

ENVOY

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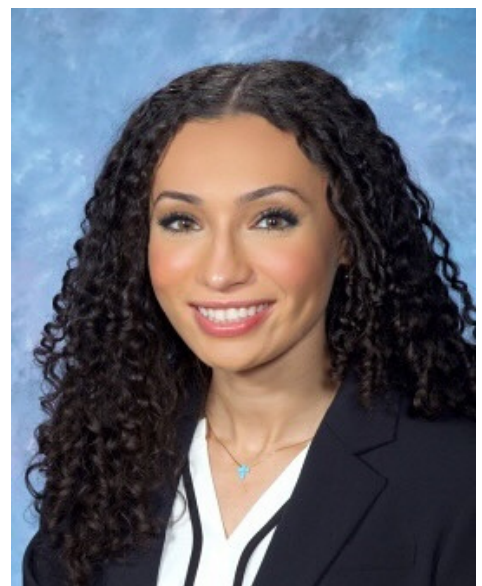
THHS UPDATES

- Junior College Night is returning in-person! This event is on Tuesday, June 6th, from 5:30pm to 8:00pm at Townsend Harris. If you are interested in speaking about your college experience, please send an email to EVENTS@THAA.ORG with
 - your name
 - year of THHS graduation or THHS affiliation
 - college/university
 - year of college/university graduation and degree(s)
 - college major/minor
- NYC Schools Chancellor David Banks visited Townsend Harris on May 1. He observed a series of classes in English and Math. He visited freshman English with Ms. Frank and Ms. Lipinski, calculus with Mr. Choudhury and Ms. Gill, and the Queens College Humanities Seminar with Mr. Dunbar, Mr. McDonough, and Mr. Sweeney. Afterwards he met with a group that included the Townsend Harris administration, Superintendent Tu and Assemblywoman Nily Rozic.
- THHS choir members performed at the opening Chancellor/DOE's celebration of AAPI Heritage Month on May 16.
- The 9th Annual Humanities Symposium took place on May 24th. This year marks the first time that other schools both visited the Symposium and presented their own original research on literary topics. The theme for this year's Symposium was "Eat The Rich".
- On May 11, NY1 reported on Aspire Outreach, a new program founded and run by high schoolers from THHS, Bronx Science, and Brooklyn Tech (and hosted by THHS). Through this program, high school students help middle schoolers decide what high school is the best fit and help them ease their transition into a new building environment.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: MARINA AWEEDA

Tell me a bit about yourself.

My name is Marina Aweeda. My family is originally from Egypt, but I grew up in Queens, NY in a bilingual household. I learned Arabic first, and then started learning English when I attended pre-school. I loved growing up in an Egyptian-American household. As a kid I grew up feeling so close to my culture; I've got to enjoy my favorite aspects of my culture like the food, music, and church community while also integrating into American culture in school and getting involved in sports and musical theater. Currently, I'm studying to become a physician and my end goal is to become a head and neck surgeon.



Marina Aweeda
THHS Class of '17

How did you end up at Townsend Harris?

In middle school—I went to M.S.67 in Little Neck—I was interested in exploring NYC's specialized high schools because I knew I wanted to attend an academically rigorous school that would push me to the next level. Naturally, I was introduced to THHS and it was the obvious choice! Some of my closest classmates were also attending, alongside me, so it felt like an exciting next step.

What is the greatest lesson you learned during your time at Townsend Harris?

The greatest lesson I learned at Townsend Harris is that challenges and obstacles are placed in our path to be overcome. Each and every day I was challenged in a new way, whether it be academically or on a sports field, and that was a truly uncomfortable process. I learned how to grow in the discomfort and to stop waiting for it to get comfortable. I learned how to enjoy the process of growth and to appreciate the fact that the more I challenged myself, the more I could accomplish. It completely changed the way I approach difficult situations and prepared me for my next steps.

Is there any teacher that you can remember that influenced you during your time at the school?

Ms. Shen was my freshman year biology teacher and senior year AP biology teacher. She saw the love I had for science and nurtured it in every way she could. She pushed me to ask intellectual questions and foster a curiosity towards learning that went far beyond the pages of a textbook or an exam. When I expressed my initial interest in human anatomy and medicine, she encouraged me to explore and would send me articles she thought I would find interesting. During AP Biology, she joked with me that I would be a surgeon one day because of how much I enjoyed cadaveric dissection and the beauty of the anatomy. Little did we both know that the budding young scientist she encouraged would eventually actually become a surgeon!

Where has life taken you since you graduated? What are you up to now?

After I graduated I decided to attend a 7 year combined BS/MD program and pursue a career in medicine. I am currently finished with 6 out of 7 years, graduated with an undergraduate degree in biomedical sciences, and will graduate with an MD in 2025. During the process I've found my passion for surgery and have decided that I will be applying to become a head and neck surgeon/ENT doctor. In the upcoming year, I will be completing a head and neck cancer research fellowship at Vanderbilt University and exploring three-dimensional reconstruction of head and neck cancers. I'm incredibly excited to become a surgeon!

What do you miss most about Townsend Harris?

I miss the community. My days at Townsend were filled with basketball practices, SING! rehearsals, FON performances, school theater productions, Latin League, and so much more. I loved being a part of each and every one of these niche communities and getting to explore so many different interests. As cliché as it sounds, THHS really did have such a family-feel and I grew close to so many people who are now my lifelong friends. I really miss looking forward to the end of the school day so I could spend time with my friends in any number of activities.

What advice would you give to current students?

Explore every single thing that interests or intrigues you throughout high school. It can feel like a race to do the "right things" or have the "correct hobbies" to be the perfect college applicant, but the best thing you can do for yourself is explore different hobbies and interests. High school is one of the busiest but also one of the most free times in your

life to experiment and try new things. You never know what hobbies you'll fall in love with and how much they'll follow you throughout the rest of your life.

How does the sentiment of the Ephebic Oath tie into your work today?

Since graduating, a lot of my medical training has been with under-served, vulnerable populations. At times it can feel difficult to appreciate if you're making meaningful change in your community, but I try to live by the idea of leaving my city or community greater than when I found it. That bit feels like a lot less pressure than implementing big changes every day or trying to change the world in one go. If I can walk away each day from the hospital knowing that I had some sort of positive effect, no matter how small, then it was a successful day.

What's a recent accomplishment that you're proud of?

I recently got accepted into a highly competitive research fellowship at Vanderbilt University. This was honestly something beyond my wildest dreams and it's incredibly meaningful to me because it came at a pivotal point in my medical school career. Having an opportunity like this to be a part of clinical trials and to be in the operating room during head and neck cancer operations is something I've dreamed about for years, so it feels really great to know that's now within reach.

How can alumni connect with you?

Other alumni can connect with me on LinkedIn. Just search for Marina Aweeda.



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