

ZION PREP

SCHOOLHOUSE



LOCAL COMMUNITY IS KEY TO EDUCATION AT ZION PREP

A Grand Opening

by Joshua Barbin, Head Teacher

I am excited to be sending you this update after our successful completion of our first six-week unit as a school! So far, our students have had unique experiences, deep learning, and developed genuine relationships, which we believe only could have been accomplished with the mentorship-relationship education model offered to students at Zion Prep.

Our school year started with a bang because of Zion Prep's participation in a nationwide entrepreneurial competition called Techcelerator, sponsored by the Philadelphia based Ben Franklin Partners. Our school competed against five other entrepreneurs for the opportunity to win \$10,000 in start-up funding. Our students jumped right into this competition and worked hand and hand with Principal Ashley Barbin and I to develop the final pitch, and they got on stage and answered questions for six minutes in-front of an audience of about 75 strangers. This was an incredible learning opportunity, and the students showed out! Although we did not win the award, so many people in the audience approached us afterward about the poise of our students in the presentation, some even saying after our presentation that our students belonged at universities like

Stanford. It was a milestone event for our whole school.

Soon after that, our students wrote, produced, and acted in a television commercial aired on Fox 8. They also helped host a ribbon cutting ceremony, where they met many local leaders who came out to support the event. Because of our downtown Johnstown location our students have had the unique opportunity of being a part of a larger community, which we believe is an essential part of life preparation.

Our students spend a lot of time together and with Ashley and me. A lot! They see each other for about 40-45 hours a week. This set up is challenging because relationships are challenging. But, in a world dominated by social media, this consistent personal interaction is helping our students to work in relationships, to practice kindness, and like each-other 😊. The good news is that there is no bullying in our school for the simple fact that it is much harder to bully someone when you spend a lot of time together.

Unit 1 News Letter Fall 2018

CELEBRATION



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Thank you to the Cambria County Chamber of Commerce for a wonderful Grand Opening Ceremony.



Techcelerator Winner

Techcelerator winner, Ryan Kieta, joined us at our Grand Opening and we got to celebrate his win with him the night before and during our Grand Opening as well!

They also observe Ashley and me and develop trust by watching how we live. This helps us to provide them with constructive feedback or help them with life-struggles. We believe mentor-relationship is at the heart of real learning and that is why we place a priority on it.

We are well on our way to helping our students accomplish the three goals we have for each one that enters our school: *That they would know who they are in the world, how to ethically earn money, and know God's purposes and their role in them.* We are accomplishing these life goals through a unique curriculum and classroom setting that teaches students above all-else *how to think.* Ashley and I liken ourselves to our student's private chefs, preparing a table of knowledge and helping them develop a sophisticated taste through practicing sound mental, emotional, and spiritual habits.

Right now, all our students (grades 7-10) are learning the foundations of education taught in American schoolhouses across the nation in generations past: the three R's, *Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.* These skills are vital to any profession or higher education that a student may pursue, yet these basic skills are so often neglected or glossed over in education today. Reading means more than reading the words on a page, but also speaking, listening, and writing. Our students develop a comfort with their voice and public speaking by reading and reciting great literature and poetry in the classroom.

Our classroom space is open for discussion, questioning, and debate. The students are also learning how to develop opinions and take positions within conversations. We generate discussion through local and national news, challenging topics in history, law, theology, and literature, and through consistent argumentative writing. Students are learning to enter a rhetorical conversation on paper through writing or in person through speaking.

Finally, our arithmetic course is one of our student's favorite courses. Who would have imagined that students would be looking forward to math class? But we have a unique approach to arithmetic in which we get to the very basics of number-sense and understanding and work from there to more difficult. I have found that many students understand the operations of subjects like algebra but have no understanding or interest in the underlying rationale for doing these operations; so, they end up frustrated and annoyed with 'math' if they face a

challenge they do not understand. But, by getting to the basics of arithmetic, our students are not frustrated by math but enjoy the challenge of it. We support this work in arithmetic by applied 'money' math. For example, our students learned the pillar of the accounting profession: $Assets = Liabilities + Equity$ and the basics of balance sheets in a project. Overall, the foundational skills of the three R's are preparing all of our students to be able to pursue independently designed programs of their choosing as they progress through our program toward graduation.

We work on creative topics in the afternoon, specifically: science, the arts, faith, and business. We teach science as a creative subject that encourages our students to be innovators and not memorizers. We are currently helping them develop a suite of 13 thinking tools that will enable them to innovate scientifically: observing, imaging, abstracting, recognizing patterns, forming patterns, analogizing, body thinking, empathizing, dimensional thinking, modeling, playing, transforming, and synthesizing. This is not exactly memorizing your periodic table of elements, but it will equip students to make discoveries such as adding a new element to the table!

In the arts, we have mastered six hip-hop dance routines from the dance-exercise program *Cize*. This program has helped them develop balance, agility, coordination, core-strength, flexibility, and stamina, and has helped them develop a wide variety of hip-hop dance moves. It is also lots of fun! Our students are also working through an online course Introduction to Classical Music offered by Yale University. They are learning the foundations of Western music theory, such as melody, rhythm, harmony, and musical notation. This will prepare them to be comfortable with music. It will also make the practical application of learning to sing or play music much easier. We will be introducing a six-week cooking course in this upcoming unit taught by trained nutritionist and skilled cook Brigette Barbin, where students will learn the basics of the kitchen and nutrition.

In the faith arena, our students have begun the yearly cycle of Torah (first five Biblical books) reading this week. We also learned about the Biblical festivals of Yom Kippur and Sukkot. And each Wednesday we do a practice of silent worship that Ashley and I learned from our Quaker Friends during a school visit in Philadelphia.

AROUND TOWN



Opening Day

Bishop Harold Spellman from Peniel Praise Community Church came on August 27, 2018 opening day to give a word of encouragement and a beautiful prayer for our school year.



Round Table Learning

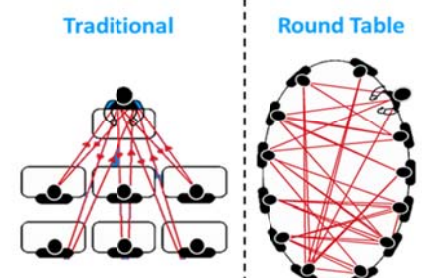
Everyone has a voice at our school and we are preparing our students to be leaders in their community and jobs.



Individualized Curriculum

We meet our student's needs and develop an individualized curriculum with them and their parents.

Common Classroom VS. Our Classroom



Finally, our students love business! They love being a part of the business community and earning money (who doesn't). We have been looking at potential school-owned businesses that our students could participate in and help earn revenue for the school. We will continue this search and planning in the upcoming months. This will help them when it comes time for them to write their Personal Business Plan before graduating. Also, we will be starting a seven-week Junior Achievement program called Career Success! taught by local entrepreneurial coach Jose Otero on Thursday's in the upcoming unit. We are dedicated to teaching our students 'how to fish' through business so they can always provide for themselves and others.

Ashley and I put in countless hours planning so that our students would have exceptional success when we started. Now, the vision for Zion Prep is a reality and our students are on their way to personal greatness! Ashley and I are so blessed to work with you to help our students mature into their full potential daily, and we could not do this work without the strong village of support that we have from our parents, friends, and local community.

We are asking for your continued support to prepare students for life by providing financial donations, books, laptops, group lessons (dance, golf, tennis, art, etc.), art supplies, cleaning supplies, office supplies, toiletries, etc.

All financial donations are tax deductible under our parent company Harmony, Inc. 501(c)(3). ***Please make checks payable to Zion Preparatory Schoolhouse or Zion Prep and mail to:***

***411 Main St. (1st Floor)
Johnstown, PA 15901***

***Online payments can be made via PayPal:
<https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1223890>***



We are Zion Preparatory Schoolhouse because of Your Continued Support. Thank you!

www.ZionPrep.us