

## Schools Prepare For LARASA & DPS Neighborhood Walk

**O**n the weekends of August 3rd and 24th, teachers will join with volunteers for a walk through the streets of their school's neighborhood in one of Denver Public Schools largest outreach programs. With the support and coordination of the Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA), thirteen schools will be participating in this year's neighborhood walk in an effort to bring schools and parents together at the very start of the school year.

"In previous years, LARASA has helped coordinate walks at three other schools, Remington, Fairmont, and Smedley," said Rufina Hernández, LARASA Executive Director. "This year we are happy to announce a formal partnership with Denver Public Schools to spread this event to other schools."

Those schools include: Castro, Columbine, Cowell, Ebert, Gilpin, Hallet, Mitchell, Pioneer Charter, Smith, Swansea, and Valverde. Supported by volunteers, who assist with the preparations, the teacher's goal will be to visit the home of every child in their classroom.

"This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to get to know each other in a non-threatening environment," said Hernández. "It's a positive first step towards open communication between school staff and family."

Teachers and volunteers will bring a bag of school supplies donated by area businesses to the child's home. They will be knocking on doors, welcoming their students and asking parents for a moment of their time to meet and discuss the year's expectations.

The day will start with a pre-walk breakfast. Previous years have served breakfast burritos and pan dulce. "Breakfast is a wonderful opportunity to bring these caring volunteers and school staff together," said LARASA Program Coordinator, Rosario C De Baca. "We want to build a sense of partnership and that can start by sitting down teachers and volunteers and sharing a good meal."

The neighborhood walk is still in the early planning stages. LARASA held a meeting with principals on April 12th to start preparing for the event.

LARASA is a nonprofit research and service organization created in 1964 to improve the health, education and self-sufficiency of Colorado's Latino community. (related story, page 4)

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*The class at John F. Kennedy High School that built finely crafted flag cases, bound for families of Sept. 11 victims in New York and Washington, D.C. include (starting at left): Travis Chavez, instructor Glenn Fairbanks, Greg Geiger, Mark Miller, Wayne Lawrence (top), Brad Geiger, Justin McGarvey (rear), Hilberto Cabral, and David Montijo.*

## High-Quality Flag Cases Draw Praise and Attention to John F. Kennedy High School

**By Glenn Fairbanks, Instructor**

**J**ust about the time popular media leads us to believe that teenagers have no social conscience, something like this happens:

Shortly after the tragedy of September 11, two of the students in my Vocational Cabinetry class at John F. Kennedy High School approached me with an idea for a service project. The two brothers, Brad and Greg Geiger, found an interesting site while cruising the Internet that touched their hearts. What they found was a request from the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers for craftsmen to build boxes to hold the flags used in funerals of people lost at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The idea took hold and, after enlisting the approval of JFK

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## Dumb Friends Teacher Workshops

Learn how to choose books for your classroom that promote kind and compassionate messages. The Dumb Friends League's Humane Education program will be holding a workshop for K-12 teachers entitled:

**Humane Education Guidelines  
for Children's Literature  
Wed., May 15, 2002  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

**Dumb Friends League Education Center**

Refreshments will be served. Please call Claudia Mishell, Humane Education Manager for more information or to RSVP: (303) 696-4941, Ext. 366.

## Kids Voting Denver

Kids Voting Denver is actively recruiting schools to participate in the 2002 election. The program offers an eight-week curriculum, trains teachers, and educates children about issues, candidates, and the democratic process. Call Neil Deason 303-764-3632 or Liz Stansberry 303-764-3885 for more information on how your school can get ready for the 2002 Election.



## Congratulations!

**Belinda Garcia, a teacher at Mitchell Elementary School**, received the Cesar Chavez Community Leadership Award for her work as Executive Director of the Hermanas de Color Organization. The State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver have both passed legislation creating a Cesar Chavez Holiday. In response to this, community leaders organized and implemented a series of community events to honor this great Chicano leader. One of the events that was created was the establishment of the aforementioned award. This is the first year and the competition was stiff. Belinda was chosen because of her dedication, commitment, hard work and compassion to those less fortunate persons who live in many of our communities.

**Fairview Students** engaged in a letter writing campaign to replace the torn and tattered carpet of their fifth grade classroom.

"They wrote letters to the administration, took pictures. This was a mission for these students to get the carpet replaced," said Don Diehl. "But most importantly, it was a lesson in "self advocacy" and how to be persuasive."

Through those letters and photos, students did get the attention of Mike Langley, head of facility management. Within weeks the classroom had new carpet.

**South High School** received \$10,000 worth of sports equipment after entering Kraft/Kroger/NFHS promotional program. The school received a sports whirlpool, classic treatment table, taping table, Hydrocollator, Ultrasound Machine, Muscle Stimulator, Exercise Bike, a refrigerator, ice machine, stools, rock ankle exercise board, and a five gallon cooler.

**Barney Ford** has been awarded the Kaiser Permanente Project PAVE grant in the elementary school category. The award honors schools that are working to create a safe and civil learning environment that promotes student safety, mutual respect, and academic achievement.

Barney Ford has taken several steps to combat violence this year. For example, 100% of all teaching staff has been trained in the Second Step violence prevention program. Lessons are taught weekly and reinforced daily. Also, a number of the fifth graders are trained peer mediators. They offer help in conflict resolution during lunch recess, and in the building as needed.

Another example of an anti-violence strategy is the creation of the Teacher/ Student mentoring program. Several teachers meet with high-risk students once a week to chat and build relationships. Students have responded favorably to the extra encouragement this arrangement provides. As a result of these implementations, teachers have reported fewer incidents of aggressive behavior among the student body.

Barney Ford plans to use the \$2,000 award to continue these programs, provide staff training in Bully Proofing, and purchase character education materials for staff and students.

**Palmer Elementary School** received an Outstanding Asset Builder Award at a statewide summit hosted by Assets for Colorado Youth in Copper Mountain on April 4-5. The school was honored for its outstanding work in promoting positive youth development and for taking the initiative to infuse developmental assets throughout its school community.

**Katherine Johnson and Trudy Eret, Assessment & Testing Specialists**, have been approved to present Practical Applications of Assessment Data for Classroom Teachers at the 11th Annual State Standards & Assessment Conference in Breckenridge June 12-14. This is a result of continuing work they have done for August Institutes, Pay for Performance-T schools, and for teams of teachers and schools.

*NW Area Superintendent Joe Sandoval stands with Fairview fifth-graders from left to right: Eric Hernandez, Ricardo Matton, Leonardo Rodriguez, Jazzmine Richardson, Matahira Hasaan, and Jessica Pacheco. The students held a breakfast celebrating a long campaign to get new carpet in their classroom.*



**Parents Fayle Ganley (left) and Robyn Frahm (right) surround Cory Elementary School kindergarten teacher Sue Denny. Parents at Cory recently threw a surprise party for Denny, who will be one of nine outstanding teachers honored at the Denver Teachers' Award banquet on Friday, May 3.**

## **More Than 100 Denver Public School Students Benefit From Energy Efficiency Curriculum**

**T**he Colorado Energy Science Center (CESC) has developed and provided educators with a program designed to teach students about energy while they sharpen their math, science and engineering skills. At the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of how energy is made, used and wasted in the home.

"There has never been a better time to learn the basics of energy science," said Patrick Keegan, CESC director. "The students who participate in the program will have the knowledge necessary to reduce home energy use, lessen their parents' utility bills and help preserve our natural resources."

The curriculum consists of more than a dozen experiments designed to teach middle and high school students about solar energy, heat absorption, wasteful leaks, the greenhouse effect and other energy factors. As a final project, they will use this knowledge to provide home energy bill analysis for actual homeowners and design posters illustrating their suggestions on how to lower energy use for those specific homes.

"With each day it becomes more important to teach our kids about energy efficiency and independence," said Maria Finley, HEAT program coordinator. "These students are learning about an issue so vital to our future."

This curriculum has attracted the attention of U.S. Representative Mark Udall. He has been invited to attend an event honoring the students participating in the program.

On Saturday, May 11, all participating students will gather at the National Renewable Energy Lab's visitor's center in Golden to present their posters. Community business leaders will evaluate the posters and select a winning team. The team members will receive prizes, and the winning homeowner will receive a free home weatherization valued at several thousand dollars.

CESC and HEAT have gathered the prizes and will coordinate the event. Both are nonprofit organizations educating people on energy issues so they can lower their utility bills. Educators interested in obtaining the curriculum can call CESC at (303) 216-2026. Those interested in learning energy-saving tips can call toll-free 1-866-HEAT-HELP, or log on [www.heathelp.org](http://www.heathelp.org), to receive a free information packet.

## **Abraham Lincoln Teachers Visit Neighborhood**

**S**ome schools are taking it upon themselves to organize a community walk. As part of an ongoing effort to reach out to students' families, approximately 40 Lincoln High School teachers visited the homes of ninth and tenth grade students on Saturday, March 9.

"The purpose was to impart information on CSAP testing and to enlist help in improving attendance," said Terry Vasin, Student Activities Director. "The families were very receptive and cordial."

Previously, as part of a program called Colorado Assets, families came to school to learn techniques about how to help their children achieve success in school. Following the program, which was presented in both English and Spanish, the families were invited to a lunch prepared by a group of parents who are on the board of the Assets program. Abraham Lincoln has plans to continue events to bring the parents into the school.

## **Reminder: Curfew Enforcement Stepped Up With Rising Temperatures**

**A**nticipating more curfew violations with warm weather, the City's SafeNite Curfew and Diversion Program reopened its doors at three recreation centers after midnight on Friday, April 5. Friday through Sunday nights, police will bring curfew violators to one of three recreation centers where they will be issued a summons to court and turned over to youth counselors.

Under Denver's curfew, youth under the age of 18 cannot be on the street in Denver without an adult parent or guardian after curfew, regardless of where they live. Curfew hours are from midnight to 5 a.m. Friday and Saturday and 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Sunday through Thursday through September 29. Please make sure students are aware of the law.

## **Time For A Tune-up**

**T**he annual Bike To Work Day 2002 is scheduled for June 26th this year. If you're a DPS employee who works through the summer, plan on tuning-up your bicycle for a ride to work on that day. You can register through Joel Bradley-Hess at 303-764-3723 or on-line at [www.ridearrangers.org](http://www.ridearrangers.org). The last day to register is May 31st.



## Appointments

**Clarivel R. Rios:** Secretary I, Education  
**Nicholas E. Castillo:** Custodial Helper, Montbello  
**Scott L. Falance:** Custodial Helper, Ellis  
**Sherry L. Garcia:** Custodial Helper, Thomas Jefferson  
**Ruth A. Oglesby:** Custodial Helper, Thomas Jefferson  
**Gregory L. Ortega:** Custodial Helper, South  
**Barbara J. Romero:** Custodial Helper, George Washington  
**Sidney R. Salazar:** Custodial Helper, West,  
**Lola E. Tate:** Library Technician I, Greenwood  
 **Catherine A. Bolinger:** Recruitment Specialist, Education  
**Lori M. Chappell:** Help Desk Specialist I, Operations  
**Stacy L. Czerniak:** SFPC Liaison Specialist, Cole  
**Karen R. Duell:** SFPC Liaison Specialist, Morey  
**Christopher Harris:** Security Patrol, Safety And Security  
**Clifford Paine:** Security Patrol, Operations  
**Wendy A. Schliep:** Fix Asset Inv Specialist, Transportation

**Timothy Vizi:** Vehicle Maintenance Technician, Operations  
**Frances J. Armstrong:** Teacher, Smith  
**Kris Bomgaars:** Teacher, Marrama  
**Cheryl L. Clamp:** Teacher, Abraham Lincoln  
**Gerald Harris:** Teacher, Green Valley  
**Ronald Henry:** Teacher, Montbello  
**Sharyn Kline:** Teacher, Green Valley  
**Diane G. Mock:** Teacher, Amesse  
**Kathleen S. Walker:** Teacher, Amesse  
**Kimberly A. Woods Thomas:** Teacher, Amesse

**Freida Bustos:** Truant Officer, Safety And Security  
**Stanle Blair:** Vehicle Service Technician II, Transportation  
**Angela Bodenhamer:** Principal, West  
**Vicki Cyr:** Principal, McKinley/Thatcher  
**Kristin Engel Waters:** Principal, Morey  
**Wendy Lanier:** Principal, Henry  
**John MacPherson:** Principal, John F. Kennedy  
**Miguel Salazar:** Principal, Kunsmliller  
**Jane Sbarboro:** Principal, Doull

## Change in Assignment

**Barbara L. Evans:** Secretary II, Teller  
**Denise A. Palomares:** Secretary II, College View  
**Rocio Rivera:** Secretary II, Education  
**Jacqueline J. Wimmer:** Facility Manager I, Operations  
**Randy J. Burg:** Custodian Assistant I, Operations  
**Juanita M. Larsen:** Custodian Assistant I, Beach Court  
**Patricia M. Montoya:** Custodian Assistant III, Baker  
**Raymond C. Parker:** Custodial Helper, John F. Kennedy  
**Steven L. Sanders:** Custodian Assistant II, Ellis

## Reappointments

**Bryant A. Greer:** Custodian Assistant I, Montclair  
**Angela Thornton:** Project Coordinator, East  
**Dorothy F. Corlin:** Teacher, Education

## Retirement

**George J. Irvin:** Facility Manager, Operations  
**Lester G. Ledford:** Facility Manager, Administration  
**Les W. Rank:** Teacher, Education  
**Raymond S. Sherbechuk:** Teacher, Henry  
**Gary R. Williams:** Teacher, Place

## New "HR" Motto: Win One Customer At A Time

The ongoing changes in the Department of Human Resources continued in April with a move that reorganizes the department to directly serve each of the four quadrants within Denver Public Schools.

"Our organization is at the heart of the mission for Denver Public Schools in terms of making this a better place for students to learn," said Assistant Superintendent Andre Pettigrew. "HR" is among the departments Pettigrew oversees. "We need to meet the challenge of providing the best possible teaching staff and principal team that we can find – developing our own teachers and principals from within the district and scouring the country for talent, too."

The four teams of HR staff "will help us put a focus on customer service. We are deeply committed to making the improvements that need to be made."

In launching the reorganization to four areas, Pettigrew also introduced a new slogan: Win One Customer At A Time, Meet The Challenge. He also brought a vision of an HR office that coordinates information, streamlines processes, demonstrates efficiency, and communicates clearly and quickly with all applicants and existing staff.

Some success is already in hand, said Pettigrew, with the new two-person Call Center managing in one-stop fashion about 83 percent of all telephone calls. The Call Center employees are working for a detailed "knowledge tree" of HR information which helps them quickly dispense key information.

Lyntyna Bedford and Scott Barnes staff the Call Center, fielding up to 100 calls each per day. Each taps a series of useful databases on their computer in responding to a myriad of questions and queries from current employees and applicants.

"A lot of people say 'oh, I get to talk to a real person,'" said Barnes. "It's a complete customer-service approach."

Added Bedford: "The live person is definitely a plus. And if we have to transfer them on for some final detail, at least they have had some of their questions answered."

On one recent day, Bedford received a call from a teacher who had applied for openings at four other schools. Within seconds and a few keystrokes, she determined the status of each application and reported that back to the teacher.

The "move information to the web" strategy has also been effective, with "hits" to the HR web site up 300 percent over a year ago. The most popular HR web page is the "job opportunities" section. Soon, applying for those jobs will be only a mouse click away using an on-line application currently under development.

The four quadrants will each have their own director – Roslyn Underwood-Dee in southwest, Ray Warren in southeast, Carol Ruckel in northeast, and a person to be named in northwest. Northwest will be led by the HR Executive Director, a new position that is in the process of being filled.

HR employees in the Area Teams – each Area Team includes either nine or 10 individuals – will be able to serve as customer representatives on all essential HR needs including requests to hire, personnel transactions (salary changes, job shar-

ing, extended non-medical leaves, longevity pay, stipends, etc.), discipline, grievances, transfers, resignations, and more.

The benefits office will continue to handle all questions about benefits, medical leaves, and workers' compensation.



*Lyntyna Bedford (left) and Scott Barnes staff the Department of Human Resources Call Center, fielding up to 100 calls each per day.*



**Morey Middle School seventh-grader Matt Guzzo was one of many students who tried on a special hazardous materials suit during a day-long demonstration from the Environmental Protection Agency's National Enforcement Investigations Center. Throughout the day, EPA representatives demonstrated various environmental scientific technologies including computer forensics, global positioning, and geographic information systems.**

## **DPS Social Work Services Co-hosts A Truancy Awareness Community Event**

**By Andrea Grasso, Kepner Social Worker**

**H**ow do schools and communities ensure that students are at school every day, ready to learn?

To focus on ideas and strategies to improve student attendance, Denver Public Schools' Social Work Services is co-hosting a Truancy Reduction Program Community Awareness event. The purpose of the event is to share information and develop strategies for working with DPS' truant students.

Another goal of the event is to highlight DPS' Truancy Reduction Program, which faces a significant loss of funding next year due to the expiration of a federal grant and the unavailability of city money that has supported the program in the past.

The event is being co-sponsored by the Geraldine Thompson Committee, a community board that meets monthly to discuss ways in which government agencies and other systems can positively impact students with chronic truancy problems. Currently within DPS, the Truancy Reduction Program (TRP) is operated in all 18 middle schools as well as East High School. TRP teams are composed of social workers, truant officers, and paraprofessionals. These teams use a wide variety of interventions to combat truancy, including referrals to community resources to help families address root causes of truancy, filing of cases in Juvenile Court, and transportation of non-attending students to school.

Teachers, parents, students and all other school staff are invited to attend and provide input at the Community Awareness event. The Honorable Dana Wakefield of Denver Juvenile Court will be the keynote speaker.

The TRP Community Awareness event will be held Wednesday, May 15 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the University Church of Christ, 2000 S. Milwaukee, Denver. If you would like more information regarding the event, please call Dr. Irma Anthony at 303-764-3620 or Steve Nederveld at 303-893-6898.

## **George Washington High School Students Visit Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory To Perform Human Genomic Experiments**

**G**eorge Washington High School 11th graders, Mike Byers-Norton, Paula Dean and John Grano, traveled to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CHSL), Long Island, New York on April 27 to perform human genomic experiments or sophisticated laboratory procedures in DNA science. CHSL is one of the world's most prestigious scientific laboratories in the world. It is the home of 15 Nobel Laureates and is directed by Dr. James Watson, co-founder of the structure of the DNA molecule.

"The lab was really interesting," said Byers-Norton. "I specifically liked how we were able to compare our DNA to Neanderthal, Ice Man and other ancestral DNA specimens stored in the CSHL database."

Using cheek cells, students started by sequencing their mitochondrial DNA and end with a genetic map of their own. Students were then able to perform various experiments on their own DNA. Using bioinformatics (computer programs designed to statistically compare biological systems to each other), students could compare the specific sequence of their DNA to sequences of the same site of DNA analyzed from over 80 population groups around the world and several anthropological specimens such as The Ice Man and Neanderthal.

"I was really fascinated by the application of computers to biology," said Grano. "CSHL is the home of the world's guru, Lincoln Stein, in bioinformatics. I was able to get his e-mail address and learn from him. I really liked seeing the application of 'mega computers' working on biological problems."

Student Paula Dean said that the experience opened her eyes as to how much we still have to learn about the human genome.

Even though the genome has been mapped, we have no idea as to how everything works together, she said. Dean compared it to just the tip of an iceberg.

Students were accompanied by AP Biology teacher Brenda Dempsey.

## Karen Behm

### C.E.C Scholars Team English Teacher

#### Years with DPS: 2

**Latest Accomplishment:** Being chosen as one of 26 people around the country invited to participate in the Folger Shakespeare Library Summer Session in Washington, D.C.

*(Editor's Note: This award comes with a \$2,800 stipend. At this conference, teachers focus on bringing Shakespeare and his works alive to students. Karen's passion for Shakespeare has led Career Education Center students to participate annually in Denver's Shakespeare Festival held each May on the 16<sup>th</sup> St. Mall.)*



**The Most Challenging Part About My Job:** Fitting all of the syllabus requirements in for each class/preparing for the CSAP!

**The Most Rewarding Part About My Job:** Seeing a non-reader turn into a reader is the greatest reward!

**I've also worked:** a waitress and a bartender

**When I'm not working I am usually:** reading, watching movies, cooking, spending time with friends

**Hometown:** Kenosha, Wisconsin. Also lived in the Twin Cities for twelve years before moving to Denver.

**Favorite movie:** "It's a Wonderful Life," "Goodfellas"

**Favorite restaurant:** Maggiano's – Great food, and Frank Sinatra music!

**Favorite book:** "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, "A Separate Peace" by John Knowles, and "A Prayer for Owen Meany" by John Irving

**Family:** Family and stepfamily in Fort Collins, 3 brothers

**Philosophy for life:** "If you can't change it, accept it."

**The most useless thing I ever bought:** A lemon yellow '75 Gremlin

## Flag Cases...continued from page 1

principal Mike Nicholson, I was able to let the brothers take the lead in building ten of the cases. The construction of the pieces required careful cutting and fitting to produce the precise angles demanded by the shape of the boxes. Spline joints (which use a splinter of wood to hold the joint firm) were added to each of the corners in contrasting woods, yielding truly handsome containers. The project proved contagious and the rest of the class joined in to help. The pride surrounding the students' work was palpable, resulting in the addition of a placard on the back listing where and by whom the boxes were made.

With principal Nicholson's assistance with shipping costs, we mailed our first boxes and were gratified by how well they were received. To quote parts of a kind message from the regional director of Woodworkers United For America: "I was worried because some schools around the country, even college-level, have done poor quality work. Your students did great! Congratulations. You and your students are my heroes! The cases you sent will be presented to families of firefighters lost at the WTC." He went on to say in a message to the national coordinator in Oregon: "I received the flag cases from the Vocational Cabinetry class at JFK High School in Denver and they are great! They are made of walnut and have very tight joints, superior sanding, and smooth, satin finishes."

Along with the compliments came requests for more boxes.

For more information about this project, see the April 2002 issue of "Wood" magazine. Also, since donations from suppliers have been less than expected, please feel free to make donations to: JFK Flag Project in care of the JFK treasurer. Thanks to the Walter W. Martin firm in Denver for donation of some glass for the project.

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