

Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

Spring
2011

D.C. PUBLIC
SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIPS
PROJECT



Students at Garfield Elementary School using Netbooks provided by Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker.

New Partnerships Formed By Seven Law Firms

Over the past year, five law firms began their involvement in school partnerships, and two longtime school partners took on new school relationships. **Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker** launched its activities at Garfield Elementary School a little over a year ago when attorneys and staff helped out at Registration Carnival Day in May. In July, a team of summer associates cleaned classrooms.

One of the firm's major efforts was bringing Garfield's empty computer lab back to life. The project began with a competition sponsored by Paul Hastings to create art for the firm's holiday cards. Card sales and a silent auction at the firm's holiday party raised over \$5,000. The funds were used to purchase Netbooks, which Principal Angela Tilghman feels will work best for the school because of their compact size and portability. In February, IT staff and volunteers from Paul Hastings delivered 19 Netbooks to the school and set up the computer lab.

See pages 6-7 for articles on our other new school partnerships.

Call For More Partnerships Comes From D.C. Bar President And Schools Chancellor

D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson threw down a challenge to Washington law firms at the School Partnerships Recruitment Luncheon on May 24. "We have about 30 D.C. public schools that are in partnerships with law firms. I have 123 schools, so right now you are reaching about a quarter of my students," she explained. "My challenge is that I want you to double that number. A year from now, I would love to be able to say that we have 60 law firm/school partnerships."

D.C. Bar President Ronald Flagg, who hosted the luncheon at his law firm, **Sidley Austin**, described the partnership that his firm has had with Thomson Elementary School for 15 years. He urged his colleagues who are not yet school partners to become involved. He also stressed the importance of community support for the schools, which have been undergoing improvements recently.

(Continued on page 12)

Check the Board

Project Perspective	2
From the Chancellor	3
Newsworthy Events	4
New Partnerships	6
Established Partnerships	8
School Partnership List.....	11
Contributors	12



WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND URBAN AFFAIRS

P R O J E C T

E R S P E C T I V E



Elinor Hart
Coordinator
D.C. Public School
Partnerships Project

This spring, I have had a chance to view how our school partnerships are viewed from the schools' perspective.

In mid-May, I attended the Ward 6 State of the Schools meeting, where I had a chance to talk with three school principals.

Melissa Martin from the Walker Jones Education Campus and Patricia Pride from Jefferson Middle School spoke with enthusiasm of the excellent mentoring by **Steptoe & Johnson** and the **Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association** at their partner schools.

Rachel Skerritt, who will be the new principal of Eastern High School,

told me how eager she is to begin working on debates and career education with **Arent Fox** during the next school year.

This meeting made me very proud of our school partnerships. It also made me realize that those of you who are putting so much into school partnership activities have an even greater reason to be proud of what you are accomplishing in the schools.

While working on a video for the Washington Lawyers' Committee at Tyler Elementary School, I learned from Principal Jennifer Frentress and Assistant Principal Shawn Bender how responsive **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld** is to the needs of the school and how helpful the firm is in supporting innovation at the school. Having also observed Akin Gump volunteers tutoring Tyler students, I know all of these efforts are very much appreciated by the students and the school.

Beveridge & Diamond has created an amazing environmental course for Savoy Elementary School. The firm has also been very helpful in putting the course on the firm's website. The course is a valuable resource for many interactive exercises, including a cap and trade game, pH testing, and building an electrostatic precipitator.

You will note on page 1 the challenge that Chancellor Henderson has given the legal community to double the number of school partnerships. The Committee welcomes the challenge and is confident that you will help us meet it.

*Elinor Hart
Coordinator
D.C. Public School Partnerships Project*

F R O M T H E

Growing up and attending public schools in Mt. Vernon, NY, I had the opportunity to participate in a variety of enrichment activities outside of school that broadened my perspective of the world and helped me become the well-rounded person I am today.

But, perhaps more importantly, these opportunities sparked a fascination that kept me connected to school. In order to participate, I had to maintain good grades. And, if my school work seemed too daunting or boring, I knew there would be a reward waiting for me after school.

At District of Columbia Public Schools, we have developed strong partnerships with law firms, large and small businesses, nonprofits, community organizations and residents that provide our children with a variety of opportunities that our school system cannot offer without collaboration. Many of these collaborative partnerships have been developed in conjunction with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

These exciting programs – developed and run by our partners – seamlessly infuse academics so that kids learn while having fun.

For example, every year DCPS students compete in the annual city-wide GeoPlunge Geography Tournament, an event developed by Alan Fishel, a partner at the law firm **Arent Fox**. The tournament gives hundreds of DCPS students a chance to compete against their peers, make new friends, learn the value of sportsmanship and have fun playing a game that Fishel created to share his passion for geography with elementary and middle-school students.

Teachers form GeoPlunge clubs and teams that meet throughout the school year. And, students build knowledge while practicing their skills and interacting with mentors from a number of law firms.

Similarly, attorneys at the environmental law firm of **Beveridge & Diamond** used their expertise to create an environmental course for fifth graders at Savoy Elementary School.

We encourage more attorneys and staff and more law firms to share their knowledge and creativity with our students. The mentoring programs that these



Kaya Henderson
Chancellor
District of Columbia Public Schools

partnerships bring to our schools are essential because many of our students do not have a caring adult in their lives who is thoughtful about their academic success and checking their progress regularly. This is especially true for our middle-school students.

We are grateful for the generous funding that these partnerships provide for our schools and students. Even more valuable than financial contributions, however, is the opportunity provided by the school partnerships for our children to connect with strong professional role models. When our students get to know their tutors, mentors and others at their partnership firms, they begin to see new possibilities for themselves. They also see that the community is invested in their lives and their education.

I am convinced that school partnerships will help our students achieve what we know they can. These school partnerships and the many volunteers who participate in them can play a critical role in making the District of Columbia Public Schools the pride of our nation.

C
H
A
N
C
E
L
L
O
R



Orr Elementary School GeoPlunge team with DCPS Chancellor Kaya Henderson (center); Bill Schreiner, one of Zuckerman Spaeder’s GeoPlunge coaches (rear); and Michelle Edwards, Orr Elementary School principal (far right).

More Students, Lawyers Involved In 6th GeoPlunge Tournament

The 6th annual city-wide GeoPlunge Geography Tournament involved more law firms, as well as attorneys and staff, and it brought more students than ever to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History last November 18.

The team from Hobson Stuart Middle School took first-place in the tournament, ending the three-year winning streak of J. O. Wilson Elementary School. This year’s team from J. O. Wilson came in second. However, the Stuart Hobson Middle School students who took first place learned GeoPlunge during their elementary school years at J. O. Wilson.

Although Cleveland Elementary School had been a tournament winner in the past, the teams from that school found the competition very tough last November. Some of the students were really discouraged when they joined their coaches from **Holland & Knight** for the lunch break and a pep talk. The coaches told the students that “participating is winning,” and that the Cleveland students should play like winners which they did during the afternoon. Their determination paid off, and they took second place for teamwork. Two teams from Thomson Elementary School, coached by volunteers from **Sidley Austin**, won their divisions.

Thirteen law firms coached GeoPlunge teams. For five of these firms, it was the GeoPlunge coaching experience that launched their school partnerships. Thirty-four teams and over 200 students participated in the 2010 competition.

(Continued on page 10)

Law Firms Bake and Compete, Schools and Students Win

The cookies, pies, and cakes baked by volunteers at 13 law firms in March are bringing books, playground equipment, field trips, circus tickets, and more to public schools across the District of Columbia. The pastries sold on March 14th raised over \$6,000 that will be used for a variety of needs on school wish lists.

The Cooking for Kids Bake Sale and Taste-Off is an annual event that includes our competition for the best cookies, pies, and cakes. The late afternoon taste-off takes place at the Washington Lawyers' Committee's offices, where a panel of culinary experts selects the winning pastries.

This year's judges included Aleks Duni, who owns several Washington eateries; Chris Floyd, founder and director of Capital Restaurant Resources; David Fritsche, executive sous-chef at The Dupont Hotel; Justin Roche, pastry chef at Charlie Palmer Steak; and Joseph Yaple, chef de cuisine at The Dupont Hotel.

Arent Fox took first place in the cookie category for chocolate chip cookies/brownie bars baked by firm librarian Courtney Keaton. She was surprised that the concoctions she calls "brookies" did so well.



Cooking for Kids Taste-Off representatives from the winning firms included (L/R) Connie Burke from **Bracewell & Giuliani**; Linda Bettencourt from **Beveridge & Diamond**; Kathy Merrill from **Epstein, Becker & Green**; Michelle Bell from **DLA Piper**; and Eleanor Smith from **Zuckerman Spaeder**.



Taste-off judges picking the winning pastries: L/R: Justin Roche, Joseph Yaple, Chris Floyd, and David Fritsche.

The cake category winner was **Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr**. Dede Smith, who submitted an entry on behalf of her husband Stephen Smith, an attorney in the litigation practice group, made a cherry chocolate cake. Stephen Smith said the recipe was passed down to his wife from her grandmother, so the win was truly a family affair.

In the pie category, **Beveridge & Diamond** took first place. Linda Bettencourt, assistant to principal attorney Henry Diamond, won with her take on blueberry pie. She was particularly pleased with her success, since this was her first taste-off.

The other winning bakers in the cookie category were Kathy Merrill from **Epstein, Becker & Green** for her ginger snaps, and Myra Harris from **Drinker, Biddle & Reath** for her oatmeal raisin walnut cookie. Additional prize winners in the cake category were Greg Williams from **Bracewell & Giuliani** for his chocolate hazelnut cake and Jessica Green Johnson from **DLA Piper** for her red velvet cheesecake. Pie winners also included Rachel Nee from **Bracewell & Giuliani** for her fresh fruit and cheese tart and Suzie Taylor from **Zuckerman Spaeder** for her lemon tart.

The other firms that participated in the bake sale include **Andrews Kurth, BuckleySandler, Holland & Knight, Pepper Hamilton, Pierce Atwood, and Winston & Strawn**.

NEW PARTNERS

NEW PARTNERSHIPS



Claudette Henry (left) and Jody Sullivan from Perkins Coie with the GeoPlunge team from Powell Elementary School

Perkins Coie Volunteers Involved at Powell

Volunteers from **Perkins Coie** launched the firm's school partnership with Powell Elementary School by meeting faculty and parents at Powell's Back-to-School night last fall. In October and November, firm volunteers coached GeoPlunge geography teams and cheered them on at the city-wide tournament. Powell students were very enthusiastic about GeoPlunge.

The Perkins Coie coaches were so proud of the Powell students that they bought a globe for the school.

In early June, Perkins Coie volunteers judged the portfolio projects created by Powell students. The keynote speaker at the ceremony to mark the 5th graders graduation from Powell will be Judith Corley, a partner at the firm and the personal attorney to President Barack Obama.

Looking to next year, the firm is planning to launch an early morning reading program.

Busy Spring At Garfield For Paul Hastings

Spring brought a lot of activity to the **Paul Hastings**/Garfield Elementary School partnership. In March, volunteers from the firm planted trees around the school.

A bake sale in April raised \$1,000 for Garfield. May was especially busy. Volunteers from the firm helped out in the library during a day-long reading fair.

Two major activities came at the end of May. One was a health and science fair geared toward parents. The firm also put on a career fair for 4th and 5th graders.

Volunteers from the firm helped out at Registration Carnival Day in early June. Attorneys and staff from Paul Hastings welcomed the opportunity to paint faces, line up children for the moon bounce, and help with other entertaining activities at the carnival.

The firm also focused on the event's main purpose—getting students registered for the 2011/12 school year. Toward that end, Paul Hastings provided fifty \$20 gift cards from Giant for prize drawings. Only the names of parents whose children were registered at Garfield could be included in the drawings.

The firm has also provided 19 Netbooks for the school's computer lab.



Paul Hastings IT Analyst Dulani Moore and Garfield Elementary School Principal Angela Tilghman display one of the 19 new Netbooks to be installed in the computer lab.



A team from Shearman & Sterling applies elbow grease to the faculty lounge at Ketcham Elementary School.

Elbow Grease, Equipment, and More Contributed to Ketcham By Shearman & Sterling

The partnership between **Shearman & Sterling** and Ketcham Elementary School was launched when attorneys and staff from the firm visited the school last fall. A tour of the school included a teachers' lounge with grimy walls, battered furniture and broken appliances. The group from the firm recognized the lounge renovation as a challenge they could meet.

In December, Elizabeth Vermilye, who is in charge of administration for the firm's Washington office, and eight others from Sherman & Sterling spent a weekend clearing out, scrubbing, painting, and repairing. The firm donated tables, chairs, and a bookcase. From employees at Shearman & Sterling, came a sofa, coffee makers, microwave ovens, and a rug. The renovated lounge was such a big hit that Ketcham teachers presented a plaque with their pictures on it to the firm.

Another December activity was a book drive that made it possible to give every child at the school a book to take home over the holiday break.

(Continued on page 10)

Students Visit Crowell & Moring For Semi-Monthly Program

Crowell & Moring began its relationship with Davis Elementary School by coaching a team for last fall's GeoPlunge Tournament.

As Kathleen Stratton recalls, "the kids were so energized, and it was just an amazing experience for all of us."

After the tournament, a meeting with the School's principal, Maisha Riddlesprigger, shaped the continuing partnership.

A primary goal was improving the students' academic achievement. Another goal was introducing the children to the world beyond their southeast neighborhood.

The centerpiece of the partnership became a twice-a-month tutoring program at Crowell & Moring. The firm arranges for a bus to bring the 1st and 4th graders who participate in the school's after-school program to Crowell & Moring from 4:00pm - 5:30 pm every other Tuesday. Their visit begins with pizza, which is followed by an hour-long tutoring session with Crowell volunteers. "They just fill our law firm with joy every time they come," says Kathleen Stratton.

Crowell & Moring also raises funds to meet the school's critical need for books.

Attorneys and staff pay for the privilege of wearing jeans on certain days and donate the proceeds to the school.



Renovated teachers' lounge at Ketcham Elementary School.

ESTABLISHED

P
A
R
T
N
E
R
S
H
I
P
S



Kiara Mutimer, a tutor from Akin Gump, helps the students she works with at Tyler Elementary School score their Scrabble game.

Innovation to Tutoring Program Introduced By Akin Gump and Tyler Elementary School

A number of long-term school partners, including **Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld** and **Beveridge & Diamond** have carried out their signature activities for several years.

Volunteers from Akin Gump, for example, have been tutoring students at Tyler Elementary School for nearly 15 years. Until the beginning of the 2010/11 school year, approximately 30 tutors went to Tyler twice a week to work with students who were not yet proficient in reading and math. Several years ago, a dramatic improvement in the scores of Tyler students on standardized tests made the students, teachers and staff at the school and tutors from Akin Gump very proud.

This past summer, Tyler's principal, Jennifer Frentress, recognized a critical need to engage students who had academic ability, but lacked the motivation to reach their potential. She asked the tutoring team to work with these students and to focus on stimulating their intellectual curiosity.

Computers became part of the tutoring sessions. Some students were not familiar with computers, but their tutors helped them understand the operating system and Internet basics. The better the students performed on their academic exercises, the more time they were allowed to explore what interested them on the web. The principal and faculty were pleased by how much the tutored students' interest in learning increased.

(Continued on page 9)

Akin Gump Tutors (cont'd)

Tests this spring, however, revealed that these students needed work on their math skills. The assistant principal, Shawn Bender, identified some games designed to develop number sense and asked the tutors to play games during their sessions with the students. As a result, “the students enjoyed the games; and their number sense improved,” reports Mr. Bender. Scrabble is another game that became a big hit with both tutors and students.

One of the Akin Gump tutors is David Brooks. Joan Adams, who directs the firm’s tutoring program, recruited him because she knew that boys at Tyler would benefit from working with an African American tutor.

“I said, ‘OK, I’ll try it,’ and I fell in love with these kids as soon as I began tutoring,” recalls David. “They are really something special. They do their homework. They come in prepared and ready to go, and always have so much energy.”

Damien, one of the students David tutors, likes working with him because David knows how to explain math problems. If Damien comes up with the wrong answer, David will do the problem again with him, so that he will be able to get that kind of problem right the next time.



David Brooks, from Akin Gump, helps one of the students he tutors at Tyler Elementary School form a word for a Scrabble game.



David Friedland from Beveridge & Diamond helps students at Savoy Elementary School test the pH of water, lemon juice, and water with baking soda.

Beveridge & Diamond Teaches Savoy Students About the Environment

For over 10 years, attorneys from **Beveridge & Diamond** have been sharing their expertise in and passion for the environment with elementary school students. Out of this effort has developed a course that they, along with some paralegals, now teach at the firm’s partner school, Savoy Elementary. Seven classes and a field trip make up the course. The majority of the classes relate to air pollution, focusing specifically on acid rain, smog (low-level ozone issues), stratospheric ozone, global warming and the regulation of sulfur dioxide under the cap and trade program.

Each class begins with a short introductory lecture, but most of the time is taken up with interactive experiments and exercises. For example, during the class on watersheds, water pollution, and the effects of acid rain, students measure the acidity of water, lemon juice and water with baking soda. They also use a topographic map to trace how water flows from their school to the Anacostia River.

The class on watersheds and water pollution ties in nicely with the field trip at the end of the course—a boat trip on the Anacostia River. During the trip, students see the local power and sewage treatment plants and witness pollution and its effects. They also have the opportunity to spot endangered and threatened wildlife species. The boat trip is an enjoyable way to reinforce what has been taught in the course.

GeoPlunge Tournament (cont'd)

GeoPlunge is an award-winning set of geography games created by **Arent Fox** attorney Alan Fishel. As one student describes it, "GeoPlunge is a very educational game. It helps you with a lot of things you should learn—border states, capitals, top cities—everything you want to know about cities and states."

Each year, the event draws raves from the student players, teachers, principals and sponsors. "This opportunity is absolutely huge for our students," said D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson. "The GeoPlunge Tournament instills in them a love of geography at a critical time in their educational development. They have a chance to interact with their peers at other schools. They understand team sports in a very different way, and they are rewarded for their academic success. To see these kids engage around GeoPlunge is very heartwarming."

As our newsletter goes to press, Chancellor Henderson's DCPS leadership team is preparing to take on the Stuart Hobson team that won the tournament last November. The results will be reported in our newsletter next fall.

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, D.C. Public Schools, and Arent Fox, organize the annual tournament, which is sponsored by dozens of local law firms, businesses, and individuals.

The 6th Annual GeoPlunge Tournament was made possible by the generosity of the following sponsors:

Andrews Kurth; Beveridge & Diamond; Buckley Sandler; Drinker Biddle & Reath; Epstein, Becker & Green; Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Housing Projects of the Washington Lawyers' Committee; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, & Jacobson; Goodwin Procter; IPR Technologies; Miller & Chevalier; Gray, Plant, Mooty, Mooty & Bennett; Holland & Knight; Kolar Charitable Foundation of BuckleySandler; Perkins Coie; Sidley Austin; Steptoe & Johnson; Sutherland Asbill & Brennan; Zuckerman Spaeder; Mary Azcuenaga; Teresa Alutto-Schmidt; Rod Boggs; G. Brian Busey; Patrick Campbell; Andrew Clubok; Stephen Colangelo; Charles Cole; H. Guy Collier; David Cynamon; Joseph Davis; Kristine Dunne; Anne Harkavy; Peter Hutt; Matt Jacobs;



Students compete in the 2010 GeoPlunge Geography Tournament.

Howard Jacobson; Benjamin Klubes; Jennifer Levy; Michael McManus; Janice Moore; Adam Nadelhaft; Nnamdi Nwaneri; Skye Perryman; Randall Rich; John Townsend Rich; Donald Ridings; Barbara Schmidt; Sandy and Susan Sierck; Paul Smith; Stephen Smith; Barbara Topel; Elisabeth Vermilye; David Williams and Paul Wolff.

Elbow Grease, Equipment, and More Contributed to Ketcham By Shearman & Sterling (cont'd)

Earlier in the year, the firm provided adult and student bus tokens for the school's homeless families to get to and from school, as the supply of tokens provided to the families by the city had run short. In January, the pizza, sodas, and desserts for a family literacy night came from Sherman & Sterling.

The firm is very pleased that it has been able to raise \$5,200 for a Ketcham Activity Fund. Elizabeth and her colleagues explored the possibility of setting up a nonprofit corporation to raise these funds. However with the help of the school's social worker, Julia Zahn, they found a way to donate it to the school system and earmark it to be used exclusively for Ketcham activities.

PARTNERSHIPS

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

Arent Fox
Randle Highlands Elementary School
Eastern Senior High School

Beveridge & Diamond
Savoy Elementary School

Bracewell & Giuliani
Brightwood Elementary School

Crowell & Moring
Davis Elementary School

Covington & Burling
Cardozo Senior High School

Dickstein Shapiro
Ellington School of the Arts

Drinker, Biddle & Reath
Ann Beers Elementary School

Epstein, Becker & Green
Emery Education Campus

Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Dept.
Marie Reed 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**
Jefferson Middle School

Holland & Knight
Cleveland Elementary School

McDermott, Will & Emery
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School

Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker
Garfield Elementary School

Patton Boggs
Francis Stevens Education Campus

Perkins Coie
Powell Elementary School

Pepper Hamilton
Stanton Elementary School

Reed Smith
Bruce Monroe at Park View Elementary
School

Shearman & Sterling
Ketcham Elementary School

Sidley Austin
Thomson Elementary School

Stephoe & Johnson
Walker Jones Education Campus

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan
Columbia Heights Education Campus

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

Williams & Connolly
Dunbar Senior High School

Zuckerman Spaeder
Orr Elementary School

Roderic V.O. Boggs
Executive Director
Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Elinor Hart, Coordinator
D.C. Public School Partnerships Project

Da'aga Hill Bowman, Director
Foundation Outreach and Public Information

Elinor Hart, Editor

**Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs**
11 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 319-1000
WWW.WASHLAW.ORG

©2011 Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil
Rights and Urban Affairs

Call For More Partnerships Comes From D.C. Bar President And Schools Chancellor (cont'd)

Representatives from half a dozen law firms enthusiastically described a variety of school partnership activities, including tutoring, mentoring, debates, art projects, an environmental course, and arranging for President Obama's personal attorney to speak at an elementary school graduation.

Approximately 10 firms who do not yet have partners were also represented at the luncheon.

D.C. Public School Partnerships Project's
**PARTNERS UNLIMITED
BULLETIN BOARD**

Published by the
Washington Lawyers' Committee
for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

CONTRIBUTORS

The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs acknowledges the following foundations and corporations for their contributions to the D.C. Public School Partnerships Project:

Black Entertainment Television, Inc.

The Dimick Foundation

Gannett Foundation

Government Scientific Source, Inc.

The Hanley Foundation

Corina Higginson Trust

Kiplinger Foundation

Anthony Lucas-Spindletop Foundation

Hattie M. Strong Foundation

Washington Lawyers' Committee is grateful to Mark Paul at **Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP** for assistance with the layout of this publication, and to **Corporate Media Solutions** for donating the printing of this publication.