

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



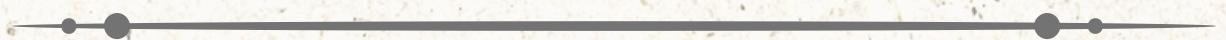
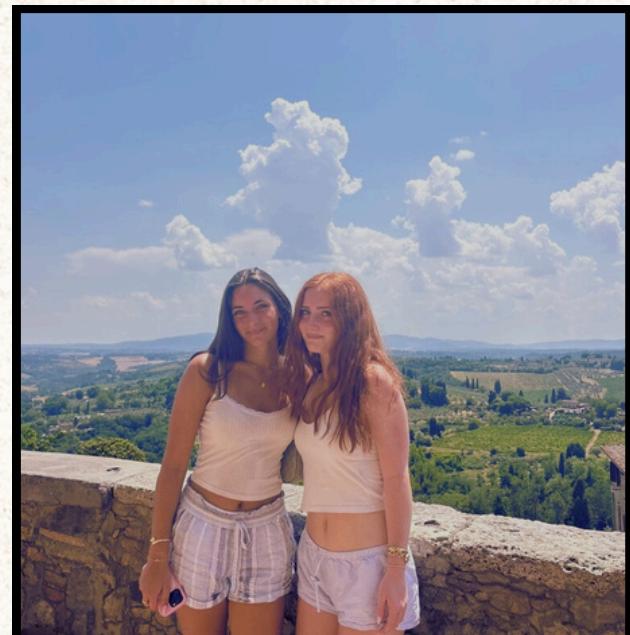
*Happy Holidays!*

*a year full of memories*

This month, the employees at FLY NY took a moment to reflect on 2025 as the year comes to a close. Between school, college applications, work, and everyday stress, it's easy to overlook how significant this year has been as seniors. Looking back, we shared some of our favorite highlights from the past year. As we head into winter break, we're excited to rest, reset, and enjoy the holidays, so we can return in the new year refreshed and ready for what's ahead.

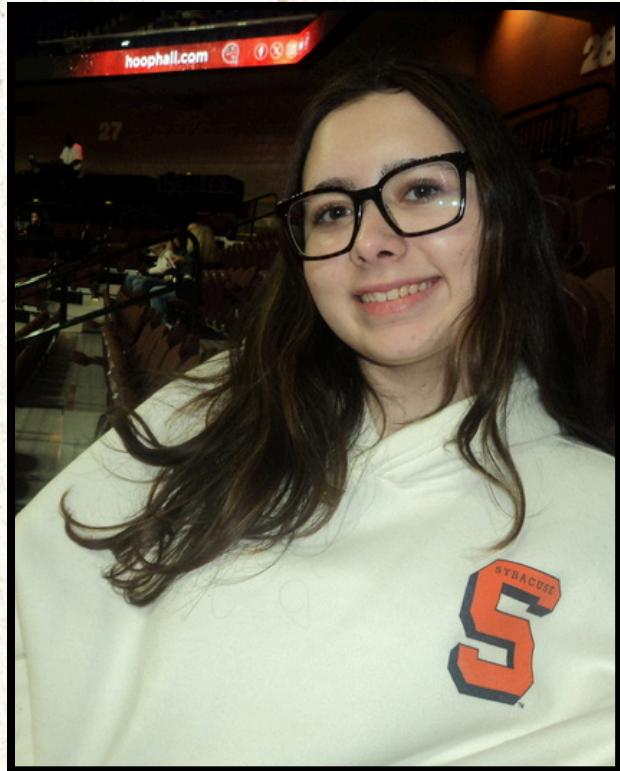
## Marlo Rivera-Opalski

My top highlight of 2025 was my 17th birthday party. My best friend threw me a surprise party that I had absolutely no clue about, and I genuinely felt so loved. It was truly the best surprise ever, and having all of my closest friends in one room was such a great time. Another highlight was the trip to Italy and France with my best friend and her family. It was insanely beautiful and such a good experience. Overall, I enjoyed 2025, but I am ready for it to be over, and I am excited to see what is to come in 2026 since it already involves a ton of change.



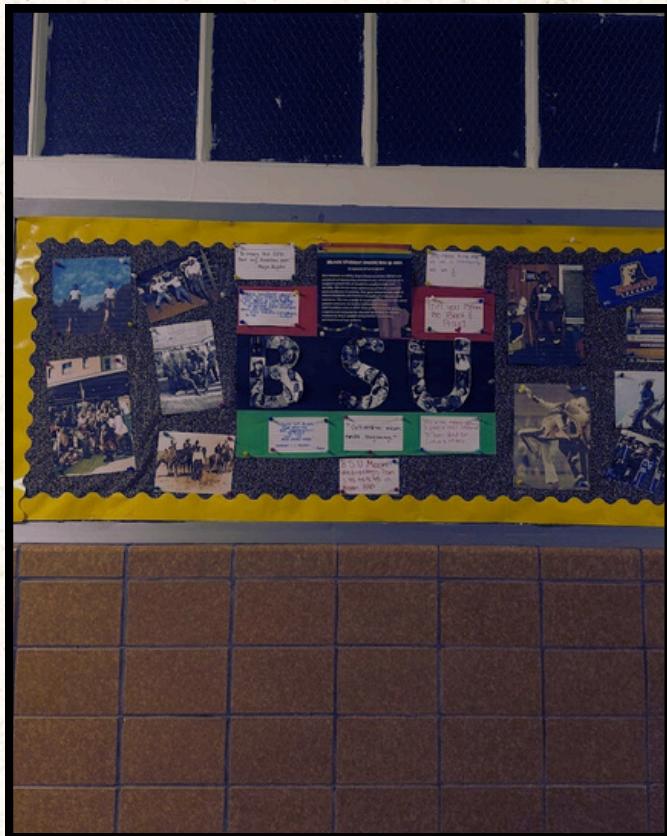
## Anne Canale

2025 was definitely a good year for me. One of the biggest highlights was meeting one of my best friends, Lucy, who made this year more exciting and memorable. I also got into UConn, which was a huge moment and something I worked really hard for. Throughout the year, I went to multiple concerts and sporting events, which were some of my favorite times because they gave me things to look forward to instead of school. I also went on trips with friends and spent a week of the summer in Connecticut at UConn's Pre-College Program, which was both fun and helpful in preparing me for next year. Even though there were some difficult moments, overall the year brought me a lot of joy and growth. Something I'm really looking forward to over break is Christmas and finally getting a mental break from school.



## Anyis Burman

Something that brought me joy this past year was my club (BSU). In just a couple of months, my club has grown into something I didn't know I was capable of. Whenever it's a Wednesday, I always get so excited to teach my club members something new that will fill them with insight and inquiry to keep pushing against the surface. My club members are attentive and are always open to immersing themselves in. So far, we have come together and thought of a Homecoming event for Black History Month that will last from February 23-27. I have collaborated with many clubs for this event, and I am hopeful for a successful run. Everyone is very in tune with this project, and it's coming out great, so everyone wants to be involved. With my club as a unit, we are able to have a voice not just one, but all.



## Riyan Thomas

This year has shown me so much love and gratitude, and I'm happy for all that I have experienced this year. I have made new connections, experiences, and opportunities for myself. With graduation rapidly approaching, I'm happy to say that I am ready for this new journey that I am about to embark on. I am so proud of the woman I am becoming and ready to see what adulthood has in store for me.



## Daniel Martinez

2025 went by insanely fast this year and things definitely have changed a lot, many awesome opportunities have come and I am very thankful. I'd say one of my favorite highlights from this year is my church anniversary, I had a blast! I'd say what has brought me joy is spending quality time with family, eating out, and on top of it all, God. Something I am looking forward to for this break is spending more quality time with family, eating and getting presents.

## Dahia Martinez Pena

2025 has been a gentle year for me. I finally got to close the distance with my long-distance boyfriend, and we'll be welcoming the new year together in the Dominican Republic with my family, something I'm really looking forward to. I'm also deeply grateful for my friends, who have stayed by my side through another year. They brighten my days in ways they probably don't even realize, understanding me effortlessly and making life feel lighter just by being in it.



## **Dominique Kennedy**

2025 went by surprisingly quickly, but I'm not really complaining about it. For me it was a very smooth and calm year for me with so many opportunities. One of my highlights is going to the University of Mount Vincent and roaming around their campus because its extremely huge for a college. I am looking forward to spending time with my family, watching shows that I haven't finished yet, and of course sleeping until I am satisfied.



## **Nadja Figueroa**

One of the highlights of my year was traveling with my parents and attending a summer program at Harvard University, where I learned more about what I want to study in college. I also loved attending concerts and traveling with my friends, which made the year feel fun and balanced. Being in new places and meeting new people brought me a lot of joy and helped me step outside my comfort zone. These experiences made 2025 exciting and memorable. Over break, I'm looking forward to finally finishing my college applications. I also want to focus on bringing my grades up and starting the new year feeling less stressed and more confident.

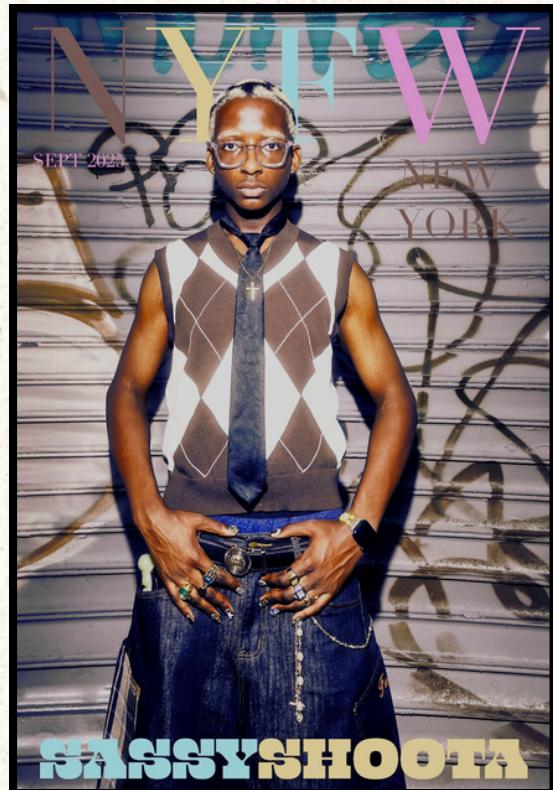
## **Khadidja Diakite**

Some highlights of 2025 is that my work ethic has improved significantly. This senior year and late junior year, responsibility has doubled and there is more pressure on me to get many things done at one time which can be very stressful. I was also able to handle my stress much better than I was last year and I learned how to manage it in a way where I don't go insane. I use it to take what I learn from it and move one and continue to enhance my work. I'm looking forward to relaxing this break because I do work very hard and there's so much a person can do and I also learned that it's good to enjoy and treat myself from time to time.



## Jaelan Clarke

2025 was a really good year for me, and I genuinely enjoyed it. One of the biggest highlights was during the summer when I had the opportunity to work at the Kith men's retail store, which helped me gain more experience in fashion. Toward the end of the summer, I also traveled to Miami, Florida, which was a fun and refreshing experience. When the school year started, I decided to cut off all my hair after growing it out for a while, and I began experimenting with different hair colors. That change brought me a lot of confidence and joy. Another major highlight was participating in a full week of New York Fashion Week. I met and connected with some incredibly cool and inspiring people, and that experience was definitely one of the most memorable moments of my year. Then after that week I got hired at Abercrombie and Fitch which helped me gain more experience with customer service and got the chance to work on the sales floor as a brand representative and gain more hands-on retail experience. Another really big highlight of my year was that I got accepted to my dream college at SCAD which was really a full circle moment because I've been wanting to go to this college since my sophomore year. I also started an internship at Anna Sui, which has been an amazing learning opportunity. On top of that, I had the chance to speak with people who work for Nike and Jordan, and I really enjoyed making those connections. Overall, 2025 brought me a lot of growth, creativity, and excitement, and over break, I'm looking forward to resting, reflecting on everything I accomplished this year, going to Florida and spending time with family and friends.



## Jewel Rivers

I will say that 2025 was quite the character development. I may not see it personally but I can admit that I'm not the same person I was last week, last month, or last year. I can genuinely say I'm happy—with myself, my friends, my life. With that being said, some highlights of 2025 were my trip to Japan, becoming CEO of this class (still can't believe it), and I would say senior year as a whole; celebrating my last chapter of life in high school and going into my next one is bittersweet but I'm glad to have such great experiences along the way.

## Zara Rosario

I think that 2025 was definitely my year. I think my biggest highlight of the year was going to London and Greece. It was the most fun I've had ,and so many emotional moments happened on this trip. This is also the first trip where we have traveled with one of my cousins, which definitely made the trip even better.



## Sadie Keogh

Looking back on 2025, one of the biggest highlights has been starting my senior year and working on college applications, which feels exciting and a little surreal. This year brought me a lot of joy through spending time with friends, finishing projects I was proud of, and growing more confident in myself. I'm grateful for the memories and lessons that came with such a busy but meaningful year. Over break, I'm most looking forward to slowing down, recharging, and enjoying time with family before jumping into what comes next.



## Mikaela Cabral

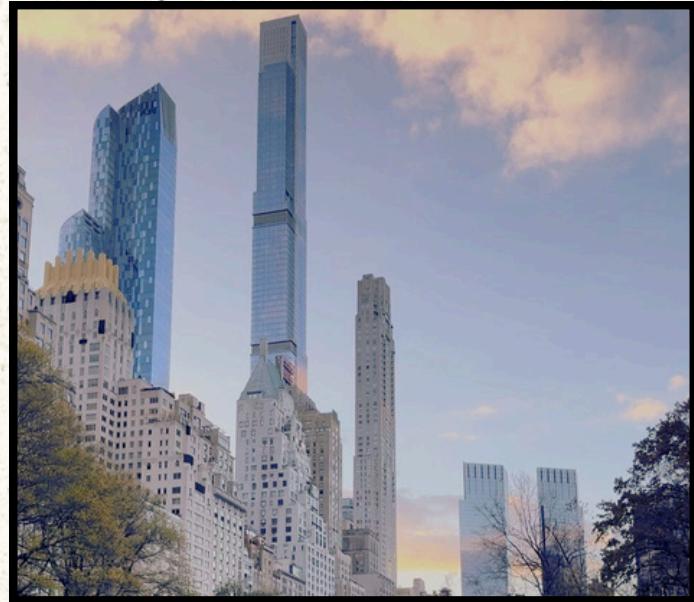
2025 was definitely....a year to say the least. It was my last year as a "kid". So really I did everything I wanted. I put myself out there and met a MAN. Shocking, I know. But I'm glad I did, and I'm also glad I was able to meet all the amazing people I did. Anyways, I'm looking forward to my birthday! 18, yes I feel unc. No, I'm not unc. Also, New Year's. Hopefully. ~\_~

## Isa Hydara

2025 I'm grateful for myself and being able to work 2 jobs, taking college classes, being on the honor roll, staying active, and being on the track team. I'm grateful for myself for continuing to push myself to be better. I'm also grateful for one of my best friends, Jewel who has continuously been by my side through thick and thin and has always been proud of me even when I'm being hard on myself. In 2026, I'm going to continue to be myself unapologetically and louder than before, becoming more career oriented as my goals fall into place.

## Niko Hamilton

The summer of 2025 was unforgettable, especially when my cousins came to visit from different countries. It was a reunion full of laughter, new memories, and reconnecting with family. Looking back on the year, one of the highlights has been the time spent with loved ones and the experiences we shared together. There's been joy in both the small moments like family dinners and long walks and in the bigger milestones, like trips taken and personal growth achieved. As we head into the break, I'm really looking forward to slowing down, enjoying some peaceful moments, and perhaps taking a little time for myself to recharge for the year ahead.



## Saharrah Martin

In 2025, I think I learned a lot of responsibility and have grown a lot. A highlight of my year was this past summer because I liked that I gained some independence and got to experience Envsn Fest. Overall, I believe that 2025 was a year of growth and understanding for me, and even though I am leaving the year very confused and unconfident i have trust in god and myself that everything will work out how it's supposed to.

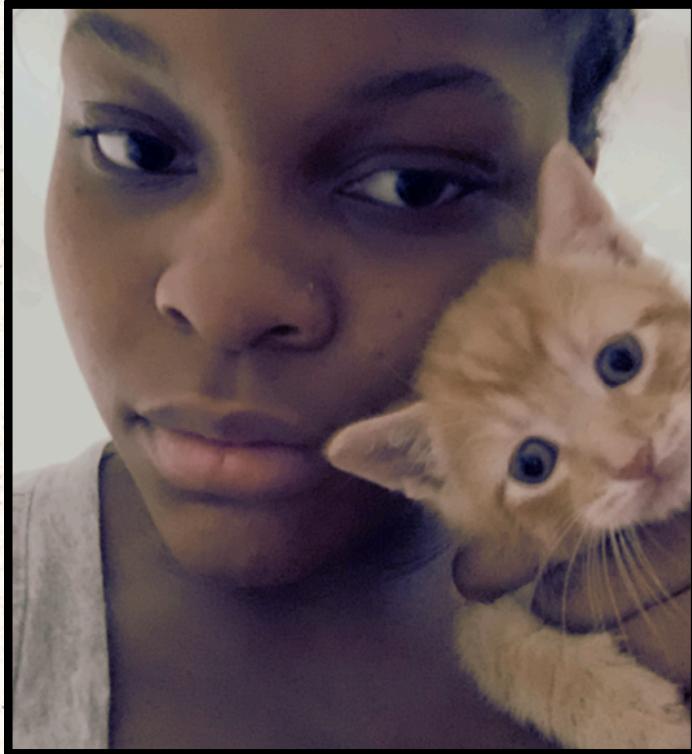
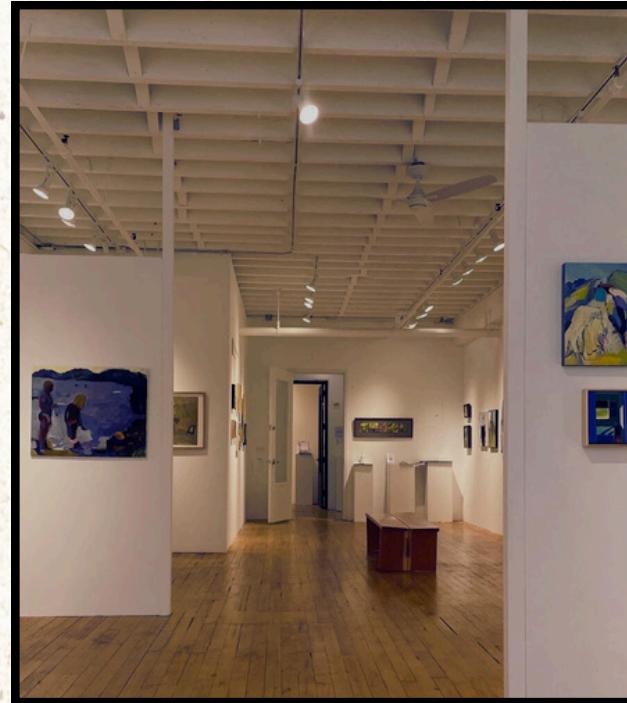
## Sierrah Martin

In 2025 I have grown a lot, I got my first job, I gained a passion for nails and turned 18. So there have been a lot of changes this year but I would not change it for the world. One of this year's highlights was obviously my birthday. And one of my favorite memories was going to my first concert with one of my besties.



## Lismarie Varela

The highlight of 2025, for me, was easily this past summer. The first six months of the year weren't the very best to me. I was struggling a lot with family and self esteem issues and it was like I couldn't exist without tormenting myself. In the summertime, I had a good work schedule and an internship at a quiet gallery and all the alone time in the world. I was finally able to think for myself, instead of feeling distracted like all eyes were on me. At this time, I was given the opportunity to really evaluate myself and what I want for my future. I realized that if I free myself from my own past insecurities, I can really allow myself to grow. The only person who was holding me back was me, and once I finally acknowledged that, I experienced more growth than I have in a long time.



## Lena Nelson

Something that brought me joy this past year is the amount of college acceptance letters I've received so far. The first one I was crying happy tears about. On top of that, I'm getting a job that I'm starting this week and being on principal's honor roll status so far. And what I'm looking forward to over the break is spending time with family and eating up all my favorite caribbean dishes I want.



## Lisbelle Bonilla

The highlight of 2025 for me has been learning how to finally put myself first after spending so long prioritizing others. It feels incredibly gratifying knowing that I am protecting my heart and personal space while staying true to the lessons I've learned, without overwhelming myself in the process. Right now, my main focus is securing a job through an internship opportunity I applied for and maintaining the principal's honor roll status I've held since the beginning of the school year. Overall, I'm excited to embrace the lessons, blessings, and opportunities that remain in this year and to carry that growth with me into 2026.

## Alera Wilcox

Some highlights of 2025 were getting good grades, going to fun places during the summer, enjoying family gatherings, and a lot more.

## Summer Otano

2025 was a challenging year. Many setbacks came along, but God got me through them. My biggest highlight is waking up every day knowing I have many lessons to learn, whether it's in the classroom or in life. I'm proud of the woman I'm becoming, and I'm looking forward to the blessings I'm getting as I grow.

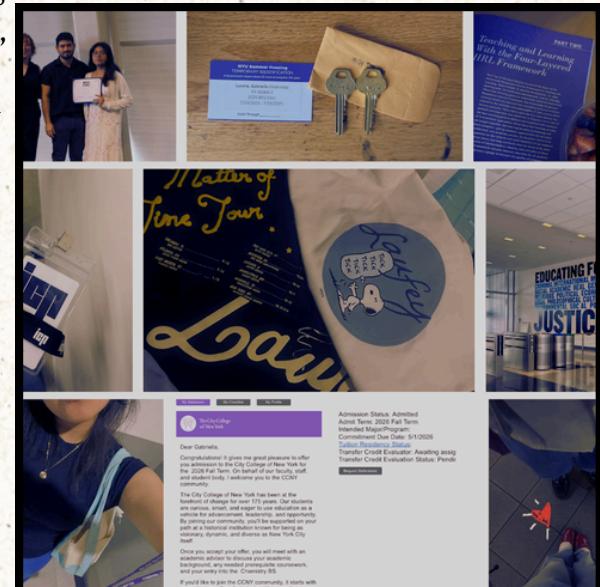


## Alex Andon-Barrera

2025 was such an okay year, honestly. There were definitely moments that were ups and downs. I feel like the end of 2025 was a lot better. I got to talk to more people and finally made a connection that I am passionate about. Looking back, things that brought me joy were having new connections and being in the right state of mind. And having beautiful friends surrounding me whenever I'm going through a tough time. Something I look forward to when break starts is just hanging out with family and actually getting sleep

## Gabriella Lucero

2025 was definitely a good year for me. I've grown more as a person and have been able to become stronger this year, especially more disciplined with the gym, staying in control of my habits, etc. I know I am not the same person from last year, which I am very proud of. Additionally, I think this is also a special year, and I'm glad I'm ending it with some good highlights this year. I gained more knowledge in the area of education through a college course. I really admired my professor and loved the course overall, which kind of helped me understand a possible career that I've thought about for the longest. Also, a major one for me was the NYU experience as a student over the summer, and delving into the area of college life. Some other nice moments were attending my favorite artist's concert, having fun dates with my boyfriend, and other things. I'm looking forward to the break and simply resting, and also finally enjoying some time with my boyfriend and friends.



# FLY NY YEAR IN REVIEW- DECEMBER 2025

As we close out 2025, we're grateful for the moments, accomplishments, and connections that made this year special. Reflecting on our experiences reminds us of the importance of community, resilience, and celebrating even the small victories. We're excited to carry these lessons into the new year, approaching 2026 with optimism. Here's to a joyful holiday season and a fresh start in the year ahead!

