

# ROIT teacher MAKERS

## Up to Read at mentary School



**Muhammad and Pasteur School Services Assistant Rene Green.**

Green knows that 30 minutes a day will launch lots of adventures and memories for parents and kids. She wants reading to be simple, routine and enjoyable for families.

That's it. Half an hour. Every day.



## Adopt a Classroom

The Nancy Marsh Women's Missionary Society of Oak Grove AME Church in Detroit adopted a Thirkell preschool classroom. For two years the group will visit and support the classroom. The women will visit for Black History Month, March Is Reading Month, Mother's Day and more. At Christmas the women introduced themselves, brought gifts and asked the 16 preschoolers if they could come back. The women's missionary has been adopting classrooms for 14 years now.

"I feel like I've been blessed and it's a blessing to give to others," said Barbara Gibbs Hyatt, first vice president of the women's missionary. "Our church is fortunate enough that we're able to do this over a long term. We're very generous." From left are Barbara Gibbs Hyatt, Thirkell preschool teacher Felecia Clark, associate teacher Clarece Hall, Charlene Thomas and Monica Alexander, both of the women's missionary.

## Spain Wins \$101,000 Grant

By Charlene Uresy

Determined to work hard to educate their students, the Spain School staff was recognized recently by the Skillman Foundation. The foundation awarded Spain a whopping check of \$101,205. When Principal Ronald Alexander made the announcement to his faculty, applause and cheers went around the room and expressed everyone's significant gratification.

The award was the second for Spain, coming from the private grant-making nationally recognized Skillman Foundation, Good Schools Program. In 2006, Skillman honored Spain as an Improving School, and awarded it \$36,000. This school year's premium prize comes under the title of High Performing School, and the check of \$101,205.

Many thanks goes to the following administrators, teachers, secretaries, and parents for all of their help in winning this wonderful award: Ronald Alexander, Mary Fields, Venisha Combs, Norbert Kidd, Heidi Hebert, Tiffany Tait, Susan Wahl, Benjamin Harris, Debra Blocker, Patricia Tyler, Lakia Wilson, Delbra Dugger, Jennifer Brown, Jacquelyn Thomas, Venice Hogan, Gwen Perrin, La Bryan Wynn, and Charlene Uresy.





# Cass Tech hosts JROTC Drill Competition



**A Northwestern High School Platoon Drill Commander aligns the squads during "Platoon Drill" at the DPS JROTC Drill Competition on Dec. 4 at Cass High School.**



**Western International High School marching during "Squad Drill" at the DPS JROTC Drill Competition held at Cass Tech High School on Dec. 4.**

Photos by ROTC teacher  
Brian Cumper



**Members of Northwestern High School Drill Team take a break with their mascot during the DPS JROTC Drill Competition held at Cass Tech High School on Dec. 4.**

## Helping Troubled Kids Emotionally Help Themselves

By Ron Seigel

In past articles I wrote how teachers can help troubled children, particularly those facing abuse or neglect. There is also a way teachers can show all young people how to help themselves. When they feel troubled, teachers can suggest students do a psychological exercise that involves four steps.

Step One: Describe what you (a) feel, both in your body and in your emotions, (b) sense, (c) notice, (d) see, (e) hear, (f) smell and (g) anything that is bothering you or on your mind.

Step Two: Write about your sensations and feelings. What they do to you, cause to happen, what they mean to you.

Step Three: Examine if you ever felt like this before. Who caused you to feel that way, or who made you feel anger, fear, or outrage? Who failed to treat you with respect? Write to this person. (This is simply an exercise. You don't have to send this to the person involved.) In the letter, you might ask the person, "Why did you do this to me?" If you feel frightened or ashamed of saying it, tell the other person so. Write this down until other feelings come out. Maybe it is anger at putting you in fear or embarrassment or shame about expressing these feelings. Express this too.

Step Four: Explain to the person how he or she ought to have behaved toward you. Explain how the individual might have acted that did not cre-

ate fear or anxiety or shame. This may help you get a perspective on the pain you're feeling, help to see your needs more clearly and find ways to fulfill your needs now.

I personally decided to add another step. Step Five: Examine how you can respond in such a positive way to others.

I first discovered such steps in a book by psychiatrist Alice Miller. In that book, she took the view that this was self-therapy. She later changed her mind. She wrote to me that she sees such steps as a good tool for clarifying things. However, now she believes that for troubled people it is necessary to talk to an "enlightened witness," not necessarily a psycho therapist, but someone who is "aware

of the effect neglect and cruelty in childhood can have, someone who can support individuals harmed by such things, can empathize with them, help them, gain an understanding of their feelings, or their anxiety and powerlessness as products of their own history rather than as some frightening mysterious force. This knowledge makes it easier for them to appreciate the options open to them."

I believe that because of the vulnerability of young people and their right to privacy, they should not be pressured into sharing the writing in this exercise with the teacher or the class, but they should be told they have this option open to them.

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



# Former Labor Leader Lech Walesa Visits Reuther Library at WSU

By Raymond Rolak

**L**ech Walesa visited Detroit in October for the opening of the "Solidarnosc: Poland's Struggle for Freedom" exhibit at the Walter P. Reuther Labor Library on the Wayne State University campus. It is the 30-year anniversary of Solidarity and the exhibit will run until July 1.

At a special luncheon at the WSU McGregor Memorial Conference Center, the former Polish President spoke through a translator about the Solidarity movement in Poland.

"We didn't have guns or missiles, but we had spirit and faith - and union workers need to act as one when facing foes that want to drive them apart," he said. "The spirit is stronger than missiles, tanks and nuclear power."

The Reuther Library was set with historic posters, displays and compelling information, thanks to archivists Dan Golodner, Elizabeth Clemens and librarian Kristen Chinery. "We got great help from the Polish Mission in Orchard Lake, the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers and the UAW," Golodner said. "They had great stuff from 30 years ago." The exhibit is presented in both Polish and English.

Walesa was very open and his

words verified the help Solidarnosc got from President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II. "When Pope John visited Poland it was more powerful than nuclear weapons and tanks," he said. "Pope John unified the factions, he brought us together. We got great help from the unions in America.

"In the new era of globalization, there is opportunity for peace and prosperity, providing we have some essential reform," Walesa said. He was folksy with humor and joked about Polish democracy. "We have over a 100 political parties in Poland and there is a saying....when two Poles talk politics they start another political party," he said smiling.

"We are equal under God," Walesa said. "We are all essentially needed. We cannot have disproportions between countries or manufacturing plants will transfer from country to country."

"Solidarnosc: Poland's Struggle for Freedom" is open until July 1 at the Walter P. Reuther Library on the Wayne State University campus. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Monday and Tuesday and 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Wednesday through Friday.

*Raymond Rolak is a sports broadcaster in Maui, Hawaii and attended Wayne State University.*



**Lech Walesa**



**GIVING AT REMUS ROBINSON** – The staff and parents at Remus Robinson School made sure that every one of their 492 students took home something special at the holidays. The staff and parents donated matching hat and glove sets, hygiene items, coats, uniforms, Chapstick, shoes and books. Some students, pictured above with teacher Felicia Langford, took a leap and went for the wrapped gifts, not knowing what was inside. Alleccia Bowman, a special education aide, organized the event. "We help her bring this to fruition between shopping and begging," said Donna Taylor, another special education aide. "I love our staff this year. They are very giving."

## Grants...

### Music Programs

The Fender Music Foundation makes grants to established, ongoing and sustainable music programs in schools to provide music education to individuals who would not otherwise have access or opportunities to make music. Support for programs comes in the form of instruments or music equipment ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. Deadline is March 15. For info, visit [www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants](http://www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants).

### Unsung Heroes

The ING Unsung Heroes Awards are taking applications from K-12 educators whose innovative learning projects have a positive impact on students. Each year, 100 educators receive cash grants to help fund their innovative class projects. The 100 finalists will receive \$2,000. Three of the finalists will receive between \$5,000 and \$25,000. Deadline is April 30. For info, visit [ing@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:ing@scholarshipamerica.org)

### Music Instruments

The NAMM Foundation is taking applications from public schools to provide instruments for music programs. Public schools must show a percentage of students eligible for reduced-price or free lunches. Schools

should have made an effort to hire highly qualified music teachers and provide standards-based sequential learning in music. Grants for instruments range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. For info, visit [www.nammfoundation.org/contact](http://www.nammfoundation.org/contact).

### Golden Carrot Awards

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine is offering its Golden Carrot Awards to schools and food service professionals who have developed and implemented healthy, nutritional, and successful school lunch programs. The award recognizes those who provide a variety of healthy food choices, including vegetarian and nondairy beverages. Grants up to \$3,000 are available. Deadline: ongoing. For info, visit [www.healthy-school lunches.org/carrot](http://www.healthy-school lunches.org/carrot).

### Creative Teaching

American Electric Power Teacher Vision Grants support PreK-12 teachers who motivate students to think creatively and step into leadership roles. The company is particularly interested in science, mathematics, technology, electrical safety and the balanced study of energy and the environment. Funds up to \$500 are available. Deadline: Feb. 25. For info, visit [educate@AEP.com](mailto:educate@AEP.com).



# Fashionista Finds Style on a Detroit Teacher's Salary



**S**amarrah Thomas adored her third-grade teacher. Miss Ostache had long red hair and flowing skirts.

"She was so pretty and she smelled good too," said Thomas, 33, a graduate of Detroit's Henry Ford High School.

It seems every girl remembers a stunning teacher in her past. Someone she wanted to grow up to be just like.

Yvette French, a fourth-grade teacher at Pasteur Elementary School, witnessed glamorous women too.

"My grandmother wore sheath dresses, opera length gloves, kitten heel pumps, fox tail furs, and pillbox hats with netting that grazed the face," says, French, a 14-year Detroit teacher.

Then there was the veritable runway show French saw every Sunday when she sat in church.

"I marveled at the beautiful dresses, exquisite handbags and fabulous hats the women wore," she said. In the French family style kept trickling down.

"My mom rocked a huge blond-



streaked afro back in the day," she says.

French takes her fashion seriously, dressing each day in edgy urban chic and a free-form fro. She buys mostly designer wear for its high quality. But that doesn't mean she spends a lot of money.

"I'm very frugal, I like my money in the bank." So she circles her wares until they are the right price, paying cash and never using credit.

"I can't afford the retail prices in the first place, add all the interest too – yikes!"

She buys mostly online and her favorite designers are

Ralph Lauren and Lisa Pliner.

"I want my kids to get a glimpse of my bubbly high-spirited personality," she says. "Educators compete with so much technology that, no matter how brilliant or choreographed your lessons are, it can be challenging to get kids to look in your direction."

"Once I get their attention," she says in her white suede military boots, "I take advantage and infuse their minds with knowledge, knowledge, knowledge."



## BEST PRACTICES *How to Get that With-It-Ness*

By Shawn Forman, PAR Consultant

With-it-ness is an effective group management practice that helps maintain appropriate behavior within the classroom as well as keeping students actively involved in their work.

With-it-ness consist of teachers learning how to...

- Stop misbehavior in a timely and appropriate manner
- Appropriate the correct response to the misbehavior
- Redirect the student's attention to the task
- Periodically scan the room to assess that students are actively involved
- Establish eye contact when asking questions, redirecting attention, and heading off misbehavior
- Set clear expectations for student behavior
- Establish good room arrangement

(AFT Foundations of Effective Teaching I Manual)

I apply the concept of with-it-ness at the beginning of the school year. I do this in a variety of ways. On the first day, I allow my students to choose where they want to sit. This gives me the opportunity to see what connections they make socially. It also gives me a chance to arrange their seats to modify misbehavior later in the school year. I learn my students' names and voices by the end of the first day. Learning to put names and voice recognition together allows you to know when someone is misbehaving without seeing the action take place.

Once I have learned my students, I tell them that I see and know all because I have "eyes in the back of my head." They actually believe this because I learned to distinguish them by their individual characteristics. This communicates to my students that I know what they are doing in the classroom at all times. This prevents disruptions and keeps students on task. With-it-ness communicates to the students that the teacher is aware of their behavior at all times.

Another technique includes positioning students with behavior issues close to the teacher's desk or with a group of students who are well-behaved. Circulating freely around the room is another way I prevent unwanted behavior.

According to Jacob Kounin, a researcher and professor of educational psychology at Wayne State University, when a teacher understands the "ripple effect" she or he can be effective in desist techniques. The "ripple effect" refers to how students who are not misbehaving are affected by the action that is taken by the teacher toward the student who is misbehaving. His studies concluded that, in order to produce more conforming behavior from the misbehaving students, teachers need to be aware of the desist techniques to correct misbehavior.

With-it-ness helps with managing the classroom effectively, which ultimately increases student success.



Shawn Forman



Pasteur teacher Yvette French



## DETROIT FEDERATION OF TEACHERS NOTICE OF ELECTION TO BE HELD AT THE MARCH 10, 2011 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

REGULAR ELECTION OF THREE (3) ELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
(TWO-YEAR TERM OF OFFICE: MARCH, 2011 to MARCH, 2013)

SPECIAL ELECTION OF TWO (2) ELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
(TO FILL TERM OF OFFICE ENDING MARCH, 2012)

### ELECTION CALENDAR

**January 31, 2011 (Monday)** — OPEN NOMINATIONS: Nominations and acceptances may be mailed to P.O. Box 02010, North End Station, 60 E. Milwaukee, Detroit, MI 48202 OR hand delivered to the DFT office during office hours.

**\*\*February 10, 2011 (Thursday)** — CLOSE NOMINATIONS and acceptances at 4:00 p.m. for Post Office and 5:00 p.m. hand delivered to the Election Committee at the February membership meeting.

**February 14, 2011 (Monday)** — List of candidates mailed to schools, to homes of nominees, and posted in the Union office.

**\*\*March 3, 2011 (Thursday)** — DEADLINE FOR GRIEVANCES regarding nominations.

ELECTION COMMITTEE hears grievance(s), if any.

EXECUTIVE BOARD hears grievance(s), if any.

**\*\*March 10, 2011 (Thursday)** — MEMBERSHIP hears grievance(s), if any, and votes on decision(s). VOTING BEGINS IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

IF THERE ARE NO GRIEVANCES, voting will begin at 4:00 p.m. Those in line at 5:30 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

**Candidate's Eligibility Date: February 9, 2010**

**Voters' Eligibility Date: February 10, 2011**

**\*\*ELECTION COMMITTEE MEETS:** Election committee members should mark the starred dates on their calendars.

Election Committee members who are candidates for re-election will be replaced by temporary appointees named by the Executive Board.



### JINGLE BELLS AT PASTEUR

The Christmas program went off without a hitch at Pasteur Elementary School Dec. 16. For special education teacher Ceressie Smith, it was a huge accomplishment when her students played the bells in unison to Jingle Bells. Smith, along with music therapist Katherine Mekis, and trainable aide Lisa Turnbore (pictured above) shared a proud moment with their students this holiday season.

Visit the  
**DFT Web site**  
**www.DFT231.com**

## Former DFT Member Gives Every Student a Gift

By Alleccia Bowman

Once a teacher, always a teacher! That is one of many lessons learned at Robinson Academy this Christmas season. Once upon a time, Arthur Cartwright was teaching math at another Detroit Public School. Now, he teaches life's lessons like loving, giving back, and mentoring as a minister. This is the second time Cartwright has given every student (PK-8) at Robinson Academy a Christmas present.

Principal Sharon Lee was extremely grateful that he chose her students to be on the receiving end.

"He is a wonderful man, with a big heart! What a blessing he has been!" one staff member said.

In return, students gave thank you cards, hugs, handshakes, and a song. Cartwright and his entourage of professionals (who come every year to witness the joy from the children) were very moved by the gestures of love returned.

In these times of economic uncertainty, it sure is a beautiful thing to have someone like Mr. Cartwright (and the GEM Children Outreach Ministry he founded) recognize the hidden jewels in our school and teach them to become givers by giving!



# Thinking About Retirement?

By Patrick Falcusan  
DFT Retirement Counselor

Once folks make the decision that they wish to retire, they usually ask: What do I do next? Following the countdown below should ensure a smooth transition from work to retirement.



Pat Falcusan

- 4 months ahead – Call the State (1-800-381-5111) to get your retirement packet and retirement forms.
- 3 months ahead – Fill out the paper retirement forms (or go online — [michgian.gov/org](http://michgian.gov/org) to apply). In addition, you will need to send to the retirement office copies of birth certificates or passports; an HMO application (if taking an HMO); a marriage license (if married). For children over 19, provide

proof of being a full-time student and page one of federal tax form. If over 62, apply for Social Security at a Social Security office.

- 2 months ahead – If sheltering pay-out money (sick days, TIP monies, any pay still owing, etc.), discuss with TSA agent. If buying time (TDP account), call the Union (313-875-3500 ext. 783) for forms.
- 1 month ahead — File your Separation from Service form. To file your Separation from Service form:
  - \* Go to the fourth floor of the Kahn Building (7430 Second Ave.).
  - \* Get two Separation from Service forms.
  - \* Fill out both copies.
  - \* Check the retirement box.
  - \* Have both copies date-stamped.
  - \* Take one copy with you for your records.
  - \* Note: Once submitted, a Separation from Service form is irrevocable.

## Increase Your Pension by Thousands of Dollars

Several years ago, thousands of DFT members signed up to buy extra years of service through a pay-roll deduction known as a TDP (tax deferred plan). They are now on track to enjoy pensions worth \$1,000 to \$6,000 more per year than members who did not buy time. Many of those members who did not sign up to buy time now regret their decision.

Buying time has now become quite complicated but it is still possible.

Members who are totally sure that they are going to retire in a year or less, should consider the option of buying extra years of service time. This will add to the amount of their pension and, in many cases, can be paid for by the monies paid to the members by the District upon retirement. For example, a person retiring this July 1 could get as much as \$44,500 for the combined value of their TIP deductions, sick days and last four checks (for folks with 26

checks). That could buy an extra three to four years of universal time. Some folks taught in other states and could buy 10 to 12 years of out-of-system public time.

Some members who need 30 years to retire might decide to buy extra years and retire years ahead of schedule.

Because the process of buying time has become so complicated, members thinking about buying time need to contact me at 313-875-3500 ext. 783.

## Applying for Medicare

If you or your spouse are over 65 when you retire and want health care through the retirement system, you will need Medicare parts A and B.

Almost all members over 65 already have Medicare part A, but not part B. Here is what you need to do to have part B in place by the time you retire.

- On your retirement insurance form, put the date from your Medicare card when Medicare part A started. Put your retirement date for the date Medicare part B started. (If you don't yet have part A, also put your retirement date for when part A started).
- Three months before you retire, go to Social Security and notify them of your retirement date and tell them you want your Medicare part B to be effective the same day as your retirement date (and part A if you don't already have part A).
- If Social Security gives you a Medicare form to be filled out by your employer (they almost always do), take that form to the fourth floor of the Kahn Building (Human Resources). (Make an extra copy of the form in case the first copy gets lost and you have to repeat this process).
- Submit the form from Social Security to the District along with a copy of your Separation from Service form. If this is the first time you have submitted your Separation from Service form, submit two copies, get them date-stamped and take one copy with you for your records.
- The District will fill out your form from Social Security and return it to you. (Usually you will have to leave the form and come back later to pick it up).
- Take the completed form back to Social Security. (Make a copy for your records).

# Calendar

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

## FEBRUARY

- 1 School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 3 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 10 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 15 Retirees Membership Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 15 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 17 Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 21-25 Winter Break

## MARCH

- 1 School Social Workers Chapter Meeting, 3:45 p.m.
- 3 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 10 General Membership Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 15 Retirees Chapter Meeting, 11:30 a.m.
- 15 Attendance Agents Chapter Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 17 Early Childhood Chapter Meeting, 4:15 p.m.
- 31 Educational Technicians Chapter Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- 31 Executive Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.