



New York Mets 1969 World Series Champion and former DJJ employee Ed Charles delivers commencement address at the Summit School.

Legendary World Champion New York Mets Baseball Player Ed Charles Gives Keynote Address at Promotional Ceremonies at Summit School

On Thursday, June 19th, the NYC Department of Education held promotional ceremonies for Non-Secure/SEEDS students enrolled in the Passages Academy Summit School facility of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice. Students were dressed in traditional purple caps and gowns at formal ceremonies where legendary World Champion New York Mets baseball player Ed Charles gave the keynote address. A post-graduation cake and refreshment reception for friends and family was also held.

Parents and grandparents of students participating in the ceremony were invited to attend and family turnout and support was overwhelming. In all, 11 students were recognized for their academic accomplishments and promoted to advance from the 8th grade to high school.

Keynote speaker World Champion New York Mets baseball player Ed Charles addressed the students by speaking about how he learned how to be successful by overcoming obstacles when he was a youth. After a 30-year career in baseball, Ed Charles joined the staff of DJJ and DOE's Non-Secure school facility, and his appearance completed his personal circle of giving back to the youth he cares so much about. Mr. Charles said to the students and guests, "No matter how big your dream is – if you want to achieve something badly enough, you can do it. But it starts with respect. And respect begins with yourself."

The promotional ceremonies were momentous experiences for the students as well as their families. Passages Academy Principal Sydney Blair said, "'We are very proud of the achievements of our students and the program we have with the Department of Juvenile Justice. We look forward to many more years of student success. We celebrate their particularly important achievement and share their parent's joy on this occasion."

Passages Academy provides education and academic services to juveniles in the care and custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice. The NYC Department of Education operates the schools under the supervision of Principal Sydney Blair.

