



Public Schools of Plainfield New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement

Gloria Montealegre
1200 Myrtle Avenue
Plainfield, NJ 07063
(908) 731-4333 Fax: (908) 731-4336

Plainfield Marching Band to Attend Morgan State University's Homecoming and Band Competition in Baltimore, MD

*Sixty Members will participate including the band's youngest member
Josiah Harris, 8, who plays in the Percussion Section.*

Plainfield, NJ – October 5, 2018 - Over sixty members of the Plainfield High School Marching Band will attend Morgan State University's Homecoming this weekend. The students will march in the celebratory parade prior to the game, Morgan State Bears vs. The Hampton Pirates, where they will compete with over a dozen bands from across the United States.

Gregory O. Williams, Director of Bands, said this is the 15th year the band has been invited to attend homecoming. He said the connection to Morgan State goes back to 2003 when Jody Ann, PHS' Band Drum Major, was the first PHS student to attend Morgan State on a music scholarship, helping to establish the connection ever since.

Williams said the band directors at Morgan State take time to speak to Plainfield students about campus life, scholarship opportunities and auditions. As a result, more of our students are attending Morgan State University on scholarships. He said, currently we have four students attending Morgan State University on Marching Band scholarships, they are: Xavier Page, Sousaphone Section, (PHS 2015); Brian Smith, Sousaphone Section, (PHS 2017); Justyn Wilson, Percussion Section, (PAAAS 2018); and Jeremy Parfait, Percussion Section, (PHS 2018).

Williams said having a viable music program in our Plainfield Public Schools is beneficial to our students who are matriculating and graduating from institutions of higher learning all around the country, from schools such as Rutgers, Lincoln University, Morris Brown University, Delaware State University, Montclair State University, Spelman College, Mannes School of Music, Howard University, and other institutions.

The entire Plainfield Marching Band will take the one-day trip to Maryland including, The Exquisite Gem Dancers, the Trumpet section, Melophone Section, Saxophone Section, Trombone Section, Sousaphone Section and the Award- Wining Percussion Section with

Josiah Harris, 8, who at the age of 6 was part of the group that won Second Place in the competition of 2016. The band will compete with a rendition of “Optimistic” by the Sounds of Blackness, with an arrangement by Mr. Williams, a dance performance by the Exquisite Gem Dancers, followed by the Spirit Song, “Let’s Go Cardinals!”

As to Josiah Harris’s participation, Williams said, “Josiah is a phenomenon. Not just because of talent, but he works diligently on his own time to be the best he can be. Most of his other colleagues are between the ages of 11 and 18. I can’t wait to see what he will become as a high school student.”

Williams said his greatest satisfaction when he visits Morgan State University and sees his students in the marching band, is knowing that these students, who came into his program in the 8th, 9th grade and high school, at varying levels of skill, were developed by himself and the staff diligently. And they have gone on to secure opportunities to play in bands at universities across the United States, graduate and come back to let him know they continue to succeed in their adult lives.

“That’s my reward,” he said.

“After we have diligently worked hard to develop their skills, and then the students go on to graduate and secure opportunities to play with a university band and receive scholarship money to assist their parents in financing their education, that’s the best!”

For more information, please call 908-731-4333 or email gmontealegre@plainfield.k12.nj.us.

###