

# insideDPS

A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS / JANUARY 1, 2003 / ISSUE NO. 6

## 100 years for denver public schools; arts, athletics and after-school activities will benefit

The newly revitalized Denver Public Schools Foundation is hosting a major event fundraiser and dinner Wednesday, Jan. 22 that will reflect and celebrate on the school district's century mark.

But the event also points very much to the future – arts, athletics, and after-school programs all stand to gain.

In early December, Board of Education President Elaine Gantz Berman and Superintendent Jerry Wartgow jointly announced that the DPS Foundation has been reorganized with new board members and a new mission that will directly support school district priorities.

"Arts, athletics and after-school programs will be the beneficiaries of the new foundation," said Superintendent Wartgow. "Parents, teachers, students and all those close to Denver Public Schools know that these are areas that need a boost in order to improve the kind of comprehensive educational experience we believe all students deserve – and expect – from our schools."

See **100 YEARS** on page 5

### what's inside

**Millionaire Minutes**  
— page 2

**Memories of DPS**  
— page 3

**Radio Disney**  
— page 4

**Keystone Science School**  
— page 5



Carson Elementary School teacher Kerry Santambrogio led her first-graders in thirty minutes of silent reading as part of a school-wide celebration of reading. See related story, *Millionaire Minutes* on page 2.

### A Day In The Life...



### ...Of Myriam De Leon, Valdez Elementary School Nurse

Life as a hospital trauma nurse was exciting. But Myriam De Leon never saw as much action as she does as the Valdez Elementary School nurse. "When I was asked to join DPS in 1996 I had nurses in the community say 'you're leaving us for that?' and actually it was the best decision I ever made," says Myriam.

First thing in the morning, Myriam is at her desk wearing her trademark pink scrubs. She's got two computers she uses sitting on her desk and a pile of paperwork she works to get done before the flood of fevers and other illnesses come pouring in.

Her first visitors are two secretaries at the front desk worried about their blood pressure. "It's a little up there," says Myriam. "152 over 68."

In addition to staff members, Myriam can see up to 35 students a day. Another group of children come to her for routine medications. For example, there are 31 children with asthma who depend on Myriam for their medication.

Her first call of the day is a parent calling to report their child is sick and will be absent. "They're calling to let me know that Destiny will be out today," explains Myriam. "She's got the virus that's beginning to hit." In addition to her dozens of duties, Myriam takes the schools attendance. It seems logical to Myriam. Since most absences are due to illness, Myriam can also give parents advice over the phone.

It's now 7:30 a.m. Myriam goes outside to greet students waiting in line for breakfast. "Good morning, hello," she tells the group. "And what happened to you? Que te paso?" she asks

See **A DAY IN THE LIFE** on page 6

# denver public schools millionaire minutes



At Holm Elementary School (inset), first-graders in Arceli Ruiz's classroom – Ricardo Sanchez, Maurice Bell, and Brenda Sanchez – discovered the "treasure" of reading. And at Dora Moore Elementary School, third-grade teacher Irene Suszko celebrated the reading success of Marissa Sklavanitis, who placed a paper firecracker on a wall of celebration, designed by the kindergarten class. One Moore student has already reached the two-million-word mark.



students. The resource teachers (librarian, ESOL, special ed and literacy coach) then organized the books per grade level on tables in our multipurpose room. Each student was given the opportunity to choose three books to take home to read. The students of East Student Council will be coming to Wyman twice a month the rest of the school year to read to Wyman children. East and Wyman are working hard together to help each student at Wyman read one million words.

Ahoy matesys! Yo ho ho and a million words! Faculty, staff and students at **Holm Elementary School** kicked off their Million Word Theme, "Discover the Treasure of Reading" by dressing up for a pirate parade. Holm is decorated throughout with pirate ships and treasure chests, including a large 3-D display in the entry hall featuring the HMS Robert Louis Stevenson, palm trees, giant waves and a treasure chest. Each class is keeping reading logs and charting student progress with gold coins and other "treasures."

On Friday, Dec. 6, 2002, **Schmitt Elementary School** kicked off their "Red Hot for Reading a Million Words" campaign. Students at the school celebrated with an assembly and enjoyed a play ("The Cat in the Hat") performed by the school staff. Many students received awards that went to readers who reached benchmarks on their way to reading a million words. Each child who read 100,000 words, 200,000 words, and so on up to a million words, received a certificate. Each 100,000 words meant children could receive Red Hot tickets to spend. They could be used on treats at the school store. They also had Red Hot Cheetos as a treat after the play.

"We are so happy because our children have begun reading daily," said Principal Gaynell Lawrence. "The best thing about this program is that our students are now fired up with reading and are learning to love it!"

**Doull Elementary School** celebrated "Pop Open a Good Book" on Dec. 5. Students were rewarded for their progress toward a million words with Pop-Tarts and treats, as they "popped open" and read more good books. This effort, led by literacy coaches Gina Chavez and Malina Delve, is supported by teachers throughout the school who have developed creative ways to track their students' efforts to read one million words this year. Students also enjoyed storytelling by Rich Castro.

Friday the thirteenth was a lucky day in December for **Barney Ford Elementary School**. Students spent the day reading interspersed with exercise, movement and games based on literacy skills. Read-a-louds were provided by invited dignitaries, administrators, custodians, and other guests to experience reading as a skill that is enjoyed and needed by people in all walks of life. Local news stations observed students who were cuddled in their comfort clothes reading to their stuffed animals brought from home. ■

[Editor's Note: Inside DPS recently received this letter from Horace Mann Middle School teacher Mary Chaisson about a star reader]

*What can I say about Nicole Carranco? She is every teacher's dream student. She is brilliant, caring, takes initiative, and thorough. I can't say enough. She is not afraid to take chances with her reading and writing. She takes suggestions well and incorporates the best ones into her reading and writing. She is a voracious reader, as testified by the fact that she has already reached the 1,000,000 word goal, and she is still going. She tries new genres and authors on a regular basis and then reads all she can find if she likes it/him/her. This lovely and brilliant young lady is, one day, going to take on the whole world in a capacity that will only benefit by her mere presence. I expect great things from her and I know she will not disappoint, maybe the first female president of the United States.*

*Thank you for allowing me to 1. Teach this wonderful person. 2. Write about how great she is. 3. Learn from this mind that never quits and last but not least, 4. One day I will be able to say: I knew her when...*

*Sincerely,  
Mary Chaisson*

**East High School** has been working with its feeder school, **Wyman Elementary School**, on the Million Words Campaign. The Student Council at East collected 800 books for the students at Wyman! Wyman held a rally for their students to "see" what 800 books looked like and to thank the students of East. Wyman students made large thank-you posters for the rally and East Student Council members read to Wyman

## US Department Of Education Hosts Town Meeting On No Child Left Behind

A Live Satellite Feed Will Be Aired On Channel 22

The Department of Education has put together a satellite TV series on the various facets of No Child Left Behind and its impact on school, kids, parents, and community. The Department of Education town meeting is called "Education News Parents Can Use." The following are dates for the live satellite feed aired on Channel 22. Viewers can call in toll-free and ask questions during these programs:

**Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"No Child Left Behind Anniversary"

**Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"Title IX"

**Tuesday, March 18, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"Teacher Quality"

**Tuesday, April 15, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"Special Education"

**Tuesday, May 20, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"Educational Technology"

**Tuesday, June 17, 2003 – 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.**  
"Summer Reading"

Taped repeats of the above live programs are aired every Thursday at 12 noon on Channel 22 in Denver and in all DPS classrooms and on Channel 48 (only available in DPS facilities and classrooms). ■

## "memories of denver public schools" needs you to celebrate 100 years

The "Memories Of Denver Public Schools" web site needs you to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Denver Public Schools. Please take a few minutes to jot down a few thoughts. Do you recall a great teacher? Do you remember how a new school changed your neighborhood? Did one school event or program make a difference in your life? What was the most memorable day of learning in Denver Public Schools?

Please send items (no more than 500 words, please) by e-mail [pio@dpsk12.org](mailto:pio@dpsk12.org). You may also mail written memories to Room 402, Public Information Office, 900 Grant St., Denver, CO 80203. If you have old photographs or any accompanying, relevant artwork that you would like to send along, these are also welcome. If you have the ability to send digital images, please e-mail them [pio@dpsk12.org](mailto:pio@dpsk12.org). You may also bring old photographs or images to the Public Information Office and they will be scanned here to accompany your written memory. Please call 303-764-3409 to make an appointment with Public Information Office webmaster Tim Summers. ■

## Memories of Denver Public Schools



## U.S. Court Of Appeals In Denver To Pilot Public Education Outreach Program

The Denver-based Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals will roll out OPERATION: EDUCATION beginning this month. The goal of the program is to heighten public understanding and to provide meaningful and realistic experiences to educate students about the federal judiciary.

Students of all ages will have the opportunity to enjoy field trips to the historic Byron White U.S. Courthouse and learn about the third branch of government, the Tenth Circuit's relationship to the U.S. Supreme Court, how the appellate process works, the structure of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, mediation, and much more.

Other age-appropriate lesson plans may involve classroom speakers, question-and-answer sessions with judges and other court staff, and poster and essay contests.

Interactive lessons, such as mini mock trials and encore oral arguments, may also be planned where students can play the roles of judges, lawyers, jurors, courtroom deputies and others involved with the judicial process. Customized programs are another option for educators.

"The Three Bears v. Goldilocks" is a best seller mock trial for elementary school children. Here, the Bears have sued Goldilocks for bad manners! More challenging mock trials, such as "Titanic," may be arranged for older students.

Schools interested in being a part of OPERATION: EDUCATION and/or the national Open Doors to Federal Courts program are encouraged to contact Linda Rivas, the local program director, at 303.335.2830 or e-mail [education@ca10.uscourts.gov](mailto:education@ca10.uscourts.gov). ■

# Comings & goings

## APPOINTMENTS

Carol D. Burtness: Speech Language Specialist, Education  
Jodell E. Decker: Physical Therapist, Education  
Julia M. Jurgens: Speech Language Specialist, Education  
Marica I. Aretz: Teacher, Greenwood  
Iretta Bell: Teacher, Randolph  
Jennifer A. Boes: Teacher, Schmitt  
Elizabeth A. Brannon: Teacher, Kunsmler  
Kimberly J. Curry: Teacher, Maxwell  
Lisandro De La Oliva: Teacher, Rishel  
Jennifer A. Ferguson: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson  
J C. Hosman: Teacher, Education Special Ed  
Laryssa Kreiselmeyer: Teacher, Merrill  
Jodie Leatherman: Teacher, Bradley  
Margarita M. Lerma: Teacher, Oakland  
Olivia Mascolo: Teacher, Thomas Jefferson  
April McLaughlin: Teacher, Noel  
Jessica Poole: Teacher, Noel  
Anthonetta Robinson: Teacher, Randolph  
Olivia M. Santos: Teacher, Remington  
Matthew C. VanderNeut: Teacher, Rishel  
Sandra J. Zeigler: Teacher, Denison  
Jackie Chazan: Secretary I, West  
Ambrosia Foden: Office Support I, Operations  
Ann M. William: Secretary I, Gove  
Andre Bowser: Custodial Helper, Maxwell  
Dehab Woldeab: Custodial Helper, South  
Bryan J. Hoylman: Senior Programmer/Analyst, Education

Tonya Anderson: Teacher, Gove  
Kurtis Denahy: Teacher, Cole  
Margaret L. McConnell: Teacher, Edison  
Jacqueline Pang: Teacher, Gove  
Jeanine A. Prince: Teacher, West  
Terrylynn M. Vigil: Teacher, Kepner  
Robert L. Wade: Teacher, Gilliam

## CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

Dolores Mullin: Teacher, Edison  
John Robinson: Custodian Asst. I, Pioneer Charter  
Rogerio R. Salazar: Custodian Asst. III, Horace Mann  
Maria T. Berman: SFPC Liaison Specialist, McGlone  
Edna D Howell: Dispatch II, Transportation  
Cesar Cedillo: Interim Principal, Morey

## REAPPOINTMENTS

Amy Harold: Teacher, Horace Mann  
Candice A. Skiff: Teacher, Randolph  
Janice M. Chiesa: Teacher, Randolph  
Paul Kiehn: Teacher, Randolph

## RETIREMENT

Nancy S. Johnson: Teacher, Teller

## Behind The Scenes of Radio Disney; DPS Students Hit The Airwaves

Parts Taken From "Whose Magazine" Story  
By Essynce Mothershed

Denver Public Schools students are having a chance to hit the airwaves thanks to The Entertainment Project, which produces "Whose Magazine" and works with Radio Disney to produce "Whose News." "Whose News" can be heard on Radio Disney's "Breakfast Club" at 1550 or 1690 on your AM radio dial from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. Sunday mornings.

This project allows those younger than age 14 to learn about broadcasting and how to develop themselves as voice talent. The goal of the program is to record four shows in one morning. Each show airs on different dates on the Breakfast Club segment featuring Whose News.

Essynce Mothershed, fifth-grader at Marrama Elementary School shares her experience. "There were two of us who gained the opportunity to be on the radio, myself and another student, Mallory O'Malley," explains Mothershed. "I've never been involved with radio before, and on that date there was absolute excitement! It was a wonderful day full of fun and opportunity."

Arriving at the Radio Disney studios in Lakewood along with Essynce were eight parents and nine children of different DPS schools and ages: Lily and Alexandra from Cowell Elementary; and Diego from Manual/Millienum Quest High School. Others schools sending students included Crofton, Barrett, and Smith elementary schools, and George Washington High School.

Once the students were together, they began to rehearse their scripts. Next, students prepared to go into the studio. The subject of their script was about the Breakfast Club, as well as activities at the Art Institute. Children who participate in this broadcasting program say that literacy now has a new meaning. They understand the importance of literacy and pronouncing words correctly.

"Being on Radio Disney was great because it gave me insight into what people have to actually do to be a voice talent or a radio announcer," said Essynce. "It doesn't matter if you're an announcer on Disney or on KS107.5 a popular hip hop station in Denver. There's a reality. You need to know how to read!"

Rogers sums it up by saying, "Our focus is to increase literacy awareness among youth. By developing these kinds of experiences, youth are reading, writing scripts, organizing and working as teams."

"We are connecting the classroom to the real world," Rogers added. "The important goal is for teachers and schools to have access to real world experiences that are valuable to a young person's learning."

Teacher Tamara Payne of Marrama Elementary, states, "I think this program was an excellent opportunity for students to excel in writing and public speaking and management skills." ■

## Cole Middle School Students "Rough It" At Keystone Science School

**W**ith hats, coats, sleeping bags and sunscreen in hands, 37 Cole Middle School eighth- graders headed up the mountains to the Keystone Science School for a two-night, three- day learning adventure in the wilderness.

"The Keystone Science School offers five thematic curriculums that schools can choose to focus on during their visits. Students learn about these scientific principles through hands-on experiences," said Nate Grover, organizing teacher. "Our curriculum focused on environmental issues."

The counselors at the school ran a very tight ship. Students and their teachers reported to the breakfast hall at 8:00 a.m., dressed and ready for a day outside. By 8:30 a.m., students were making their own lunches and cleaning up after breakfast. After gathering the snow shoeing gear and loading the buses, students set out to learn about the mountain animals and trees, their habitats, and how each animal and tree play a part in the overall existence of the environment.

"My favorite part of the trip was the hiking. We were in snowshoes walking around learning how to track animals, learning about the types of food animals eat, and other stuff like that," said Eduardo Munguia.

Jessica Avila felt the physical activity alone was a learning experience. "At first, I thought I was going to just sink into the snow, so I held onto my friend," said Avila. "Eventually, I figured out how to work the snowshoes and was able to move around on my own."

Learning did not stop after the day's activities. Students ended their afternoons with some hot chocolate while debriefing and summarizing the learning for the day. After a one-hour free period, they reported back to the dining hall for dinner, an evaluation of how much food they wasted as a group that day, and clean-up. Their evening ended with a mini-course.

"My favorite part was the evening activities," said Carlos Ayala. "One night, we went from table to table looking at all different types of animal feathers, hides, and SCAT, (slang for feces). We compared and contrasted all the different animals."

Thanks to the San Francisco based Sierra Club, these Cole Middle School students were offered an unforgettable opportunity to take their learning outside of the classroom. ■

Chairman Bruce Benson, chief executive officer of Benson Mineral Group, and vice-chairman Cole Finegan of Brownstein, Hyatt & Farber, will head the new DPS Foundation.

"To lead the foundation we have assembled a group of community leaders, businessmen and businesswomen who believe, to a person, that the mission of the DPS Foundation is one that transcends politics," added Board of Education President Elaine Gantz Berman. "This is one of the top-priority agenda items that this community can work on, successfully, together. Each of these board members is committed to making the foundation a success. This is a very worthy cause that will make a real difference in the daily lives of students today."

Noel Ginsburg, president of Intertech Plastics, is donating half of his work time to serve as president of the DPS Foundation (he'll be paid \$1 per year).

"The DPS Foundation is taking on a critical mission at a critical time," said Ginsburg. "The district's general fund is doing everything it can, but it is stretched too far to have the kind impact we believe is needed to keep students connected to school in a meaningful way. The DPS Foundation will work to enhance what schools can offer through arts, athletics and after-school programs and we will do this by demonstrating the kinds of partnerships and support that is needed to make each school experience as well-rounded and as dynamic as possible."

Ginsburg said the foundation will set high fund-raising goals and will use its resources strategically to seed good ideas that demonstrate maximum impact on students' lives.

Back to the event: The DPS 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner will be held at Denver Marriott City Center, 1701 California St., beginning at 6:30 p.m. Ticket purchases begin at \$250 for individuals (a limited number of \$100 seats are available to DPS employees) and up to \$10,000 for platinum level support and a table of ten.

Checks may be sent to ERH & Associates, Inc., P.O. Box 6564, Denver, CO 80206. Please make checks payable to "Denver Public Schools Foundation." ■



*Left to right: Board of Education President Elaine Gantz Berman, DPS Foundation President Noel Ginsburg, DPS Foundation chairman Bruce Benson, DPS Foundation co-chairman Cole Finegan, and DPS Superintendent Jerry Wartgow. All five announced the formation of the revitalized DPS Foundation during a news conference held at Lowry Elementary School.*

## Susan Varner

Fifth-grade teacher at Centennial



**Years with DPS:** 34

**Greatest or Latest Accomplishment:** Revising the DPS curriculum for the fourth- and fifth-grade family life education.

**The Most Challenging Part About My Job:** Meeting each student's individual needs.

**The Most Rewarding Part About My Job:** When my students come back to see me and tell me what they are doing.

**I've Also Worked:** A clerk for a credit union, a salesclerk, a waitress, a wedding coordinator.

**When I'm Not Working I Am Usually:** Reading mysteries.

**Hometown:** Denver, Colorado

**Favorite Book:** "Lonesome Dove," by Larry McMurtry

**Favorite Movie:** Cutting Edge

**Favorite Restaurant:** The Fish Company

**Family:** Daughter, Stacey, 24 in final semester of graduate school.

**Philosophy For Life:** Do the best you can and add a lot of humor.

**Final Words:** I started as a DPS student in 1952, graduating from North in 1965. I have worked for DPS for 34 years. DPS has been a huge part of my life and I am honored to be recognized as I approach my retirement.



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### A DAY IN THE LIFE from page 1

eight-year-old, Richard who has a bad scrape on his forehead. "I was throwing the trash and I hit my head," he responds. "Do you want to come to my office so that we can clean that up?" Richard shows up in her office later that morning ready for some pampering. She cleans his wound with alcohol and he swats it dry as he walks out of her office. The phone rings. "Are we talking about lice?" asks Myriam. She tells a mother to wait outside her office and then proceeds to give instructions over the phone on how to isolate the caller's classroom. Myriam's son who was in special education at DPS, inspired her to work for the public schools. "Students have asked me why would you leave Denver General for us? And just that comment was the selling point," says Myriam. "I look at them and I see my son."

It's 8:00 a.m. and Myriam is just starting to hustle. The line of parents and students starts to form at her office door. "Miss, my ear is hurting," says nine-year-old Daniel. "Miss, I twisted my ankle on the jungle gym," interrupts 11-year-old Aushaley. "Ladies, come on in. One at a time," Myriam tells a trio of little girls. In between the flurry of patients, a mother is standing at the door asking her for change for a dollar.

Raised by a linguist in Bordeaux, France, Myriam speaks three languages: English, Spanish, and French. When Myriam came to the United State she spoke no English so she is sensitive to the little ones at Valdez who have trouble communicating their needs. Five-year-old Brenda enters the nurse's office whimpering. Her sister, 11-year-old Perla, is by her side. "Her stomach has been hurting for days," Perla explains. "Yo no quiero ir al escuela," Brenda whines in a squeaky, barely audible voice. After checking her out, Myriam grants her request to go home. "I'll be waiting with her at the door in ten minutes," Myriam tells Brenda's mother on the telephone.

Myriam is more than a school nurse. She also fills the void of a school social worker. She can have up to twelve family interventions a week. Sometimes parents are the ones who need the most help. This morning, Myriam takes a look at a mother with a second-degree burn on her hand. Myriam had cleaned it earlier in the week after it got infected. The mom had burned herself at the restaurant where she works. She was uninsured and afraid to tell her employer of her injury for fear of losing her job and being deported.

In many ways, school nurses are like Primary Care Physicians not only for the student but their entire family. This is just one of the reasons why Myriam finds her job so gratifying. One gets exhausted just watching Myriam but she loves her job so much that time flies. After an hour on the job, Myriam comments, "It must be a slow day because of the nice weather we're having." ■