

## DFT Reaches Pay Settlement

The DFT reached a settlement in federal court on Feb. 29 over a lawsuit that challenged the emergency manager's order that cut pay and benefits.

The emergency manager issued an order on July 29, 2011 voiding parts of our Collective Bargaining Agreement, which included a pay cut, the elimination of the sick day cash out at retirement, freezing salary steps and

eliminating pay for lost preps, and other cuts. The DFT, Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals and the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees filed suit in federal court to have the order overturned. The judge urged both sides to work toward a settlement.

The settlement allows those who want to continue to work for DPS to do so and those who want to retire to receive some payment for their sick days.

The agreement includes:

- A 2.5 percent pay bonus for ALL employees on 2011-12 earnings to be paid no later than Sept. 30.
- Salary steps restored for second semester
- Lost prep pay restored for second semester

- A retirement incentive.

"Today is a happy day," DFT President Keith Johnson said. "This allows those who want to enjoy their retirement to do so. It allows those who want to work to know they'll have a place."

DPS Emergency Manager Roy Roberts said, "It's absolutely the right thing to do."

Under the retirement incentive, members who turn in their Irrevocable Separation of Service Forms by March 19, 2012 with an effective retirement date of July 1, 2012 will receive 50 percent of their sick bank cash out. (Go to the DFT website at [www.dft231.com](http://www.dft231.com) to see amount of sick day cash out and other retirement information).

## Wedding Bells at Wright Academy

The bridesmaids and groomsmen were in place. The "alter" was decorated in purple. The minister "Mr. Alphabet" was ready to perform a union that must not be divided. That is, the marriage of the letters "Q" and "U."

"Do you, Mr. U, take Miss Q to be her partner and form words like quiet, quail and question?" Mr. Alphabet asked the groom.

"I, U, take you, Q, without question or qualm, to quote and quiet, to be my partner in words, from this day forward, I won't quit," the groom promised.

The elementary grades at Charles Wright Academy took pleasure in watching the wedding of Q and U in a formal ceremony Jan. 24 in the auditorium.

Nekia Thomas, 8, enjoyed the ritual. "It was beautiful and fun and patient," she said. Thomas liked when Q and U walked down the petal drenched aisle as Mr. and Mrs. Qua with their matching candy pop rings.

First grade teachers Kim Scott and Susan Sanders put on the extravaganza, replete with food, gifts and parents enjoying the festivities.

The bride's parents and grandmother attended to watch her walk down the aisle. No tears were shed however. Everyone beamed at the parade of beautiful blended consonants with a future of literacy before them.



Wright teacher Kim Scott put on the wedding of Q and U.



# SETTLEMENT ALLOWS DFT TO RESTORE AND MOVE FORWARD

Seven months ago, AFT Detroit (DFT, DFP and DAEOE) embarked upon a groundbreaking endeavor to challenge the constitutionality of the emergency manager law, known as PA4. This archaic piece of legislation allowed an emergency manager to nullify an agreement that all three unions negotiated to help DPS recover from its own fiscal irresponsibility.

## President's Report



**Keith Johnson**

Despite more than \$93 million in concessions in 2009, the EM simply said, "I need more" and took it. We objected and set forth the wheels of justice to determine whether "word is bond."

We filed in U.S. District Court because we believed our best chance at victory was to challenge the law under the U.S. Constitution, the ultimate law of the land. We landed a "favorable" judge, Judge George Steeh, because we believed he would look at the letter and application of the law and determine who was right.

We knew that proving our case would be a daunting task, and even a victory at the district level would only mean an appeal to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. We were aptly prepared to present our case and present it well.

From the start Judge Steeh made it clear he wanted the sides to settle the

dispute without him having to make a ruling. The case would be prolonged and difficult and would have taxed the resources of the district and the union. We were ready.

We also realized that DPS seemed to have a preference to reach a settlement, on their terms! We clearly and definitively established that any settlement would have to involve fair negotiations. We did our homework; reviewing their finances and revenue, and prioritizing what we needed for our members.

Our team, particularly Executive Vice President Mark O'Keefe, Financial Analyst Patrick Falcusan, and our lead attorney Marshall Widdick, did a masterful job of analyzing the data, reviewing legal precedents, and projecting potential costs to the district. Our goal was to restore as much of the income and benefits to our members as possible, while not jeopardizing the district's path to fiscal recovery.

The restoration of the salary steps, the sick bank cash-out, and some return of the 10 percent pay reduction were a must! We also fought for compensation for oversize classes and lost prep periods.

While we did not get everything we wanted, we got what we needed to move forward and soften the financial impact on our members, particularly those ready to retire and those still on steps.

More important, we stared the emergency manager law in the face and made it blink. Our settlement, coupled with the delivery of over 260,000 signatures on petitions demanding that PA4 be put to a vote of the people, gained the attention of those who

thought that the union movement was dead and buried.

We showed our resilience and determination to stand up for our rights. This could not have been achieved without the indulgence of our members. You had to endure my silence on what was happening with the lawsuit; not because I didn't wish to tell you but because I was under court order not to speak on the discussions while they were in progress.

I pride myself in keeping the members abreast of what is happening in THEIR UNION, but now I could not. I had to endure some of our brothers and sisters accusing me of conspiring with the EM to dismantle our union. NOTHING could be further from the truth.

Now that the settlement is done, I will turn my attention to the coming negotiations for DFT relative to DPS and EAA. We will prepare for negotiations with an EM or without, depending on what happens with the petition drive.

In either circumstance I am prepared, as always, to represent the best interests of this membership. Now that DPS is far more fiscally stable than it has been in years, due in large part to the concessionary contracts we've been forced to negotiate since 2005, it is time for those who have sacrificed the most to be rewarded for their patience and sacrifice.

I am grateful for all you do and for those of you who take the time to greet me and uplift me whenever our paths cross. My thanks are not just from me, but from all who work beside me in our fight to represent you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

# Updates . . .

## Retirements Announced

Debra Finley has announced her retirement. If you have retired in the last six months and would like it announced, please call the editor at 313-875-6776.

## Staffing Changes at DFT

On March 1, the DFT Executive Board accepted Mark O'Keefe's resignation from the position of executive vice president, allowing him to be named DFT's controller. Effective March 12, O'Keefe will assume his new position, which was formerly held by Vito Peraino.

Edna Reaves, who was elected vice president in November 2010, was named the new executive vice president. Reaves will concentrate on labor issues, including member mobilization. The DFT also will benefit from her expertise in computers and technology.



Edna Reaves

As controller, O'Keefe's focus will be on the business side of running the union, and other financial matters. He will help to close out any active grievances and arbitration cases that he had been involved in. He also will assist Executive Vice President Reaves in her transition.

Initially, O'Keefe will work four days per week but hopes to reduce that to two or three days in the near future. His compensation is the same daily rate as the rest of the professional staff, which is the teacher's master's step 10. By working less than five days a week, he will be able to save the union some money.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to be of service to the union," O'Keefe said. "I look forward to continuing in a different capacity. I feel that President Keith Johnson and I have been a good team, but we are not the whole team."

## 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.

Editor — Margaret Weertz  
mweertz@dft231.com  
313-875-6776

The Detroit Federation of Teachers  
2875 West Grand Boulevard, Detroit, Michigan 48202  
(313) 875-3500

# A Home Run for Mr. Panzenhagen

By Mark O'Keefe  
DFT Executive Vice President

Ten years ago, DPS lost an excellent teacher and I lost a friend. Jim Panzenhagen taught phys ed at Clark Elementary School where I was teaching third grade. We were two white guys who lived in Grosse Pointe, liked music and sports, and wanted to teach third grade at Clark. That's a pretty small club. I picked Clark because I grew up five blocks from the school. In Jim's case, it was because his father had been a student there. When I looked at Jim, I felt I was looking at a younger, better version of myself.

Jim seemed to like everyone, and everyone liked him. Still in his 20s, and teaching phys ed to every student in the school, he seemed to turn the African proverb around. Mr. Panzenhagen was like the child who raised a whole village.

Everybody seemed to like Mr. Panzenhagen, and we all seemed to feel our own special connection, as if we were in on a secret that nobody else knew. When he tilted his head back, gave a half-smile and said "Hey!," I felt like he was acknowledging our little secret — "This is a great life!"

For one teacher, the connection was cancer. She was still fighting her own battle on March 3, 2002 when we lost Jim. Ten years later, it still hurts.

In the days that followed, his family was touched by the outpouring of emotion by so many whose lives he touched. Jim didn't get to celebrate his 30th birthday. Instead, 100 friends and family members met for lunch at a restaurant near Comerica Park and then headed to our seats in left field.

While walking to the ballpark, I told one of Jim's good friends that someone in our group would catch a home run ball. I said, "For the last week I have been convinced this will happen, and I have an overwhelming feeling it's going to be me. I just want to go on record before it happens."

I had attended over 200 Tigers games and never caught a ball. Even so, I still told the couple next to me that I expected to catch one. As fate would have it, only one home run was hit that day. Tori Hunter crushed a ball to left field and it seemed to have my name written on it. The people next to me said, "Mark, here comes your ball!"

I let it bounce on the empty seat in front of me and watched as it headed back toward the field. It hit a man's head two rows in front of me, arced back in my direction, and dropped into my cupped hands. To this day, it is the most amazing thing I have ever seen.

I held the ball up with one hand and pointed to Jim's father with the other. I knew the ball wasn't mine. He reluctantly accepted, but insisted that I write the date on the ball and sign my name. I did, but I still don't feel right about it. A few weeks later, my brother-in-law asked me what I thought this story meant. I said, "I don't know," but that doesn't feel right either.

What I should have written on the ball was what Jim would have said to us: "I'm okay. Be happy." That feels right.



Mark O'Keefe



## Davison Celebrates 13th Anniversary TV Broadcast

**T**hirteen years ago when Judy Robinson and Tony Shopinski dreamed up the idea of broadcasting Davison School news, they barely had the equipment or the know-how. Today, their show is so polished they win awards every year at the Michigan Film Festival.

These dynamic teachers are planning to retire this year. So the 13th anniversary broadcast on Feb. 17 was particularly celebratory. Several staff members joined them as well as the regular student anchors.

In all 13 years, a peculiar sight has been missing from the broadcasts. Robinson and Shopinski have never been on camera.

"We always say we have faces for radio," Shopinski says. They use student anchors and other teachers for the broadcasts. One day no one showed up to the early morning taping. They had absolutely no teachers or students to stand in. So they used puppets.

"But we decided to go on the last show," Shopinski says. It promises to be an emotional exit. "Judy cries at the drop of a hat."

The last broadcast with Shopinski and Robinson producing will be on the last day of school on June 14. Stay tuned.



## Detroit Teacher Owns Massive Collection Of Sports Memorabilia, Black History

**I**f you need a photo of the 1968 World Series or a Joe Louis fight – or practically any other event in Michigan history, Alan Feldman has the original newspapers they appeared in.

Over 50 years, the retired Detroit teacher has amassed one of the largest newspaper, sports memorabilia and black

history collections in Michigan. Now he is looking for a good adoption.

"My house is probably one of the best sports museums ever," Feldman said. Several prominent collectors have visited Feldman for specific memorabilia. The Detroit International Auto Show bought his Detroit newspapers from 1904

through 1907. The Charles Wright African American History Museum has visited his collection more than 10 times.

Feldman's dream is to open a closed Detroit school to house a museum of his 200,000 newspapers and memorabilia. He wants to showcase historic information about the

Detroit Public Schools for Detroit school children. At the district, that vision fell on blind eyes.

"My stuff is incredible," the 31-year DPS teacher said. He has newspapers dating back to 1848. His newspapers decorate the walls of Great Lakes Crossing Mall. He proposed using them to decorate Cobo Hall.

A short time ago, Feldman sent 50 newspapers to Mayor Dave Bing on his basketball career. More than anything, Feldman wants a caretaker for his collection at a Detroit Public School.

"Kids would love this sort of thing," said Feldman who retired in 2001 after working at Nolan, Farwell and Cleveland schools.

So far his immaculately-kept collection is still waiting for a new home and a larger audience. Anyone interested in exhibiting these collections can contact Feldman at [alanfeldman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alanfeldman@sbcglobal.net).



# DFT Asked to Support Postal Workers

By Paul Felton

**Y**ou might have heard that the Postal Service is losing money because the Internet and other forms of communication have made mail outdated. You heard wrong.

The Post Office is losing money because it is under attack from Congress, especially those right-wing extremists who hate unions, workers and public institutions.

The attack on postal workers is similar to the nationwide attack on teachers. One attack is intended to weaken the teacher unions and at the same time undermine the public school system. The other attack is intended to weaken the postal unions and to dismantle the Postal Service.

## The Congressional Attack

In 2006 Congress passed a law that requires the Postal Service to set aside \$5 billion a year to guarantee health benefits for retirees 75 years into the future. That's money set aside for people who haven't even been born yet! This money cannot be used to cover operating expenses; it must be set aside by law. Without this law, the Postal Service's revenue would've exceeded expenses over the last several years.

Last May, the American Postal Workers Union signed a contract that preserved our No Layoff clause and avoided monetary givebacks for current employees (It did have a lower starting salary for new hires, and other provisions that will save the Postal Service \$3.8 billion over the life of the contract). Congressman

Darrell Issa of California, who heads the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, held hearings at which he quizzed union and management alike and denounced the contract because it did not take away enough from our members!

Congressman Issa has used his power as Committee Chair to block legislation that would eliminate the \$5 billion set-aside that is causing the USPS red ink – and he has introduced legislation demanding massive layoffs, plant closures and Post Office closings.

Postal management, assuming no solution is forthcoming from Congress, has announced plans to close as many as 3,600 Post Offices nationwide, and up to 300 processing plants. The 3,600 Post Offices are primarily in rural areas (where the Post Office is critical to the life of the community) and poor urban areas (where many residents lack reliable transportation). There are 10 post offices in Detroit under consideration for closing. And closing the 300 plants will delay mail processing. Management is proposing to relax the service standards so that mail that used to be delivered overnight would now be classified as 2-3 day mail.

There are a number of bills in Congress to address the postal deficit. Some of these bills would require massive cutbacks. In other words, they are attacking our jobs and your mail service – to address an artificially created financial crisis. Like the boy who murdered his parents and then asked the judge to show mercy because he is an orphan, Congress robbed the Postal Service of \$5 billion a year

and then pointed to the Post Office's deficit as evidence that it needs to be dismantled.

## What We Want

Of course, we want to preserve our jobs and our standard of living. Remember that our continued employment allows us to contribute to your community's tax base and our spending contributes to the economy.

We want to maintain a reliable and efficient mail service that gets a first class letter anywhere in the country quite rapidly for just 45 cents.

We want to maintain six-day delivery.

We want to maintain Post Offices in every community in the country. The Postal Service was never intended to turn a profit; it was intended to break even and without Congressional interference we could do that. No community should be considered too small or too poor to be deserving of our service.

There are two bills in Congress that present positive solutions. I urge DFT members to contact their representatives and ask them to support HR-1351 (in the House) and S. 1853 (in the Senate). Please spread the word among your friends and neighbors and in your classes if that is appropriate. You will be helping your union brothers and sisters but most of all, you will be helping your community.

*Paul Felton is an Executive Board member of the 480-481 Area Local of the APWU, Legislative Director for the Michigan Postal Workers Union, and on the Executive Board of the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO.*

## Detroit Teacher Visits the White House

Connie Atkinson, a 14-year Detroit science teacher, has been entering science fairs and contests for years. This year, her student's project caught the eye of President Barack Obama. Atkinson and seventh-grader Suzan Shalhout were invited to the White House Science Fair on Feb. 7.

"The paparazzi has almost cleared out," Atkinson said about the stream of media interviews since her trip to Washington, D.C. The two were sponsored by the Star Base program from Selfridge Air Force Base for their 2011 GLOBE project "Water, Water in the Ground, Who is the Cleanest One Around?" originally presented at an Ohio conference last April.

Shalhout used GLOBE hydrology protocols to test tap water in several communities to determine which had the safest drinking water. The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program is a worldwide hands-on school science program.



Another of Atkinson's former students is a junior and was chosen as a NASA High School Women in STEM Scholar. She will work on a NASA mission this summer in Houston.

"I'm so geeked over that too," Atkinson said.



# THE DETROIT NEWSMAKERS

## Science and Good Works at Clippert

By Kathryn Meloche

The Clippert Academy Science Olympiad Team won a \$500 grant from the Michigan Chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). The NDIA gives grants annually for projects in STEM Education (science, technology, engineering and math).

Clippert will use the funds for supplies and the fees for its Science Olympiad Program. The team is 20 students strong this year and looking forward to success at the regional competition in March.

Clippert Academy is the only Detroit Public School with a Science Olympiad Team. Pictured above is the team preparing baskets for our annual Christmas food drive. We donated 14 baskets of food and gift certificates to needy Clippert families this year.



At right, Mayor Dave Bing with Erica Rolack, academic engagement administrator. Above, Mike Jackson, of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, with principal Ronald Alexander.



## Carpenters Build Generosity at Spain

By Charlene Uresy

This was the 15th year the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, led by Executive Secretary-Treasurer Mike Jackson, sponsored the Carpenters Christmas for Kids at Spain School.

They came on Dec. 16 with Santa Claus and splendid gifts for each of the 700 students at Spain. It is always a great day when they visit. Along with the gift giving, city leaders, TV news reporters, athletes, and other celebrities visit the school and speak to the students. This year Mayor Dave Bing visited.

But this year the carpenters made it even more special. Jackson presented Principal Ronald Alexander with a check for \$10,000. The money will be used for a clothing closet, a food pantry, and updating the school's technology. Spain School is very grateful!

## Detroit Schools Place in Future City Competition

Detroit students showed off their skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). They also competed against more than 500 students throughout Michigan in the 17th Michigan Regional Future City Competition Jan. 30 at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

FLICS, the Foreign Language Immersion & Cultural Studies School, won the "Most Healthy Community" award. Paul Robeson Malcolm X Academy won the "Paul Tucker Jr. Excellence in Engineering Award."

The competition challenges middle school students to envision a city in the future in which they would like to live. Guided by their teachers and volunteer engineer mentors, students begin working in September to develop a computer model, write an essay, and build a physical model using engineering and math principles. Then they present their creation to professional judges during a daylong competition.



**The FLICS team (from left): mentor Fred Russell, Nicholas Bridgeforth, Rachel Kirichu, John Morrison, Summer Boxley, Zharia Taylor, Kasia Rivers, and science teacher Heather Kuehne. The FLICS students are all sixth-graders.**



Keiona Nichols, center, with U.S. Rep. Hansen Clarke and A.L. Holmes teacher Robin Bush in Washington, D.C.

## A.L. Holmes Goes to Washington

Detroit student Keiona Nichols and teacher Robin Bush traveled to Washington D.C. Feb. 7 to attend Capitol Hill Day. Keiona was selected by the staff of A.L. Holmes School to represent Michigan. Keiona is a special education student assigned to Bush's classroom. She met with nine members of Congress to explain how Special Olympics/Project Unify has changed her life and made a difference in her outlook on her education.

Capitol Hill Day is organized each year to send a representative from each state to talk to congress members since budget cuts went into effect for Special Olympics. This was the first time Detroit has sent a student. Keiona represented Michigan and Detroit Public Schools very well. She even had offers from some congress members to visit A.L.Holmes. In all, Keiona met with Congressmen Sander Levin, Dan Benishek, Gary Peters, Hansen Clarke, Carl Levin, Dale Kildee, Tim Walberg and John Conyers.

## Beard's First Spanish Class — For Teachers

Liz Vasquez, a Detroit Public Schools paraprofessional and parent, started teaching Spanish to the teachers at Beard Early Childhood Center. The teachers each pay her \$5 a lesson and meet across the street at El Bosque Salon.

They meet after school and learn conversational Spanish to speak with parents. The teachers and other staff who attend are beginning to challenge each other speaking Spanish as much as they can at school. At some of the Friday meetings, 75 percent of the staff have attended.

"It is actually pretty fun," said Ann Crowley, a Beard teacher. "The parents will love us at conferences when they hear us converse using some Spanish finally."



## Author's Tea at Thurgood Marshall School

Thurgood Marshall Elementary School hosted an Author's Tea for 60 students and parents on Jan. 30 to honor students who published their first novels. The novice authors wrote several stories about their families, friends and fun times at school. All of the books were bound with creative covers by Studenttreasures Publishing.

Social Studies teacher Vicki Troup, above, sponsored the Author's Tea and worked with students to proceed through the writing process in order to have their books completed in November. Principal Sharon Lee welcomed the many parents and students



who attended the first Author's Tea on a cold January morning.

The students enjoyed receiving a certificate along with a free copy of their published book to share with their family. After the awards ceremony, attendees enjoyed cookies and a delicious array of teas from raspberry, lemon, black, green, mango and others.

The Author's Tea was a great success with so many students expressing their creativity in stories and having their writing come to life in an actual novel they can feel, read and share with friends and family. One day we might read books and stories from these future authors.



# Burying a Bully

Students and staff members held a funeral for a bully at Catherine Blackwell Institute on Jan. 25. They asked students to sign an anti-bullying pledge and put violence to rest.

Carl Hankins, Blackwell's assistant principal, conducted a survey this year and found 76 percent of the students had either been bullied or knew someone who was. More surprising was the number of girls – 60 percent – who were the bullies in these cases.

"I've seen a shift from when boys were more violent to girls," Hankins said. "Girls are being witnesses or victims of violence and they're turning that around and being perpetrators of violence."

The school counselor, Cheryl Germany-Turner, started several initiatives to counter this. She announces a word each month and students write about these words. The Bully Burial also involved writing. Each student had to write something that would keep them from bullying, go through the processional, and put their oaths in the casket. This is the beginning of a complete plan to mentor Blackwell's boys and girls.



**Cathy Wilkins, instructional specialist; assistant principal Carl Hankins, Rev. Michael Searcy, of the DPS Safe and Drug Free Schools Committee, counselor Cheryl Germany-Turner, and Shaton Ireland, noon hour aide.**

## Grants

### Creative Teachers

ING's Unsung Heroes Awards are up for interested applicants – educators who have created break-through projects that bring their teaching to new heights. Each year the Unsung Heroes program selects 100 teachers to receive grants from \$2,000 to \$25,000 that help make their innovative classroom projects a reality. Deadline: April 30, 2012. For info, visit [ing@scholarshipamerica.org](http://ing@scholarshipamerica.org).

### Technology

Educators interested in increasing technology education may apply for the EdTech Conference grant from eInstruction. The grant provides teachers with information on best practices and integrating technology. The \$3,000 grant includes free loaner technology for every presentation. Schools that host a conference will also be provided materials. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit [edtechconference@einstruction.com](mailto:edtechconference@einstruction.com).

### Psychology Learning

The American Psychological Foundation is taking applications for its Pre-College Grant program to support high quality education in psychology and nurture the next generation of psychologists. The up to \$20,000

grants will go to programs that focus on the education of talented high school students. Deadline: May 1, 2012. For info, visit [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org).

### Early Childhood

The LEGO Children's Fund makes quarterly matching grants to support early childhood education and technology and communication projects. Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000. Deadline: April 15, 2012. For info, visit [www.legochildrensfund.org](http://www.legochildrensfund.org).

### Bluegrass Awareness

The Foundation for Bluegrass Music offers matching grants to support the awareness of Bluegrass music through its Bluegrass in the Schools Program. Bluegrass music, a relatively new form, is one of the very few styles to originate in the U.S. Matching grants of \$200 are available. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit <http://ibma.org>.

### Teacher Exchanges

America Councils for International Education is offering opportunities for educators to expand their international cultural knowledge through Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Educational seminars. The U.S. teacher trips to different countries are financially

supported by ECA. Participants' travel and program costs are covered. The next exchanges are to Argentina, Brazil or Thailand. Deadline: March 30, 2012. For info, visit [www.americancouncils.org](http://www.americancouncils.org).

### Healthy Students

ING has partnered with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education to support schools that create running programs for their students to encourage a healthy lifestyle. ING Run for Something Better has developed a school-based running program for boys and girls in grades 4-8. The program will provide 50 prizes of \$2,500 for schools that plan to create a running program or expand an existing one. Deadline: May 15, 2012. For info, visit [www.or-angelaces.com](http://www.or-angelaces.com) or [naspe@aahperd.org](mailto:naspe@aahperd.org).

### Young Scientist

The Young Scientist Challenge, sponsored by Discovery Education and 3M, is open to students in grades 5-8. Students enter by creating a two-minute video that explains an idea they have for a new invention designed to solve an everyday problem. Ten finalists receive \$1,000 and the top young scientist receives \$25,000. Deadline: April 19, 2012. For info, visit [YSC@Discovery.com](mailto:YSC@Discovery.com).



# Another Side to School Bullying

By Ron Seigel

At a time when some teenagers use Facebook to bully and humiliate others, one 13-year-old student — Natalie Hess — has designed a Facebook page encouraging kids to take action to stop bullying and prevent the suicides that are sometimes caused by bullying.

Teachers and students who want to see it can type [www.facebook.com/savealifeandstopbullying](http://www.facebook.com/savealifeandstopbullying). Teachers can encourage students to read her material and start their own efforts.

"Together everything is possible," she noted.

However, there is another side to school bullying — bullying by adults. Those facing it may not only feel condemned by their peer group but by the voice of adult authority, which represents the voice of adult experience. They are likely to feel condemned by the entire world.

A 2005 study by Dr. Stewart Twemlow, a psychiatrist, who directs the Peaceful Schools and Communities Project at Baylor College of Medicine Menninger Child and Family program, said 45 percent of the teachers in the sample said they bullied a student at one point in their careers.

The researchers in the survey defined teacher bullying as someone using "his or her power to punish, manipulate or disparage a student beyond what will be a reasonable disciplinary procedure."

Darlene Koenig and Rosalyn Hester Daniel wrote that bullying can involve name calling, taunting, cultural slurs, teasing, stereotyping and belittling.

Sometimes teachers have either intentionally or inadvertently inspired students to bully other students.

In an article that appeared in the fall issue of *Teaching Tolerance*, a magazine by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Koenig and Daniels described how a kindergarten teacher berated a child who had problems keeping his work area neat.

"Your area looks like a pig sty," she said and mocked him by crying, "Piggy! Piggy! Oink! Oink! Oink!"

Later someone coming into the classroom saw other kids surrounding the child, yelling "Piggy! Piggy!" and making pig sounds.

The teacher denied she had encouraged this behavior, maintaining she simply failed to notice it. The child, though, was in the center of his mocking classmates and was crying.

The teacher involved was clearly trying to use humiliation to maintain her standards of behavior.

Some, though, may not have this excuse.

I remember many years ago, when I was an elementary school student in a suburban school district, a teacher caught a kid crying and referred to him ever since as "Weepy Jones." I felt a profound gratitude toward whatever cosmic forces existed that the teacher never caught me on the occasions when I could not hold back my tears.

One time the teacher saw a girl talking to herself and announced to the class she must be crazy. Even then I was skeptical that talking to oneself represented a sign of mental illness and doubted even more that such public humiliation was an effective treatment for psychological disturbances.

Today I wonder about what lasting harm this might have done to her and what harm such treatment may be causing other kids in the same position.

One hopes teachers today can recognize bullying and show the same insight and courage demonstrated by some of the students who are working to prevent it.

*Ron Seigel is a freelance writer who lives in Highland Park, MI*

## African American Legacy Exhibit Visits Spain

By Charlene Uresy

Spain School had the privilege to host a ribbon cutting in December for the Know Your History American Legacy Magazine mobile exhibit. American Legacy is an African-American magazine that focuses on history, culture and the contributions African-Americans have made in the world.

Literacy Coach Tiffany Taylor-Tait and Vencent Kirkwood, a volunteer reader at Spain and a marketing director,

coordinated the festivities that included Rodney Reynolds, founder and publisher of the magazine.



**Rodney Reynolds, founder and publisher of American Legacy Magazine, and Spain literacy coach Tiffany Taylor-Tait.**

The distinguished guests were greeted by the orchestra, cheerleaders, who made original cheers to welcome them, and a VIP lunch reception. Guests included Alvin Wood, assistant superintendent, Tom Choske, from the office of U.S. Rep. Hanson Clarke, and Willie McAllister, DPS fine and performing arts director.

American Legacy magazine is a free publication found in many Detroit Public Schools, libraries, churches and community centers. Reynolds and owner Harry Kurtz understand what a gem they have in educating Detroit students with this museum quality exhibit.

Vivian Johnson, eighth-grade language arts teacher, took full advantage of the mobile unit visit. Her students wrote reviews on various issues of the magazine. Principal Ronald Alexander invited the community to visit the exhibit with the students and staff, who marveled at what they saw. The visitors wondered whether the exhibit would visit other schools. Reynolds and Kurtz said they would love to see that happen.

Spain School did such a wonderful job hosting the exhibit and making Reynolds, who flew in from New York, feel at home that he spent the entire day at Spain. The attendees could see he was touched by the gratitude of having the exhibit visit Spain.

# Understanding Effective Instruction

More than 200 Michigan teachers and administrators jammed a conference room in East Lansing on Jan. 24 to discuss teacher evaluation. A new state law requires teachers to be evaluated annually. And that begs the question: By what objective means?

Stephen Fink, executive director of the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, conducted the conference sponsored by the Education Alliance of Michigan.

"We're in a whole new terrain and it's a high stakes terrain," Fink said. He urged districts to develop teacher evaluation rubrics in collaboration with teachers and administrators.

"Absolutely involve the teachers," he said.

Administrators shouldn't look to see how they would teach a lesson, but is the lesson being effectively taught?

Conference attendees watched videos of real teachers in the classroom and were instructed to "notice" not "judge" specific elements of their teaching. The attendees then rated the teachers.

"We were all over the map," said David Hecker, AFT Michigan president. "You can see how complex evaluating a teacher can be."

Panelists said a rubric should be easy to use, it should be concise, and there should be no fewer than four observations before rating a teacher. Fink also cautioned that policy and rubrics are only the starting points to improving teacher quality in Michigan.

"It's easy to put the policy language in place," he said. "It's much more difficult to put the monetary and other investments in place that teachers are deserving of, that principals are deserving of," he said.

"Are we prepared to make the investment necessary to ensure a proficient and distinguished teaching force?"



**Detroit Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) consultants Kim Radden, Vanessa Parnell, Helen Harven, Jeana Harper, Ivy Bailey and Kim Cole-Murray attended the conference.**



**The team: ed tech Malcolm Arnell, literacy coach Sharon Adams, instructional specialist Cassandra Hampton, and computer tech Bennett Nowicki.**

## Learning Village Makes Strides at Coleman A. Young

It's the perfect storm at Coleman A. Young School for Learning Village. All the right conditions seem to be propelling its success. Every classroom has a webpage. Now the students and parents are being trained in how to access the Parent Student Learning Village from home.

"It's like that spotlight school that's really working hard," said Brent Hartsell, Learning Village project manager from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In February, a core of staff held parent workshops on Learning Village, the comprehensive "super store" portal into the DPS curricula. It will help parents keep abreast of their children's learning.

With a cart of Macbooks dispersed in Cynthia Bell's fifth-grade class, the students learned to show their parents how to access the parent resource website, visit classroom web pages and check homework assignments.

At one parent workshop in January, 30 parents attended and interest went viral.

"Parents started talking to other parents," said instructional specialist Cassandra Hampton, "Then the parents started calling, 'How can I get the code?'"

Literacy coach Sharon Adams told the fifth-graders, "This is for you and your parents. The math is your exact math workbook. This allows you not to have to take your books home. So I don't want to hear, 'I left my book at school.'"

Bell said 95 percent of her students have personal computers at home. Further, she is teaching to a generation who like screens and moving at their own pace.

While Bell's classroom is a beautiful showcase of U.S. Presidents, continents, vocab words, multiplication tables, angles and lines, an anatomy torso, magnets and the globe, the Macbooks have all that too. The team at Coleman A. Young realize they are meeting a new generation of learners on their own turf.



# Diversity: *Being Different, Liking It and Sharing It*



**Farwell Counselor B.J. Foster.**

Counselor B. J. Foster likes to create a calm and creative setting for her Farwell School students. She starts by putting on Mozart, Beethoven or Chopin in the media center. When she moved to Farwell this year she brought her music selection and art supplies.

"I just assumed she'd do traditional counseling," said Carol Moore, Farwell's academic engagement officer. "Then she showed me her portfolio and said, 'I can counsel students and teach them art.'"

Foster's students created such interesting artwork that they entered a contest sponsored by the Detroit Diversity Council of the Detroit Federal Executive Board. Their piece won the grand prize in a contest on "Diversity Around Me."

Tanisha Holmes-Garris, of the Diversity Council, had an idea to have children define diversity.

"As we get older, we have defined notions of diversity," Holmes-Garris said. "Children typically just make a friend and it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from."

The council sponsored a student art

market and asked students what diversity means. One student said: "It's being different and liking it and sharing it."

Foster and her students accepted the Diversity Council's award Feb. 28 when the Detroit Federal Executive Board, which represents multiple federal agen-

cies in Detroit, attended a ceremony at Farwell.

"Your piece had a wow factor," said Sana Isho, chair of the Diversity Council. "Unless you embrace a person's diversity, you're not going to learn from them."

## *Calendar*

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

### **MARCH**

- 8** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 13** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 19** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 20** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

### **APRIL**

- 6-13** Schools Closed, Easter Break
- 17** Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 17** School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 19** General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 19** Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.