



## **NJDOE News**

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### **State Board of Education Recognizes May Students of the Month**

The New Jersey State Board of Education today recognized Gisell Grullon, Lorraine Correa, and Cynthia Fernandez as the students of the month for May 2003.

The three Memorial High School seniors in West New York, Hudson County, are all outstanding students in their own rights and represent and symbolize the diverse membership of Memorial High School and its Peer Leadership Program, according to school officials.

The State Board honored Gisell, Lorraine and Cynthia at its regular monthly meeting today in Trenton as part of its ongoing monthly program that recognizes a student or group of students for accomplishments in community service, the arts, academics and sports.

"The State Board of Education is proud to recognize these fine young women as wonderful student leaders and role models," Board President Maud Dahme said. "We are quite confident that they will make their marks on this world in nothing but positive ways."

"The state Department of Education is proud to join the State Board in honoring these impressive students," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "We are certainly impressed with the dedication all three have exhibited with their Peer Leadership Program."

The three students create a more peaceful high school environment in their capacity as Peer Mediators, school officials said, and commitment, dedication and compassion everyday.

"It is for their selfless efforts in this program and their ability to maintain academic excellence that they are being recognized by the school administration," said Robert Osak, the Hudson County Superintendent.

Gisell Grullon has been a four-year member of the Peer Leadership Program and has served as a peer mediator. During that time, she has brilliantly demonstrated her outstanding leadership abilities in her school community. Gisell has performed more than thirty successful mediations during her high school career.

Gisell's efforts to be more socially responsible in her community extend well beyond the perimeters of this program. As president of the National Honor Society and a Senior Class Officer, her presence and commitment is a continual reassurance to her classmates that they are being heard through her voice.

Gisell will attend Rutgers University in New Brunswick and plans on majoring in either law or psychology.

Lorraine Correa has also been a four-year member of the program, performing in the same capacity as a Peer Mediator. This year, she has been requested to perform the majority of the mediations. Her extraordinary conflict resolution and mediation skills serve her well, but add to her daily responsibilities.

In her junior year, Lorraine served as editor of Memorial's school newspaper "The Memo." Further inspired by attending the Hugh N. Boyd Minorities Journalism Workshop this past summer, she has quietly put together the school's "Peer Newsletter."

Lorraine has been accepted by several colleges and has narrowed her search down to two; Pace University or Florida International University. She plans on majoring in Journalism and communications.

Cynthia Fernandez, also a member of the National Honor Society and a Senior Class Officer, has served as a seven-year member of the Peer Program. Including elementary school, she has been a participant in every level of this program's existence. Her compassion, non-judgmental awareness, and above all, her empathetic understanding distinguish her as a most effective mediator.

Cynthia's ability to listen, feel, coordinate, and multi-task seamlessly propel her into a leadership role. Cynthia, as well as Gisell, participated in "Camp Anytown" this past summer. A culturally and ethnically diverse, leadership based program, Anytown exposes biased and prejudiced behavior through sharing and self-awareness.

Cynthia will be attending Montclair State University this fall and hopes to become a teacher of mathematics.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (973) 282-1126.