers. Over the years I have enjoyed working with various teachers who have helped nurture my interests in music and the arts and at the same time learn about letters and numbers and about the whole

world around me. I have had some of the most outstanding teachers beginning with my preschool teacher up until my current home instruction teacher.

My parents with their tenderness and dedication have also played a crucial role in making it possible for me to succeed in school. They have very lovingly exposed me to new environments and outdoor activities with such care and love. My loving family of siblings, grandparents, caretakers and all my extended family have also helped enriched my learning experience as I have grown.

After I graduate, I will participate in a new program that will continue developing new skills in me as they reinforce all my strengths and goals achieved during my school journey.

First of all, I want to thank God for the gift of life. Also, want to thank all my teachers, teacher's assistants, nurses and paraprofessionals who have made it possible for me to go attend school and receive home instruction for all these years. I also want to thank each and every one of my classmates whom I have had the privilege of sharing a classroom with and my little sister Emily who has been by my side during my years of home instruction.





**Mario Smith (Manhattan)**  
**Teacher: Dea Dusenbury**

Congratulations, Mario!!

We are very proud of you!!!

Positive energy!!





**Elon Valdez**  
**(Manhattan)**  
**Teacher:**  
**Alexandra**  
**Manzano**

Elon Valdez was born in Harlem, New York to a very loving mother. She is the oldest of 3. Elon is a sweet young lady who is curious about the things around her. She enjoys music, bubbles and T.V. Elon also

enjoys going on vacation but dislikes the plane rides. Spending time with her family is her favorite thing in the world. She loves to laugh and look at their faces. Her family is very excited about her graduation and proud that she has made it this far!





**Keanon Velez (Bronx)**  
**Teacher: Sinthia Powell**

Keanon Velez, also known as “Ace” is just that – an Ace! While at Home Instruction, Keanon was an exemplary student with an inquisitive mind. He demonstrated an inept ability to debate just about anyone with his persuasive and rather compelling techniques. Never lacking in compassion and kindness, Keanon will help out just about anyone in need. A champion for change, Keanon not only aspires to attend college, but hopes to inspire others to cultivate and bring about meaningful changes.

**2022**  
*Graduate*



2022

*Congrats!*