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The Catholic Advocate



Vol. 67 No. 1

The community newspaper of the Archdiocese of Newark

January 24, 2018

Hip-hop and 'Hamilton': Students get schooled on history

By Kelly Marsicano
Associate Publisher

Students from two archdiocesan high schools didn't throw away their shot to learn more about U.S. history and possibly perform on Broadway.

Immaculate Conception High School in Montclair and St. Mary of the Assumption High School in Elizabeth recently took part in the Hamilton Education Program. The program is a partnership between the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; the creators of the award-winning Broadway show "Hamilton"; and the Rockefeller Foundation. Participating schools engage in a two-week curriculum about the founding era of Alexander Hamilton, read and analyze primary source documents and learn how

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Ayanna Mallory (left) and Lenaye Lang on stage at the Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York rapping about the Boston Massacre. Photo courtesy of the Gilder Lehrman Institute

Former superintendent trades in retirement to head Catholic school



Dr. Thomas Altonjy

By Melissa McNally
Editor

"I always joke that I had a 12-hour retirement," said Dr. Thomas Altonjy, principal at Academy of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Franklin Lakes. After 40 years in public school education, through "divine intervention," he decided to come out of retirement and accept the position at the Catholic grammar school three years ago.

"The experience that had the most personal impact on me was

attending Saint Gerard School in Paterson. I always had the idea that maybe I would return to Catholic school education," he explained.

Altonjy began his career as a high school math teacher in Wayne and Montville. He advanced to administrative positions in Montville, including District Supervisor of Mathematics, after earning a master's in education/human service leadership at The College of Saint Elizabeth in Convent Station.

After more than two decades in Montville, he became assistant superintendent for the Cedar Grove school district and earned a doctor-

ate degree in education during his tenure. He then became superintendent of schools for the Warren Hills Regional school district in Washington, and retired from public education on June 30, 2015. The very next day, he became principal at Academy of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Being an administrator at Blessed Sacrament is a far cry from his previous career in public education, Altonjy explained. As a middle school superintendent, he was in charge of 2,000 students with a staff of 350. At the academy, he leads 150 students.

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