



Stephens Elementary School teacher Ellen Morgan asked each student to walk down the catwalk for an impromptu fashion show at the Young Ladies Tea Party June 3.

Would You Like Some Tea? *Ladies and Gents Play the Part at Stephens*

Kelvon Cunnegan put on a crisp suit and tie June 3 to go to school. He was attending his first Gentleman's Gathering, a sister act to his school's Young Ladies Tea Party.

"I was so excited that I forgot to do something I was supposed to do in the morning," said the 11-year-old student at Stephens Elementary School.

Kelvon leaned in to listen to the three guest speakers. Though other boys poked friends or got distracted, Kelvon couldn't get enough of what the speakers had to say about growing up to be responsible citizens and finding a career that's fulfilling.

"People are always telling you, 'You should do this. You should do that.' But what is it you want to do?" asked guest speaker Michael Reeves, Director of Detroit Urban Youth.

"Most of the gifts and dreams are not in schools. Where are they? They're in the graveyards."

For Kelvon, who has a 3.6 gpa, his dreams are intact.

"I want to be a teacher, artist or doctor," he said. "Lately I've been thinking about being a fireman because they're always helping people."

Stephens teacher Ellen Morgan wanted to inspire these kinds of discussions about the future and self esteem when she started the Ladies Tea for the girls four years ago. But this year she asked her husband, teacher Paul Morgan, to do something for the boys at the same time.

Kelvon, for one, thought it was a good idea.

At the tea party, the girls discussed self esteem and why put-downs and sarcasm are so prevalent today.

"Some people just put people down to make themselves feel better," said Bernice Dunham, 11.

Dressing up was a sort of antidote to that negativity all day.

"I had no one come in my office today," said principal Rosalind Butler. "I think you need to wear these outfits everyday till the end of the school year."

Morgan was amazed at the beautiful array of ladies.

"You all look so beautiful, simply beautiful," she said.

The young gentleman at the other end of the school, ended their afternoon with chocolate marble cake and a goody bag and a few things to think about.



Kelvon Cunnegan, 11, wore a suit and tie for the Gentleman's Gathering June 3 at Stephens Elementary School.

Detroit Teacher Newsmakers

School Nurses Fill Critical Need— Nurses Petition for State Oversight

Beyonce doesn't need to appear at Beckham Academy. The elementary school already has a VIP. It's the person who diagnoses a student's ringworm or gets the nebulizer.

"I feel like a rock star," said school nurse Pamela Joy. She walked into Beckham one day in May to flowers, balloons, a fruit basket and a banner saying "National School Nurse Joy Day."

"I feel totally valued here," Joy says. "The children are happy to see you. The staff is happy to see you because they've been handling these issues all day."

Nurse Joy covers three schools, dealing with critical health care needs, and holding inservices for parents and staff. As with all areas, school nurses have seen cutbacks over the years, taking on more schools per nurse.

Because of more health issues and fewer Michigan children with health insurance, the Michigan School Nurse Association is urging the state to install a school nurse consultant at the Department of Education. It would put Michigan in line with 42 other states that already use a statewide consultant.

Julia Lechtenberg, president of the MASN, asked a sub-committee on School Aid and Education to add \$150,000 to the 2008-09 budget. She said the position is a proven investment in other states that received millions in Medicaid reimbursements and grants.

MASN said Michigan ranked 49 among states in its nurse/student ratio. That's 4,300 students to every school nurse (data that cannot be verified, Lechtenberg says, because no one currently collects this data in the state).

"This would help standardize health care across the state," Lechtenberg said. "The problem is every single school district does things differently.

The instances of chronic diseases are going up and the complexity is enormous."

Nurse Joy says the biggest health issue in schools today is asthma.

"We have more children in this school with asthma than any other disease," she said. "In fact, it's the number one cause of kids missing school."

Joy held three classes for asthmatic students in May. The students learned that many of them need

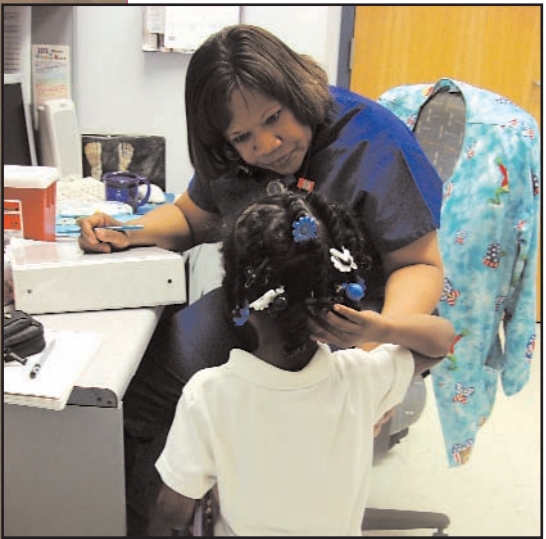
to take controller medicine, not just relief medicine. A serious asthma attack at camp last summer landed a student and Nurse Joy in intensive care at UM Medical Center.

Beckham students walked away realizing, many for the first time, what happens when their lungs get stressed and what their individual triggers are.

One student learned another thing: "I didn't know that's the way you spelled it."

Pamela Joy's Wish List

1. Every child would eat real food (not fast food, junk food or packaged food).
2. Every child would sleep nine to 10 hours a night.
3. Every child would have access to health care.



Pictured at left is Pamela Joy R.N. teaching a session on asthma to students with asthma at Beckham Academy. Above, Nurse Joy sees a student with health concerns.



Sixth-grade teacher and author Adra Young gets animated at Family Reading Night, reading from her book "The Everyday Living of Children and Teens Monologue."

Family Reading Night Features African Storytelling

African storytelling is an ancient art that must be performed so it won't be lost. Ivory Williams, a historical storyteller, captivated Ronald Brown Academy students and parents at a May 2 family reading night.

Ronald Brown students pulled up their blankets and pillows, munched popcorn, and listened to Williams and other readers during the event.

Principal Nancy Ross kicked off the annual family reading night with the selection If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Numeroff. The evening continued with pizza, magic and books galore.

The event was a good kickoff for a summer of reading.

"Parents read to children, children read to parents," said teacher Pam McGhee, a reading specialist. "Teachers read to children and children read to each other. It was wonderful."



Historical storyteller Ivory Williams uses his whole body to tell a story.