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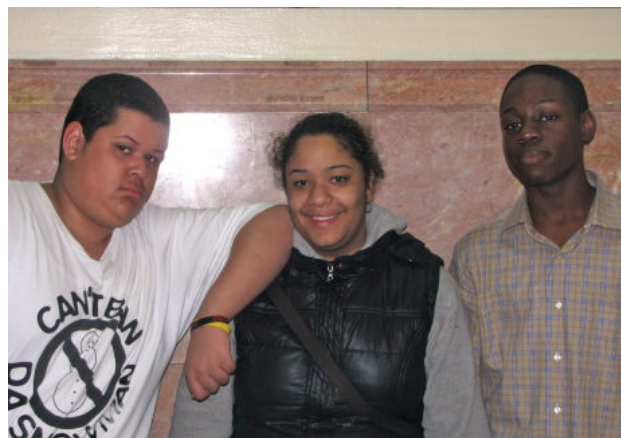**Home**   News   **Boards**   **Events**   **Businesses**

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ACORN Community High School Competes in State Debate Tournament

ACORN debate team faced off against some of the best debaters in the state this weekend

Posted by McCarton Ackerman, April 23, 2011 at 11:44 am

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- - 1   The powerhouse debate team at ACORN Community High School joined dozens of other high schools across the state in the first ever New York State Debate Coaches Association (NYSDCA) tournament at Brooklyn Tech this weekend.

ACORN's team qualified to participate by finishing within the top 15 percent of at least one previous tournament this year.

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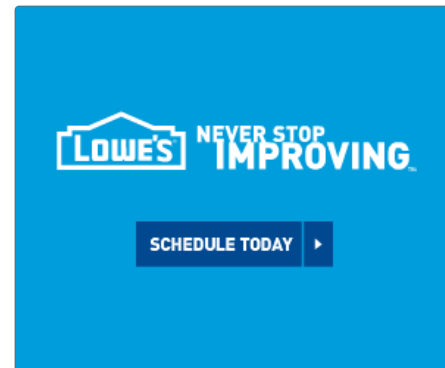
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Announcements July 3, 2013 at 02:18 pm

Amy Sara Clark (Editor)

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"Coming into this weekend, we had won a couple of debates against schools so handily that our opponents were crying afterwards," said junior Jessica Cotto, one of the 20 students competing from ACORN's debate team.

Over 35 teams from across the state participated in NYSDCA's inaugural tournament, although most were from New York City and Westchester.

Members of ACORN's debate team had been practicing at least once a week and kept in constant contact by e-mail leading up to the tournament, as they came up with different strategies for debate over whether the US should withdraw troops from all foreign countries.

Coach Lee Sharmat says the topic has been the same for all state debate tournaments this year, which demands that the students continually add depth to their arguments as the year progresses.

"They've learned a vast amount of material in just a few months," said Sharmat. "They started out with an on-case affirmative position, but have learned how to handle both sides of the argument and even sidestep questions when necessary."

Sharmat says the teams are broken up into individual pairs for the debates, making it critical to provide the right balance of knowledge on both sides and also provide a balance in personalities.

"In rounds, my partner might see something that I didn't see, but I can help him because I pick up on things faster than he does," said Freshman Tyler Anderson. "I'm stronger than him with questions in cross examination, but he still uses the cross examination as ammunition to power his speech."

The event featured competition in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Policy Debate, Public Forum Debate, and a one-day event in Congressional Debate.

"Our organization is only a year old, so we're still growing and attracting members," said Jon Cruz, President of the NYSDCA and Director of Forensics at Bronx High School of Science. "As our tournament grows, so will the fields."

The New York State Forensics League has long run statewide tournaments that included both debate and speech, but last year the NYSDCA formed and began tournaments that focused solely on debate, according to Ben Honoroff, ACORN's Assistant Principal of Humanities. Since Honoroff began the school's debate team in 1999, the school has gone to statewide forensics tournaments, and in 2004 ACORN tied for 4th place with Stuyvesant High School.

This year, ACORN failed to make it past the initial round of competition in each event. But despite the loss, students said they learned a lot for the experience, with benefits that extend well beyond the classroom.

"I've learned not to be as narrow when thinking about current events or even situations with friends, and consider all the different viewpoints," said senior Jorman Antigua. "Debate is really helpful in terms of affirming your views on how you see yourself and the world around you.

Of course, there are also some other perks that come with learning how to argue effectively.

"I've been able to convince my parents to let me stay out later and spend more time with my friends," said Cotto. "That's definitely been a plus."
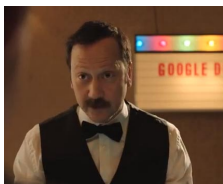
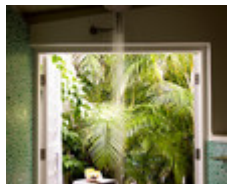3 Comment   Recommend   Like 0   Tweet 0

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Amy Sara Clark (Editor) April 20, 2011 at 03:11 pm
Hi Tyler, The reporter is going to contact you to straighten it out and figure out the necessary changes. Thanks for letting us know.
Best, Amy Editor, Prospect Heights Patch
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Amy Sara Clark (Editor) April 23, 2011 at 03:46 pm
Readers: Tyler's quote has been corrected.
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rayrayham

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Zach Crane

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July 7, 2013, 3:00 PM | 7 | Brooklyn Draw Jam
July 7, 2013, 4:00 PM |

| 7 | Indian + Le Chat Mort + DecaDence @ The Way S…
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Announcements June 28, 2013 at 03:33 pm

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