Homo naledi's hands demonstrate the species' unique blend of human and nonhuman features: a humanlike wrist, palm, and thumb, but long, curved fingers, which are suitable for climbing trees.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY REX FEATURES VIA AP

On September 9th, news reached humanity of a previously unknown hominin relative called Homo naledi. It was discovered in Maropeng, South Africa, about three hundred feet beyond the entrance to a cave chamber called Dinaledi (“Rising Star,” in the local Sesotho language). Getting to the species’ fossilized remains was a claustrophobic proposition. The access chute (http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/11/23/the-view-from-a-caverscientist/) was only about eight inches wide in places, earning it nicknames like “Post Box” and “Superman Squeeze.” Because the principal investigator on the dig, Lee R. Berger, a paleoanthropologist at the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg, could not himself fit through the Post Box, he placed an advertisement on Facebook (http://news.wisc.edu/naledi/gurtov.html) for “skinny and preferably small” cavers with “excellent archaeological/paleontological excavation skills” and a willingness “to work in cramped quarters.” Six young women (http://www.wits.ac.za/files/ggrol_662998001383819531.pdf) were selected from among the fifty-seven respondents.

Over the course of three weeks, the cavers collected more than fourteen hundred bone specimens and a hundred and thirty-seven teeth specimens from a total of at
Homo naledi's hands demonstrate the species' unique blend of human and nonhuman features: a humanlike wrist, palm, and thumb, but long, curved fingers, which are suitable for climbing trees.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY REX FEATURES VIA AP

On September 9th, news reached humanity of a previously unknown hominin relative called Homo naledi. It was discovered in Maropeng, South Africa, about three hundred feet beyond the entrance to a cave chamber called Dinaledi ("Rising Star," in the local Sesotho language). Getting to the species' fossilized remains was a claustrophobic proposition. The access chute (http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/11/23/the-view-from-a-caverscientist/) was only about eight inches wide in places, earning it nicknames like "Post Box" and "Superman Squeeze." Because the principal investigator on the dig, Lee R. Berger, a paleoanthropologist at the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg, could not himself fit through the Post Box, he placed an advertisement on Facebook (http://news.wisc.edu/naledi/gurtov.html) for "skinny and preferably small" cavers with "excellent archaeological/paleontological excavation skills" and a willingness "to work in cramped quarters." Six young women (http://www.wits.ac.za/files/ggrol_662998001383819531.pdf) were selected from among the fifty-seven respondents.

Over the course of three weeks, the cavers collected more than fourteen hundred bone specimens and a hundred and thirty-seven teeth specimens from a total of at least fifteen individuals. Becca Peixotto, a Ph.D. candidate at American University and one of the half-dozen modern humans to enter the chamber, described the journey down to the site as her all-time most beautiful daily commute. It took her past delicate starburst-like speleothems (https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/data-access/paleoclimatology-data/data-sets/speleothem), "fossil-bearing layers of breccia," a "perfectly still pool of water," and a row of "jagged teeth of rock," ending in the chamber with "fossils everywhere you look." (The excavation covered only a small area of Dinaledi.) The women worked two or three at a time, with each shift lasting between five and seven hours. Berger and other experts kept up on their progress via a live video stream, but there was no audio feed—a deliberate decision, to grant the excavators some privacy. When they had questions for the command tent, they used a telephone. They had brought a laminated cutout photo of Berger with them, which they sometimes waved in front of the camera to get people's
The *Homo naledi* fossils that Peixotto and her colleagues unearthed are remarkable not only for their abundance—hominin findings are exceedingly rare, and often an entire species is represented by only a few bones from one individual—but also for their juxtaposition of seemingly modern and primitive features. Three million years ago, parts of Africa were inhabited by apelike australopithecines, most famously exemplified by Lucy (http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/prehistoric_life/human/human_evolution/mother_of_man1.shtml), the three-foot-seven-inch *Australopithecus afarensis* found in Ethiopia, in 1974. Lucy walked upright, but, because of her small brain and other apelike features, she doesn’t belong to the human genus. *Homo erectus*, which was taller, had a larger braincase, and wielded fire, didn’t come along for another million years.

*H. naledi* was the size and weight of a small modern human (about five feet tall and a hundred pounds), but its brain was the size of an orange. The flaring upper part of its pelvis looks just like Lucy’s, but the lower part looks like a human’s. The leg bones start primitive on top and get progressively more modern toward the ankle, terminating in high-arched, remarkably humanlike feet. William Harcourt-Smith (http://evolution.binghamton.edu/evos/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Harcourt-Smith-Aiello-2004.pdf), a paleoanthropologist at the City University of New York and the American Museum of Natural History, who led the foot portion of the investigation, characterized them as “virtually indistinguishable” from ours—feet made for walking, or at least adapted to it. *H. naledi’s* teeth include primitive roots and modern crowns. The over-all effect, one paleoanthropologist told *National Geographic* (http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150910-human-evolution-change/), is “weird as hell.”

With its intertwining of the human and the prehuman, *H. naledi*, like other recent fossil findings (http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/were-hobbits-human-14768/?no-ist), seems to complicate the trajectory of hominin evolution. According to Charles Darwin and his immediate successors, that trajectory was more or less linear, running from primitive to advanced. Until lately, evolutionary biologists believed that the genus *Homo* was distinguished from its apelike forebears by an “adaptive package” that included bigger brains and bodies, smaller teeth, bipedalism, and tool use (http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/which-came-first-humans-or-tools). Findings such as *H. naledi* suggest that these features may have arisen independently, in different combinations, in different species, at different times. As Harcourt-Smith, the foot expert, put it, “Some come earlier, some later; some come earlier, disappear, and then reappear in different lineages; and so on.” He added that “our idea of hominin evolution has radically changed in the last forty years”: the tree of life is not only older than was previously believed but also “very bushy.”

It’s easy to understand how bushiness might not have occurred to someone like Darwin, who lived in a time when the fossil record was even sparser than it is
For the moment, the position of *H. naledi* in the tree or bush of life remains unknown, because nobody knows its age. Usually, paleoanthropologists estimate the age of hominin remains by where they were found in relation to layers of volcanic ash, which can be radiometrically dated. No volcanic ash was found in Dinaledi. Could *H. naledi* be the long-lost, two-and-a-half-million-year-old great-grandfather of *Homo erectus*? Maybe. But it could also be some hundred-thousand-year-old, tiny-brained cousin of Stone Age *Homo sapiens*.

Equally mysterious, and fraught, is the question of what brought the fifteen *H. naledi* to the cave in the first place. They definitely didn't live there; there was nothing for them to eat. They weren't carried in by a flood; a flood would have left debris. They weren't dragged in by predators; there were no tooth marks on their bones. Berger and his team now believe that they were deliberately interred—lugged through the dark cave and dropped down the chute by their friends or associates. Many experts doubt that *H. naledi* could have carried out such a complex undertaking with an orange-sized brain. To date, humans are considered the only creatures advanced enough to ritualistically bury their dead. But if Dinaledi does turn out to have been a burial site, how do we treat it? Hannah Morris, one of the excavators and the founder of the Georgia-based paleoethnobotanical firm Chena Consulting, noted that international rules regulate the excavation of human remains and sites of veneration. There is no such protection for sites venerated by animals.

One of the more discordant parts of *H. naledi* is its hand, the humanlike wrist, palm, and thumb seeming at odds with the long, curved fingers, which are suitable for climbing trees. Peixotto described her experience uncovering one such hand, nearly intact, in the excavation chamber. It took hours of work with toothpicks and paintbrushes to realize that it was a hand, and Peixotto was further moved to discover that it was the same size as her own. When *H. naledi* was alive and had flesh, she said, its hand would likely have been bulkier than hers. And yet, once the bones were uncovered, she told me, “it was hard not to look at that hand and my hand and wonder.” Peixotto added that, since she is four feet ten, “the adult male *H. naledi* and I are about the same height, and I think that’s pretty cool.” The subject of height came up again when I spoke with Morris. Because the excavators had been described in the *Guardian* as “small spelunkers” (http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/sep/10/homo-naledi-small-spelunkers-required-how-an-advert-led-to-the-discovery-of-homo-naledi) and in
I was surprised to learn that she is over five feet ten. I was still more surprised by the sense of identification I felt—something close to pride. I'm a tall woman myself, and we all like to see our kind, *sapiens* or *naledi*, getting on in the world.
"Forever Grateful"
"Eternamente agradecido"


"Forever Grateful"

CUNY Service Corps kicks off new cohort

Story and photos by Mónica Barnkow

"My parents always taught me to give back," said Marcus Charlton.

The Lehman College junior is now embarking on a journey that will fulfill his desire to honor their counsel, and also make a difference in his own life.

"I am forever grateful to CUNY Service Corps," said Damilola Iroko.

Charlton is one of nearly 900 City University of New York (CUNY) students chosen to join the 2015-2016 CUNY Service Corps.

He will work for the Center for Employment Opportunities, an organization dedicated to finding employment for those formerly incarcerated.

He said he felt into disbelief when he received the acceptance letter.

"I was kind of speechless," he said. "I know this is a good opportunity."

"It is extremely important because it is an underserved population," he said of the ex-offenders, parolees and ex-convicts with whom he will soon work.

Charlton joined his fellow Service Corps members in a pledge ceremony at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) on Fri., Sept. 11th. The participants hail from eight CUNY campuses, including the Borough of Manhattan Community College, City College, College of Staten Island, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Lehman College, Medgar Evers College, New York City College of Technology and Queens College."
Established in 2013, the CUNY Service Corps employs and pays full-time students to work on projects to improve the city’s civic, economic and environmental sustainability. Participants are partnered with 335 non-profit organizations and government agencies, and work 32 hours a week for 24 weeks.

"This is very important work," declared CUNY Chancellor James Milliken, who noted that part of the institution's mission is to serve the public. "It is so important for students to be involved. You will help New Yorkers and gain experience."

The selection process is competitive, and involves an online application, short essays, references and a group interview. Full-time students, with 24 or more credits and a GPA of 3.5, are eligible. Candidates are expected to have demonstrated civic commitment and leadership skills.

"We get to see all the dimensions of the student," explained Rachel Stephenson, University Director of CUNY Service Corps. "It is a rigorous process. We are looking for students with an interest in serving, ability to lead and problem solve."

It is also a popular program.

Stephenson confirmed that 2000 applications had been received this year.

Organizations in the Service Corps portfolio include arts groups, after-school programs, criminal justice/prisoner re-entry organizations, hospitals, groups serving older adults, park and wildlife organizations, and city libraries.

After 14 hours of pre-service training, students go out into the field and obtain real-life experience while completing their undergraduate degree. In addition, service students become role models expected to enhance and broadcast the standing of CUNY.

"A big part of our approach is to prepare students to be ambassadors for CUNY," said Stephenson.

Alton Dobris, CUNY's Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer, used his personal story to encourage students to work hard — and to persist.

Born to immigrant parents, Dobris was raised by his mother after his father died while he was still a child.

"I am the first one in my family to graduate from high school," said Dobris. He recalled that he had been voted "less likely" to succeed then.

But he went on to graduate from Queens College graduate and now teaches as an adjunct professor at City Tech.

"You can start from humble beginnings and have a great career," he said, using the term "magic children" to describe those who persevere to succeed against all odds.

One who might be the most named by Dobris was Darnel Locke, an alumni of the CUNY Service Corps first cohort, who served as the keynote speaker.

Of Nigerian descent, Locke grew up in Roxford-Shavesset. He took to the streets, coming into close proximity with local police officers. They soon steered him towards more positive behaviors, including joining up with recreational, physical and social activities with the Police Athletic League (PAL).
MANHATTAN DA'S OFFICE, CITY OF LONDON POLICE, CENTER FOR INTERNET SECURITY ANNOUNCE FORMATION OF GLOBAL CYBER ALLIANCE

First-of-Its-Kind International Not-For-Profit Organization to Confront and Prevent Malicious Cyber Activity

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., City of London Police Commissioner Adrian Leppard, and the Center for Internet Security (CIS) today announced the formation of the Global Cyber Alliance (GCA), an international, cross-sector effort designed to confront, address, and prevent malicious cyber activity. The announcement was made at the International Conference on Combating Financial and Cyber Threats Affecting Global Financial Centres, hosted by the City of London Police. District Attorney Vance delivered the keynote opening address in London.

"A crime prevented is far better than a crime prosecuted," said District Attorney Vance. "But when information about a cyber threat or attack is not divulged, other institutions – and perhaps entire industries – remain vulnerable. Serving as a voluntary clearinghouse, the Global Cyber Alliance will share and disseminate this kind of crucial information across sectors in real time. Currently, the cyber landscape is dotted with entities that are either for-profit or divided by region or industry. The Global Cyber Alliance has no such restrictions or limitations, crossing borders and sectors in an effort to map, understand, and thwart cybercrime, with no profit motive attached, and with no goal other than the prevention of future crimes. Today, we are inaugurating a new, better, international approach to fighting this global problem."

City of London Police Commissioner Leppard said: "Protection from cyber attacks is a huge challenge for businesses and organisations across the globe. The threat doesn't respect national borders or legal jurisdictions and the solution to the challenge should recognise this. Today's announcement should be a sign that the partnership between our nations can continue to protect us today and into the future from those that would use technology against us."

Global Cyber Alliance Strategic Adviser Will Pelgrin, former CEO and President of the Center for Internet Security, said: "Cyber crimes have become a worldwide epidemic with estimates of a half billion global cyber victims annually. We must treat cyber security threats and crimes as we would any widespread infectious disease – immediately, urgently and collectively. Cyber risks have reached catastrophic proportions and, therefore, require an unparalleled, public/private and transnational response. The Global Cyber Alliance is a not-for-profit operational organization that was created to confront these cyber risks by building a cyber ecosystem for positive change. Bringing transnational/cross sector global leaders and cyber experts together will truly make a difference by focusing on a common mission that is driven by an altruistic approach. The Alliance concept is simple but powerful – collectively, we are much more powerful to act than individually. I applaud the New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. for his leadership and vision. I thank him for providing the critical funding and leadership necessary to develop unique Global Cyber Alliance organization. CIS is honored to be partnered with District Attorney Vance and the City of London Commissioner of Police, Adrian Leppard. Working together, I am positive we will make a difference."
Center for Internet Security CEO Jane Holl Lute said: "The Global Cyber Alliance represents the kind of bold move necessary to help confront the cyber challenges we face worldwide. The Alliance will make practical, effective action a priority, and reach out broadly – irrespective of geographic boundaries or sectors – to build a truly inclusive and collaborative approach to cybersecurity. The Alliance will bring together some of the world’s very best cybersecurity professionals to accelerate the implementation of sound cyber hygiene practices – measures that we know help prevent or contain the majority of attacks we see commonly today. Our aim is to help chart a new course to a safer online world."

The Global Cyber Alliance will be headquartered in New York City and London – two leading financial centers of the world with numerous transnational corporations – and will focus on building a stronger global cyber landscape. As a not-for-profit organization, it will bring together many of the leading global experts in cyber security, including security operations centers, key global organizations and associations, security emergency incident response teams, development and research centers, Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs), and other critical stakeholder organizations and individuals. Members will identify global threats, form action teams, and design approaches to confront widespread cyber threats.

In order to address the most pressing cyber security concerns of our time – cyber attacks, extreme vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure, financial and other online crimes, and the lack of effective education and prevention methodologies – the Global Cyber Alliance seeks to foster international, coordinated collaboration to reduce and prevent malicious cyber activity. To protect its members and the public at large, the Global Cyber Alliance will not collect any Personal Identifiable Information, and will only possess what is voluntarily provided – data that describes or identifies the attackers’ information, such as location or infrastructure, and the threats associated with them.

The growing list of partners and leaders who have already joined the Global Cyber Alliance include leaders from security, defense, retail, healthcare, insurance, energy, aviation, education, law enforcement, government, and finance institutions, including American Express, Barclays Bank, Citi, Deloitte, the Financial Services ISAC, and more.

The Manhattan District Attorney’s Office has committed $25 million in criminal asset forfeiture proceeds to fund this critical work – an initial investment of $15 million over the first three years with an additional $10 million to follow. The Global Cyber Alliance will seek additional funding from individual donors and partners. The City University of New York’s Institute for State and Local Governance is acting as the technical assistance consultant for this effort.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said: "To ensure that New York City remains the safest big city in the nation – both online and on the street – we can and must remain alert and proactive in how we confront and contain threats to cyber-security. I congratulate Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance’s office for this important investment in the Global Cyber Alliance, which will bolster our capacity to ensure that New York City remains a safe place to live, work, and visit as well as advance our commitment to promote cyber security in an increasingly interconnected world."

New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton said: "As technology has advanced, so have the criminals, who are ever eager to exploit the anonymity of the internet with just a few clicks of a mouse. This collaborative effort is critical in combating the global threat of cybercrime. I commend the Manhattan District Attorney along with our many partners in this endeavor, for taking this important step."

Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary and University of California President Janet Napolitano said: "In today’s dynamic and ever-evolving world of rapid technical innovation, interactive and interoperable systems, and big data, all organizations, regardless of sector or location, are in need of effective solutions for predicting and responding to cyber threats. The Global Cyber Alliance provides an important new approach to eliminating silos and barriers, focusing on collaboration and results."

National Health ISAC (NH-ISAC) Executive Director Denise Anderson said: "The Global Cyber Alliance takes on the task of fixing the fundamental problems associated with cyber vulnerabilities and attacks. With data, devices and processes becoming more connected to the Internet, as they are in the health care sector, this task becomes critical. The National Health ISAC is pleased to support this important effort."

Downstream Natural Gas ISAC (DNG-ISAC) Threat Analyst John Bryk said: "The Downstream Natural Gas (DNG)-ISAC Threat Collaboration Portal (TCP) provides a central repository for multidirectional cyber and physical threat information and reporting. Participants may share in anonymized or anonymous formats with the entire DNG community or to specific members. The platform is hosted on the Microsoft Azure cloud, provides multi-factor authentication, audited user access, encrypted data in transit and in motion and regular vulnerability testing and assessment for security. Though relatively new, DNG has already demonstrated a global reach in defending the U.S. infrastructure against international threats. DNG looks forward to expanded opportunities for sharing and cooperating with the Global Cyber Alliance."

Google Chief Internet Evangelist Vint Cerf said: "There are many existing regional and sector-based communities that address online threats. The Global Cyber Alliance plans to bridge these efforts with an operational platform focused on bringing concrete results to cybersecurity collaboration. I am pleased to contribute to this global effort and look forward to its potential."

DeepEnd Research Security Researcher Andrea DiMino said: "The rapid evolution of cyber
security threats necessitates a similar evolution in strategic partnerships to coordinate and respond to these threats. The efforts of the Global Cyber Alliance will build a significant multi-tiered cooperation among a variety of organizations and individuals. This global cooperation will foster the aggregation and correlation of a wide variety of threat data, and will result in actionable intelligence for their constituent’s security program. We are proud and honored to be part of the Global Cyber Alliance, and look forward to supporting their mission."

Retail Cyber Intelligence Sharing Center (R-CISC) Executive Director Brian Engholm said: "The R-CISC is proud to be considered among the many great organizations that have come together as charter members of the Global Cyber Alliance. Addressing risk as it relates to the cyber realm is truly a global issue, and the R-CISC is committed to helping achieve the global level of success that is the aim of the GCA."

American Express Chief Information Security Officer Fred Gibbons said: "American Express supports the work of the new Global Cyber Alliance. We commend New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. for his leadership in bringing together the public and private sectors in a more holistic way to confront the many challenges associated with cybercrime. As a company with offices throughout the world and a passion for the safety of its customers, we fully recognize the importance of timely information sharing across sectors and borders. We look forward to working with the Global Cyber Alliance."

Hathaway Global Strategies, LLC President Melissa Hathaway, former Acting Senior Director for Cyberspace in the National Security Council, said: "The establishment of the Global Cyber Alliance is an important international initiative, that will foster transnational partnerships to address the threats to our digital environment."

CrowdStrike Services President Shawn Henry, former FBI Executive Assistant Director, said: "As we come to realize the benefits of our cyber world are many, but there have been too many costs and complications introduced by the networked world. These days, we are dealing not only with independent actors aggressively targeting government, military, and commercial networks, but also nation-state directed attacks designed to either procure intelligence or disrupt critical state functions. There is a critical need for a unique approach that brings corporate and government leaders, academics, law enforcement, researchers and practitioners together in a trusted, collaborative and cooperative manner to address cyber security problems at a global scale. I am honored to be part of the Global Cyber Alliance, which is dedicated to eradicating cyber risk, improving the safety and security of our connected world, and bringing cyber criminals to justice. I fully support its formation and mission to do just that, and make our networks safer."

Defense Security Information Exchange Executive Director Carlos Kitzes said: "The Defense Security Information Exchange (DSIE) applauds the foresight, innovation, and commitment of the New York County District Attorney’s Office, the City of London Police, and the Center for Internet Security in developing the Global Cyber Alliance. DSIE is a committed Charter Member of the Alliance, and in that role, supports the development and implementation of this collective effort to prevent cyber threats impacting our increasingly connected global community."

Defense Industrial Base ISAC (DIB-ISAC) Executive Director Steve Lines said: "The Defense Industrial Base has been combating cyber espionage and crime for many years. The Defense Industrial Base Information Sharing Analysis Center (DIB ISAC) believes that the only effective way to stay ahead of the adversary is through cross-sector and international cooperation. As such, we support the Global Cyber Alliance in its mission to support international collaboration."

The City University of New York Chancellor James Milliken said: "The City University of New York is very pleased to partner with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance as a charter member of the Global Cyber Alliance, dedicated to confronting cyber security risks. CUNY has a long history of productive collaborations with the District Attorney and Industry leaders, working with faculty and students throughout the University on educating students in preparation for careers in related fields— and including programs involving John Jay College. We especially look forward to the expansion of opportunities for student internships and research as this initiative unfolds."

Financial Services ISAC (FS-ISAC) President and CEO Bill Nelson said: "Just like any other global problem, we need a collective approach to fight the cyber security threats. Global Cyber Alliance is one such effort. We must work towards a common goal of eliminating cyber risk. I look forward to being part of the leadership advisory team of this exciting new effort. I am confident it will result in a safer online experience for everyone around the globe."

Barclays Bank PLC Group Chief Information Security Officer Troels Oerting, former Head of Europe’s Cybercrime Centre (ECC), said: "Consumers and enterprises alike in today’s marketplace must have confidence in the transactions that we now take for granted in cyberspace. Unfortunately, cyber criminals and others determined to cause harm in today’s online world have operated too long with advantage. The Global Cyber Alliance is exactly the kind of unique, pragmatic collaboration between the public and private sector that the world needs to tackle these threats. I am pleased to join its Advisory Board to help its efforts reach as widely and deeply as possible."

SANS Institute Founder and Director of Research Alan Paller said: "The new waves of attacks, like those against the Office of Personnel Management and United and American Airlines, cross industrial sector lines and are being repeated in multiple nations. Today, victims have no
effective means of sharing detailed information on these global attacks early enough to enable timely action – not to identify global actions that they can take to reduce the threat. The GCA offers the most promising approach we have seen to meeting these global challenges, and we at $ANS, on behalf of our more than 120,000 cyber security alumni in 70 countries, are fully committed to helping make it successful. Specifically, as Target and American Airlines so starkly illustrated, technical staff members who lack the skills to act effectively on early “indicators of compromise (IOC) leave their organizations wide open to debilitating attacks even if the needed data arrives in time. We will commit more than $1,000,000 in scholarships for hands-on training for organizations that participate in GCA to ensure their staff have the skills to take full advantage of the information that GCA will be sharing.”

Current Chair of National Computer Forensic Technology Association (NCFTA) Ron Plesco said: “NCFTA is committed to partnering with important organizations to help address the cyber risks we all face today. The Global Cyber Alliance is one such organization that provides a critical component to the fight against cyber threats. As Chair of NCFTA, I look forward to developing a strong working relationship with the Global Cyber Alliance – maximizing our respective strengths for the betterment of the global community.”

Deloitte Center for Cyber Innovation Chairman Lt. Gen. Harry Reddige, Jr., (USAF, Ret.), said: “In order to confront the daunting cyber risks we face today, there is a critical need for a new and unique approach that establishes a viable, collaborative public-private partnership approach to address the major cyber risks which increasingly are challenging all of us in cyberspace today. As such, I am pleased to be part of this effort and to lend my experience in supporting the mission of Global Cyber Alliance in its critical mission of improving Internet security.”

Astute Chief Information Security Officer Jim Routh said: “The cyber security landscape is constantly evolving for private enterprises today. The mission of Global Cyber Alliance is essential to leverage transnational and cross-sector collaboration to confront cyber risks and address approaches that work across borders.”

Ridge-Schmidt Cyber, LLC Partner Howard Schmidt, former Cyber Advisor to Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, said: “The Internet connects us in ways that no other invention ever has. We need to leverage that connectivity in meaningful ways in order to both protect and advance society. The Global Cyber Alliance will offer a needed and trusted venue which transcends geographic location and sector-driven analysis to build a global ecosystem of real-time intelligence that informs and mobilizes positive action. I am happy to support GCA and look forward to lending my expertise as one of its first strategic advisors. GCA is important to be a not-for-profit dedicated to its mission to confronting cyber risk, bringing criminals to justice, and improving our connected world. Cyber risks have reached catastrophic proportions and, therefore, require an unparalleled, public-private and transnational response. We need, and must have, aspirational goals of developing solutions to eliminating cyber risks, where feasible; bringing those who use cyber to cause harm to justice and protecting the privacy of the connected world.”

NYU Polytechnic School of Engineering Dean Kastapol R. Sreeramanan said: “New York University Polytechnic School of Engineering congratulates the New York County District Attorney’s Office, the City of London Police, and the Center for Internet Security for their innovative approach for confronting cyber threats. The Global Cyber Alliance is a truly new approach – a partnership to confront cyber threats across borders and affecting multiple sectors. As an educational leader based in New York, but with affiliations and campuses throughout the world, we fully support the Alliance’s mission. NYU School of Engineering looks forward to having our professors and students working with The Alliance on these critical issues.”

Partnership for New York City President and CEO Kathryn Wyckoff said: “The Global Cyber Alliance addresses the growing need for a network dedicated to prevention of cyber crimes that transcend national jurisdictions and industry silos. New York’s international business community fully supports this initiative.”
Parents in Law: Is It Possible to Be Both an Attorney and a Committed Mom or Dad?

A new kind of firm is letting its lawyers pick out a schedule that makes sense for them without compromising on the high quality of their work.
At 4 p.m. each day, I stroll my one-year-old son to the nearest Central Park playground. While pushing him on the baby swings, I often chat with other mothers doing the same, exchanging children’s names, ages, and number of teeth. The conversation inevitably turns to what we did before spending afternoons blowing bubbles, singing “The Wheels on the Bus,” and preventing the ingestion of old leaves and puddle water.

“I used to be a lawyer,” I explain. And fairly frequently, the other mother says, “Oh, me too.”

These past-tense lawyers—women who leave large corporate law firms, often in conjunction with having children—are nothing new. Though women make up 45 percent of associates in private practice, they represent only 20 percent of partners, according to statistics compiled by the American Bar Association. And the National Association of Law Placement Foundation reports that two-thirds of female associates will leave their firms within five years.

As described in a recent report from the University of California Hastings School of the Law, the flight of women from law firms is explained in part by the failure of traditional firms to deliver the flexible schedules that mothers—and most lawyers in general—want. Unlike older generations of working mothers, Gen Xers and Millennials have more of an expectation that work can and should sometimes yield to family time and other commitments. “Many [corporate] lawyers are able to be home at 7 or 8 to put their kids to bed, but then they log back on and are working until midnight,” says Lauren Pearlman, an attorney and the owner of Pearlman Career Counseling. “Sure, it’s flexible, but it’s not work-life balance.”

While traditional law firms offer some flexibility in theory, there’s really no release from the pressure to bill. The billable-hour model, under which productivity is measured by time spent on a project, creates an inherent
conflict between the objectives of a firm and the objectives of a mother, or any lawyer who values time outside of work. From the firm’s perspective, a woman who can generate a stellar brief in time to make it to her daughter’s afternoon soccer game is less profitable than an associate who takes all night to complete the same task. “Moms are probably the most efficient workers in the marketplace,” says Erin Clary Giglia, the founder of Montage Legal Group. “But the way law firms are set up, that efficiency is not rewarded.”

The most common way mothers handle this conundrum is by taking on part-time schedules, but that comes with costs. “I don’t like feeling like I’m being sorted into a ‘not ambitious’ group. I’m swallowing my pride in order to take advantage of the opportunity to have a better work-life balance,” said one part-time associate at an elite New York firm. (She spoke to me on the condition of anonymity, because she was afraid of how her employer would respond to learning how she felt.) Many infer that having a child makes a woman less serious about work. “If a man’s office is dark on a Wednesday afternoon, people assume he’s at a closing. If a woman’s office is dark, people assume she’s at the playground,” says Debbie Epstein Henry, the president of Flex-Time Lawyers, a legal consultancy.

“These firms allow women to say ‘I’m still practicing law.’ The ability to hold on to that identity is huge.”

There are mothers who’ve made Big Law work for them after having children and many firms are eager to become more women-friendly. But for many new mothers, the downsides of practicing at a traditional, large firm outweigh the benefits—so they quit. The alternative, though—the transition
from lawyer to full-time caregiver—can be fraught. Pamela Stone, a Hunter College sociology professor and the author of *Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*, found that only 10 to 15 percent of high-achieving women who left the workforce actually intended to become stay-at-home moms.

“Mothers were the only demographic I interviewed who expressed remorse about leaving the law,” says Amy Impellizzeri, the author of *Lawyer Interrupted: Successfully Transitioning from the Practice of Law—and Back Again*.

But women who’ve been frustrated with the all-or-nothing decision may now have access to a middle ground. As detailed in the U.C. Hastings report, there are a number of “New Model” law firms created by and catering to women with children, which are tapping into the highly-qualified idle workforce of women who’ve left large law firms.

“We wanted to provide a way for women to have non-stigmatized, alternative careers,” says Epstein Henry, who co-founded Bliss Lawyers, a New Model firm that matches attorneys with “secondment” assignments at corporations and law firms. Bliss pulls from a network of over 10,000 attorneys—which now includes men as well as women—she started to form in 1999 after struggling to balance her law career and family.

New Model firms let their lawyers select a schedule that works for them, without compromising the high-level nature of the work they desire. At a traditional firm, when a partner calls on a Friday at 6 p.m. with an assignment, an attorney has little choice but to cancel that weekend camping trip. But at New Model firms, attorneys have the power to say no. “I can do PTA, pick-ups, and drop-offs,” says Lindley Fraley, who takes on projects through the firm Montage Legal.
“These firms allow women to say ‘I’m still practicing law,’” says Impellizzeri. “The ability to hold on to that identity is huge.”

Mae O’Malley, the founder of the secondment-type firm Paragon Legal, is quick to point out that flexibility is not synonymous with scaling down. “Our attorneys are very much looking for a robust career with all the responsibility and high-level work that comes with that,” she says. “Often it’s just a matter of knowing they can leave at 5 p.m. to pick up a kid. This seems like such a simple thing to ask for, yet a it’s a privilege few attorneys enjoy.”

“There’s no question the demand for alternative firms is there,” says Pamela Stone. “What’s new is it’s no longer all supply-side from mothers. These firms are gaining acceptance and becoming less stigmatized because the demand is client-driven.” As the U.C. Hastings report emphasizes, clients see a significant value in hiring Big Law-trained attorneys from New Model firms for a fraction of Big Law rates.

While these firms are allowing women to resolve personal-professional conflicts, Stone worries they won’t alter the industry’s mainstream thinking. “These New Model firms are not getting women into the high-prestige, high-power positions in legal field. We don’t want to take the pressure off firms that are the shapers of the profession,” she says.

But New Model firms may help mothers who are looking for an alternative to Big Law find their work-life sweet spot. And maybe more women I meet at the swing set will tell me they are lawyers—present tense.
Cuomo: Contract with faculty is 'up to CUNY'

By Conor Skelding

5:07 a.m. | Sep. 17, 2015

Governor Andrew Cuomo said that the City University of New York's contract with its faculty union is its own responsibility.

"It's up to CUNY, the way it's up to SUNY, to settle their labor contract," Cuomo told reporters at an availability in front of the New York Public Library's research branch on Wednesday.

CUNY's main faculty and staff union, the Professional Staff Congress, has worked without a contract since 2010.

University chancellor James Milliken, who has called settling a contract his "highest priority," said last week that the "most disappointing outcome from the state legislative session was the failure to address collective bargaining needs."

Cuomo disagreed with that.

"They got the money, they have a budget, and they have to pay the salaries from their budget," he said.

He also said he was unfamiliar with a pending bill, which has been passed by the Legislature but not yet sent to his desk, which would guarantee collective bargaining costs for CUNY and SUNY out of the state budget, and which both the university and the union support.

"I haven't seen it. I don't know what it is," Cuomo said.

CUNY spokesman Mike Arena referred POLITICO New York to previous statements.
NEW YORK When speaking with Jay Eisenberger, the only quality more apparent than his intelligence is his determination.

Both characteristics propelled him through his remarkable journey to Brooklyn College, where he is a second-year bio-engineering student. Eisenberger was raised as part of New Square's Skver Hasidic sect, one of the most isolated religious groups in the country.

Investigation: East Ramapo yeshivas fail to prepare students in secular studies (http://story/news/investigations/2015/09/18/east-ramapo-yeshivas/33482729/)

Eisenberger attended an all-male yeshiva there for 12 years where he learned "zero secular education." Like most young men in his community, he married at 19, began having children immediately, and worked at various jobs to support his family. But, unlike his peers, he began reaching out for knowledge about things beyond his village. He began to learn English, he said, by secretly watching "Titanic" and other movies, a practice strictly forbidden by religious leaders.

Yearning for a life beyond the social and religious confines of his village, Eisenberger read everything he could. He eventually divorced and moved to Brooklyn. Though scrambling to support himself while studying for a general equivalency diploma was his "biggest challenge," he received very high marks and continued on to college with the help of grants and other financial aid.

He hopes to earn a scholarship and complete his studies at New York University.

"If I can get this far without anything, I imagine how far I could've gone," he said. "I compare myself to people who got a secular education. What a waste of time and talent."

Eisenberger visits regularly with his two sons, who are still in the Hasidic yeshiva system.

"It's crippling," he said. "I think they are being robbed of learning things that are worthwhile, but my hands are tied."

Read or Share this story: http://lohud.us/1Kk69bv
Lonnae O’Neal: When should you give up on who you said you wanted to be?

By Lonnae O’Neal  Columnist  September 17 at 3:00 AM

Back-to-school has always been a time for fresh starts and new possibilities. I associate it with the busyness of children — of backpacks and bus stops and new class notes. A time for parents to wrap their schedules around bell-time logistics.

As a single mom of two, New York lawyer Carolyn Edgar has been through a dozen years of back-to-school buzz. This year it was time to add one more class schedule to the mix.

Her own.

Along with her high school freshman son and college freshman daughter, Edgar, 50, who worked for IBM before attending Harvard and becoming a lawyer for a big cosmetics firm, just headed back to class — an MFA program at the City University of New York. She’s pursuing her dream of becoming a novelist. Whether it happens or not is beside the point, she says. It’s the psychic work it took to get there — to start something new and creative in the middle of her high-powered corporate life — that’s the story.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 38 percent of higher education students are older than 25, and 25 percent are older than 30.

The Grad School Hub Web site lists the average graduate student at 33, a number that has remained relatively stable for decades, but the site stresses that “there may be an average age for a graduate student, but there is no age cap.”

Edgar had majored in English but got a job in sales at IBM. She’d loved writing, but just for herself. And everybody, parents especially, wants to see young dreamers settle into real jobs. “At IBM, I was all focused on business,” she says. In law school, an essay about her experience as a black Harvard law student (she knew fellow student Barack Obama enough to say hi on campus) caught the attention of a professor who published it in a magazine he founded. It was the first time she’d ever had validation for writing. The first time she told herself, “Oh, you could actually do
this.”

She clerked at author Scott Turow’s law firm in Chicago. His legal thriller “Presumed Innocent” had just been made into a Hollywood movie and “all of us were star-struck.” When the young associates asked him how he juggled being a lawyer and a writer, Edgar remembers he said simply that “he always intended to do both,” so that’s how he structured his life.

She was less clear on how that worked. For nearly a decade, she tried to do both and failed. She’d take writing classes only to drop them because of her workload. Then came a husband. Then came kids. Time kept slipping, and Edgar reached a crossroads. And a realization.

SPONSOR-GENERATED CONTENT

Building a new era in affordable housing

By Citi

Safe, sustainable communities are being developed for New York City residents.

READ MORE

We have only a finite amount of time to be the people we always said we wanted to be. Sometimes we let that version of ourselves slip away, then just say we’ve moved on in a different direction. Sometimes we lie about what we want because we don’t know whether we have what it takes to get it.

In 2008, Edgar started blogging. She wrote about her parents passing away. She wrote about the annoyances of jogging in Harlem (catcalls). She wrote about parenthood, then single parenthood. She began writing about popular culture and doing commentary for CNN, Huffington Post, Salon. It still wasn’t enough.

She applied to two graduate schools right at their deadlines, and when she got into CUNY, she was like, “Wow, I was prepared not to be accepted.” Then she was like, “Wow, I need a backpack.”

She and her children all started their new schools within the past month. She does law during the day and school at night. First up: playwriting. When she gets home, her son “wants to know what I’m writing about” and whether he’s in it. She doesn’t know how long it will take her to finish the program or whether she’ll ever be a novelist. It is the permission to fall short, not the determination to triumph, that allows us to try. For now, it’s just enough that she’s started, and that her kids see that.
Edgar says she reminds herself of a little girl saying she wants to be a writer when she grows up. "When I sit in my room late at night after my son has gone upstairs to his room and I'm doing my homework, I'm happy," Edgar says. It sort of feels like a back-to-school lesson for everyone.

For more by O'Neal, visit wapo.st/lonmae.
Research to prevent, treat vascular disease garners NIH award

Thea Singer

Assistant professor of chemical engineering Eno Ebong takes the art of multi-tasking to a new level in her interdisciplinary search for the cause and treatment of vascular diseases that cause heart attacks and strokes.

Call it “multi-labbing”

In her two years at Northeastern, Ebong has undertaken experiments with researchers in fields as disparate as engineering, physics, pathology, molecular biology, and biological imaging. As the recipient of a new National Institutes of Health Mentored Career Development Award, she will draw on those collaborators, including bioengineering professor Jeffrey Ruberti, to uncover poorly understood cellular and molecular sources of atherosclerosis—the buildup of fatty deposits, or “plaques,” in artery walls.

Atherosclerosis is one of the underlying causes of heart attacks and strokes. According to the American Heart Association, 795,000 Americans experience strokes and 915,000 experience heart attacks each year.

“My goal is to understand the underlying mechanics and biology of what causes vascular disease,” says
Ebong, "and then to develop engineering solutions, say, novel drug-delivery systems using nanotechnology, to try to reverse that disease."

Eno Ebong's NIH award exemplifies the momentum of Northeastern's College of Engineering, notes dean Nadine Aubry. "The potential for breakthrough understanding of a long-standing fundamental scientific issue and transformative societal impact of Eno's work is tremendous," says Aubry. "I am delighted that NIH has recognized the importance of Eno's work through this very competitive and prestigious award. Her research is a shining example of the role that engineering can play in further understanding complex biological systems and improving human health, in this case the millions of people around the world suffering from cardiovascular disease."

```
The potential for breakthrough understanding of a long-standing fundamental scientific issue and transformative societal impact of Eno's work is tremendous.
— Nadine Aubry, College of Engineering dean
```

The road to biomedical engineering

Ebong didn't start out to be a biomedical engineer. Indeed, she didn't even think she would study engineering in college when she started at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1995, despite her love for math and physics in high school in Albany, New York. Economics was at the top of her list. "I didn't have engineering role models, not even on TV, where there were plenty of doctors and lawyers," she says. Then at a community event she met a man with a doctorate in engineering who worked at nearby General Electric Co. He opened her mind to the possibility. At MIT, mechanical engineering struck a chord.

But it wasn't until she was in the doctoral program in biomedical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that she "really started learning about biology," she says. Her interest in commingling disciplines had been piqued earlier: On a summer internship as an undergraduate developing ultrasound equipment at Hewlett Packard, she visited a medical clinic. "I went in with an engineering mind, saying, 'Does the equipment work?' and saw the personal side—a nervous patient," she says. "I realized that I didn't just want to develop devices to detect disease; I wanted to find cures."

Research that extends from the macro to the micro

The new NIH award will help Ebong pursue that goal at Northeastern.

On a macro scale, Ebong studies the trouble spots in blood-vessel geometry—the junctures, constrictions, and curvatures where blood is more likely to slam into a vessel wall and erode it, leaving lesions where fatty deposits can settle.

On a micro scale, she focuses on how the mechanical forces of blood flow affect the cells that line and guard those vessels, the endothelial cells. Going even deeper, she zeros in on the thin, protective gel-like layer of sugar molecules and proteins coating the surface of those endothelial cells—called the glycocalyx—to understand, on a molecular level, how lesions are allowed to form and what researchers can do to reverse the process.
The glyocalyx, says Ebong, is like a dense version of the hair on your arms, standing on end. It functions as a kind of sensor taking the measure of the environment. It triggers biological responses, helping blood vessels to adapt to the forces of healthy or disruptive blood flow.

"The same way you can feel the breeze on your arm, the glyocalyx can 'feel' the blood as it flows through the vessel," she says. Scientists believe the glyocalyx may act like a "lever." The force of healthy blood flow exerts a "pull" on the glyocalyx, which is anchored to the endothelial cell bodies. That pull remodels the cells.

"With remodeling, the cells become streamlined," says Ebong. "Let's say you're in a really nice racecar, the ride is smooth. Essentially, the glyocalyx helps the cell remodel and become like a racecar. It evens everything out, the vessel walls remain clean, healthy."

Studies of blood samples have shown that in disease conditions a lot of the glyocalyx is shed into the blood. With less of the glyocalyx attached to endothelial cell bodies, the "pull" and the endothelial cell remodeling changes.

"Let's now say you're in a bulky vehicle—you can feel the turbulence around you," she explains. This mode of endothelial cell remodeling "leads the endothelial cells, which are normally connected, to detach from one another," she adds. "They now become a sort of filter for cholesterol and inflammatory white blood cells to get in, leading to plaque growth in the vessel wall."

**Basic science leads to treatments**

In her chemical engineering lab, Ebong constructs bioreactors—systems comprising fluids and human endothelial cells—to replicate both healthy and disruptive blood-flow conditions and to learn about the flow-glyocalyx-endothelial cell relationship. Her team combines these experiments with live animal studies to
assess the validity of the results in real disease conditions.

In the long term, Ebong hopes to develop therapies that reverse that progression of disease. She’s already begun the process. In collaboration with professor Thomas Webster, the Art Zafiropoulo Chair in Engineering and chair of the Department of Chemical Engineering, and Srinivas Sridhar, Arts and Science Distinguished Professor of Physics, her team is working to understand whether they can leverage the nature of the glyco- calyx, together with nanomedicine, to precisely deliver drugs.

“Numerous studies for drug delivery to fight diseases from atherosclerosis to cancer do not consider the vascular glyco- calyx, yet seminal studies by our group show the possibilities of nanoparticles to penetrate the glyco- calyx layer,” says Webster. “Based on our work, I am not sure I trust any results from studies that do not consider the glyco- calyx. It is simply that important.”

Ebong embraces the research challenge. The passion that led her from MIT to RPI and then to a joint post- doctoral fellowship at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and City College of New York before coming to Northeastern continues to inform not just her own work but her advice to students, whether they voice interest in a career in science or the arts.

“Follow whatever you’re passionate about,” she says. “If you’re hard working, you’re going to put in 100 percent, so enjoy what you do.” And take the time to find the “right fit.” “When you are passionate and good at what you do, you will be appreciated and your work will be recognized with awards like the one I just received.”
Your guide to de Blasio's announcement, with new goals for grad rate, coding for all

By Sarah Darville and Monica Disare
PUBLISHED: September 16, 2015 - 12:01 pm EDT

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced new education initiatives for New York City schools at Bronx Latin on Wednesday. (Photo by Patrick Wall)

Mayor Bill de Blasio laid out an ambitious new set of education goals and initiatives on Wednesday.

In a speech at Bronx Latin, de Blasio said the city would aim for 80 percent of high-school students to graduate within four years and would add reading specialists to elementary schools to ensure all second-graders could read at grade level. Over the next decade, the city will also introduce computer science instruction to all schools and offer all eighth-grade students the chance to take algebra.
After the de Blasio administration spent most of its first year and a half focused on rapidly expanding pre-kindergarten and introducing plans to improve a set of especially low-performing schools, the mayor’s speech offered new indications about how the city plans to improve instruction in all schools. De Blasio said the changes are aimed at creating a more equitable school system and city, invoking his mayoral campaign’s focus on inequality.

“There is a tale of two cities in our schools,” de Blasio said. “Excellence will not be apportioned out for the lucky few.”

We’ll be adding details over the course of the day. Here’s what the mayor announced:

**Graduation rate goal:** The city’s four-year August graduation rate was 68 percent for the class of 2014. De Blasio set a new goal: 80 percent by 2026, 10 years after this year’s high school seniors graduate.

**College readiness:** Two-thirds of those graduates will be “college ready” by the city’s standards by 2026, de Blasio said. That number refers to graduates who scored 80 or higher on a Regents math exam and 75 or higher on the English Regents exam or earned an equivalent score on the SAT, ACT, or CUNY Achievement Test, which included 47 percent of the city’s 2014 graduates.

In the South Bronx’s District 7 and Brooklyn’s District 23, adult advocates called “single shepherds” will be paired with students to help them navigate middle and high school and to prepare for college, starting next fall at a cost of $15 million per year.

Another initiative will provide tours of New York City colleges to middle-school students. De Blasio mentioned Columbia, New York University, the City University of New York, and the Fashion Institute of Technology specifically.

**Advanced Placement classes:** The mayor said the city will expand access to Advanced Placement courses. Some new AP classes and prep classes will be rolled out by next fall, the mayor said. Seventy-five percent of students will be offered at least five AP classes by the fall of 2018 and all high schools will have that many by 2021.

Officials did not say which AP courses would be made more widely available. A recent report from the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School found that nearly four in 10 city high schools do not offer advanced math and science classes. The reasons include the proliferation of small high schools, which have less scheduling flexibility, and that many high school students are unprepared for the material — two challenges the de Blasio administration is likely to face as it expands access to AP courses.
Algebra instruction: The city will expand middle-school algebra classes to ensure students take the class by ninth grade. More than 40 percent of middle schools currently don’t offer algebra in eighth grade, according to the city.

Some new algebra classes will be added next fall, and all students will have access to algebra in eighth grade by 2021.

Computer science: All students will receive some computer science education in elementary, middle and high school in the next 10 years. The number of students receiving computer science training will be “expanded significantly” starting in the fall of 2016, and the program will have expanded to all grades in 2025. The program is expected to cost $81 million and will be the nation’s largest effort to increase computer science in classrooms, de Blasio said.

It expands on a series of smaller efforts to boost computer science in schools that the city has made over the last few years, including the launch of a teacher training plan, opening software engineering-focused high schools, and adding Advanced Placement computer science courses to high schools.

Reading instruction: Elementary schools will have access to expert reading specialists, who will focus on helping all students read on grade level by second grade. That’s a goal Chancellor Farina has been talking about since the start of last school year.

De Blasio said his goal is for two-thirds of students to be able to read with fluency by the end of second grade within six years, and for the city to achieve 100 percent literacy in second grade by 2026. That will require significant improvements: Less than one-third of New York City’s third-graders earned a proficient score on last year’s state tests.

Approximately 700 reading specialists will be placed in elementary schools by 2018 and schools that need the “most support” will begin hiring specialists this spring.

District-charter school cooperation: De Blasio said the city would create and fund at least 25 partnerships between district and charter schools to share ideas for teaching math and reaching English language learners. The initiative will be based on Chancellor Carmen Farina’s “Learning Partners” program and cost $5 million a year by 2017.

Correction: An earlier version of this story referred to a different college readiness measure.
'She was a good mother,' says mom of New Dorp woman found dead in hotel

Mira Wassef | mwassef@siadvance.com By Mira Wassef | mwassef@siadvance.com
Email the author | Follow on Twitter
on September 16, 2015 at 7:11 PM, updated September 17, 2015 at 7:06 AM

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — "When's mommy coming back home?" asks the youngest child of a New Dorp woman found dead in a Brooklyn hotel over the summer.

"They miss their mother," the victim's mom told the Advance Wednesday. "She was extremely close with her kids."

Police found Chrissy Bevelaqua, 34, inside the Bushwick Hotel in Brooklyn on July 23 at 4:32 p.m., according to the NYPD's Deputy Commissioner of Public Information.

She was found naked with bruising around her neck, which indicates she was possibly strangled, the New York Times reported.

Her cause of death is still under investigation, according to a spokeswoman for the Medical Examiner's office.

"I like to watch mysteries, but I feel like I'm living a mystery and it's my daughter," the mom said. "I just want it to be over."

Bevelaqua was said to be a devoted mother of four, ages 6, 8, 15 and 17, and coached her kids' softball and soccer teams.

She grew up in Brooklyn and moved to Staten Island about nine years ago.

She earned her associates degree from Kingsborough Community College and earned a scholarship to John Jay. She was six months shy of completing her criminal law degree, her mother said.

Bevelaqua worked as a part-time photographer and at Applebee's while she was in school, and had small business at the Staten Island Mall.

"She was a good mother," her mom said. "She loved doing sports with her kids."

Bevelaqua did, however, have legal battles, but was trying to straighten out her life.
Deng’s attack more brutal: Poconos police

By Sadek Ali Kally
TimesLedger Newspapers

After homicide and other related charges were brought Monday against 37 members of an Asian fraternity at Baruch College, police contends the students were particularly brutal to Michael Deng, a 19-year-old freshman from Oakland Gardens, who died in the Poconos after a night of hazing in 2013.

According to the Pocono Mountain Regional Police, the hazing ritual called “glass ceiling” required blindfolded Pi Delta Psi pledges to carry a 30-pound backpack in the snow while being beaten by members in a line. Police Chief Chris Wagner said during a Tuesday press conference in Monroe, Pa., “It was reported that he was tackled harder than any of the other pledges.” Members told police that Deng had complained of breathing problems before he became unconscious, police said. Authorities said his fraternity members delayed 90 minutes before seeking medical help.

Five former Pi Delta Psi fraternity brothers were charged with murder and the 32 others with related charges in the Dec. 9, 2013 death, police said. The department said it planned to arrest suspects starting with the ones facing the most minor charges and then the group accused of the most culpable crimes.

Five of the former members—Charles Lai, Kenny Kwan, Raymond Lam, Daniel Li and Sheldon Wong—were charged with homicide, involuntary manslaughter and criminal conspiracy-related charges, according to police.

Another five were charged with aggravated assault, simple assault, hindering apprehension, hazing and criminal conspiracy, police said. The Monroe County grand jury also indicted 27 others on charges from aggravated assault to criminal conspiracy.

Among the 27 was Andy Meng, younger brother of U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-Flushing) and head of the fraternity. Meng faces lesser felony charges of hindering apprehension, hazing and criminal conspiracy, police said.

Andy Meng allegedly was called by the frightened fraternity brothers after Deng lost consciousness during the ritual and told them to hide items with the Pi Delta Psi name, remove hazing-related evidence and change Deng’s clothing, officials said.

Similar stories

OAKLAND GARDENS: Judge gives Deng family OK to file claim against CUNY in 2013 hazing death
OAKLAND GARDENS: Dad says the hazing is still happening
OAKLAND GARDENS: Frat pledge dies in hazing; DA says no charges
OAKLAND GARDENS: Oakland Garden frat pledge’s death ruled a homicide
BAYSIDE: Former hoops star concentrates on coaching

According to police, Dr. Wayne Ross, a forensic pathologist, conducted a detailed analysis of Deng’s injuries, which coincided
with police allegations.

Ross's analysis showed "significant and severe" injuries to the head, a massive bruise on the back due to repeated blunt force trauma, which resulted in traumatic asphyxia, and bruising to the thighs due to restraint or blunt force impact.

Ross pointed out Deng could have survived if medical help had not been delayed.

The Deng family issued a statement through their attorney, Douglas Fioretti, who has also filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the fraternity and CUNY's Baruch College. "The parents of Michael Deng applauded the actions by the police, grand jury and Monroe County District Attorney's office to bring criminal charges against the Pi Delta Psi Fraternity and its members for the tragic, entirely preventable hazing death of Michael."

Baruch College President Dr. Mitchel Wallerstein also responded to the allegations, "We owe it to Michael and his family to hold accountable those who were responsible for the senseless death."

The college permanently banned the Pi Delta Psi chapter after the incident.

Wallerstein said less than 100 students participate in fraternities or sororities out of approximately 15,000 undergraduates enrolled at the commuter college, which is based in Manhattan.

In a statement U.S. Rep. Grace Meng said, "our deepest condolences and prayers continue to go out to [the Deng] family and friends."

She also said that she would support her brother through the legal process.

Reach Reporter Sadef Ali Kally by e-mail at skally@ne洛杉i.com or by phone at (718) 260-456/6.

©2015 Community News Group
5 Baruch Frat Members Could Face Murder Charges in Hazing Death

THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 07:41  BY HANNAH HAYES

Police announced on Monday, September 14, that a grand jury has recommended 37 members of a New York City college fraternity be charged in connection to the death of a freshman who was killed during a hazing ritual.

Prosecutors said Tuesday, that five members face charges of third-degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault, while others face lesser charges that could include hindering apprehension, hazing and criminal conspiracy.

In December of 2013, the victim, Michael Deng, went on a weekend retreat to Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains with the Baruch College chapter of Pi Delta Psi, and never returned home. He along with other pledges were blindfolded and told to carry a backpack filled with sand across a snow-covered field while fraternity brothers pushed and tackled them.

In a statement Monday, police said, "The ritual was brutal. Deng was subjected to repeated blunt force trauma which was applied to three different organ systems of the body to include the head, torso and thighs."

In a news conference on Tuesday, Chief Chris Wagner, of the Pocono Mountain Regional Police said, "The overall investigation shows that, yes, he was singled out and he was treated harsher than the other pledges."

The fraternity members put off taking Deng to the hospital after he fell unconscious from a head injury. The members instead called Andy Meng, the fraternity's national president, who allegedly instructed them to hide all Pi Delta Psi regalia.

According to police, the conclusion of the medical examiner was that the delay in treatment "significantly contributed" to Deng's death.

A lawyer for Meng, who faces the less serious counts, said his client was not even in Pennsylvania at the time of the hazing and "had no role in his medical treatment and did not impede or obstruct the investigation into his death."

An attorney representing Danny Chen, who faces the same charges as Meng, said charging all the frat members who were present is "not justified nor provable." The lawyer Hugh Mo said, "It is regrettable that the DA and the Grand Jury made no distinction as to the individual culpability of each of the young man who was present. I believe a number of the defendants would be acquitted by a jury. The tragic death of Michael should not be used to ruin the life of so many young Asian American college students, the bulk of them fully cooperated with the DA and testified before the grand jury."

The Deng family said they would be taking additional action against those involved in Deng's death, through a statement released by their lawyer Douglas Fierberg.

Deng's parent said, "Fraternities and their members must be held accountable. ... Michael was a wonderful, beloved young man and in his honor, the family also continue pursuing its wrongful death case against the fraternity to cause it and other fraternities to change so that other parents will be spared the loss of a precious child."

Following Deng's death, Baruch College disbanded their chapter of Pi Delta Psi.
De Blasio’s Plan to Lift Poor Schools Comes With High Costs and Big Political Risks

By KATE TAYLOR  SEPT. 16, 2015

There was $75 million a year for second-grade reading specialists. Advanced Placement classes got $51 million. Every eighth grader can take algebra thanks to $19 million. And $15 million was proposed to provide more than 16,000 students with dedicated counselors from sixth through 12th grade.

On Wednesday, Mayor Bill de Blasio made his biggest commitment yet to his education philosophy. He announced a half-dozen programs that focus on New York City’s poorest students, in a speech that framed the proposals as a way to address income inequality, a touchstone issue of his administration.

The cost of Mr. de Blasio’s programs is high, and the political risks are great. Republicans in the State Legislature are already skeptical of the mayor’s approach to education, and the results of his new programs will not be known for years. In June, the Legislature extended the mayor’s control of schools by only one year, meaning that he has to go back to Albany next year.
to request an extension. (The Legislature had given former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg control for seven years, then a renewal for six.)

In his speech, Mr. de Blasio argued that this investment in the city's struggling schools was a moral imperative.

"There is a tale of two cities in our schools, and we simply don't accept it," he said, reprising the theme of his campaign. "Each and every child, in each and every classroom, deserves a future that isn't limited by their ZIP code."

But many questions remain about how these programs will work and what the impact will be on the school system.

The city is already redirecting $113.5 million a year in existing education funding to its previously announced effort to add social services and improve results at the city's 94 lowest-performing schools, according to the city's Independent Budget Office.

City Hall said that the funding for the $186 million commitment laid out on Wednesday, which also includes computer science instruction in every school, will come from new revenues that they are anticipating based on financial projections.

But if the economy slowed down, the city would have to choose between backing off these programs or making cuts elsewhere. Mr. de Blasio could risk turning off voters if parents saw class sizes grow or extracurricular activities shrink further.

Leonie Haimson, the executive director of Class Size Matters, an organization that advocates smaller classes, was disappointed with the mayor's speech.

"Where is the research that shows that these initiatives would narrow the achievement gap, as class size reduction has been proven to do?" she
said. "De Blasio made many promises during his campaign to parents and other voters to lower class size that he now appears to have forgotten completely."

David C. Bloomfield, a professor of education leadership at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center, called Mr. de Blasio's speech "a feel-good parade of accomplishments and helpful initiatives" that was meant to bolster his chances for renewal of mayoral control of schools and re-election.

He said it was striking that, in a speech titled "Equity and Excellence," there was no mention of the high degree of racial segregation in New York City schools and ways to combat it.

Mr. de Blasio did try to inoculate himself against critics who adhere to Mr. Bloomberg's education approach. In contrast with the Bloomberg administration, the current mayor opposes closing schools that perform poorly, except as a last resort. While Mr. Bloomberg was on a constant, and largely unsuccessful, mission to fire teachers he considered subpar, Mr. de Blasio has had a more amicable relationship with the city teachers' union.

But he said on Wednesday that his administration had "helped 660 educators find their way out of the New York City school system," from April 2014 to April 2015. Asked to elaborate, the Department of Education said that the number included teachers who had been fired or denied tenure, and who resigned while facing disciplinary action.

"This shows we are willing and able to make the change that's necessary," Mr. de Blasio said. "Where it's needed, we will replace school leadership or staff to transform a school if they cannot improve with our tailored and targeted support."

Mr. de Blasio, who has clashed with charter school supporters, also announced a $5-million-a-year program under which district and charter schools can share practices.
One prominent pro-charter group, Families for Excellent Schools, was not satisfied, arguing that Mr. de Blasio’s aversion to more charter schools was cutting off an avenue of opportunity for poor families.

“At the current rate, all New York City students won’t be able to read at grade level until 2051,” the group’s chief executive, Jeremiah Kittredge, said in a statement. “The incremental change proposed today won’t fix New York City’s education inequality.”

Mr. de Blasio set a number of long-term goals during the speech, including increasing the four-year high school graduation rate to 80 percent from 68 percent by 2026 (by which point he will have been out of office for at least four years).

Some of the goals he set on Wednesday may be even more ambitious.

“Excellence and achievement cannot, should not and will not discriminate in New York City,” he said, adding that “we have to make sure success is as common in East New York as it is on the Upper East Side.”

A version of this article appears in print on September 17, 2015, on page A29 of the New York edition with the headline: High Costs and Big Political Risks in Mayor’s Plan to Lift Struggling Schools.