

Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

Fall
2009



Tutors Carlton Johnson and Jennifer Wilson from Akin Gump work with Sa'Niya Smith at Tyler Elementary School.

5th City-wide GeoPlunge Contest Set for November 20 At American History Museum

The 5th city-wide GeoPlunge Geography Tournament will be held in Washington, D.C., on November 20 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History from 9:30 am to 2:15 pm. The National Museum of American History is located at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 14th Street, NW, on The National Mall.

Three-person teams of 5th and 6th graders from all D.C. public elementary and middle schools are welcome to compete in the tournament. The Committee's D.C. Public School Partnerships Program, **Arent Fox**, and D.C. Public Schools are sponsoring the event. The Committee is also actively recruiting sponsors for GeoPlunge teams from individual schools.

GeoPlunge is played with a set of cards, each representing one of the 50 states. The first two tournaments included three different card games that combine geography and fun. Guess the State encourages students to learn the names of the 50 states. Playing Race for the Borders teaches participants where states are located geographically.

(Continued on page 4)

Law Firm Tutors Help Students Achieve

Tutors from **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld**; the **U.S. Courts**; and **McDermott, Will & Emery** are proud of the recent academic success of their partner schools.

"The tutoring by Akin Gump volunteers definitely contributed to our good test scores," declares Terry Dade, principal of the firm's partner school, Tyler Elementary.

"Not only did the tutors develop great relationships with the students, but they also focused on the standards of learning, as well as the skills and concepts we expected to be on the standardized tests," he added.

According to Joan Adams who tutored for three years and now coordinates her 28 colleagues, absenteeism at Tyler has decreased significantly since her initial involvement in tutoring.

"The tutoring curriculum is worked out with Principal Dade who also gives the tutors great ideas for working with the kids," explains Joan. She also says that it does not take long for a tutor to understand where a child needs help and for students to come to trust their tutors.

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WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND URBAN AFFAIRS

S C H O O L

Y S T E M



Shereen Williams
Director, Office of Community Partnerships
District of Columbia Public Schools

I welcome the opportunity to work with the Washington Lawyers' Committee's D.C. Public School Partnership Program.

The Committee and law firm volunteers realize that community involvement contributes to the academic success of our students.

Even before the scores from the latest round of testing were published, tutors from **Akin Gump, the U.S. Courts, and McDermott, Will & Emery** knew their students were making significant progress in math and reading.

Also, the involvement of numerous firms in back-to-school activities helped many children and their parents begin the 2009-10 school year with an expectation of success.

We, in the school system, are very grateful for your tutoring and mentoring efforts. We are delighted with the creativity that has produced such innovative activities as student-designed holiday cards, outdoor classrooms, and GeoPlunge competitions. Every year, the GeoPlunge Tournament gives more and more students city-wide the opportunity to work cooperatively in teams while mastering U.S. geography in this popular and exciting competition. We appreciate the generosity of the Committee and numerous law firms in making the tournament available to schools not yet paired with law firms, as well as schools already part of the School Partnership Program.

We look forward to the coordination of additional school partnerships with more law firms, as well as corporations and organizations. Every school needs partnership support. We have seven schools that have requested law firm partners, and five more would be receptive to a partnership.

Your work in our schools is not a "complement" to education--it is critical to making a difference for our students and our school system. I know that I speak for Chancellor Rhee when I say how important it is for your work to continue and that we very much hope you will expand your partnership efforts.

Shereen Williams
Director, Office of Community Partnerships
District of Columbia Public Schools

What do debates, art contests, career panels, and geography competitions have in common? They are all activities that **Arent Fox** sponsors, organizes and conducts for its school partner, Randle Highlands Elementary School.

While I have had the privilege of chairing the Randle program for six years, Arent Fox has had an excellent reputation for pro bono and community service work for more than 60 years. In fact, the current chair of the firm's Executive Committee, Marc Fleischaker, has been instrumental in supporting the firm's efforts with Randle (and has served as a judge at many of our students' debates).

Arent Fox Associate Karen Ellis Carr, Senior Paralegal Ngoc Niblack and I have organized nearly a dozen debates at the firm on issues relating to politics, sports, immigration, curfews, and statehood for the District of Columbia. Students from many schools compete in these debates. The judges include Arent Fox partners and industry leaders.

Our art competition involves each student at Randle drawing a picture of a D.C. landmark. The ten best works of art in each grade are brought to Arent Fox, where firm personnel select the winners in each grade.

Our career panels, run by Arent Fox Associate Loni J. Sherwin, bring people from virtually every profession to answer questions from both elementary school and high school students. The students are always excited to participate and never run out of questions.



Alan G. Fishel
Partner, Arent Fox

Finally, every year, under the leadership of Arent Fox Associates Marcia Fuller Durkin, Matthew Wright, and Lisa Edwards, and myself, in coordination with the Washington Lawyers' Committee and D.C. Public Schools, we run our multi-school geography tournament based on the award-winning game GeoPlunge. Somewhere between 30 and 50 schools bring one or two teams of three students each to compete in this exciting event. Many children have told us that the GeoPlunge tournament was the best day of their lives, and that they could not believe that they would have so much fun while learning geography and competing against, and meeting, new friends.



GeoPlunge Champions from J. O. Wilson Elementary School.

Calling GeoPlunge Teams and Sponsors For 5th City-wide Tournament

When students Play the Ranks, they learn how the states rank in size, population and order of entry into the Union.

Alan Fishel, a partner at **Arent Fox**, created the geography game and the set of Geoplunge cards. Geoplunge was such a success with students at Arent Fox's partner school, Randle Highlands Elementary, that Alan and his law firm persuaded the Committee to co-sponsor the first two Geoplunge tournaments.

For the 2nd tournament, held in November 2006, they were joined by 28 law firms that sponsored individual schools. The 3rd tournament in November 2007 had 48 team sponsors, while the 4th tournament had nearly as many sponsors last fall. The D.C. Public Schools will be publicizing the tournament among elementary and middle schools.

A number of schools have emerged as tournament winners over the past two years. A team from J. O. Wilson Elementary School were the winners in the 4th city-wide competition last November. J. O. Wilson also won the 3rd city-wide competition in November 2007. The winning schools in the 1st tournament, held in April 2006, were Randle Highlands and LaSalle Elementary Schools. In an informal rematch that took place shortly after that tournament, LaSalle came out on top. The winning schools in the tournament that took place in November 2006 were Cleveland and Gage-Eckington Elementary Schools. That tournament was followed by a mini-tournament among the winning schools from both tournaments. Gage-Eckington prevailed in that "tournament of champions." A mini-tournament held in spring 2008 was won by a team from Cleveland Elementary School.

Firms interested in sponsoring a team from their partner school and/or another school may contact Elinor Hart: 202-387-2966; hart1651@juno.com.

Academic Success At Partner Schools (cont'd)

"By the time of the holiday party that the firm holds for the students we tutor, you can see how the students have bonded with their tutors. Our tutors are very passionate about what they do."

Akin Gump's tutoring program is a priority for the firm, which provides a van to take tutors to and from the school.

Students at J. O. Wilson Elementary School, where volunteers from the U.S. Courts have tutored for 13 years, have also made significant gains in reading and math. According to Wanda Zachary, who was their contact at the school for five years, the efforts of the tutors from the courts are "a tremendous asset to the school. Students really look forward to the time they have with their tutors." Ms. Zachary is impressed with the tutors' commitment. Judge Merrick Garland, for example, follows the students he tutors through their years at J.O. Wilson, and when he is unable to tutor, he sends a member of his staff.

Tracy Scarrow coordinates the 30 tutors from the U.S. Courts. From their many years of tutoring, Tracy and her colleagues have



Tasjohnia Adams at Tyler Elementary School with her Akin Gump tutor, Courtney O'Connor.

developed approaches for working with children that do not take to reading and math drills right away. "It is important to vary the tutoring session with word games and other tasks," she points out, adding that "after working one-on-one with students, week after week, our tutors can always come up with something that makes a tutoring session productive."

Amidon Bowen Elementary School students did very well on the math tests they took last spring. More than 40 volunteers from McDermott Will & Emery who tutor the students are very proud of this success and determined to help Amidon Bowen students improve their reading scores next spring.



Geoplunge competitor from Eaton Elementary School with tournament trophies.

Fannie Mae's Book Fair For Marie Reed

On September 18, Fannie Mae's Legal Department teamed up with the Politics & Prose bookstore to raise money to buy books for the Marie Reed Learning Center.

The bookstore's Partnership Fridays Program made it possible for 20% of the store's sales on that day to be donated to a book fund for the school.

As a result of the Book Fair, Marie Reed acquired many new books on its wish list.

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Katina Yates, Savoy Elementary School students, and Jim Esselman with school supplies that Beveridge & Diamond collected for the school.

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Firms Provide School Supplies

Having a good-looking book bag, sharp pencils, and a new ruler does not guarantee academic success. But school partnership volunteers at **Beveridge & Diamond** and **McDermott, Will & Emery** know that it sure helps.

Beveridge & Diamond marked a transition in the firm's partnership with a school supplies drive for Savoy Elementary School. For 10 years, Beveridge & Diamond was paired with Birney Elementary School, which closed at the end of the 2008-09 school year. This school year, as Birney students began attending Savoy, Beveridge & Diamond followed the Birney students to their new school.

According to Katina Yates, who coordinates the firm's partnership activities, the response of her colleagues was great. In September, she and Jim Esselman, Of Counsel at Beveridge & Diamond, delivered to the school three large boxes, overflowing with school supplies that included everything from adhesive bandages to reclosable plastic storage bags.

Since Beveridge & Diamond has an environmental practice, volunteers at the firm turned their recycled papers into bright notepads in 16 colors. Teachers at Savoy are using these attractive notepads as incentives and rewards.

Last fall, McDermott, Will & Emery worked successfully with Office Depot to maximize the number of school supplies the firm was able to purchase for its partner school. This school year, because of Office Depot's generous donation of book bags and other supplies, the firm will again be able to provide school supplies for Amidon Bowen Elementary School.

Law Firm Volunteers Go Back to School

Many law firms helped their partner schools kick off the 2009-10 school year. **Covington & Burling; Dickstein Shapiro; and Epstein Becker & Green** participated in Back-to-School Nights at Cardozo High School, Ellington School of the Arts, and Emery Educational Center.

At Emery's Back-to-School night, attorneys from Epstein, Becker & Green staffed a legal information booth where they distributed information about divorce, parental rights, and landlord tenant issues. The firm's decision to provide legal information during Back-to-School night grew out of questions that parents asked Epstein, Becker & Green attorneys who took part in an awards program at the school. With the parents' questions in mind, Amy Simmons and Kathy Merrill consulted the D.C. Bar's website where they found resource material related to the parents' questions. During Back-to-School night, the attorneys from Epstein Becker & Green provided material for 15 parents. They also left materials for the school's parent resource center.

Covington & Burling provided refreshments for Back-to-School night at Cardozo High School. The firm has been doing this for more than ten years. Having refreshments has more than doubled attendance at Cardozo's Back-to-School nights. The

(Continued on next column)

**Escuela Primaria Bancroft
Bancroft Elementary School
Trường Tiểu Học Bancroft**



**Manual de la Familia
Family Handbook
CHỈ NAM của GIA ĐÌNH
2009-10**



L/R: Guy Collier, McDermott, Will & Emery; Shereen Williams, Director, Office of Community Partnerships, District of Columbia Public Schools; Rod Boggs, Executive Director, Washington Lawyers Committee; and Amy Simmons and Kathy Merrill, School Partnership Coordinators, from Epstein, Becker & Green.

food provided by **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld** has also helped to boost attendance at Tyler Elementary's PTA meetings. Both **Beveridge & Diamond** and **Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson** provided food for faculty meetings at their partner schools. Teachers from the School Without Walls came to Fried Frank for their initial meeting of the 2009-10 school year. The end of the meeting focused on plans and possibilities for the partnership between the law firm and the school.

Howrey Publishes Trilingual Handbook For Bancroft Elementary

To help launch the 2009-10 school year, **Howrey** again published a handbook for families at its partner school, Bancroft Elementary.

Because the school has so many children whose languages at home are Spanish and Vietnamese, the handbook is published in these languages, as well as in English.

The handbook includes such basic information as school hours and the school calendar.

It also has important information about how parents can be involved in the school and in their children's education, as well as contact information for the teachers and staff who work at the school.

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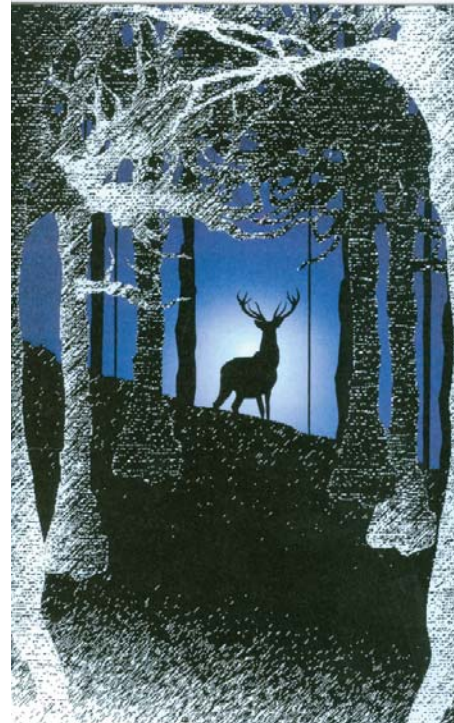
12th Holiday Card Contest Sponsored by Dickstein Shapiro

Attorneys and staff at **Dickstein Shapiro** are currently deciding which student-created design will grace the firm's 2009 holiday card. They are choosing from some 100 drawings submitted by Visual Arts students at their partner school, Ellington School of the Arts. The drawings line the walls of Dickstein's largest conference room, where all firm employees have the opportunity to vote for the winning entries. Their votes will determine the first-, second-, and third-place winners.

Prizes will be awarded to the winners at a December reception, during which the student artwork will be displayed and offered for sale



Ellington student Miguel Valdez at the Anderson Ranch Art Center



Dickstein Shapiro's 2008 holiday card, created by Miguel Valdez at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts.

(with the consent of the artists). First prize will be a \$250 gift certificate to an art supply store. Second- and third-place prizes are \$150 and \$75 gift certificates for art supplies. Dickstein Shapiro will also donate \$2,500 to Ellington's Visual Arts Department.

The winning design will appear on over 20,000 holiday cards that the firm will mail this year. It will also be turned into an electronic card that is sent to thousands more and displayed on the firm's website. Dickstein Shapiro's 2009 holiday card will be the firm's 12th card designed by an Ellington student.

Twelfth-grader Miguel Valdez won the 2008 competition. During the summer before he won the competition, a Dickstein Shapiro scholarship made it possible for him to study visual art at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center near Aspen, Colorado. Every summer, the firm provides scholarships to Anderson Ranch for four Ellington students. This year, Miguel is studying computer animation at the University of Maryland.

(Continued on page 10)

Fannie Mae Involves Students In Trial of Gold E. Locks

Law-related activities can also be creative. **Fannie Mae's Legal Department** and the **D.C. Office of the Attorney General** have used scripts developed by the American Bar Association to conduct mock trials for their elementary and middle-school partners.

For example, Fannie Mae has previously observed Career Day at Marie Reed by involving sixth graders in trying Gold E. Locks for bad manners. The facts of the case were based on the story of "Goldilocks and The Three Bears." The roles of Defendant Gold E. Locks, the Bear Family, and key witnesses were played by Fannie Mae attorneys who came to court dressed in character. Fannie Mae attorneys also assumed the roles of Judge, Prosecutor, and Bailiff. The Bailiff explained her role as well as those of her colleagues as she introduced them. She also explained the role of the jury before administering the oath to the sixth graders.

The trial was interrupted at several intervals to make sure the sixth graders understood what was happening. After receiving instructions from the judge, the sixth graders deliberated thoughtfully for 15 minutes. Many jurors expressed the feeling that Gold E. Locks failure to ask permission to enter the Bear home and to eat and sleep there meant that she was guilty. In the words of her mother, played by Melissa Reese, "They were determined to fry her." After the jury returned a unanimous verdict, she was pronounced "Guilty."

David Kalinski, Associate General Counsel at Fannie Mae, played Papa Bear, a role that required roaring. The children's request for him to repeat his roar made him feel that he played his role effectively. Fannie Mae's Deputy General Counsel Jon Griffith, played the judge. According to him, no one playing a role in the trial had to spend time memorizing lines. The time required for them to prepare for their roles was under 15 minutes.

The Gold E. Locks script is one of 14 mock trial scripts developed for grades K-6 by the American Bar Association. For more information, go to <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/mocktrials.html>.



Sid Dickstein looking at holiday card designs created by students from the Ellington School of the Arts.

Different Verdicts Reached By Middle School Juries

Several years ago, when the **D.C. Office of the Attorney General** used the ABA developed script with students at Terrell Junior High School, two student juries returned verdicts in the trial of their eighth-grade classmate, Gold E. Locks. She was charged with breaking and entering, trespass, injury to personal property, and misdemeanor larceny. The Honorable John M. Ferren, Senior Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, presided over her trial. Attorneys from the Office of the Attorney General played the roles of the prosecuting and defense attorneys. Terrell students played all the Bear roles, as well as those of Bailiff, Courtroom Clerk, and Marshals.

The mock trial program introduced the students to the judicial process and the American legal system as a whole. It also served as a springboard for lessons in the students' social studies and reading classes. After the attorneys introduced the program, they gave a series of presentations on the American legal system; criminal law versus civil law; criminal procedure; anatomy of a criminal trial; and definition of key terms. Following the orientation session, attorneys held two practice sessions, one at Terrell and one in the trial courtroom in the D.C. Superior Court Building.

The two juries deliberated separately. One acquitted Ms. Locks. The other found her guilty.



Pre-K students at Cleveland Elementary School enjoy a day at the "beach," courtesy of Holland & Knight.

Holland & Knight Brings Beach to Cleveland

At the end of every school year, **Holland & Knight** organizes an in-town Day at the Beach for the pre-K children at its partner school, Cleveland Elementary.

Volunteers from the firm set up swimming pools on the playground and barbecue hot dogs for the children and their parents.

Firms Help Schools With Printing Needs (cont'd)

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson and **Epstein Becker & Green** also handle printing projects for their partner schools. Epstein, Becker & Green printed the teacher handbook for Emery Educational Center. Throughout the year, Fried Frank prints a variety of forms used by the School Without Walls.

Dickstein Sponsors Design Competition (cont'd)

The contest schedule has to be fairly tight to ensure enough time to print the cards and have them at the firm to distribute to Dickstein attorneys right after the Thanksgiving weekend.

The time from when the students begin work on their drawings to the selection of the winners is about five weeks.

A holiday card contest is also a possibility with younger students.

In the past, several firms that were partnered with elementary schools have held competitions for their holiday card designs.

You can read about **Foley & Lardner's** experience with a competition for elementary students in the Fall 2003 issue of this newsletter at www.washlaw.org; click on *Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board* newsletter, Fall 2003.



Dickstein Shapiro's 2007 holiday card, designed by Ellington student Julius Hutchins.

PARTNERSHIPS

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld
Tyler Elementary School

Arent Fox
Randle Highlands Elementary School

Baker & McKenzie
Payne Elementary School

Beveridge & Diamond
Birney Elementary School

Bracewell & Giuliani
Brightwood Elementary School

Brown Rudnick
Whittier Education Center

Covington & Burling
Cardozo Senior High School

Dickstein Shapiro
Ellington School of the Arts

Drinker, Biddle & Reath
Ann Beers Elementary School

Epstein, Becker & Green
Emery Educational Center

Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Dept.
Marie H. Reed Learning Center

Foley & Lardner
Wilkinson Elementary School

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson
School Without Walls

Fulbright & Jaworski
Macfarland Middle School

Holland & Knight
Banneker Senior High School
Cleveland Elementary School

Howrey
Bancroft Elementary School

McDermott, Will & Emery
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School

Patton Boggs
Francis Stevens Educational
Campus

Pepper Hamilton
Stanton Elementary School

Reed Smith
Bruce Monroe at Park View
Elementary School

Sidley Austin
Thomson Elementary School

Stephoe & Johnson
Montgomery Elementary School

Sutherland
Bell Multicultural Senior
High School

**U.S. Courts for the District of
Columbia Circuit**
J.O. Wilson Elementary School

Weil, Gotshal & Manges
Noyes Elementary School

Williams & Connolly
Dunbar Senior High School

Winston & Strawn
Kamit Institute for
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2009-2010

PARTNERSHIP DATES

November 20	Geoplunge Tournament
January 26	Partnership Luncheon
April 28	Partnership Luncheon

Partnership Luncheons
will be held at the law firm of
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP.

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