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## BASE produces Posse Foundation scholarship winners

The big news is not just that every year students are graduating from Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE) with college scholarships. What's drawing attention to the six-year-old public high school in Prospect Heights is the kind and quality of scholarships BASE students are garnering.

This year BASE seniors Peter Warren and Ersane John have both received four-year, full-tuition scholarships from the Posse Foundation. The two BASE students were among 419 new Posse Scholars selected from more than 9,000 nominees nationwide. The Posse Foundation brings together talented students of diverse backgrounds into small groups called "posses" whose members will attend the same colleges and serve as mentors to help each other make the

most of their college experience.

As part of their scholarships, Peter and Ersane are already meeting weekly with other New York Posse Scholars and education mentors to sharpen the academic skills they will need for college. Peter will be going to Brandeis University and Ersane to DePauw University; the guidance and encouragement of Posse Scholars already at these schools awaits them.

A supportive and personally-attentive educational environment is something Peter and Ersane are very familiar with from their high school years at BASE. The school of nearly 500 students emphasizes close collaboration between students, staff, parents, and its founding community partners, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) and the Prospect Park Al-



From left, Ersane John, Juanita Fraser, Peter Warren, and Mervyn Roach.

liance (PPA), in order to create an optimum learning environment that ignites a life-long passion for learning.

BASE offers one of the strongest science and environmental study experiences available to NYC students. For field research BASE students have access to BBG's gardens, conservatory, herbarium, and library, as

well as the opportunity to work with scientists in the Garden's DNA-sequencing laboratory.

At Prospect Park, BASE students conduct field studies in the Park's natural areas with the guidance of educators from the Prospect Park Audubon Center and field scientists from the Park's Natural Resources Crew.

Ersane traces his in-



Peter Warren and Ersane John (L-R).

terest in studying environmental geosciences at DePauw to a week-long trip he and fellow BASE students took to the Florida Everglades. "We used GPS to track wildlife and the GIS to map our findings," says the technically savvy scholarship winner, who will be the first person in his immediate family to attend college. "We also researched man-

grove trees, and saw plenty of alligators."

Peter joined other BASE students in a program that introduced them to the study of medicine at the Cornell Medical School. "I first learned about the whole process of doing research — how to question things and conduct experiments — from our field work at Prospect

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# Scholars

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Park and BBG," explains Peter, who is also the first person in his immediate family to attend college. "Even now, I'm thinking ahead to graduate school and to receiving a medical degree."

BASE guidance counselors Juanita Fraser and Mervyn Roach stress that having good grades is just one part of what it takes for students today to be in the running for coveted scholarships. "A foundation like Posse is looking for students who are well-rounded," Roach says. "At BASE we help students become critical thinkers, active learners, and engaged citizens. The result is that they work well in a team setting and exhibit leadership qualities."

Fraser and Roach also laud the hands-on learning experience provided to BASE students at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park as the perfect opportunity for their students to develop important academic and

social skills. Internships and study opportunities made available by other partners including the Nature Conservancy, the NYCLU Teen Health Initiative, and the Wildlife Conservation Society also enrich BASE students' academic and real-world experiences.

For Ersane, plugging into all the activities that BASE offers came naturally. "I enjoy keeping myself busy," says the gregarious young man. "BASE is like a big family and I was able to meet and interact with people easily and to really develop my leadership skills."

Peter, on the other hand, admits that he is normally shy. "Because BASE is a small school, my teachers got to know me and helped me learn how to present myself with confidence. It's been great for me and I've really grown — both academically and personally."

Both BASE scholarship students commented on the impact the scholarship award has had on their families and on the entire BASE student body. "My mother always

told me that education is the key to open all doors," says Ersane. And Peter relates how his mother called everyone she ever knew — including his kindergarten teacher in Pennsylvania.

Since the scholarship news was announced, Peter and Ersane have become new role models at the school. Inspired by their example, there has been a rush of Junior class students coming to guidance counselors Fraser and Roach seeking scholarship applications.

The two new Posse scholars are just the latest BASE students to set the bar high for their classmates. Last year, BASE senior Richaela Primus was one of 1,000 students honored with a Gates Millennium Scholarship. The coveted Gates scholarship pays for a student's college and postgraduate tuition. Richaela was chosen from a national candidate pool of more than 13,000 high school students from ninth to 12th grade, and is now a freshman at Wells College, a liberal arts school in Aurora, New York.