

Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

D.C. Public School Partnerships Project
of the Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Fall 2007

Third City-wide GeoPlunge Contest Set for November 14

The third city-wide GeoPlunge Geography Tournament will be held November 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C. Three-person teams of fifth-graders from all District of Columbia public elementary schools are invited to participate in the competition.

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

(Continued on page 5)



Bell students with their supervising attorneys from Sutherland. Back Row, L/R; Jay McDannell (Sutherland Asbill & Brennan), Hermis Santos, Diego Pereira, Brad Prendergast (Sutherland Asbill & Brennan). Middle Row, L/R: Martha Medina, Odessa Lewis, Stephanie Baez. Front Row L/R: Ana Contreras, Beverly Cruz

Law Firms Hire Students From Partner Schools For Summer Jobs

This past summer, four law firms employed students from their partner high schools.

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan, through a program it developed called Sutherland Junior College (SJC), gave eight students the opportunity to work in a wide range of areas at the firm over the summer.

These areas included the law library, marketing department, technology department, paralegal and secretarial areas, facilities, records, and recruiting.

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IRIS' N T R O



IRIS J. TOYER
Project Director, D.C. Public School Partnerships
Project, Washington Lawyers' Committee

It is back to school time once again. Already our partnership law firms are working hard to improve outcomes for the students at their partner schools. Whether it is hosting a dinner for the teachers and administrators, or providing meals for Back-to-School Night to boost parent participation—you name it and I will bet that a firm has it on its 'To- Do List.'

The law firms highlighted in this issue are performing life-changing acts. On page 1, Sutherland Junior College, a creation of **Sutherland Asbill & Brennan**, exposes young people at their partner school, Bell Multicultural High School, to the real work environment.

The story on page 5 shows that we never know how far-reaching the work of these partnerships can be. One **Reed Smith** summer associate pointed to the firm's partnership with Park View Elementary School as a reason for applying to the firm for a summer associate slot.

Imagine going to lunch and making it a math lesson. Read the story on page 9 about **Baker & McKenzie's** program 'Take a Kid to Lunch and Talk About Life' to see how the simple act of eating lunch can be turned in to a teachable moment.

I would also like to draw your attention to our very special guest columnist, D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee. Ms. Rhee's recognition of the D.C. Public Schools Partnership Project and the fine work performed by our partnership firms is rewarding and her pledge to be supportive of us all is significant.

Ms. Rhee's office is already making good on her commitment by providing high-level support for our upcoming GeoPlunge Tournament this school year. Our front page story on the 3rd Annual GeoPlunge Tournament describes how this one will be bigger and better than the first two competitions.

With the help of the Chancellor we will be able to accommodate 64 elementary school teams for the GeoPlunge Tournament. Together, we are making plans for the day and are excited at the prospect of seeing nearly 200 fifth- and sixth-graders matching wits over geography!

After reading this issue, I know that you will want your firm to a part of this exciting work. So call me!

Iris

Iris J. Toyer, Director
D.C. Public School Partnerships Project

FROM THE C

In my first weeks as Chancellor of D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), I have met many parents, students, community members and business leaders.

Ready to convince constituents of the important link between community support and student achievement, I was pleased to meet a city already full with energy, resources, and ideas for making our schools work for students and their families.

I am grateful for the discourse that began in my town hall meetings across the city, and with your involvement, I look forward to continuing that conversation.

Our partnership with the Washington Lawyers' Committee and its Public Education Projects are vital as we build relationships in the community. Our schools cannot operate in a vacuum, separated from the lessons of community leaders and professionals. Your work in support of students, either directly volunteering your time or financially supporting enrichment events and programs, has been invaluable in strengthening communities and impacting students' lives.

I was inspired by the celebration of literacy in the Poetry Slam for Macfarland Middle School students, led by the attorney-mentors of **Fulbright & Jaworski**.

I want all students to have the opportunity **Holland & Knight** created for Banneker students, who applied their science curriculum as hands-on engineers in the Banneker Robotics Project.

In my role as Chancellor, I am determined to increase college attendance for our graduates, so I am encouraged by the work of **Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan**, who walked students through the college application process at Bell Multicultural High School.



*Michelle A. Rhee
Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools*

These are only a few examples of the countless partnerships you have established and maintained with DCPS.

As Chancellor, I am acutely aware that your work in our schools is not a “complement” to education for our students but a critical piece that students and their families will be depending upon in the coming years.

You have set a strong foundation for the collaboration our children need from us. Thank you for your work in holding them to high expectations, guiding them through the challenges on the way to meeting those expectations.

Now, I am ready to build upon that foundation to make our schools work for the students and families of DCPS.

H A N C E L L O R

NEWS

NEWSWORTHY



Cooking-for-Kids Taste-Off judges (Back Row, L/R) Thomas Head, former Executive Wine and Food Editor, Washingtonian Magazine; Melanie Parker, Pastry Chef, Equinox Restaurant; David Dorsen, former Wine and Food Editor, Washingtonian Magazine; and Nancy Brier, Assistant to the owner, Equinox Restaurant; with Iris Toyer, Director, D.C. Public School Partnerships Project (Front).

Mayer Brown, Rowe & Maw, Reed Smith, Bracewell & Guiliani Win Pastry Taste-Off Honors

Tonie Davis of **Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw** took the top prize with her lemon pound cake in the 8th annual Cooking for Kids Taste-Off held at the Committee's offices on June 4, 2007. She won dinner for two at a Washington, D.C., area restaurant, courtesy of Taste-Off Judge David Dorsen, Esq., former Wine and Food Editor of *Washingtonian Magazine*.

Second Prize went to frequent Taste-Off winner, Elizabeth Carder from **Reed Smith** for her triple berry pie.

Amanda Fillman from **Bracewell & Guiliani** took third prize for her chocolate chip cookie.

The three other taste-off judges were Thomas Head, former Executive Wine and Food Editor of *Washingtonian Magazine*; Melanie Parker, Pastry Chef at the award-winning Equinox Restaurant; and Nancy Brier, assistant to the owner at Equinox. Second- and third-place winners received a bottle of fine wine recommended by the judges.

Other firms who brought delicious pastries to the Taste-Off include **Arent Fox, Spriggs & Hollingsworth, Steptoe & Johnson**, and **Weil Gotshal & Manges** as well as the Washington Lawyers' Committee.

Third City-wide GeoPlunge Contest Set for November 14 (cont'd)

Alan Fishel, a partner at **Arent Fox**, invented the geography game and created the set of GeoPlunge cards. GeoPlunge was such a success with students at the Arent Fox partner school, Randle Highlands Elementary, that Alan and his law firm persuaded the Washington Lawyers' Committee to co-sponsor the first two GeoPlunge tournaments. For the second tournament, they were joined by 28 law firms that sponsored individual schools.

The third tournament will also be co-sponsored by the Committee and Arent Fox. Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of D.C. Public Schools, has helped to publicize the tournament among elementary-school principals.

The winning schools in the first tournament, which took place 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."



Students from Cleveland Elementary School organize their cards for the playoff round in the second Citywide GeoPlunge Tournament.



Students compete in 2nd city-wide GeoPlunge Tournament

To sponsor your partner school or another school in the tournament, contact Iris Toyer at: 319-1000, ext. 117, or Iris_Toyer@washlaw.org.

School Partnership Leads Associate To Reed Smith

During one of her final interviews for a summer associate position at **Reed Smith**, a senior partner asked Angela Holland, "Why Reed Smith?"

Angela, who was completing her second year of law school at Vanderbilt University, responded that Reed Smith was the first and, for many years, only law firm name she knew.

Her first encounter with the name of the firm was a T-shirt proclaiming "Reed Smith Cares About Park View Students." It was worn by her father who was then the principal of Reed Smith's partner school, Park View Elementary.

When his young daughter asked him what Reed Smith was, her father explained that it was Park View's partner law firm and that it did all kinds of things to support the school. Over ten years later, she remembers some of those things.

"During the initial years, Reed Smith aided my father in his unyielding efforts to raise the literacy levels of Park View students," recalls Angela. "When Park View was searching for ways to provide incentives for the children, the firm jumped right in, donating prizes to motivate the young readers."

(Continued on page 10)

W O R K

O R L D



Covington's summer employees from Cardozo High School with their Saturday Academy mentor: L/R Cardozo student Esrael Mesfil; Saturday Academy Coordinator H. Patricia Blackshire; and Cardozo students Marsha Casey and Elijah Harris.

O F

Cardozo Students Work at Covington & Burling

This past summer, **Covington & Burling** continued its 15-year practice of hiring students from its partner school, Cardozo Senior High, for summer jobs.

Marsha Casey, who is now a senior, worked in the Space Maintenance Department. Esrael Mesfil, also currently a senior, worked in the Mailroom. Elijah Harris, now a junior, was another Mailroom summer hire.

As they began their summer jobs, the students were a little apprehensive. Marsha thought she would be intimidated by the very professional and very serious atmosphere. But she soon realized that, "I like to work with people who are serious about their job. I learn a lot."

Elijah, who was worried about "messing up," discovered that he had a chance to correct mistakes that he made at first and that others in the mail room came to rely on him to get the right document to the right attorney on time.

The three Cardozo students are very much focused on their futures. Esrael wants to become a doctor. Marsha's goal of pediatrician is even more specific. Elijah wants to major in history, and because he enjoys researching, he is interested in becoming a paralegal.

Summer employment is only one aspect of Covington & Burling's mission of preparing Cardozo students for the future. The three students who had summer jobs at the firm also participate in Covington's Saturday Academy, the centerpiece of the 15-year Covington & Burling/Cardozo partnership.

"The Saturday Academy helps get students ready for the world of work through a variety of activities," explains Saturday Academy coordinator Patricia Blackshire.

During the Saturday session, students practice being interviewed, and they learn how to prepare resumes and fill out job applications, including those for employment at Covington.

W O R K

Eight Bell Students Have Summer Jobs At Sutherland (cont'd)

Students from Bell Multicultural Senior High School helped to produce marketing materials, research school information for the recruiting department, and worked with paralegals and secretaries to meet client needs.

They also participated in a series of training programs giving them a solid foundation in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint. More than 25 partners and associates, and dozens of staff members, worked with and supervised the students.

Over the summer, the students gained a better understanding of the workplace environment. As one student, Brittani Dennis, explained, "I greatly enjoyed working in the Recruiting Department. It gave me a better understanding about resumes, how to format my personal resume, and a better understanding of college." Brittani plans to major in Forensics Science.

Martha Medina, another student, said, "I enjoyed my time in both the Services Department and Marketing Department. While in Services, I got to work with different software, including Microsoft Word which I will definitely use in the future." Martha wants to attend college at the University of North Carolina or Wake Forest University.

(Continued on page 10)



Elijah Harris (left) and Esrael Mesfil review the list of attorneys who are supposed to receive a Covington & Burling document.



Odessa Lewis, a student from Bell Multicultural High School, works in the library at Sutherland Asbill & Brennan.

Dickstein Shapiro, Fried Frank Hire Interns From Partner Schools

Every summer, **Dickstein Shapiro** reserves an intern slot for a graduating senior from its partner school, Ellington School of the Arts.

According to Sharon O'Connell, who is in charge of interns for the firm, the Ellington hires always work out well, because she manages to place them in positions that match their abilities and interests.

This past year, the Ellington intern was Robert Ashe. As he is good with computers and electronics, he worked in the Information Technology department.

During the summer of 2006, the Ellington intern's placement worked out so well that he opted to stay on and defer college for a year.

Two years ago, Dickstein hired Molly McArdle, an aspiring writer, who felt at home among books. "I had worked in a bookstore, and I was used to an environment where you had to take care of books. I was also familiar with the Dewey Decimal System," she recalls.

Fried, Frank, Harris Shriver & Jacobson, hired Davide Carozza, a recent School without Walls graduate, to work in the managing partner's office. He was sent to court frequently and filed pleadings. According to his supervisor, Joe DeSantis, he was a great asset.

At the end of every school year, Fried Frank hosts the School Without Walls Senior Awards Ceremony. During the ceremony last spring, Davide, who is attending Williams College, presented the annual Williams College scholarship to a senior at the school.

ESPRIT

LE M E N T A R Y



Winners of the fitness challenge during the slumber party that the Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women's Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC) held for girls from Malcolm X Elementary School.

GWAC Hosts 20 Malcolm X Girls For End-of-Year Slumber Party

Attorneys from the **Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women's Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC)** treated 20 girls from Malcolm X Elementary School to an end-of-year slumber party last May.

Throughout each school year, GWAC volunteers have weekly tutoring sessions for fifth- and sixth-grade girls at Malcolm X. They also take the girls on a special outing each month.

The outing for last May was an activity-filled 25½ hours at the home of Elizabeth Thomas, who for several years coordinated GWAC's Malcolm X activities. During this well-organized slumber party, Elizabeth had the help of nine other GWAC volunteers, whose assigned shifts were Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening, and/or Sunday morning.

Shortly after arriving at Elizabeth's house, the fifth- and sixth-grade girls listened to a health lecture. Then everyone went to a nearby park for a fitness challenge and picnic lunch. The afternoon featured a talent show and workshop on manners. Dinner was followed by jewelry-making and team-building exercises.

The final Saturday events were a snack and a late-night movie which ended as scheduled at midnight. The girls from Malcolm X, however, in spite of their day of non-stop activity, were not sleepy. But after considerable whispering and giggling, they got enough rest in their inflatable beds to do an impressive job on the essays they wrote the next morning about the GWAC program.

Payne Elementary Students Treated to Lunch By Baker & McKenzie

On a bright day last May, a bus pulled up in front of 815 Connecticut Avenue where 20 volunteers from **Baker & McKenzie** were waiting. As the eager sixth-graders from Payne Elementary School got off the bus, they were paired with mentors who took them to lunch at Georgia Brown's, McCormick & Schmick's, or another nice restaurant within walking distance. Baker & McKenzie calls this activity "Take a Kid to Lunch and Talk about Life."

Each child was given \$30 for his or her lunch. In order to make sure the students spent the money on lunch, their school chaperones told them that they would have to turn in money they did not use for their meals to their Baker & McKenzie lunch partners.

Their lunch partners from the firm, however, rewarded the students for their excellent behavior and companionship by letting them keep the change. The special lunch ended with dessert on the balcony of the firm's offices at 815 Connecticut Avenue, where the young students enjoyed ice cream and a view of the White House.

The activity last May was Baker & McKenzie's first "Take a Kid to Lunch and Talk about Life" event. Cheryl Kragnes, the firm's school partnership coordinator, believes the event has started a tradition.

"Everyone from the firm who participated said 'sign me up next time,'" she reported.



Payne Elementary School students enjoy ice cream as part of a special lunch provided by Baker & McKenzie.



Fathers and sons listen to speakers while awaiting food served during Tyler Elementary School's annual Father-Son Dinner.

According to Cheryl, the firm is looking to hold this activity early in the 2007-2008 school year. This arrangement will give the Baker & McKenzie volunteers time during the year to develop the relationships that they initiate over lunch.

"Take a Kid to Lunch and Talk about Life" was funded by the firm's unique auction of baked goods. Half of the firm, the Bakers, provide 40 to 50 pastries. The other half, the McKenzies, bid on the baked goods at the auction which raises several thousand dollars for Payne Elementary School annually.

Akin Gump Helps Boost Parental Involvement At Tyler Elementary

The administration and faculty at Tyler Elementary School are well aware of how critical parental involvement is to students' academic success. With the help of **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld**, Tyler has been able to strengthen its connection to parents. Attendance at Back-to-School Night more than tripled after Akin Gump began providing supper for this event.

The firm also provides food for the school's annual Father-Son Dinner and Mother-Daughter tea. The Tyler faculty was particularly pleased with the attendance at the recent Father-Son Dinner, because getting fathers involved in their children's education can be challenging.

Akin Gump is very proud of Tyler's recent academic success. In the latest round of standardized testing, the school showed dramatic improvement in reading scores. Tyler is also one of the schools that have made adequate yearly progress according to the federal No Child Left Behind Program.



Bell students, Martha Medina and Diego Pereira, working at Sutherland Asbill & Brennan.

Bell Students at Sutherland (cont'd)

Martha and the other students who worked in the Marketing Department were supervised by Gail Hageman, Market Technology Senior Manager.

According to Ms. Hageman, “Sutherland’s Marketing department was fortunate to host four SJC students over the summer. All of our interns had great attitudes and worked at lightning speed, taking on every assignment as a challenge. They tackled website information, inventoried collateral materials and assisted with major mailings to certain groups of clients, just to name a few projects. The extra help was a bonus, and the students got a close-up view of many aspects of law-firm marketing.”

In summing up his summer experience, Diego Pereira, recalled, “From my experience at SAB, I have learned about working in the ‘real world’ and I feel more prepared now for college.”

This summer employment was only one aspect of Sutherland Junior College. The firm’s program ensures that Bell students who have the potential to attend college receive the support they need to make higher education a successful reality.

A year ago, these students, who were then juniors, were paired with an attorney mentor from Sutherland and began weekly after-school sessions. During these sessions, students received personal training for the SAT, learned about college, financial aid and admissions, and received life-skills training needed for college and career success.

(Continued on page 12)

School Partnership Leads Associate To Reed Smith (cont'd)

“Most notably, Reed Smith sponsored prizes for the annual Dunk-The-Principal for Reading Contest, including the grand prize of a chauffeured limousine dinner for the family of the child who succeeded in reading the greatest number of books,” said Angela.

“I remember when my brother—a Park View fifth-grader—boasted about his participation in the Reed Smith-sponsored KidSavers Group and his visit to Reed Smith for the Power Lunch,” she said. Angela’s younger brother, Burnell Holland III, graduated from Boston College and is active in civic activities in San Francisco.

Angela’s final summer associate interviews turned out well, and she was glad to be hired as a 2007 Reed Smith summer associate. One of the highlights of her spring and summer at the firm was the Washington Lawyers’ Committee’s 2007 Wiley A. Branton Luncheon where she watched Reed Smith being honored by the Vincent E. Reed Award for the firm’s sustained commitment to a D.C. Public School.

As she said, “Once an outsider looking in, I am truly inspired that I can *finally* be a part of the partnership between a special school and an extraordinary firm that values its community as well as its clients.”



Bell High School students who held summer jobs at Sutherland Asbill & Brennan in front of the firm’s building.

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

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft

H.D. Woodson Senior High School

Covington & Burling

Cardozo Senior High School

D.C. Chartered Health Plan, Inc.

Ballou Senior High School

Dickstein Shapiro

Ellington School of the Arts

DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary

Bruce Monroe Elementary School

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

Greater Washington Area Chapter -

Women Lawyers Division -

National Bar Association

Malcolm X Elementary School

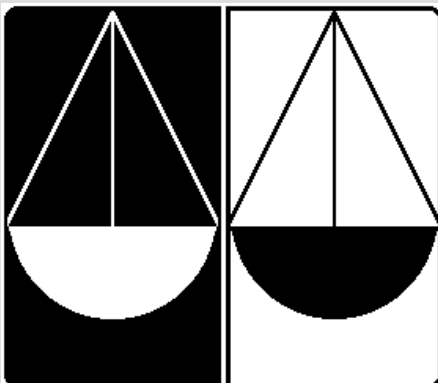
Health Right, Inc.

H.D. Cooke Elementary School

Ferebee-Hope Elementary School

LaSalle Elementary School

Lincoln Junior High School



F I R M S C H O O L S

Holland & Knight

Banneker Senior High School

Cleveland Elementary School

Howrey

Bancroft Elementary School

Kilpatrick Stockton

Sousa Middle School

McDermott, Will & Emery

Bowen Elementary School

Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw

Gage-Eckington Elementary School

The Office of the Attorney General, District of Columbia

Walker Jones/R.H. Terrell

Education Center

Patton Boggs

Francis Junior High School

Pepper Hamilton

Stanton Elementary School

Reed Smith

Park View Elementary School

Sidley Austin

Thomson Elementary School

Spriggs & Hollingsworth

Jefferson Junior High School

Step toe & Johnson

Montgomery Elementary School

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan

Bell Multicultural Senior High School

U.S. Attorney's Office for the

District of Columbia

Amidon Elementary School

U.S. Courts for the District of Columbia Circuit

J.O. Wilson Elementary School

Washington Bar Association -

Young Lawyers' Division

Banneker Senior High School

Ballou Senior High School

Weil, Gotshal & Manges

Noyes Elementary School

Williams & Connolly

Dunbar Senior High School

Winston & Strawn

Kamit Institute for Magnificent Achievers

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Bell Students at Sutherland (cont'd)

During the 2007-2008 school year, these senior students will receive assistance with college applications, go on tours of colleges, and search for scholarships. Because of enthusiasm for Sutherland Junior College at both the school and the firm, ten more juniors from Bell Multicultural High School recently began the program and can look forward to their summer at Sutherland.

2007/08 Partnership Dates

Wednesday, November 14, 2007	Geoplunge Tournament 3
Thursday, January 24, 2008	Partnership Luncheon
Thursday, April 17, 2008	Partnership Luncheon

Partnership Luncheons will be held at
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

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