

# THE DETROIT teacher

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## Why Do I Need a Union?

Ninety percent of teachers never need to call their union.

- Their checks show up without glitches.
- They are not unfairly disciplined.
- The district has them on the right step at the right time.
- They are liked and understood by parents and principals alike.
- They know when and how to retire without an advisor.

But some teachers need the help of the union. And it could be you.

“You don’t know when it’s your time,” says DFT President Keith Johnson. “We don’t like having to pay auto insurance. But I got rear-ended by a drunk driver on Dec. 23, 2010. Without insurance I would have no car but still be responsible for the note.”

You may or may not need the union’s expertise for an inter-personal problem but you certainly will need it to negotiate your salary and benefits, work hours and class size limits. Just recently the DFT won a 2.5 percent payback of wages taken by the emergency manager.

Automatic dues deductions will end June 30 unless a court order stops the plan passed by the Republican-controlled state legislature. The DFT is asking each member to sign an alternative dues plan. So far, more than 1,000 members have signed up. DFT and AFT Michigan staff will visit your building by the end of the year to sign up.

“One of the underlying reasons for having a union,” Johnson said, “is you get the benefits of everything we have worked for.”



**DFT President Keith Johnson held a press conference May 25 at the DFT to announce legal action against the evaluation process.**

## The District “Royally Screwed Up” Evaluations

The DFT met with the district throughout the year on an evaluation tool and process for Detroit teachers. But the district ran out of time and, under a state mandate that all Michigan teachers be evaluated this year, rushed a shoddy process to evaluate teachers.

DFT President Keith Johnson held a press conference May 25 to announce that the district will not get away with the way it is evaluating teachers.

“The district screwed this up royally,” Johnson said. “And we’re not going to pay for it. We’ve already paid for their ineptitude with a 10 percent pay cut.”

As late as April, most Detroit teachers had not been evaluated this year, Johnson said. In fact, most Detroit teachers had not been evaluated in a decade, or ever. In the 2009 contract, long before evaluations were mandated by the state, the DFT negotiated to jointly develop a tool and process for evaluations. Three years later, we still have not reached agreement on this.

“We agree we need to be evaluated for our performance,” Johnson said. “I do not want someone in this profession who cannot and will not adhere to its tenets.”

But the district is rushing to get evaluations done in the last few weeks of the year. DPS hired retired principals to conduct some evaluations. Many teachers got one “drive-by” evaluation that was conducted in as little as four minutes.

“Twelve minutes out of six hours out of 180 days is not a measure of a teacher’s effectiveness,” Johnson said.

In addition, the district will need about 700 fewer teachers next year. But it is participating in job fairs and recruiting people from Teach for America. “We’re convinced that they simply want to get rid of teachers,” Johnson said.

The union will take legal action, he said, if any Detroit teacher is not retained because of these hurried year-end evaluations.

“We are preparing the most monumental lawsuit against DPS in recent history.”

# Apathy on Dues is Disappointing, Maybe Fatal

**T**his spring the Michigan legislature passed a bill the governor signed that was specifically designed to destroy teacher unions. This law prohibits school districts from deducting membership dues (and agency shop fees) from members' paychecks and would make it virtually impossible for locals to represent their members. It appears that some of our DFT brothers and sisters are willing to contribute to the **END OF THE DFT!**

Since the legislation passed we have been working diligently with our state federation, AFT Michigan, to secure voluntary deduction forms from our members.

To date only 14 percent of our membership has signed up for the voluntary deduction.

Considering all the DFT has accomplished through the years — negotiating progressive collective bargaining rights, salaries and benefits, winning major groundbreaking arbitration cases, successfully representing members who were violated or mistreated — it is **APPALLING** that in the time of our union's greatest challenge, some of our brothers and sisters are apparently willing to let **THEIR UNION DIE!**

Some members contend they don't need the union. They never have a problem with an administrator. No one ever bothers them. They get paid for what they do, etc.

What they fail to realize is those battles have already been fought so they didn't have to fight them.

They also don't realize that one day it may be **THEIR TURN** to need the representation from **THEIR UNION**. Without the dues, however, the DFT **WON'T BE THERE!**

Some members say the union hasn't done anything for them or "look what's happening now even though we have a union."

What have they asked the union to do that is permitted but failed to do? Imagine what would be done if **YOU**

## President's Report



**Keith  
Johnson**

### DON'T HAVE A UNION?

At a time when we need to galvanize against those in Lansing who want to make Michigan a "right to not work" state, members blame the ineffectiveness of the union for our challenges rather than what the Republican-led legislature has done to divide us.

They would rather complain and criticize than engage in the fight. This is exactly what our nemesis wants to see: that the fight is out of the DFT. If the DFT falls, every other teacher local in the state will fall like dominos.

Some members have apparently forgotten all this union has done for them through the years. Here are a few reminders from recent history:

- Donation of sick days to colleagues who are enduring catastrophic illnesses.
- Daily prep for elementary teachers after 40 years of fighting.
- SuperSteps for teachers who achieve National Board Certification.
- District Liability Coverage for members named in a lawsuit. The district will represent and indemnify them. This becomes the **PRIMARY** coverage thus allowing the AFT Occupational Liability Coverage to become the **SECONDARY** protection.
- Negotiated agreement that allowed teachers laid off in 2006, 2007 and 2008 to maintain their **REGULAR CONTRACT PAY** while getting certified in special education **AND** reimbursing them for their tuition costs.
- A settlement for teachers improperly

laid off in June 2009 that made them whole for up to 30 days in lost wages (they were all called back before 4th Wednesday count).

- Won arbitration for teachers not recalled according to seniority.
- Won arbitration for teachers laid off yet placed in positions for which they were certified and paid as substitutes. These teachers were made whole for the difference between substitute pay and contract pay.

This is only an example of what the DFT has accomplished on behalf of our membership. This does not include the problems we resolve for members every day. This does not reflect the questions Patrick, Mershira, Judy, Karin, Terrence, Mark and Edna answer daily. This doesn't include the service provided by Estella, Samarrah and Barbara, our clerical staff that works hard to ensure every member receives quality service.

Without dues we don't have Margaret, who produces the award winning Detroit Teacher, which highlights all of the positive things about Detroit Public Schools that **YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS** make happen. Margaret also keeps you informed with the most up-to-date **FACTUAL** information via the DFT website.

The DFT has **NEVER** run from a fight. We win because we fight for what is right. Some of those who have benefitted from the battles won by this great union don't feel the need to **KEEP** what has been fought for and won. Maybe they didn't have to fight themselves. Maybe they believe the days of a strong union are over.

If we allow this attitude to prevail, they will be right. Then all of the accomplishments of the DFT under MaryEllen Riordan, John Elliott, Janna Garrison, Virginia Cantrell and me will die with the DFT. There will be no one to blame except those who would not stand up for the union that for so long stood for them.

# Updates . . .

## DFT Staff Gets Layoff Notices

In May all staff at the DFT office received layoff notices, effective Aug. 24, due to uncertainties related to dues collection.

"Depending on the timeliness of dues collection or whether we win our legal challenge to the law, we hope to rescind most of these layoffs before they go into effect," DFT President Keith Johnson said.

The DFT employs four Labor Relations Administrators, four clerical staff, and three part-time professional staff (editor, controller, retirement counselor), a president and executive vice president.

A new state law makes it illegal for the district to withhold teacher union dues. The law takes effect when our contract expires June 30. The DFT, however, joined other unions to file a lawsuit challenging the law.

## COPE \$100 donations

Wendy Newberry, DFT executive board member and teacher at Marcus Garvey Academy, has donated more than \$100 to COPE, the DFT's political action fund.

## Trustee Elected



Beverly Wilkerson

Beverly Wilkerson has been elected trustee of the DFT Executive Board. She replaces Wanda Lundy Colquitt, who filled the position of vice president, which was vacated by Edna Reaves. Reaves accepted the position of DFT executive vice president when Mark O'Keefe left to become

DFT controller.

## Election Committee Election

Four members of the DFT Election Committee were elected by acclaim at the May 10 DFT membership meeting. **Tracy Arneau, Patrick Burton, Keisha Allen** and **Jeff Wasilewski** will serve two-year terms through March 2014. Arneau and Burton ran for re-election. Allen and Wasilewski ran for seats vacated by Dorothy Burk and Gwendolyn Williams.

## Retirements Announced

Cynthia Pearson-Matthews, Birtukan Prince, Karen Williams, Delois Williams, Carol Steiner and Geraldine Melvin have announced plans to retire on July 1. If you are planning your retirement or have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

# The Detroit Teacher Wins Eight National Awards

*The DFT has won eight national awards in the 2012 AFT Communications Network Contest:*

- **First place** in Design for The Detroit Teacher.
- **First place** in Layout for The Detroit Teacher.
- **First place** Best News Story for "Davis Aerospace High School - Where students can fly. Literally!"
- **First place** Best Feature Story for "Wrestling as a Life Lesson at Academy of the Americas" (about teacher Jose Ramirez).
- **First place** Best Original Photo for "Detroit Teacher is Renowned Muralist" (about retired art teacher Dennis Orłowski).
- **Second place** Best Periodical for The Detroit Teacher.
- **Second place** Best Editorial for "Competition versus Cooperation" by former DFT Executive Vice President Mark O'Keefe.
- **Third place** Best Profile for "Fashionista Finds Style on a Detroit Teacher's Salary" (about Pasteur teacher Yvette French).



THE DETROIT teacher

The Detroit Teacher is the official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Teachers Local 231, AFL-CIO. Member of the Union Teacher Press Association, International Labor Press Association & Michigan Labor Press.

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By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Controller

## From the Penthouse to the Outhouse

My first employer, Plante & Moran, is consistently rated one of the top 10 places to work in America. Detroit Public Schools has not yet made the list. A look at their differences may be helpful to those who would like to see DPS become a better place to work.

At Plante & Moran, employees are given a blank evaluation form before they begin their first assignment. They know what is expected. Staff is evaluated after every major assignment, usually five or more times per year.

Many DPS employees have gone years without being evaluated. Now that state law mandates an annual evaluation, employees are being evaluated on criteria that have not yet been explained to them. Some may lose their jobs because they failed to meet an attendance standard that has not yet been articulated.

Plante & Moran believes it hires professionals who will do great work if you give them what they need. DPS operates through fear and intimidation. Teachers are regularly told they will not be asked back to their school if they do not agree to every demand placed upon them, no matter how unreasonable.

Plante & Moran has a well-defined corporate culture. The current leaders have the same corporate philosophy that Frank Moran embraced over 60 years ago. From office to office from year to year, employees and clients know what to expect from Plante & Moran.

At DPS, every other year a new leader takes over with a determination to change directions. Principals are free to pursue their own individual approaches that vary widely from school to school. Then they are reassigned or terminated, and replaced by someone who takes the school in a different direction.

Plante & Moran emphasizes the importance of keeping your life in balance. Your work life, physical life, spiritual life and family life must all be in balance. Otherwise, all aspects will be adversely affected. Imbalance is bad for the employer, but worse for the employee.

DPS makes ever-increasing demands on employee's lives, and expects them all to be happy they have a job.

In 2009, Plante & Moran laid off 80 employees. The company let staff know that "...once we did it, we were done. It's not a very good work environment if everyone is looking over their shoulders." Laid-off employees got a severance package, health care and retraining.

By contrast, when DPS learned it would have 700 more DFT members than it needed for the 2012-13 school year, it held job fairs to hire additional teachers and committed to bring in more people from Teach for America. This necessitated more layoffs of experienced teachers who may never have received a negative evaluation.

Plante & Moran conducts exit interviews with employees who separate from service. They know this is their best chance to hear employees speak freely. They also know that the former employees will be an important part of the public's perception of the firm. DPS does not ask why teachers leave. While DPS misses a valuable learning opportunity, teachers are led to the inescapable conclusion that DPS just doesn't care.

## Parents Flock to Priest to Learn English

"He put his trucks in the toy box," Hailah Soofi says slowly to her adult pupils learning English. "He folded the pants and put them away." "You did a great job, he said."

Since starting an English as a Second Language adult education program, dozens of Priest School parents are doing worksheets and practicing the language of their adopted country.

Ana Gonzalez has been in the U.S. for 10 years but, without a formal English course, feels her English is at year three. She wants to speak English well so she attends morning classes at Priest five days a week.

"She's a very good teacher," Gonzalez says of Soofi, the ESL teacher. Soofi is fluent in English and Arabic. More than half of the class is Arabic speaking, the rest speak Spanish.

But Soofi speaks English to everyone.

The class started in the fall but that teacher was reassigned. There was a months-long span before adult education found Soofi.

Now Soofi has a mission to help these students make inroads with English. She understands the hardship of navigating a new world without knowing the language.

"I do feel bad that's why I'm more determined to teach them," she said.

"The parents are really enjoying these sessions," said Vida Bonacci, a Priest teacher. This, along with the Parent Resource Center, and the Family Resource Center (which is a State of Michigan Family Independence Agency offering for parents of students who attend Priest) is a unique way Priest is assisting parents.

"I do not know if an FIA office is located inside any other DPS school," Bonacci says. "The caseworker, Anita Whatley, is fabulous!"

Soofi reaches out to all the parents who happily fill the cafeteria on weekday mornings from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

"I look at them as young ESL students," she said. "There's an extra push. They're even willing to bring their children."



Hailah Soofi teaches the English class at Priest. Ana Gonzalez, center, and other Priest parents assemble at Priest to learn English.



## DFT Awards Two Scholarships

The DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund has awarded two scholarships to students at the College of Education at Wayne State University. The DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund awarded \$2,000 to Jeremy R. Hein, a Detroit resident.

The fund also awarded \$2,000 to Stephanie N. Smith of Southfield in memory of Carol C. Thomas, a former DFT union activist and executive vice president, who passed away in 2011.

The DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund gets money from donations made to honor Detroit teachers who have passed.

"In the last year we have lost two iconic DFT activists," said Paula Trilety, chair of the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund, "Carol Thomas and Sophie McGloin, who are now having a martini together and raising hell."

The DFT Retirees Chapter has been active monthly in securing contributions toward the scholarship fund. If you would like to donate to the fund, send your check or money order to the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund, 2875 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48202.



**Carolyn Shields, Dean of College of Education (at left) and Paula Trilety (far right) of the DFT Memorial Scholarship Fund are pictured with recipients Jeremy Hein and Stephanie Smith (center).**

## Field Day at Marcus Garvey

Students at Marcus Garvey Academy busted out of the school to enjoy Field Day May 24 in unseasonably balmy weather. Volleyball, train rides, games, a barbeque and face painting were all part of Field Day. Student Kazaree Powell, below right, got a henna application on her arms, then sat with educational technician Carol Bennett to get her face painted under a tree.

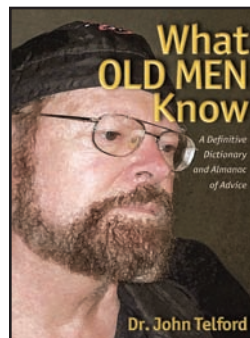




# THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

## Book Review: What Old Men Know

Dr. Wayne Dyer — a past DFT member and world-famous self-help author - has written the introduction to past DFT member John Telford's latest book, "What OLD MEN Know." The 76-year-old Telford's new book pokes savage fun at Republicans and features advice for coping with life's travails. It also contains incisive references to DPS.



Last June, Telford's memoirs "A Life on the Run" (check out [www.AlifeontheRUN.com](http://www.AlifeontheRUN.com)) earned him the Joe Louis Foundation's prestigious Spirit of the Champ Award. In addition to Dyer, others who have praised Telford and his books include Dennis Archer, John Conyers, Huel Perkins, Geoffrey Feiger, Hansen Clarke, Keith Johnson, Spencer Haywood, and the Detroit Free Press, which pronounced Telford's memoirs "Sensational!"

Telford is often heard reading from both books on his TV and radio shows on Comcast 20 Detroit on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 and on 1340 AM on Sunday afternoons at 1:45. Both books can be ordered on Amazon, at Barnes & Noble bookstores, or at Harmonie Park Press, 586-979-2077.

Dr. Dyer coached track with Telford at Pershing and writes in the introduction, "The pervasive wisdom in this edgily amusing, frankly politically skewed, yet brilliantly philosophical treatise makes it a must-read for those Sages, semi-Sages, or Sages-in-training - young and old, male and female, Democrat and Republican - who hope for a fairer future for all humankind." Any DFT member who picks up either of these books won't put them down.

## AFT Michigan Lobby Day

More than 50 DFT members attended AFT Michigan Lobby Day in Lansing May 22 to confront legislators about the state's attacks on teachers. Hundreds of public school teachers from across Michigan went to Lobby Day. They knocked on the doors of legislators and had spirited conversations. It showed those in Lansing that teachers will not be stand by silently as Republican legislators push to make Michigan, birthplace of the labor movement, a right to work state. AFT Michigan political coordinator Julie Matuzak urged teachers to gather resources and fight anti-teacher candidates in November. "If you don't like the decisions, you have to change the decision-makers," she said. "If you don't like the way they vote, vote for a different person."



**DFT members Wendy Newberry, Rhonda Chaffin, Jewel Gines and Amele Washington return to the DFT after Lobby Day.**

## TREES PLEASE!

### *Vernor Elementary School Enhances the Neighborhood*

By Alicia Brown

On March 16, the fourth- and fifth-grade students at Vernor Elementary School worked side by side with the Greening of Detroit to plant trees around the school and the neighboring community. The tree planting was a community-building endeavor involving staff, parents, neighbors and students.

The students were well prepared for tree planting. The week before, the Greening of Detroit gave the school a presentation on the importance of trees in the community and a "how to" on tree planting. This was a perfect example of science in a real world context and is aligned to the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations.

Donned in work clothes, gloves and old gym shoes, the students picked up shovels and began to dig holes. The trees – Maples, sweet gums, tulip trees, and dawn redwoods – came from a nursery where they had been allowed to grow for 10 years.

These trees weighed 200-300 pounds apiece. Thank goodness the forester was there to assist. Students had to dig a hole deep and wide enough for the "ball and burlap" covered root system to fit into the ground. Team work was the name of the game when the students rolled their tree into the hole. After each tree was straightened, they



**Vernor science teacher Alicia Brown plants trees with her students.**

filled the hole with soil and placed mulch on top. The last step was to water the tree. Each tree needs 15 gallons of water. That meant many trips to the water spout for these boys and girls.

At the end of the day, the students were tired but proud of their accomplishments. They named their trees. Some even returned the next day to continue the job in the community and brought their families to help.

Over the two-day period some 200 trees were planted in Vernor's community. The Vernor students will never look at a tree the same way again.



## Pumping Up at Spain

By Charlene Uresy

Again for the sixth year, Gloria Celina and Andre Harlan, physical education teachers at Spain School, had the entire student body - all 750 of them - participating in The World's Largest Exercise class with ACES — All Children Exercising Simultaneously.

This year was extra special because Spain was recognized by the Michigan Council of Physical Fitness, Health and Sports, the Michigan Fitness Foundation, and Farm Bureau Insurance.

The goal of all of these organizations is to teach children that physical activity is fun and healthy. This philosophy has always been part of Spain's fundamental beliefs in educating the whole child.

The ACES class started with the dance group Dynamic Vision, led by Angela Blocker. The excitement began with its performance of Beyonce's work-out video "Let's Move!," which was produced for First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign.

Farm Bureau presented a \$250 check to Principal Ronald Alexander and Gloria Celina in front of the school and visitors, including Detroit Councilman Andre Spivey, members of Cass Tech's football team, the 2012 Division 1 High School State Champions, and their coach Thomas Wilcher.

With the aid of the drum line keeping great timing, Celina, above, led the school in a series of exercises that got the heart and sweat glands pumping. Afterward the teachers walked around the track with their class, as DJ Harlan played the jams!

Spain School received special recognition from Marilyn Lieber, president and CEO of Michigan Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health, and Sports, and from Steve Paradiso of Farm Bureau Insurance who videotaped the activity and posted it on YouTube. The video can be seen by googling 2012 ACES Program at Spain Elementary in Detroit.

## Many Dimensions of Learning Art at Spain School

By Charlene Uresy

With severe budgets cuts in Detroit Public Schools, art classes have suffered. Spain School is thinking outside the box to bring art to its students.

Just in time to honor June as African American Music Appreciation Month, nationally renowned Detroit artist Tony Roko is volunteering to give Spain students an art class. Under Roko's direction, the students will paint one of the best musicians the world has ever known — a young Louis Armstrong in his childhood New Orleans neighborhood "the Battlefield" on June 5, declared as Art Day.

The children will gain environmental awareness because the work will be painted on a canvas of repurposed boards, measuring over six feet tall.



Roko brought with him the art piece of young Louis. When the children saw it, they were ecstatic and proud to be part of its creation. They were able to touch and feel the canvas of the repurposed boards, preparing students for the non-smooth surface they will paint on. Students fired questions and Roko answered them while the music of Louie Armstrong played in the

background.

The finished product will be featured during a solo show of Roko's work at the Birmingham Gallery, June 9, after which it will return to Spain School as its permanent home.

This lesson is teaching students so much more than art. They are learning about the genius of the Great Louie Armstrong. They are learning how you can take something that was tossed away and repurpose it for something else. They are learning that people in the larger Detroit community are thinking of them. And they are learning that Spain School has not given up on art and its importance in the education of its students, opening their minds to what art can bring to their world.



# IT'S POPTASTIC

## at Davison

### Elementary/Middle School

P.O.P. (Pencil on Paper) Time© is a creative quick-write where students write on a given topic for 15 minutes. Each topic of the day is accompanied by a creative, mental picture-painting introduction that helps to stir creativity in young writers. This introduction is announced daily on the school PA system.



**Brian Flaggs of Flaggs and Associates with Literacy Coach Calli Hayes-Leslie**



The quick-write concept culminated in a P.O.P.TASTIC competition held May 4 with 40 contestants in grades three through eight. Students whose stories were submitted and showcased throughout the school year gave readings to a panel of distinguished judges. The morning-long

event brought life to their written words.

The competition had 13 winners. The first-place MVP's—"Most Valuable Poppers" were Sydney Woods, Makayla Curry, Faizul Miah, Susmita Dash and Jaleel Gooden. Second-place winners were Jaquai Williams, Khi'Ara Chames-Maye, Taslima Miah and Aysha Ali. Third-place winners were Artenia Morris, Khalid Gooden, Wandy Gutierrez and Rubayath Alam.

The competition was sponsored by community partner Flaggs and Associates. The P.O.P. Time© best practice was created by Literacy Coach Calli Hayes-Leslie.



## Membership Meeting Attendance

School representatives who were in attendance for the months of April and May 2012 are listed below.

### APRIL, 2012

Academy of Americas	Clark	Drew Transition	Homebound Teaching	Nichols	Randolph
Attend.-Ctr. Northeast	Chrysler	Duree	Jamison, Mae C.	Noble	Renaissance
Bates	Clemente	Earhart	Keidan	Oakman	Sampson
Beckham	Clippert	EIDC Edison	Kettering	Osborn College Prep.	SSW
Bow	Cody DIT	Edward Duke Ellington	King J.R.	Osborn College Prep.	Schulze
Brenda Scott	Dody Upper	Farwell	Langston Hughes	Palmer Park Prep.	Speech & Hearing
Brewer	Comm. Disorders	Field, M.	Law	Parker	Trix
Brown, R.	Cooke	Finney	Logan	Pasteur	Vernor
Burton International	Denby	Fisher Lower	Ludington	Paul Robeson	VI Support
Carleton	Detroit City High	Fisher Upper	Mann	PAR	Wayne
Carstens	DDSD	For H.S.	Marquette	Pershing	West Side
Carver	DIA	Gardner	Marshall, T.	Phoenix	Western
Cass	Dixon	Golightly Ed.	Mumford	Priest	White, J.
	Dossin	Golightly CTC	Murphy	Psych. Services	Young
	Douglas	Head Start	Neinas		

### MAY, 2012

Academy of Americas	Clemente	Field, Moses	Jemison	P. Robeson	Speech Pathologist
Bagley	Clippert	Fisher Lower	King, J.R.	PAR	Thirkell
Bates	Cody—DIT	Fisher Upper	Logan	Pershing	Trix
Blackwell	Cody-Upper	Fleming	Ludington	Phoenix	Turning Point
Brewer	Detroit College Prep.	Ford, Henry	Murphy	Priest	Vernor
Bunche	DDSD	Golightly CTC	Nichols	Psych. Services	VI Support
Burton International	Dixon	Golightly Ed	Noble	Randolph	Wayne
Carleton	Drew Transition	Gardner	Oakman	Sampson	Western
Cass	Earhart	Holmes, A.L.	Osborn College Prep.	Schulze	J. L. White
Clark	EIDC	Holmes, O.W.	Palmer Park Prep	Scott	Wright, C.
	Edison	Langston Hughes	Parker	SSW-Elem. West	Young
	Farwell	Huchinson	Pasteur		



# A Career Day that Paid Off

Career day worked for Alfonso Ruiz. Growing up in Detroit, a police officer visited his school and talked to the fifth-grade Ruiz about police work. From that day forward, Ruiz wanted to be a police officer.

When he was 18 and graduated from high school, Ruiz applied at the police academy.



**Detroit Police Officer Alfonso Ruiz.**

“My ma found out and wasn’t happy,” he said. “I said, ‘OK ma I won’t be a police officer’. I went back to the steel factory where I was working.” Ruiz stayed for five years but couldn’t shake his dream of becoming a police officer. Eventually he joined the police academy and never looked back.

Ruiz recounted his career story to elementary students at Earhart Elementary School May 15 for the school’s career days. Earhart teachers Kimberly Taylor, Jennifer Hammonds, William Gardner and Rebecca Greenshields organized 18

community leaders and professionals to visit Earhart to talk about the world of work.

“One of the most important parts of my job is helping people,” Ruiz said. “Every day is something different. I like that about being a police officer.”



**Earhart counselor Kimberly Taylor, Detroit City Airport air traffic controller Salvador Cid, and teacher Jennifer Hammonds.**

## Weather Rocks Vocabulary Parade at Priest

Monica Weiss wanted a different way to promote the Math and Literacy Night May 9 at Priest Elementary School. The 15-year Detroit art teacher decided on a “Vocabulary Parade” with every kindergarten through third-grade student designing their own wearable art featuring their own unique, incredible, peculiar, visionary word.

“I put a lot of energy into the parade,” Weiss said. But as the kids piled out of the school from different doorways, harsh winds swooped up the handmade word hats. Nothing went off as planned.

Another unexpected thing happened as the good weather evaporated. The kids started running after the hats and laughing and basking in the imperfect weather. Which might, of course, be the



point of it all. As well as action research that shows building vocabulary is critical to language achievement. While the kids thought they met complete fun, Weiss thought she met complete disaster.

“Mr. [Stephen] Garcia, the assistant principal, comforted me and said it was

the weather!” Weiss said. “He said, ‘Well at least they learned some new words and got excited about Family Literacy and Math night.’ That’s looking on the sunny side!” Weiss was satisfied with the enormous success of the night that the parade was supposed to preview. “The Literacy and Math night—rocked.”



# Bunche Academy Students —

## Get Their Hands Dirty in “Teaching Gardens”



Twelve-year-old Byron Foxworth (pictured below, center, with teacher Paul Bryant), was itching to get his hands dirty.

“I just want to help,” he said, watching students plant zucchini, herbs and vegetables in garden boxes at Bunche Academy on Detroit’s east side. The American Heart Association worked with Bunche science teacher Paul Bryant to open the “teaching gardens” at the school.

The AHA wants to use its science and nutrition guidelines to teach students how to plant seeds, grow plants, harvest produce and ultimately understand the value of good eating habits.

Several studies show that participation in a school garden can have a positive impact on students’ attitudes toward fruits and vegetables.

“I think it’s an awesome idea and a great start,” Bryant said.

Byron got his chance to put the zucchini plants in fresh, black dirt and spray them with water, as well as take photographs of the event.

“The title of my article would be ‘Green Team’ because everyone is planting plants,” he said. “We’re planting a new life.”



**Printing Equipment For Sale** — The DFT is accepting the best offer for three pieces of printing equipment: an ABDICK 9850 printing press, an ABDICK 156 plate maker, and a Bourg Collators System. If you are interested, contact DFT controller Mark O’Keefe at 313-875-6775 or [mokeefe@dft231.com](mailto:mokeefe@dft231.com).





# Detroit School Social Workers Help Students with Obstacles

Anthony Stephenson was dealt a bad card. After battling months of severe abdominal pain, he was diagnosed at 13 with Crohn's, an inflammatory bowel disease.

When he entered Mumford High School he was 120 pounds.

"Now I am down to 90 pounds," the Mumford senior said. He was hospitalized three times in three years and is taking the maximum medical treatment — a feeding tube at night to get the necessary nutrients. Anthony had so much pain, he looked to the school social worker for support.

"He would come to school some days in such pain but he was determined to get an education," said Mumford school social worker Cheryl Whitehead. With his parents, Whitehead made sure the smart and serious student kept a path toward college.

"I'm learning that no matter how bad I feel I must suck it up and stay the course," Anthony said. "I want a chance to make a difference."

Whitehead submitted Anthony's name to the Mildred Ellis Scholarship Committee. Detroit school social workers established the scholarship 23 years ago to honor Ellis, the first African American director of the Office of School Social Work Service. The fund has given more than \$219,000 to 162 Detroit students who have had to overcome steep hurdles. Most of the funds come from Detroit school social workers.

Anthony won one of six \$1,000 scholarships and will study math at Western Michigan University in the fall. The six scholars, their families, and Detroit school social workers attended a May 24 dinner at the Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.

"We are extremely proud and grateful

because every little bit helps," said Anthony's father, Anthony Stephenson Sr.

"They won't be disappointed. He's a hard worker."



**Mildred Ellis scholars: Cass Tech graduate Myya Jones, school social worker Kathy Hemingway, Mumford graduate Anthony Stephenson, Pershing graduate Destiny Harris, Detroit International Academy graduate Caleb Kenya McGrady, retired school social worker Curtis Stout, Cody graduate Arin-Alexis Smith, and Western International graduate Jacqueline Vasquez.**

## Calendar

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

### JUNE

- 4 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 5 School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 7 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 14 Last day for students
- 15 Last day for teachers
- 19 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

### JULY

- 27-29 AFT Convention in Detroit