

# THE DETROIT teacher

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November 2010

## Our Deficit Elimination Plan for DPS

By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Executive Vice President

**E**mergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb is proposing two deficit elimination plans. You can ignore Plan B because its only purpose is to look so horrible that everyone will accept Plan A.

Plan A also is completely unacceptable. It gets the state to assume the district's debt in exchange for Bobb giving away something that's not his to give: teachers' rights and the district as we know it.

Plan A would turn the district into two districts — one with traditional schools and the other, larger district with schools that sound a lot like charter schools. The district would embrace Race-to-the-Top reforms that limit seniority rights.

Our plan says, yes, the state should take over this debt. The debt was accumulated on the state's watch on two occasions — when it took over the district in 2005 and again under Bobb. Let's remind everyone that the district had a fund balance of \$115 million when the first state takeover occurred. We now have a deficit of over \$300 million.

Second, we should do what the new documentary "Waiting for Superman" suggests. The movie shows waiting lists for charter schools and students hoping to get in. Half of our schools should have waiting lists. They don't because we let everyone in and double-up our class size.

We could spend our Special Purpose Funds to lower classroom size, giving better instruction and

See **ELIMINATION**, on Page 6



Dr. Therese Smith with MacDowell Arabic Language Students.

## Teacher Brings Detroit's First Arabic Class to English Speakers

**S**eventh-grader Delon Tillman visited a neighborhood party store and thought to use something he learned at school.

"Sabah el kheer," he said at Jerry's on the northwest side. The greeting in Arabic was met with delight. Cawan Mueller used another Arabic phrase.

"He froze with my money and my chips," said Mueller, 12. The man behind the counter gave back his chips and his money.

"I don't have to pay?" Mueller asked. "No."

The students are learning classic Arabic at MacDowell School, the first school in the district to teach Arabic to non-Arabic speakers.

The program is being offered thanks to risk-taking Principal Mildred Davis and a teacher fluent in standard Arabic and the script language.

Dr. Therese Smith, a curriculum development specialist, approached the principal with the idea and soon the program was launched with a curriculum in conversation, language and culture.

They will take field trips to the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn and to Arabic restaurants for the kids to learn and observe first-hand the culture of the Middle East.

Dr. Smith told her students that a high school graduate who is fluent in Arabic can earn up to \$100,000 in varied careers, including translating. Arabic is one of the five world languages of the United Nations along with Chinese, Spanish, English and French.

The MacDowell fifth- through seventh-grade students seem to be quick learners, pronouncing and spelling

greetings to visitors.

"The kids are very excited because they can go in stores around here and greet and order," Smith said. Smith is her own quick study. She graduated from high school in Jerusalem and entered the University of Michigan at 16 on a scholarship. Several degrees later, she earned her doctorate in curriculum and instruction and was an adjunct professor at WSU in the School of Education. Smith has been a language arts and social studies teacher with Detroit for 17 years.

"It's important to have a visionary principal," Smith said of Principal Mildred Davis. "She felt the kids need a language and Arabic is a very important language nowadays. She listens and she knows what's best for the kids. Now they can speak and converse."



# DFT Gains National Praise for Leading Education Reform

At a time when public school districts like Detroit and unions like the Detroit Federation of Teachers are being vilified in so-called documentaries like "Waiting for Superman," the DFT is gaining national recognition and praise for embracing teacher-driven reform through collective bargaining.

At a forum sponsored by the AFT that brought union leaders, superintendents and school board members together from across the country, the DFT was heralded as an example of a union that had the courage and the

without receiving the coveted "Race to the Top" federal funding promoted by the Obama administration.

As AFT President Randi Weingarten travels the country, she consistently points to the DFT as an example of teacher unions leading the charge to improve the quality of education for the nation's public school children. President Weingarten details how getting our membership to embrace these reforms and make economic sacrifices due to the district's financial distress was "a heavy lift." However, our willingness to accept that we could not improve by staying the same, challenged us to drive the reform train rather than be run over by it.

At the 54th annual Council of Great City Schools conference in Tampa, Fla., the DFT was heralded as a union willing to make a difference by accepting the need to embrace reform rather than fight it.

During their presentations, the superintendents from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Hillsboro County, Fla., and Atlanta specifically referenced Detroit as an example of the need for collaboration with the union to drive education reforms. This allowed the union to have ownership of the destiny of the school district by empowering the practitioners (teachers) to make the difference in their schools to raise student achievement.

This was in direct contrast to the strategies used by Washington D.C. chancellor Michelle Rhee (who was in attendance). Rhee attempted to impose punitive reforms upon teach-



Photo by Steven Portnoy

**DFT President Keith Johnson and Gov. Jennifer Granholm at a Royal Oak screening in October of the documentary "Waiting for Superman."**

ers, rather than working with the union to develop strategies to improve educational quality.

We were able to demonstrate that you do not have to sacrifice the rights and benefits of teachers to initiate reforms. We maintained seniority rights, tenure, and due process rights, and avoided salaries based upon student performance, specifically test scores, as part of our contract.

Even Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who referred to Detroit as "ground zero" for the need for educational reform, has praised the DFT for our vision to "not only embrace change, but to lead it."

As I accept these accolades on behalf of the DFT, I am acutely aware of the fact that while I may have led

the negotiations, you are the ones who are making it happen, under the most adverse conditions. Despite all of the challenges you face, you continue to provide the best education possible for the students in your charge.

As I consistently tell any audience I have before me, when you come into a Detroit Public School, don't just look at what my members are doing, look at what they are doing without, and still finding a way to make a difference in the lives and futures of our students.

Thank you DFT for making our great union a shining example of what we can do when we are given a voice and a choice to make education happen.

## President's Report



**Keith Johnson**

vision to not only recognize that reform was inevitable, but to seize the opportunity to adopt reform initiatives that were proven successful in other, smaller AFT locals and modify them to fit our needs in Detroit.

We were recognized for taking on this challenge despite working in a district that is in dire straits financially. Education reforms — like all aspects of quality education — comes with a price tag. Yet we are successfully acting upon reforms such as Peer Assistance and Review, revamping the evaluation tool, shared decision-making, and Priority Schools,

Visit the  
DFT  
Web site

[www.DFT231.com](http://www.DFT231.com)

## New DFT Website a Resounding Success

It may be a busy highway, but you should get on it. We're talking the DFT website.

The DFT's website has tons of traffic. In fact, it's the busiest website of 500 locals that are served by the AFT.

In one month, from Sept. 6 to Oct. 6, the DFT website — [www.dft231.com](http://www.dft231.com) — got 29,000 page views.

"There is no other local with your amount of traffic," said Jared Schwartz, associate director of AFT's digital communications department. The busiest features are: the contract,

salary schedule, and The Detroit Teacher.

Schwartz was curious how we worked up such interest in our site. It is true that the Detroit Public Schools are in a constant state of crisis, which leads members to seek out information. In addition, DFT officials use the site daily to communicate to the membership.

"I think you've done an amazing job of training people to go to your website," Schwartz said. "Your website is very active. It's the most visited website in the whole system."

**THE DETROIT** teacher

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# Updates...

## Divers Wins 2010 AFT Michigan Walter Bergman Award

AFT Michigan President David Hecker presented the 2010 Walter G. Bergman Human Rights Award on



Art Divers

May 15 to Dr. Arthur Divers, a retired Detroit Public Schools counselor and administrator and vice president of the DFT Retirees Chapter. Divers was presented the award at the 71st

Annual Convention at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center.

"Thank you for all your hard work and commitment to enrich the lives of the less fortunate," Hecker said as he presented the award. The award is given to a tireless worker for equality and social justice.

Dr. Walter G. Bergman was an educator, union organizer, and the first president in 1935 of the Michigan Federation of Teachers. He was savagely beaten by the Ku Klux Klan in 1961 as one of the first Freedom Riders and suffered a stroke 10 days later. He never regained his ability to walk and used a wheelchair but was an indefatigable civil rights advocate who fought for social justice until his death at 100 in 1999.

## Retirements Announced

The following DFT members have announced their retirements: Richard Langlois, Kathleen McComsey, Gail Williams, Imani Hines, Gloria Chappelle, Colette Cook, Linda Howard, Gwendolyn Robertson, Karen O'Neill, Evelyn Inempolidis and Shirley Britton. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.



**FRATERNITY DONATES BACKPACKS** – The Detroit Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi donated 60 backpacks filled with school supplies to four Detroit schools, including Greenfield Union, above. "Many of our fraternity members are in education – teachers, counselors and principals," said Dr. Robert Bryant, retired Loving Elementary School principal. "So it feels great. We're children oriented and we love children." Pictured with Bryant are Vivian Welcome (left) and Principal Beverly Campbell.

## Retired Detroit Teacher Begins Term on Optimist Int'l Board

Fatima Plater, a recently retired Detroit Public Schools teacher and longtime community volunteer in Detroit, has been elected to the Board of Directors of Optimist International, one of the world's leading service club organizations. Plater's three-year term began on Oct. 1.

For 15 years, Plater has been involved with Optimist International, an organization that aims to "bring out the best in kids" by conducting positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year. She was elected at the 2010 Optimist International Convention in Denver, Colorado.

Plater has been a member of the Optimist Club of Metro Riverfront-Detroit since 1995. She also was active in other clubs, including the Loving Community-Detroit Optimist Club, the Shining Stars Optimist Club of Detroit and the WSU Warriors Optimist Club.

She served as president of her club in 1996-1997 and again in 2004-2005. Her club was recognized at the international level for its accomplishments during both years in office. In 2001-2002 she served as governor of the Michigan District of Optimist International.

Plater became more involved at the international level several years ago. She served on a committee that focused on strategic growth and on a committee that provides guidance for Junior Optimist Octagon International, the youth club component of the organization.

Plater graduated from Western Michigan University in 1968. She received a master's degree from Wayne State University in 1973 and received her training as an educational specialist from Wayne State in 1987.

Plater is retired from a 41-year teaching career with Detroit Public Schools. During her years in education, she was named the State of Michigan Service-Learning Educator of the Year in 1995; received the Wayne County Regional Education Golden Apple Teaching award in 1997; and was a finalist for State Teacher of the Year. She also received the Spirit of Detroit Award in 2003.



Fatima Plater

## Not so Super Charter Schools

By Patrick Falcusan  
DFT Financial Analyst

There's a lot of buzz about the new documentary "Waiting for Superman" that paints charter schools as the answer to failing public schools. But think about these statistics when you're watching the movie.

Did you know that the charter schools in Detroit have nearly the same foundation grant as the public schools? But unlike Detroit schools, where nearly 10 percent of the students are involved in special education, the average charter school in the tri-county area has less than one percent of their students in special education.

Everyone knows it is extremely expensive to educate special education students. And further, these special education students as a whole don't score particularly high on MEAP tests.

But achievement at charter schools is painted well in the movie. In reality, only 17 percent of charter schools show higher achievement than a traditional public school. That is according to a study from The Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University.

Did you know that the district has to contribute 20 percent of payroll to the state retirement system to fund your pension?

But most charter schools are not part of the retirement system through a loophole in the law and they contribute zero percent to the retirement system.

In 2009-2010, the tri-county area had 67,000 students in charter schools. Some 89 charter schools operate in the tri-county area, about half of them in Detroit.

There may come a day in the near future when more Detroit children attend charter schools than public schools. This may happen before the public fully realizes that they fail to achieve what they set out to achieve, even after accepting fewer children with disabilities. This may happen after the teachers were sold a demanding job with lower earnings, fewer benefits, no pensions. Indeed, charter schools, Superman and kryptonite have a lot in common.



Patrick Falcusan



## Everyday Super Heroes

Detroit teachers responded to the propaganda in the new documentary "Waiting for Superman," in which charter schools are portrayed as good and public schools as bad. The movie lays the fault of failing schools at the feet of teachers, not the "disadvantages of poverty, homelessness, joblessness, poor nutrition, absent parents, etc.," as critic Diane Ravitch said. Detroit teachers are not being silent. They responded by passing out and wearing "Everyday Super Hero" buttons. Even some students sported them. Shown above at Carstens Elementary School students with teachers Vanessa Jones and Elbert Bennett Jr.



## Students Prep for MEAP at Science Center

The fifth-grade students at Marion Law Academy took part in the MEAP ME! at the Detroit Science Center Sept. 27. The Detroit Science Center's education department prepared a free group experience for Detroit Public Schools completely focused on MEAP objectives for our fifth-graders. The students attended a MEAP rally and competed in a game show where they answered sample MEAP questions. They attended various demonstration stations to explore MEAP-related activities on space, life, earth and physical science, and chemistry. The Toyota Engineering Theater took the students on an interactive journey into the world of real-life engineers! Their science teacher, Jane Sucaet, was confident the experience helped them be better prepared to achieve higher science MEAP scores on the test in October.

# THE DETROIT NEWSM

## Sleep Deprivation a B

**P**lenty of Detroit kids go to school tired and sleepy. Detroit teacher Tania Curtiss noticed this phenomena at every one of the four schools she's taught in.

As much as she lectured her kids to get a "good night's sleep," it wasn't happening. As simple as sleep is, it's as though everyone wonders: How do you do that?

"A lot of our kids come late and they're sleepy and they're hungry," said Curtiss, a 12-year Detroit teacher and literacy coach at Glazer Elementary School. So for years, Curtiss put in a bid to get the non-profit organization Sweet Dreamzzz to come to her school. Sweet Dreamzzz, based in Farmington, provides sleep education and bedtime essentials to at-risk students, their parents and teachers.

Turns out, sleep is misunderstood, for both children and adults.

"People take sleep for granted," said Ann Raftery, director of the sleep program. "It's so overlooked. Without it you can't learn. And yet it's a free commodity."



Glazer teachers Tania Curtiss and Sweet Dreamzzz to Glazer Sept. 29 for a



Sleeper teachers (from left) Jill Uille and Diane Henri, with Ann Raftery, director of Sleep Programs for Sleep Dreamzzz Inc.



# ROIT teacher MAKERS

## Big Issue for Students



is and Althea Buckner in pajamas on Count Day. Curtiss brought Sleep for a sleep education program.

Sleep is being studied by researchers. Recent studies say sleep deprivation is linked to obesity and academic problems in children. Sleep deprivation can disrupt hormones that trigger hunger. So sleep-deprived people tend to eat more.

"We've done some parent surveys and most parents only think their kids need eight hours," Raftery said. "That's not adequate for a child." Elementary children need between 10 and 12 hours of sleep and need to get to bed between 8 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., she said.

Raftery and a crew of volunteers do a half-day program of sleep education, instructing children to eat fruit, not chocolate or soda, before bed. They show them that reading and brushing their teeth are best before bed, not watching TV.

On Sept. 29, Sweet Dreamzzz donated backpacks with Benie Babies, toothpaste, socks and a book. They raised money to donate 130 new sleeping bags to Glazer. They hope to visit 10 Detroit schools this year to educate and donate sleep kits. "We don't want to just go in for 30 minutes," she said. "We want to involve the teachers and parents. We want the kits to remind kids: 'This is what I need to go to bed.'"

## Members Go All Out for Count Day

By Charlene Uresy, Spain teacher



The trifecta of academics, athletics and fun was the theme of this year's Count Day at Spain School. Teachers, students and Principal Ronald Alexander dressed in their favorite sport uniform. Some of the athletes were: football, basketball, baseball, hockey, tennis, soccer, swimmers, skate boarders, referees, and dancers showing their athletic prowess throughout the building. It was a fun day!

The school was entertained by the drum-line, cheerleaders and dancers. The Detroit girl group Boi performed. These beautiful young women in the music business already have a following on YouTube and Twitter. Also with much delight, Spain was honored with the child stage actor, 12-year-old Elijah Johnson. Elijah is from Detroit, and for the last two years played Simba in the Las Vegas production of the Lion King. How exciting! These professional acts were brought to Spain by computer teacher Debra Blocker.

In the afternoon, the fun went outside. The entire school danced in a Soul Train line, with tunes provided by Spain's own D.J. Andre Harlan. In that mix of old school dancing were at least three different hustles. When D.J. Harlan played a different song, a different hustle ensued. Everyone from the tiniest football player to the tallest basketball player were jammin'!

Student attendance was recorded at 767. Spain students understood that for every student here on this day, the State of Michigan would give the school \$7,000. At several grades, every student was present.

Celebrating the importance of coming to school is another way Spain inspires its student body to the fun of learning and education.

## Walk to School Day Burns School Fights Obesity and Blighted Houses



By Janet Ray

Burns Elementary School's Walk to School Day rallied 20 parents and over 100 students to bring awareness to unsafe streets and promote healthy children. The Oct. 6 walk began at 7 a.m. with students, teachers and parents walking in unison. They want to improve student health as well as call for the City of Detroit to demolish 11 dangerous houses on the block. The number one house requested for demolition is 14210 Terry, Detroit 48227.

Walking to school was common just a generation ago. In 1969, 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school, and today fewer than 15 percent do. In Michigan and other states, traffic jams, abandoned houses and pollution around schools are commonplace, causing safety hazards for children at drop off and pick up times. With the rising price of gasoline there's no better time to get out of the car, enjoy the fresh air, and walk with your children to school.

"My goal is to support parents in their effort to make Burns School a walking school to better health and academic outcomes," said Tracy Jones, a compact tech at Burns. "Children do better in school when they are safe and healthy. Our school was one of the first to have fresh fruits and vegetables at lunch. We now want to improve our surrounding streets so children can be healthy by walking to school. Burns being selected as a Safe Routes to School awardee is a step in the right direction."

Safe Routes to School is an international movement that builds on the momentum of Walk to School Day. Many schools in Michigan begin a Safe Routes initiative as a follow-up to Walk & Roll to School Day.



## ONE NATION RALLY



Photos by Ricardo Thomas

Thousands of Americans rallied on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Oct. 2 as an antidote to the Tea Party movement. Americans at the One Nation Rally reminded political leaders that they serve all Americans, including the middle and working class. Protesters committed to putting America back to work and pulling America back together. "We all do better when we all do better," one sign read. DFT members (above) filled two buses traveling to the rally and came back committed to taking back our country from corporate and reactionary interests.

## Life After TIP: Multiply Your Savings

By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Executive Vice President

When the TIP program ends a year from now, your TIP account will be worth \$10,000. After saving \$10,000 in two years, what will you do next? Consider investing in a tax deferred 403(b) savings plan.

The 1 percent raise on Aug. 29 will add about \$30 to each paycheck for members at master's step 10. The end of the TIP program will bring your pretax pay up by another \$250, but about 40 percent of this will be taken out in taxes.

You don't have to give your money to Uncle Sam. You can put part of your pay into a 403(b) plan on a pretax basis. This money will

grow on a tax free basis, until you take the money out. Most people do this during retirement when they are in a lower tax bracket, so they save two ways.

Although the TIP deduction ends after the first paycheck in November 2011, you don't cash in your account until you quit or retire. One thousand people did so this summer. Some just took a check minus a substantial amount of taxes. Others found an additional savings opportunity.

At retirement, you can use your TIP account to buy time from the state's retirement system. Your \$10,000 should buy about one year of service. For those at master's step 10, that translates into an extra \$1,000 per year in your pension check. If you retire at age 60



Mark O'Keefe

and live 25 more years, you will get \$25,000 from your TIP account.



## Our Deficit Elimination Plan

ELIMINATION, from Page 1

more individualized attention.

Instead of making 90 percent of our schools charter schools, let's make them application schools. Parents will have to commit to excellent attendance and students will have to abide by the Student Code of Conduct. Imagine this: the majority of DPS schools will have low-class size, high attendance, high parent participation, good behavior, and most likely, improved test scores.

Here's what Deficit Elimination Plan C looks like: The state should take over the \$300 million debt that is rightfully theirs. It should issue new long-term bonds at a lower rate and repay the high-interest, short-term debt.

We would get back on track with a clean slate, make the district accountable to not overspend, and put money on the front line where it belongs – in the classroom. All without surrendering the rights that the district and the union have collectively bargained.





Longtime friends from Southwestern High School (from left): Tim Michalak, Bob Platte, Rick Sale, Willy Yee, and Stever Kruckemeyer.

## Timothy Michalak—A Memoriam

By Rick Sale

Tim Michalak taught business for over 30 years at Southwestern High School, where I also taught and where we became lifelong friends. For 20 of those years, Tim was an Alternative Rep and then DFT Building Rep. Tim also was elected to multiple terms on the DFT executive board, a DFT treasurer, and served on the bargaining team.



Tim Michalak

For the last few years of his career, Tim was hired as an Administrative Assistant (now Labor Relations Administrator) at the DFT office.

Tim was married to his beloved wife, Anne, for 40 years. The light of his life was his daughter, Alison, whom he walked down the aisle of her wedding last fall.

Despite his outstanding career as a teacher and union representative, his greatest challenge came with his struggle with brain cancer.

For far beyond any diagnosis, Tim took all the surgery, treatments and chemo in order to fight on. He finally succumbed on Oct. 10, 2010 at the age of 65, but not without putting up a mighty struggle right up until the end.

Tim and Anne were music fans, especially of Bruce Springsteen. Just weeks before his passing, they went to a concert to see the Boss.

Neil Young once wrote, "Ride on, old friend, ride on in peace."

The many people who were touched by Tim—students, other teachers, friends and family—can only wish Tim peace and quiet. He will be sorely missed.

*Rick Sale is a retired DPS administrator, DFT administrative assistant, and longtime union activist.*

## Detroit Public Schools Homeless Unit Gets Huge Donation

Nearly 2,000 backpacks reached Detroit homeless children this fall, thanks to the Feed the Children program and Detroit school social workers.

The Detroit Public Schools Homeless Program received a huge donation Oct. 12 of food and school supplies to aid children who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, to have the resources they need to stay in school.

Feed the Children, an international, nonprofit relief organization in Oklahoma City, donated 1,920 backpacks filled with school supplies, 1,920 food bags and four pallets of books.

The district's homeless program has served homeless children for more than 18 years and last year served more than 1,800 students and their families. It collaborates with homeless and domestic violence shelters that house school-aged children in Detroit. The unit provides transportation assistance, uniforms, shoes, school supplies, books, food and hygiene items, social work services and educational assistance.

"Our program allows us to help children who would normally go unnoticed in our schools," said Cynthia Reynolds, school social worker of the Homeless Unit. "This donation helps serve our mission to ensure all children have the resources they need to be successful in school."

The Detroit Homeless unit is one of the oldest in the state and has been rec-



Cynthia Reynolds

ognized by the Michigan Department of Education, which commended the district for the high level of public support represented by in kind contributions, donations, and strong partnerships with local organizations. The state applauded the program, saying it "has succeeded in making the McKinney-Vento law come alive for children and youth... and your leadership involving the entire community is a great asset to students."

Homeless children and their families are eligible to receive services under The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which ensures that all children, regardless of their housing situation, receive a public education.

This is the fourth year that Feed the Children has partnered with the DPS to distribute the backpacks and food to district students.

## New Books for Johnson McKinney Center

Like all teachers, Mariann Watson talks shop around her family.

Watson, a special education teacher at Turning Point Academy on the east side, lamented that her students had an empty library. Sure the teachers bought books for their classrooms out of their own purses. But the library had empty shelves.

Watson's niece, Megan Phillips, comes from a family of avid readers. The Owosso High School senior said, "Maybe we can do something."

"Well, get on it," Watson told her. As vice president of her student council, Megan spearheaded a book drive for the students. When her council members got diverted by another community service project, Megan contin-

ued to gather books on her own.

"She went to every school in Owosso," said Watson, an 18-year teacher. This September Megan headed to the University of Michigan to study psychology. But Turning Point, which merged with Johnson McKinney Day Treatment Center, got boxes and boxes of bestsellers, classics, and history. They got Hardy Books, Goosebumps, and Encyclopedia Brown.

Johnson McKinney works with severely emotionally impaired students who need more structure, individual and group counseling, assistance to form positive peer relationships, and individualized approaches to education beyond those available

in a traditional school.

Watson (pictured on right) has a theory about her students — mostly boys — and reading.

"I believe that most EI (emotionally impaired) boys are EI because they're so embarrassed about their reading skills," says Watson, who earned her Ph.D. last year. Watson incorporates science one day a week. "Boys love science but most of the teachers are women and they do reading."

The students helped unload



Watson's minivan when it arrived with the books. Watson saw the students' delight and a goal accomplished.

"Most of them picked out books for themselves while they were shelving them."



# Detroit Public School Social Workers Start Clothing Fund

Like most school social workers, it always bothered Curtis Stout to see students in worn or dirty uniforms. He sometimes saw a student who could not afford a uniform at all.

In Detroit, the many students who are homeless or living in shelters have an education. But they don't have their basic needs met. When he retired this year, Stout wanted to do something about this.

One of his first orders of business was to start a fund to build a closet of new clothes for students. He called his colleague — social worker Mary Ellen Bell — and she loved the idea.

"When Curtis called I shared my positive experience with having a clothing store at my school," Bell said.

Stout and Bell started the fund this fall with their own seed money: \$500 each from their own pockets. Mary Duncan, another school social worker, donated \$75.

"This is something that has been on



**Doris Alexander, social worker in the Homeless Education Program; Mary Ellen Bell and Curtis Stout, retired school social workers; and Phyllis White, supervisor of the Homeless Education Program.**

my mind for the past couple of years," Stout said. "When I saw kids without a uniform or a dirty uniform, it was worrisome."

Like all good programs, they put a name on it and they're keeping it simple.

The Clothes Rack will be available for the social workers to tap for kids in need, not only those who are homeless or in a shelter.

Students will get a \$35 voucher for a shirt and pair of pants.

"We get lots and lots of calls," said

Phyllis White, supervisor of DPS Homeless Education Program, "so this will go to good use."

If you would like to donate to the fund, call the Homeless Education Program at the DPS Office of School Social Work at 313-866-0858.

## Detroit Teacher Keeps the New York Times on its Toes

Spain School teacher Norbert Kidd retired this year after 40 years. Perhaps he now has more time to pore over his beloved New York Times.

This month he found a rare grammatical error in the esteemed "All The News That's Fit to Print."



"First, I must say I am a devoted admirer of the NYT," wrote Kidd, a Detroit. "My daily subscription is vital to my day."

In an article "Debate Rages over Standoff in Ecuador," a paragraph began, "Inside the hospital, doctors, nurses, patients and journalists lied on the floor..."

Kidd always taught that the past of lie, meaning to recline, or be situated, is lay.

"Has there been a change?" Norbert Kidd asked.

Philip B. Corbett, the Times associate managing editor for standards, wrote back.

"Dear Mr. Kidd: Thank you for the note and the kind words. And no, there's been no change -- you're absolutely right that "lay," not "lied," is correct. Fortunately that fix seems to have been

made quickly for later versions, but I'm sorry the one you saw had the error. We'll keep trying."

Kidd doesn't know if he should have made a fuss.

"Probably I should just have said, 'I know' and let it pass," Kidd said. "I did sent a copy to Mr. A. to tell him his teachers are still on their toes!"

## Calendar

All meetings will be held at 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, unless otherwise noted. Dates and times are subject to change.

### NOVEMBER

- 4 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 9 School Social Workers Chapter, 3:45 p.m.
- 9 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 11 Veteran's Day, Half Day
- 15 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 16 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 18 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 18 Ed Tech Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.

### DECEMBER

- 2 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 7 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 9 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 14 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 16 Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 17 Last day for teachers and students