

# ROIT teacher MAKERS

## TECHNICAL CENTER

### Makeovers for J.L. White Students

By Cora Duncan Foster

"A strong, positive self-image is the best possible preparation for success," J. Brothers once stated. The cosmetology students at Breithaupt Career & Technical Center know the importance of a positive self-image. So they used their skills and talents to perform services such as facials, manicures, and various hairstyles for students from Jerry L. White Center High School.

"Our students are very excited when they hear we are going to Breithaupt," said Kellise Watts, a teacher at J.L. White, a school for cognitively impaired students.

Breithaupt offers programs in trade and industry, technology, hospitality and food services, and cosmetology for high school students. After receiving services, Shantiniq Futch said, "I would like to come here and learn how to do nails."

Anyone interested in student enrollment or services at Breithaupt CTC may contact the school at (313) 866-9623.



**Top row—Breithaupt CTC: Winnye Knight, Special Instructor; Nicole McCoy, Senior Student; Destiny Cobb, Junior Student; Diamond Waters, Junior Student; Demeko Crenshaw, Senior Student; Daphne Gresham-Gaddy, Special Instructor.**  
**Bottom Row—Jerry L. White Center High School: Ramona Vincent, Guidance Counselor; Students: Antoinetta Johnson, Shantiniq Futch, Eman Al-Sharejy, Jada Hewlett; Kimberly Drew, Parapro; and Kellise Watts, Daily Living Teacher.**



## Mann Visits the 6th Precinct

By Pam Namyslowski

On Feb. 4, Mann Elementary School staff and students visited the 6th Precinct of the Detroit Police Department. Students delivered get well cards and letters for the four officers who were involved in the Jan. 23 tragic shooting that occurred there. Students expressed their gratitude for all officers who work at the 6th Precinct by making cards for them as well.

Mann students brought cookies, pastries, fruit and other snacks to show their appreciation of the men and women in blue. Meanwhile, students were able to observe the roll call for the afternoon shift as well as a presentation by the Michigan State Police for Commander Brian Davis and Officer David Anderson who were shot in the rampage.

Tyler Welch, a fifth-grader, read his moving letter for Commander Davis.

"You are a champion," Welch said. "You met danger at the 6th Precinct. You didn't run away. You showed strength and courage. Thank God for a commander like you. I am glad you survived when you got shot. Not only does your family need you, the people of Detroit need you, too."

## Student Finds Success at Veterans Hospital

Successful transition from school to work is the point of what we do. For Gerald Canasty, a sophomore at Turning Point/Johnson McKinney Center, he learned to fill an application, take a bus, and work in a kitchen at Veteran's Hospital, thanks to his transition specialist DeLisle Horton-Willis.



Work based learning programs allow students to experience the world of work in a non-threatening environment dedicated to their success. Students experience potential career opportunities without making firm commitments to a profession. They learn work skills such as: time management, interpersonal relations, follow through, team work, listening, tenacity, problem solving, and integrity.

Turning Point/Johnson McKinney Center serves about 125 severely emotionally impaired students in kindergarten through grade 12 from Detroit, Harper Woods, Highland Park, Hamtramck and Grosse Pointe.

Canasty, 16, started such a work program at Veterans Hospital in Detroit's medical center in January. Horton-Willis taught him to ride the DOT bus from school to work and then home. Together they completed the intricate application for Veterans Hospital. Eventually he was placed in the kitchen where he immediately found his space. In the kitchen he learned to prepare patient trays, set-up for the cook, and prepare and cook select items.

"The Veterans staff has been extremely supportive and attentive," Horton-Willis says. "This experience has reinforced for Gerald the need for a career and future employment."

Now Gerald is looking forward to a career in the food service industries via Detroit Public Schools' career and technical centers. It's a journey where the first steps have been taken.

## MORE NEWSMAKERS

### Detroit Grad Sings at White House

Christa Shephard, a 2008 Detroit School of Arts graduate, performed at the White House on Feb. 26. She auditioned and won the opportunity to sing four solos, including "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." Shephard is the daughter of Adria Cox Shephard, a resource room teacher at Palmer Park Preparatory Academy. Shephard is a music education student at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. The 20-year-old with the golden voice performed at Carnegie Hall in 2007 under the tutelage of Detroit teacher Shiela Sipes. "She opened up the world of classical music to me," Shephard says of Sipes, who has retired. "She's like a second mother to me."



**DOSSIN CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY** — Dossin Elementary School honored black history March 23 with a program celebrating African dance as well as African-American leaders in the automotive industry and the United Auto Workers. In a tribute to the book "Driven" about auto industry's African American trailblazers, the upperclassmen performed roles of black leaders in the automotive industry. Students also performed dances by the Baga, Nalou and Landoma ethnic groups of northwest Guinea as well as modern classics like Earth, Wind and Fire's "September."

### Pulaski Goes All Out for March Reading

Linda Howard kicked into gear because March was upon her. Howard, the literacy coach at Pulaski School, like all good people in literacy, knows March is Reading Month.

So Howard coordinated a series of events. She invited WJLB radio personality Coco to speak to the kids about the importance of reading. Howard asked children's book author Todd Zoellick to read his book "Daniel Harrington Fairbanks the Third and the Great Camping Adventure."

On the March 2 kickoff day, Pulaski was riddled with quest readers. Teachers throughout the building rallied to read in different styles. First-grade teacher Deborah Syme, who introduced a different genre every week, let a special student hold her Clifford the Dog stuffed animal while she read. This week was Dr. Suess and Syme read her own ragged book from childhood — "Bartholomew and the Oobleck."

Howard is thrilled with the results — seeing more kids picking up books for pleasure reading. "It was an excellent experience here," she said. "They caught the reading bug."



Pictured from left are Pulaski counselor Lizzie Fore, math coach Latricia Ward, technology coach Karen Keffer, Principal Karen Abbott, and literacy coach Linda Howard.

### Glazer School Draws Detroit Celebrities

Glazer Elementary School asked Detroit celebrities to read at their school and they said yes. Detroit's First Lady Yvette Bing visited March 23 and read "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" to Dolores Dodson's fourth-grade class. She entertained questions about her career and family life. She also complied with a request to give a young man an autograph on his arm. Detroit Red Wing Justin Abdelkader visited March 7 and read his favorite book to Scott Buckberrough's second-grade class: "The Little Engine that Could." "My mom and dad always told me to do my homework first," Abdelkader told the kids, "so I could go out and play."



Top photo: First Lady Yvette Bing with student Noorah Khalid.

Photo at left: Red Wing Justin Abdelkader with Glazer teacher Scott Buckberrough.

## Davison Celebrates 12-Year TV Show

When Davison Elementary School teachers Tony Shopinski and Judy Robinson started their video broadcast, they never expected it to continue every morning for the next 12 years.

It's been quite a commitment on the part of the cast and teachers who arrive by 7 a.m. each day to film. There's the weather, a healthy tip, the school news, sports, this day in history, and "did you know?"

The show has welcomed guest appearances by Curtis Granderson, Robert Bobb, Martha Scott (Davison is her alma mater) and Steven Gray, Time magazine correspondent.

"When I first started I was nervous," said Jaleel Gooden, a 12-year-old who's anchored the program for two years. "But the adults were more nervous."

When the school got closed circuit TV, Robinson told Shopinski, "Let's do one show."

The teachers have witnessed lots of successes. One anchor became president of her Northern High School class and invited Shopinski and Robinson to her graduation. She got a full-ride scholarship to the University of Michigan to pursue medicine.

"We were hoping she'd go into broadcast journalism," Shopinski said. The students coming out of the program develop poise, confidence and reliability. They improve in reading, geography, and math – to convert the weather around the world from Celsius. The show consistently wins "Best of Show" awards at the Michigan Student Film Festival at the Detroit Film Theater.

Robinson has spent her entire 38-year career at Davison undertaking myriad school activities with Shopinski. "When people come here they don't want to leave," she says.

The team, however, expects to retire next year.

"Hopefully someone will pick up the slack," Robinson says with moistening eyes. "I'm going to be crying all next year."



Davison teachers Judy Robinson and Tony Shopinski with students Mariah Owens and Jaleel Gooden

## Detroit Students Take to Archery



Jose Ramirez likes to give his southwest Detroit students different experiences. The Academy of the Americas physical education teacher has introduced wrestling and now archery.

"A lot of our kids have never seen a bow, much less shot one," Ramirez says of the heavily Hispanic school population. "I like to provide the kids with different learning experiences. If they don't get it here, where are they going to get it?"

At a February competition, the gym started filling as one-man-show Ramirez put up caution tape, hung the bows, and positioned the targets.

"You will be competing against the best students from around the state of Michigan," he told the fifth- through eighth-graders. "We are one of the only schools in Detroit doing this so you should be proud."

Ashley Chapa won a bow last year as one of the top shooters. Chapa took so well to archery that her dad constructed an archery lane behind two abandoned houses for her to practice.

Abigail Martinez, new to the school this year, refused to pick up a bow.

"She was kind of a bitter kid and didn't want to try anything," Ramirez said. "After forcing her to give it a try, she must have hit a center." Martinez slowly took to it and placed ninth in the state out of more than 100 shooters.

"Talk about a transformation," the coach said. "She gives me high-fives. Is this the same kid? She's my success story this year because now she smiles and just seems to be happy."

Ramirez didn't know anything about archery but took a course to train himself and started the program with \$2,500 in grants he wrote from the Michigan Department of Resources and the Sierra Club.

The grants paid dividends: the Academy placed second in the state competition.

But Ramirez points to a huge cardboard box stuffed with cross country skis.

"See that," he says. "That's my next little project."

# How to Report Job Assaults

By **Mershira Oliver**  
DFT Labor Relations Administrator

Unfortunately, sometimes hard working and dedicated Detroit teachers and other DFT members are assaulted on the job. It is critical to follow procedures during those challenging moments after an assault.



**Mershira Oliver**

Over the last few years there has been a disconnect regarding the steps to follow, who should complete the necessary forms, and how to make sure the situation is handled correctly.

I have been told by some members that they were not given instructions or not told to go to the industrial clinics for medical assistance. One member stated her administrators did not

relieve her of her duties to compose herself and she remained in the class until the end of the day.

Three years ago, the district was on the right path to developing a plan or checklist for student assaults against DPS employees. I was optimistic the process would put all stakeholders on the same page with regard to reporting assaults.

Unfortunately the committee did not complete its task because of various agendas, disagreements on verbiage, and conflicts regarding the definition of assault.

Not to be deterred, I want to share as much as I can regarding the necessary forms and departments to be contacted. Hopefully, the parties will convene and complete the checklist soon.

Here's the process for teachers assaulted on the job by students and, increasingly, parents.

- First, members should notify their school administrator (principal or

assistant principal). Do not delay in notifying the administrator in charge.

- If your building has public safety, make sure you inform them.
- The accused student should go to the office/public safety area.
- Staff members must fill out the "Form 63 Undesirable Incident Report" and the "Form 48 Report of Injury" (if necessary) and make a copy for your records. The completed forms are given to the school administrator for the start of an investigation and submission to the necessary offices such as Risk Management and Public Safety (if school is without an officer).
- In the event the assaulted member is unable to complete the forms herself, the Building Representative, school union committee member, or any DFT member should assist to ensure the forms are completed. We must document accurately when assaults happen.

- If you are injured, make sure that you go to a board-approved industrial clinic (and have the administrator's signature on the form). Do not wait. Go the same day so you receive medical assistance.

- Once members have completed both forms, they must be submitted to DPS offices within 24 hours of the incident. That responsibility belongs to the administrator or their designee, often public safety or assistant principals (this is not a DFT member responsibility).

- I recommend that a student referral is completed with as many details as possible so that the administrator can include it in his or her investigation report.

- The "Undesirable Incident report-63" is a detailed form, so take your time to answer all questions. It provides a wealth of information once completed correctly. The same is true for the "Report of Injury-48." Take your time and complete it to the best of your ability.

## Grants...

### Psychology

The American Psychological Foundation is offering grants to support the study of psychological science among talented high school students. The foundation wants to support high-quality psychology courses in high school and nurture the next generation of psychologists. Grants up to \$20,000 are available to fund innovative programs. Deadline: May 1, 2011. For more info, visit <http://forms.apa.org/apf/grants>.

### Music Programs

Hungry for Music is a nonprofit dedicated to providing musical instruments for some of the most important American citizens – underprivileged children. Founder Jeff Campbell was impressed by the amount of talented street musicians in the D.C. area and later decided to help provide instruments for needy children with willing instructors and a hunger to play. Deadlines are ongoing. For info, visit <http://hungryformusic.com>.

### Books for Kids

The Lisa Libraries donates books and small libraries to organizations that work with children in poor or underserved areas. The Lisa Libraries was started to honor children's book editor Lisa Novak. No deadline. For info, visit [www.lisalibraries.org](http://www.lisalibraries.org).

### Environment

The Captain Planet Foundation funds environmental projects that involve children ages 6 to 18. Projects should promote understanding of environmental issues and, hands-on learning, interaction and cooperation, and help young people develop planning and problem-solving skills. Grants range from \$250 to \$2,500. Deadline: June 30, 2011. For info, visit [www.captainplanetfoundation.org](http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org).

### Community Action

Young people who seek start-up money for a community action project should look to [www.DoSomething.org](http://www.DoSomething.org) for funding. Do Something provides

small grants of \$500 to implement programs that make a positive impact on the community. Examples of such programs include a community-run organic farm or a youth-written literary magazine for women of color. Deadlines are ongoing.

### Professional Development

The National Education Association Foundation supports the professional development of staff and teachers in public schools through its Learning and Leadership grants. Grants up to \$5,000 are available for individuals for high-quality professional development such as summer workshops or action research and for groups to fund collegial study. Deadline: June 1, 2011. For info, visit [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org).

### Media Specialists

The Gale/Library Media Connection TEAMS Award supports effective collaboration between teachers and media specialists in K-12

schools. Winning collaborations are those that promote learning, increase student achievement, and help students develop 21st century skills. Grants of more than \$2,500 are available. Deadline: June 15, 2011. For info, go to [www.galeschools.com](http://www.galeschools.com).

### Activism & Environment

The Earth Island Institute is offering its annual Brower Youth Awards to young people who have shown outstanding activism and achievements in the field of environmental advocacy. Winners receive a \$3,000 prize. Deadline: May 15, 2011. For info, visit [www.broweryouthawards.org](http://www.broweryouthawards.org).

### Math & Science

The Toshiba America Foundation makes grants to support teaching of math and science. The foundation supports the projects, ideas, and materials that teachers need to innovate in their math and science classrooms. Grants for up to \$5,000 are accepted on an ongoing basis. For more info, visit [www.toshiba.com/taf/about.jsp](http://www.toshiba.com/taf/about.jsp).



## Mumford Class Creates Facebook Pages

In Liz Rosenbaum's English class at Mumford High School, you can't miss the happy kids and a prodigious supply of essays on the walls.

Hanging over the blackboard are notes from reading an abridged version of "Angela's Ashes," the Pulitzer Prize-winning account of a poverty stricken Irish childhood.

Rosenbaum wanted to do something different — and fun — for her latest research and writing project. So the students researched historic black Americans and created a social network page for each one. The project is called "Farcebook."

"I didn't want them to do a report, they do lots of those," she said. "I wanted them to do something that connected with their lives."

Farcebook.us is an educational tool for grades nine through 12. The students spent several weeks in the library researching such figures as Ben Carson, George Washington Carver, Will Smith, Barack Obama and Lil Wayne.

The students responded enthusiastically, doing solid research and writing.

"My kids are the best kids in the whole wide world," Rosenbaum says infectiously. "They want to be here and they're motivated."

Perhaps that motivation stems from their teacher who clearly enjoys teaching. Rosenbaum has missed one day — for her mother's funeral — in 25 years of teaching in Detroit.

"I love every day I come to school," she said. "I will do anything for these kids. I will go to bat for them."



## Coalition of Unions Seeks Partners at Community Breakfast

A coalition of Detroit school unions hosted a Community Breakfast Feb. 18 to meet community leaders and partner with them on issues that affect the children and parents of Detroit.

"There's more strength in numbers and we need each other," said Karin Whittler, of the DFT, a lead organizer of the event. "If we come together as a community to fight for our issues, than we can stand together for a stronger Detroit for our kids."

More than 75 community and political leaders attended, including City Councilwomen

Joann Watson and Saunteel Jenkins; State Reps. Coleman Young Jr. and Rashida Tlaib; State Sens. Virgil Smith Jr. and Hoon-

Yung Hopgood; Wayne County Commissioner Michelle Joyner; Washington Youson Jr. from U.S. Rep. Hanson Clark's office; Trevor Epps, chief of staff for State Rep. John Olumba; Sandra Williams, president of the metro Detroit AFL-CIO; Brenda Moon from the AFL-CIO national office; Ed McNeil of AFSCME Local 25; Denise Edwards of the SEIU; Erkeisha Terry of

CWA/United Way; Dennis Richardson from the Wayne County Sheriff's Office; Linda Peltier, Kevin Robinson, and Inspector Nick Kyriacou from the Detroit Police 12th Precinct; Terry Shea from Comerica Bank; Derrick Blackmon from the Detroit branch of the NAACP; Darryl Hibbett of HAP; Ed Ptesznik of the AFL-CIO; and motivational speaker Raphael Johnson.



Photos by Jim West

**State Sen. Hoon-Yung Hopgood, DFT President Keith Johnson, Ruby Newbold, president of the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees; Donna Jackson, president of the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals; and State Sen. Virgil Smith Jr.**

The coalition — The DFT, the Detroit Federation of Paraprofessionals, and the Detroit Association of Educational Office Employees — asked the leaders to sign commitment letters placed on each table.

The Coalition hosts quarterly events to bring the community and the schools

together in the cause. The next Coalition event: a parent discussion about bullying on May 14 at the DFT. The Coalition also will run its successful summer Literacy Camp Aug. 8-12 at the DFT. For more information or to register for these events, call 313-832-1275. To volunteer for the summer Literacy Camp, contact Karin Whittler at [kwhittler@dft231.com](mailto:kwhittler@dft231.com).



# Spain School Grieves Loss of Sisters

By Charlene Uresy

"There is a human bond that connects us all; a delicate thread that in tragic times becomes a line of steel which intensifies the bond that we have."

The Spain School family was deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of sisters Lataya and Alaya Cook. They died in a dreadful house fire, that is believed to have been fire-bombed.

Lataya, 10, and Alaya, 8, were in the fourth and third grades. They were beautiful little girls with warm smiles, kind personalities, and thick free-swinging braids. Coming to school was a joy for them, something they loved to do. School was a place where they felt safe and loved by their teachers and peers. They personified the innocence and wonders of childhood. Being excited about school and school activities was easy for them.

The sisters were electrified about the coming Black History program. They couldn't wait to recite their essays, wear cute costumes, and dance for family and friends. The anticipation of performing was all they talked about since the winter break! The over-flow crowd saw a spectacular show in loving memory of Lataya and Alaya. Principal Ronald Alexander made the dedication at the start of the show. He told



**Spain teachers (from left) L'Juanna Jones, Rhonda Quinn, Nakia Lockhart, Gloria Celina and Maria Brown at a vigil at the school.**

the crowd, "The participating students will do their very best to honor their classmates." Instructional specialist Erica Rolack emceed the evening event and mentioned the sisters throughout the performance.

Spain held a candlelight vigil outside, giving respect to Lataya and Alaya. The girls' parents, Dante Cook and Rosette Renee Cook, attended, along with other family, friends, teachers and classmates. They shared hugs, tears and words of condolence. Principal Alexander lovingly expressed thoughts about Lataya and Alaya.

A family member, as well as the Rev. Dr. Oscar King III, minister of Northwest Unity Baptist Church,

offered prayers. The girls' counselor, Lakia Wilson, made soothing remarks. At the end of this very special and spiritual ceremony, pink and

black balloons were released toward the heavens; another painful task to show the sisters the love and compassion felt by everyone.

With the tragedy of their passing, Lataya and Alaya have taught one of many lessons: "Each day should be passed as though it were the last." Spain School will miss Lataya and Alaya Cook. May they rest in peace.

## Calendar

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

### APRIL

- 7 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 11 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 12 School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 12 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 12 School Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 14 Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 19 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 18-25 School Closed, Spring Break

### MAY

- 5 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 10 School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 10 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 12 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 16 Special Education Chapter Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 17 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 17 School Counselors Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 19 Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- 19 Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 30 School Closed, Memorial Day

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