

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2019

NOVEMBER 15

We are **PRESENT, POSITIVE** and **PASSIONATE!**



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From Light Work Facebook Post: [Light Work](#) exhibiting artist Wendy Red Star met with students from the [LaFayette Big Picture High School](#)! At first a quiet group, after a brief discussion regarding her exhibition, Wendy welcomed a flurry of questions and insights about [#NativeAmerican](#) identity and heritage. Students were eager to share thoughts about traditions that are central to their identity as Indigenous youth, including the forthcoming [#Haudenosaunee](#) Ceremony of Midwinter, celebrated by the People of the Longhouse. We appreciate and value the time students took to discuss local Indigenous traditions with Red Star and Light Work staff.

"It is so important for the students to have these first-hand experiences with potential role models, says Carol DiSalvo. "As always, I am grateful that you make us all feel so welcome in such an important space as Light Work" We thank you, Carol, for helping facilitate the student's visit, we look forward to their next tour and artist talk. Photo credit: Julie Herman



TGIF from Greg

The 201s had a very busy week, despite having Monday off to honor our Veterans. We started off the week on Tuesday, jumping right back in to our internships and shadow days. Evan has been burning it up at Giarusso Sheet Metal cutting, welding and learning the trade while working on his homemade go-kart for his exhibition. JJ and Adam have been hard at work at the On The Dot Coffee Shop; our own Big Picture on-site coffeehouse where they are working to create their own new drinks for their Learning Plans, in addition to the menu that Dawsun has created. They are taking orders from an online form, shared on the Big Picture Classroom, and delivering all over! Devyn has been working hard to learn more about his Onondaga culture with Sue Parsons, learning how to speak his native language, as well as taking an internship with our own Hollis Rotella, working on life skills and cooking. Gabe has been looking for an internship that meets his interests, while volunteering for service learning at the Samaritan Center when he's free. In the meantime, he's been working on his first presentation with the Big Picture Learning Program and exploring his family history, discovering who he might want to grow up to be, and embracing his Regents classes. Wednesday three of our students, Aiden, Mason, and Austin participated in the school exchange program. The

school we participate with is PSLA at Fowler. We had a group of students come in from PSLA to learn about our school and how we operate. It's a great way to learn about other schools and the creative ways they incorporate the Big Picture values into their curriculum. In the meantime, while the students from PSLA were visiting, the rest of the class went to the Rescue Mission Sorting Warehouse to sort

much needed donated shoes to be distributed to various sites. We also got to sort through fun Christmas donations that will be put to good use. Thursday we resumed our "normal" schedule, with our students going out to internships. In addition to our internships, we had the opportunity to visit Light Work with Carol DiSalvo to view a very interesting photography exhibit by Wendy Red Star. She is a Native American who has dedicated her career to her ancestors' history and documenting all she can to preserve and showcase her culture. The students learned a lot about their pasts and seemed to gain *new* interest in where they come from! In addition to all of this jam-packed week, we've been squeezing in a poetry unit for ELA with Walt. The students have been learning about and writing their own haikus, free-form poetry and cinquains, which has a very specific syllable sequence that was a ton of fun to create! Friday we had the students all take their STAR reading tests again, to get a better understanding of their base-line scores and are SUPER happy to report that ALL the 201s INCREASED THEIR SCORES! We couldn't be more proud of our students, and rewarded them with a pizza party while they did practice run-throughs of their upcoming exhibitions. We really can't wait to see how all of their presentations turn out and what they come up with for their Gateway projects this year!



Photo by Julie Herman

TGIF from Lenny

From 11/8: Our week began a little brighter with the end of Daylight savings time giving us a bit more morning light. Although, not all students seemed to have fully adjusted to the time change as of Monday morning. In any case, we kicked off another busy week with positive energy and solid plan.

Our 401 advisory was largely consumed with two missions. We were trying to finish reading our advisory book by Friday and Walt was giving us instruction on compound complex sentences to improve our writing. Our writing showed measurable improvements in just a couple days but we were about 5 pages shy of finishing our book. It was a fortuitous lesson in time management that we all owned. We will wrap up the last few pages Tuesday morning. On Tuesday evening many of us will see Tommy Orange, the author of *There There*,

speak at the Civic Center.

In ER we continued to research various aspects of the history, decline, and recovery of Onondaga Lake. Students will present their finding next week. In LE, we capitalized on our knowledge of plants and our recently acquired microscope and chromatography skills. We began the State Lab Relationships and Biodiversity and both sections did a great job applying their knowledge and skills.



TGIF from Walt

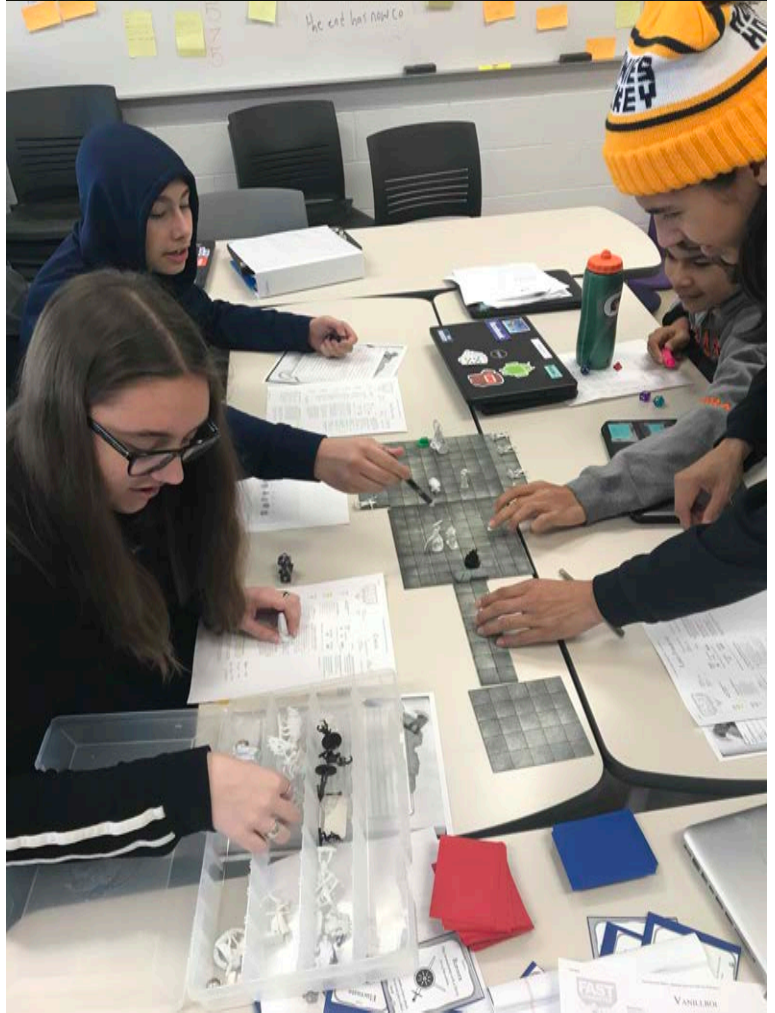
This was a short week, but very busy. Most of my week, while at school, was spent providing reading and writing instruction. I have been working with the 401s on writing skills and improving sentence complexity. I have also been working with the 201s on reading skills, and we have been focusing on a poetry unit. I have also created a game called "Grammar and Goblins" which I have been testing out with the 201s. It is similar to Dungeons and Dragons, however utilizes identifying vocabulary, sentence completion tasks and correct grammar usage instead of dice rolls. It is very well received, and has been a fun way to learn grammar.

This week's highlights:

I attended the school-wide service learning day on Wednesday and went with students to the Rescue Mission. We spent our time sorting out donated shoes and pairing them together. It was a fun trip, and I enjoyed seeing students giving back to the community.

The coffee shop has been doing very well, and we are getting into the holiday spirit. I worked with Dawsun, Adam, Kaia and JJ this week to work on a few new drink ideas. JJ experimented with eggnog this week and created a latte and hot chocolate for our seasonal menu. Additionally, I worked with Adam to create a peppermint flavored simple syrup this week. We used this to create a peppermint mocha latte, and also a peppermint hot chocolate that we also added on as seasonal options. JJ also completed our official "On The Dot" logo and we are in the process of having uniforms made up.

On Friday I went to Utica College for a campus visit with David and 301 and 401 students. We toured the facilities, learned about programs and were informed about various academic opportunities. They also treated us to lunch and allowed our students to participate in a hands-on lab activity. All of the students enjoyed this experience, and we all had a good time.



TGIF from April

From 11/8:

101's had a week full of angst and learning. It was a HARD week. Honestly, the last few weeks have been hard for the 101's. Behaviors are running rampant for many of them. So on Wednesday we spent advisory time learning to work together and then debriefed about not only our behaviors during the team building activity, but also for the past 2 weeks. It was a time of soul bearing honesty for some of us. Many of us 'got it'- others still need work. However, they all learned that pulling against your teammates does not help you reach your group objective. Nor does name calling.

Our group objective is to get all 16 TOGETHER across the graduation stage in 4 years. Our behaviors towards each other has been very damaging, my hope is that as I continue to make them work through these team building activities they will stop blaming others for their actions and begin taking OWNERSHIP of their own behaviors along with the negative impact those behaviors have on others around them. We discussed how only THEY can own their behaviors, and own the changes that need to take place in order to shift those behaviors from negative to positive.

On a positive note, we finished "There There" by Tommy Orange on Friday! We were on a marathon read to get the book completed prior to Tommy Orange's visit to Syracuse this coming Tuesday, and I was thrilled with their immersion in the reading on Friday! As they were sprawled across the room with their pillows and vocabulary lists, we read to the end of the book, and they were totally engaged. The teacher/guest in our room who was observing from The Sweet Home School made a comment about how the 101's clearly understood the book and how he was impressed by their behavior during the reading. 😊 Yay! Baby steps...

101's also completed a relatively large project for World History this week. They were able to learn about a region of the world that interested them. We shall work more on World History and their area of interest as time goes

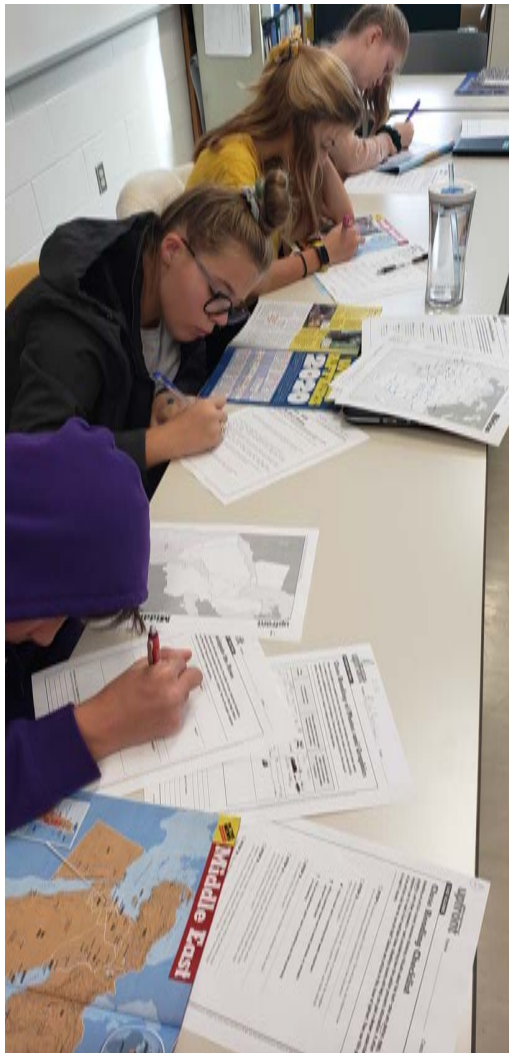
forward in advisory.

On Tuesday I did my first site visits. I was able to return to Light Work at SU where I worked with Julien and his mentor Dan. It was special because I used to do site visits there with my former student Keegan who graduated last year. As I was going to my car Keegan was walking toward me on the sidewalk- he now attends SU- it was a wonderful surprise to see him (SU is a LARGE campus) doing so well!

I was also able to visit Carol DiSalvo's photography, where Olivia and Jordyn intern, on a trip to the Bird Library on the SU campus. What a magnificent experience they were afforded! I am so thankful I was able to stop in! They attended the G. Arents Research Library and we all were able to touch and explore the primary sources pulled for Carol's class regarding Social Justice issues through the lens of photography. We were able to touch and read through items such as: an actual 1855 edition of Fredrick Douglass's "My Bondage and My Freedom", Ansel Adams "Taos Pueblo", Dortehea Lange's "The Crucial Years 1930-1946, Carrie Mae

Weems "The Hampton Project, Life Magazine photo's essays such as the 1951 edition "The War America Fought" and many other primary sources. I am also excited to have made the contact with one of the curators who is willing to work with me to put together an opportunity to bring my US History students to the Library to see and touch and learn from ACTUAL primary sources relating to our US studies in workshop!

US History workshop completed a gallery walk this week viewing their brochures on the Sons of Liberty. After the gallery walk they turned and shared with a partner what they learned, from the brochure they liked the most, with each other. The final step in the process was each student then had to share with the entire workshop what their PARTNER said they learned from a brochure (other than their own).



Exploratory Art with April students have started work on adding more to our Big Picture Mural in the Hallway entering the HS. I am excited to see how they will 'match' the previous artists (Nick P. a BP graduate) work and at the same time make it their own. Hmm... ownership seems to have been a theme this week. 😊

Enjoy the long weekend, 101's have a FULL day on Tuesday when we return!

11/15

This week Elliana and Elaina were able to pursue their passion in fashion design and have a shadow day at Midnight Sun in Syracuse. The owner Jim showed them around his quaint shop and discussed many aspects of a private, small shop. The girls unloaded some merchandise and organized it for Jim. Jim then took us to another shop in Syracuse that was a completely different vibe from his store. The owner of the designer clothing store, James had such a depth of knowledge regarding the fashion industry (as he originated from NYC's fashion industry) it was impressive! I am excited to continue conversations with Midnight Sun and Vagabond Clothing to see about the girls possibly interning at the locations.

Lexi had a shadow day at Devine Madness as her interest lies in cosmetology. She was nervous and excited she said as we headed to the site, but when I went back to pick her up she said she "never wants to leave". She gained rave reviews from all of the stylists there and I



was able to secure her a spot there as a full time intern! Congratulations Lexi!

Mya also had a big week! She had a shadow day at Blue Prints a dog training and day care center. She was able to work with the puppies (I couldn't help but stay for a bit and watch the puppies in action- so cute and relaxing!) in the puppy training room. Four of the puppies in training will eventually end up at Clear Path for Veterans, which warmed my heart as my last advisory group that graduated in June had done some service learning for Clear Path. Mya also was invited to pursue a full time internship with Blue Prints. Congratulations Mya!

Tuesday evening we took a group of students to hear author Tommy Orange speak. He was self-professed nervous about speaking, however he did a tremendous job. He was actually quite humorous. The students were excellent and I want to thank the parents who picked up the teens that night in the nasty weather. Thank you also to STEP and David for securing the tickets for our school to attend.

On Wednesday our PSLA partners visited Big Picture, it was fun to get to know some of them through our advisory time. As the PSLA group worked at our school the remainder of students went out on Service Learning. I really enjoy watching how the 101's respond so positively to volunteering for others. They do a great job!

We continue to work on building positive self-esteem and proper behaviors toward others. The 101's held a restorative circle to address some behaviors on Friday. It warmed my heart to see that on the day of our restorative circle almost all of the 101 students chose to eat lunch in our room together, which does not happen everyday. We have a few that do eat there everyday, but most eat elsewhere so I found that very interesting and as I said, warmed my heart.