

# insideDPS

A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS / JUNE 1, 2003 / ISSUE NO. 11

## 'millionaires' read their way to top honors



Marrama Elementary School students (from left to right) Matthew Jones, Giovanni Thomas, Gabrielle Castro, Marge Ruby and Aerik Frances.

In its first year, the district's Million Words Campaign fashioned more than 12,000 "millionaires" – students who read one million words – as part of the literacy plan started this year. That's about 25 chapter books per year for a fifth-grader or about four books per day for a first-grader.

At a Board of Education meeting last month, Marrama and Kaiser elementary schools and Hamilton Middle School took home top honors and giant trophies for having the most students who reached the million-word mark (based on an April 15 count).

Marrama Elementary School had 474 million-word readers, more than 95 percent of its population; Kaiser Elementary School had 326 million-word readers, 93 percent of its population; and Hamilton Middle School had 328 million-word readers, almost 33 percent of its population.

See **MILLIONAIRE** on page 6

### What Does One Million Really Look Like?

A million words – just how many is that? As part of his Eagle Scout project, Grant Ranch eighth-grader Jeff Kile brought the Million Words Campaign to life, initiating a school-wide operation to collect a million pennies to buy books for the library. Through class competitions, rummage sales, collection jars at the school and in the community, and a pledge from the Grant Ranch PTO to match the amount collected, the school now has a million pennies on display. The penny drive collected 1,056,493 pennies – \$10,564.93 – for the purchase of library books. ■



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# new schools and programs to open in august

**D**enver Public Schools continues to add to the variety of choices offered to parents and students. Here's a recap of recent additions; for a complete list of current offerings, visit the DPS Web site, [www.dpsk12.org](http://www.dpsk12.org) and click on "DPS Today – Enrollment Guide."

**Connections Academy** – For students in grades one through eight whose parents have time to serve as the children's learning coach. The school uses a rich and rigorous text-based K-8 curriculum. Technical and educational support is provided via the Internet. Each student receives a computer. No location – students learn at home.

**Denver Big Picture High School** – A new charter school will begin for students in grades nine and 10 (adding grade 11 in 2004 and grade 12 in 2005). The school will feature highly personalized instruction. It's based on a highly successful model in Rhode Island. Location: 5900 E. 39th Avenue

**Dual Language Program at Fairmont Elementary School** – A Dual Language, Spanish-English program will be offered for 48 students in two kindergarten classrooms and early childhood education (ECE). One grade level per year will be added until Dual Language classrooms are established through grade five. Location: 520 W. 3rd Avenue

**Fred N. Thomas Career Education Center Middle College of Denver** – This premiere career and technical magnet school allows high school students to earn credits toward a college associate's degree while taking four courses a year at Community College of Denver. Emily Griffith Opportunity School is a partner in this effort. Location: 2650 Eliot Street

**High Achieving Students at Gust Elementary School** – The Highly Gifted Program at Gust will expand to include high achieving students in grades one through five. Location: 3440 W. Yale Avenue

**Highly Gifted Program at Carson Elementary School** – The Highly Gifted Program will expand to Carson for students in grades one through four adding grade five in 2004-2005. High achieving students will also be able to attend the new program on a space available basis. Location: 5420 E. 1st Avenue

**Life Skills Center of Denver** – A new charter school designed to serve as a safety net for high school dropouts. Location: 1000 Cherokee Street

**Montessori Program at Lincoln Elementary School** – The district's third Montessori program will launch in the 2003-2004 school year for three-, four-, and five-year-old children. One or two additional Montessori classrooms will be added each year thereafter until the program serves students through grade six. Location: 710 S. Pennsylvania Street

**Northeast Academy** – A new charter school will open with 150 students in kindergarten through fifth grade (adding one grade per year until the school serves students through the eighth grade). The school intends to offer a "research-based, challenging and content-rich curriculum" based on the Core Knowledge approach to learning. Location is to be determined in the Montbello neighborhood.

**Odyssey Charter School/New Stapleton Elementary School** – The new building will host two schools in one, a relocated Odyssey Charter School and new K-5 neighborhood elementary school. This is the first new school at the former airport site. Location: 8800 E. 28th Avenue

**Smiley Middle School International Preparatory Magnet** – Modeled after the highly successful "IPM" program at Hamilton Middle School. The program will start with sixth-graders and serve about 150 students in all three grades by 2005. Location: 2540 Holly Street ■

## Colorado Teacher Of The Year Nomination Deadline In September

**T**he Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is now accepting applications for the 2004 Colorado Teacher of the Year Program, the state's oldest and most prestigious honors program that recognizes the contributions of the classroom teacher. Colorado's Teacher of the Year automatically becomes the nominee for the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Nominees must be skilled, dedicated, knowledgeable classroom teachers in state-approved or accredited schools teaching pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and planning to continue active teaching careers.

Completed applications are due to CDE by Friday, September 5. Applications will then be reviewed by an independent selection committee. Several candidates will be interviewed in October and then semi-finalists will be visited and observed in their classrooms by members of the selection committee.

Because of the individual nature of the questions—teaching philosophies, most remarkable education achievement, etc. —nominees must fill out and submit their own applications. Potential candidates for Colorado Teacher of the Year are encouraged to fill out and return the application form available online at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeawards/trtoyinf.htm>.

Questions? Contact the Colorado Teacher of the Year Program, 303-866-6937. ■

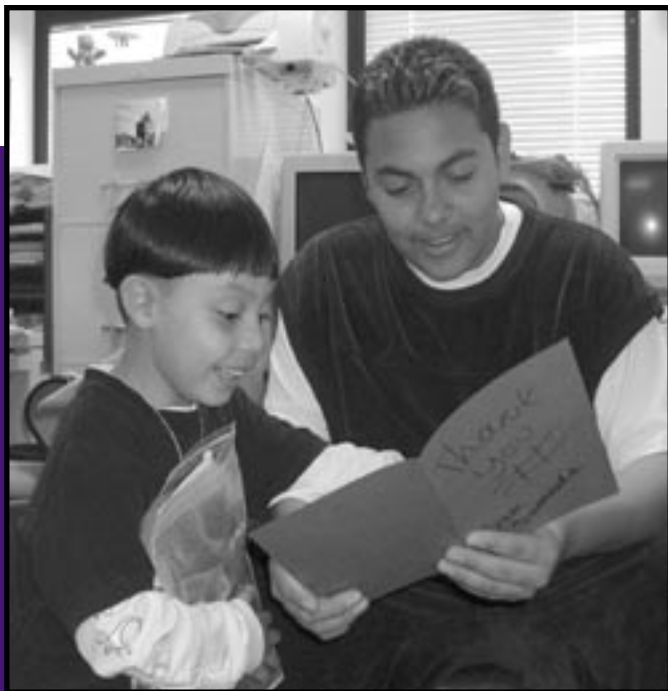


# lions and tigers and bears and pedometers and \$6,000!

The first annual "There's No Place Like Home" five kilometer run, walk and dance this spring raised more than \$6,000 to benefit children of the homeless. Almost 400 people participated, significantly boosting the number of supplies such as prescription eye glasses, school clothes, supplies, graduation costs and activity fees the DPS Educational Outreach Program provides to students in need.

Top fundraisers were the Student Services Department, which entered the largest department team and contributed close to \$1,700, and Cowell Elementary School, which had the largest school team and contributed the most money in pledges from a school. Cowell won the incentive prizes of \$1,000 worth of gym equipment and 50 pedometers for its physical education department.

"All of our individual and team participants are commended for their contributions and participation," said Kim Vela, DPS Homeless Liaison. "Thank you to everyone who participated and made our first annual 5k a huge success. See you next year!" ■



*Kunsmiller Middle School seventh-grader Samuel Acosta buddies up with College View Elementary School kindergartener Ivan Soto during this year's "buddy reading" cross-age tutoring pilot, a part of the secondary Literacy Studio program. Middle and high school students pair up with elementary school students to practice reading and writing. Many of the partners are English Language Learners who are reading and writing to each other in both languages. The smiles are cheek to cheek, and the reading experiences and benefits are a mile long. The cross-age tutoring unit will be launched district-wide this fall. "Buddy Reading" will be an integral part of efforts to increase students' reading potential.*

## Spanish Classes Offered This Month For Staff

George Washington High School is offering two sessions of Spanish classes to school staff from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 2-6 and June 9-13. The cost is \$160 per session and includes a textbook. The classes are divided by ability levels, and curriculum is designed to meet participants' needs.

Licensed employees may receive two semester hours re-license credit per session. Non-licensed staff may receive 30 contact hours educational credit. To register, contact Sue Gosman, George Washington High School, at 303-764-3203 mailbox 20626# or [susan\\_gosman@dpsk12.org](mailto:susan_gosman@dpsk12.org). ■

## Big Apple Shines Some Learning on Schmitt

The Schmitt Elementary School Literacy Team is back from a fact-finding trip to two New York City schools where they studied the best means for implementing the new literacy program in DPS – and found renewed enthusiasm for the program's approach.

The April trip included Schmitt literacy coaches Lois Bender and Mary Bronniman and Schmitt principal Gaynell Lawrence; the team visited the DeSoto School and the Manhattan New School.

After viewing the schools in action, the team decided to implement such program elements as Accountable Talk, Partner Talk, classroom arrangements, and Independent Reading strategies.

"We have observed Accountable Talk and the use of rigorous thinking in the New York Schools," said principal Lawrence. "We are poised to move our students in that direction. The nested learning environment there is student centered, rather than teacher centered, and we are moving in that direction as well."

At the Manhattan New School, the team remarked on the intense focus that students had toward their educational experience. Children were chatting about books, respectfully disagreeing with each other, and voicing their "wonderings" about books and ideas. Teachers guided the discussions but did not fill the pauses with teacher talk.

"We have learned so much from our visit and we are eager to get started in helping our teachers and students at Schmitt learn more about this interesting program," said literacy coach Lois Bender.

Photos and transcripts of the visit are available to other schools for use. Call the school at 303-935-4651 to find out more. ■

## APPOINTMENTS

Jorge-Ayn G. Riley: Principal, Smith  
Stacy L. Geyer: Teacher, Rishel  
George M. Gorton: Teacher, Horace Mann  
Jarred J. Kamaraukas: Secretary I,  
Denver School Of The Arts  
Michael R. Melosh: Teacher, Columbine  
Greta Martinez: Principal, Slavens  
Lauri A. Simington-Echer: Teacher, Gust

## CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

Dennis Thompson: Principal, Bromwell  
Roxann McGrew: Food Service Manager II,  
Greenwood  
Bethany F. Hamilton: Principal, Denison  
Mark S. Hernandez: Principal, Smedley

## REAPPOINTMENTS

Ruth Benjamin-Wardle: Teacher, Manual/  
Leadership

## RETIREMENTS

Loretta J. Ukulele: Secretary, Emily Griffith  
Opportunity School  
Russ Gregory: Teacher, Park Hill

## DEATH

Orelia Smith: Teacher, Holm

## At-Your-Fingertips Human Resources Data Coming Soon

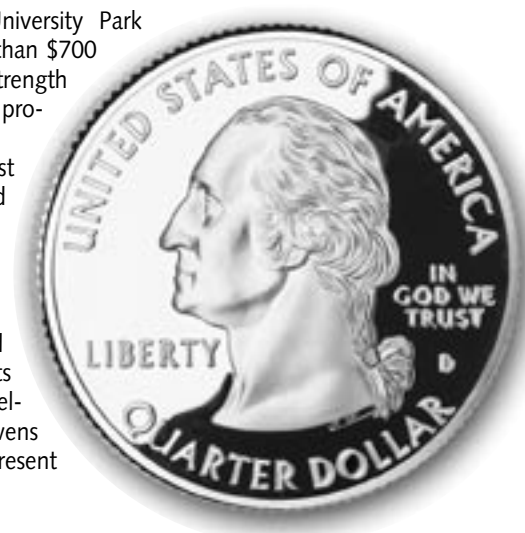
**T**his fall, Human Resources will roll out district-wide the online Lawson Self Service Center that ultimately will allow employees and managers to update personal information and track HR, payroll and benefits data. This provides a significant cost savings over paper documents, easier maintenance of records and quick dissemination of updated information. Secretaries will be trained on the system in July and August ... watch for more details coming soon! ■

# schools share their strength

**B**ryant-Webster, Smedley and University Park elementary schools raised more than \$700 in quarters for the recent Share Our Strength 'Quarters for Kids' program, which provides breakfast for homeless children.

"At our school, which has almost 90 percent of its children on free and reduced lunches, we raised \$468.36," said Marsha Chavez, principal of Smedley Elementary School. "I find this amazing!"

Bryant-Webster students raised \$100 and University Park students raised \$141.50. Schools attended a celebration breakfast with Governor Owens last month at Strings Restaurant to present their contributions. ■



*John F. Kennedy High School graduate Rodney Edwards was one of 25 American Indian students honored during a ceremony sponsored by the Indian Education Program. Each graduating student was given a handmade star quilt. As with all graduates, parents joined the graduates on stage. Rodney plans to attend the University of Northern Colorado and return as a teacher and coach at Kennedy, where he was an offensive lineman, football captain and senior wrestling captain. Rodney maintained a 4.0 or higher GPA through high school. The ceremony was held in May at College View Elementary School.*

## 2003-2004 Traditional Calendar

Vacation .....	August 1-11, 2003
Colorado Day (holiday) .....	August 4
Walk-In Registration (secondary) .....	August 12-13
½ Professional Day, ½ Planning Day (no school for students) .....	August 14-15
First Semester Begins .....	August 18
Assessment Day (no school for students) .....	August 22
Labor Day (holiday) .....	September 1
Professional Day (no school for students) .....	September 26
Professional Day (no school for students) .....	October 20
Conference Day (no school for students) .....	October 21
Veterans' Day (holiday) .....	November 11
Vacation .....	November 26-28
Thanksgiving (holiday) .....	November 27
Second Semester Ends .....	December 19
Vacation (winter break) .....	December 22-January 2
½ Professional Day, ½ Planning Day (no school for students) .....	January 5
Second Semester Begins .....	January 6
Martin Luther King (holiday) .....	January 19
Presidents' Day (holiday) .....	February 16
Conference Day (no school for students) .....	February 17
Vacation (spring break) .....	April 5-9
Professional Day (no school for students) .....	April 12
Second Semester Ends (half day for students) .....	May 27
Vacation .....	May 28-July 30
Memorial Day (holiday) .....	May 31
Independence Day (holiday) .....	July 5, 2004

## 2003-2004 Continuous Year

**Amesse, Barrett, Bryant-Webster, Cheltenham, Colfax, Columbian, Del Pueblo, Eagleton, Fairmont, Ford, Harrington, Johnson, Maxwell, McGlone, Mitchell, Smedley, Smith, Valdez and Wyman elementary schools**

Vacation .....	July 1-22, 2003
Independence Day (holiday) .....	July 4
½ Professional Day, ½ Planning Day (no school for students) .....	July 23-25
First Semester Begins .....	July 28
Assessment Day (no school for students) .....	August 1
Colorado Day (holiday) .....	August 4
Labor Day (holiday) .....	September 1
Conference Day, Report Card Date (half day for students) .....	October 3
Vacation .....	October 6-17
Professional Day (no school for students) .....	October 20
Veterans' Day (holiday) .....	November 11
Vacation .....	November 26-28
Thanksgiving (holiday) .....	November 27
First Semester Ends, Report Card Date .....	December 12
Vacation .....	December 15-January 2
½ Professional Day, ½ Planning Day (no school for students) .....	January 5
Second Semester Begins .....	January 6
Martin Luther King (holiday) .....	January 19
Presidents' Day (holiday) .....	February 16
Conference Day, Report Card Date (half day for students) .....	March 19
Vacation .....	March 22-April 9
Professional Day (no school for students) .....	April 12
(no school for students and staff) .....	May 21
Memorial Day (holiday) .....	May 31
½ Planning Day, Report Card Date (half day for students) .....	June 11
Second Semester Ends .....	June 11
Vacation .....	June 14-30, 2004



*George Washington High School student Ellice Whittington was recognized recently by the Colorado Section of the American Chemical Society for her outstanding achievement in chemistry. Whittington's teacher is Lucy Okoh. Also in Okoh's class this year were two students – William Eucker and Shyam Patel – who qualified for the runoff examination sponsored by the International Chemistry Olympiad Competition. Okoh said the pair of students excels in theoretical chemistry and lab practical examination. The two students were among just 12 in the state who qualified for the runoff examination.*

# bike to work day

wednesday, june 25

**P**lan now to participate in the largest cycling event in Colorado. Bike to Work Day is Wednesday, June 25.

Denver Public Schools is one of more than 450 employers supporting the event. Employees can register for Bike to Work Day through Joel' Bradley-Hess, Curriculum and Instruction, at 303-764-3723 or joel\_bradley-hess@dpsk12.org. Online registration is available at [www.ridearrangers.org/biketoworkday/index.cfm](http://www.ridearrangers.org/biketoworkday/index.cfm). Register as an individual participant under the company name of Denver Public Schools (not as company coordinator).

Cyclists can take a break at one of the many bike stops to enjoy some coffee or pastry on the way to work (breakfast items will vary from stop to stop). Register to win great prizes from local sponsors, and enjoy fresh air and exercise while getting out of traffic and having fun with other cyclists.

There's nothing to lose! Ride Arrangers will even guarantee rides home (in case of emergency or illness only). ■

The trophies will be on display at the schools next year and will travel to the succeeding winners a year from now.

### Why One Million Words?

“Reading one million words is a worthy and reasonable goal. If students read one million words every year, they will develop their fluency in reading and improve their vocabulary,” said Sally Mentor Hay, Chief Academic Officer.

This year, DPS elementary students studied reading and writing for three hours every day in school, and it's important to continue their reading practice at home.

Research indicates that a good way to increase student achievement is by encouraging reading. A 1994 study showed that frequent readers had higher reading achievement. A 1999 study showed that reading volume predicted reading comprehension achievement. ■



Above: Kaiser Elementary School students (from left to right) Ethan Tiburcio, Itzel Alvarez, Aidan Manzanares, Anessa Bernhart, Jesse Wilson and Nathan Bustamente. In the back row (from left to right) are principal Angela Hardy-Wilhite and LMC teacher Karen Epps. Right: Hamilton Middle School students (from left to right) Matea Wasend, Caleb Ziegler, Isabella Kendrick, Derishia Wesley and Matthew Valeta.

# what generation gap?

North High School English Language Learners became into biographers this spring when they recorded the oral histories of senior citizen residents of the Gardens at St. Elizabeth in northwest Denver. After having completed their own autobiographies in class, the students ventured out and, quite happily, got an earful (so to speak).

“The students enjoyed listening to the histories of these wonderful residents,” said teacher Lauren Stewart.

In the end – not much older, but perhaps a bit wiser – students presented the senior citizens with their own personal written histories and individual photos of this special experience. ■



Students and parents at Rosedale Elementary School xeriscaped their school this year, planting 100 tulips, crocus bulbs and mums along the west and north grounds of the gymnasium. Fifth-graders were immersed first-hand in lessons about the importance of conservation and water management, even attending an informative session on drought management given by Shawn Eberly, master gardener and speaker for the Denver Water Board.



## See You In September!

The next issue of Inside DPS will be the first of September. Need more copies of the June issue? This issue is online at [www.dpsk12.org/news](http://www.dpsk12.org/news). Enjoy the summer break! ■



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