

# insideDPS

A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS / DECEMBER 1, 2002 / ISSUE NO. 5



*Steele Elementary Principal Gail Paige-Archambeau and members of the Steele Student Council cut the ribbon on the new cafeteria and lunchroom at a dedication Nov. 15. Steele has waited 73 years to add a real lunchroom to the building – since a closet kitchen was installed off the gym in 1928. (The school was built in 1913 but at first students went home to eat lunch.) The Steele PTA announced that the new addition would be named in honor of Paige-Archambeau – news that came as a complete surprise to the honoree.*

## what's inside

Millionaire Minutes  
— page 2

Spread the Word About Tax Credit  
— page 3

Comings & Goings  
— page 4

Hamilton Boys Create Original  
Computer Games  
— page 5

## A Day In The Life...



### ...Of John Schmitt, Lift Bus Driver

**D**riving a school bus can be a challenge. On some days, you might have 65 boisterous kids to deliver to school. But some bus drivers have a different challenge. They drive lift buses for special needs students. And though the number of students they carry may be few, the responsibility is great.

At precisely 6:00 a.m. the doors to John Schmitt's lift bus swing shut at the new Hilltop terminal in West Denver. The gray-haired 69-year old has a shiny new bus to thoroughly inspect. He's a School Bus Road-eo medal winner for pre-trip inspections, so he has a reputation to uphold.

In just ten minutes he'll start his route. He is on his way to pick up two students on this trip. Both have Muscular Dystrophy. They are sound and capable mentally but trapped in a body that is dependent- dependent on people like John.

Once 14 year- old Ricardo is dressed and showered ready for school, his parents ship him off from their northwest Denver home. John, who arrives right on time as usual, is the first adult they entrust with Ricardo. Though the ride is just a small part of Ricardo's day, John has a mission. "My mission is to make sure that 30 minute ride is the best part of their day," he says.

Today Ricardo is in good spirits. "Hi John, where's Danny?" Ricardo inquires

denver public schools  
**millionaire**  
minutes

**S**tudents at **Maxwell Elementary School** love Readin' Recess. Students are allowed to sit in corners, lounge on the stairs or lay on carpeted areas of the large auditorium. Supervising adults walk around the auditorium reading their own books. Students bring their Independent Reading Book Bags and have about thirty-minutes of peaceful reading time. Readin' Recess is offered every day. Even on sunny days the auditorium is packed.

Students at **Teller Elementary School** are on their way to reading a million words. 28 students have met the first milestone of reading 250,000 words by the end of the first 9-week grading period.



*Among the Million Word "Passport" holders at Merrill Middle School are eighth-graders (back row, left to right) Sherelle Jackson, Kiyoshi Kawamoto, Calvin Hunsinger and (front row) Christina Walker and David Anver.*

Principal Karti Lyons took the bunch out to lunch at Gunther Toody's to celebrate.

Every month students who have reached the monthly goal for reading are recognized at **Bryant-Webster Elementary School**. This past month the school had 17 students who have already read a million words.

Every child who has met the monthly benchmark is recognized by having his or her picture taken with the principal. The pictures are then placed on a bulletin board in the main hall. They are also treated to a bag of popcorn at the end of the day. Also, parents and students are being congratulated through a community notice.

The Million Word Campaign at **Merrill Middle School** is called "Read On! Around the World in One Million Words." As of Nov. 8, one seventh-grade student, Anees Shaik, had read more than 1.6 million words! Students were given a "passport," which is a map of the world, with ten cities labeled as stops going from west to east. Each stop represents reading 100,000 words for the student. When students have reached the 100,000-word milestone, they verify their results with our librarian, and receive a small prize. Their progress is tracked on their individual world maps using a hot air balloon symbol.

If you would like to share your Million Word Campaign stories or letters, please e-mail them to: [laura\\_gallegos@dpsk12.org](mailto:laura_gallegos@dpsk12.org). ■

**Science Gets a Boost  
At Kepner, Rishel and  
Smiley Middle Schools**

**T**he National Institutes of Health has awarded a Science Education Partnership Award to fund a partnership between Denver Public Schools and the University of Colorado that will benefit middle school teachers and students.

The partnership will support integrated professional development, direct classroom support, and necessary equipment to science faculties at Kepner, Rishel and Smiley middle schools.

The direct financial benefits include \$26,000 for equipment for science teaching related to the project for each school in the first year (teachers and staff will decide on equipment purchases), \$4,000 for equipment repair and replacement in each school (in years two and three), and \$1,700 for teaching supplies for each school (also in years two and three).

In addition, each teacher will be provided annual stipends (\$1,200 in the first year, \$1,300 in year two and \$1,400 in year three) and teachers who attend Saturday meetings will also receive \$150 per day. Finally, substitute pay will also be provided to cover for teacher meetings during school days.

Program activities from the partnership will include curriculum development, professional development for teachers in curriculum implementation, mentoring of teachers by an experienced program master teacher, and the placement of science graduate students in each school to serve as scientist role models.

"We envision this partnership as a true collaboration, in which teacher input and feedback will guide the development of the project," said the letter from the University of Colorado's Biological Sciences Initiative to each of the schools. ■

## Jurassic Park Institute Allows Teachers To Download "Dinos"

**J**urassic Park Institute (JPI), a science-based, educationally focused program that provides children, parents, and teachers with the ultimate resource for dinosaur learning and fun, has unveiled Dino Lab, an online, inquiry-based education program designed for educators by educators.

Dino Lab, located on JPI's official Web site, [www.jpoinstitute.com](http://www.jpoinstitute.com), features a variety of free materials that include interactive lesson plans, online student activities, and easy-to-implement teaching tools.

Created in accordance with National Science Education Standards, Dino Lab was developed by JPI with a world-class team, including top dinosaur experts, experienced university science educators, and classroom teachers.

Dino Lab's Teacher Resources area serves as the educator's guide to the site's comprehensive offerings. It contains a variety of lesson plans and activities, as well as information about the program and the methodologies and strategies used to create it. The lessons within Dino Lab are designed to help students form questions; gather, display, analyze and interpret data; explore relationships and seek correlations; and develop models and theories about the world in which they live. The activities connect to disciplines beyond science, including mathematics and literacy, to engage the full range of a student's intellect.

Dino Lab's online activities for students, housed in the site's Dinosaur Academy and Nests & Nurturing sections, can be easily integrated into the classroom. The Dinosaur Academy offers students the opportunity to see real fossils online, build their own dinosaurs, take virtual field trips to dig sites around the world, and meet famous dinosaur hunters.

In addition to Dino Lab, educators have access to the Dinopedia, a Web-based reference guide to hundreds of dinosaurs and 4.5 billion years of the Earth's history, as well as up-to-the-minute Dino News on JPI's Web site. ■

# spread the word:

needy DPS families could  
benefit from tax credit

**T**he federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) can provide more than \$70 million to 35,000 low-income working families in the City and County of Denver. With more than half of DPS students on free and reduced lunch, hundreds of families could benefit once they are empowered with the information.

"Thousands of families in Denver are working hard every day, sometimes at more than one job," Mayor Wellington Webb said during an announcement Oct. 21 to promote the tax credit. "But the wages they earn are insufficient to support themselves and their children. The success of these hard-working families is essential to our city's success. They are the foundation of our continued economic prosperity as a city and as a region."

EITC provides tax relief for low-income working families, and it also provides an incentive to work. The EITC can bring substantial cash payment as high as \$4,140 to families whose incomes are low enough that they owe little or no federal taxes. The average EITC for families with children in the City of Denver is \$1,921.

In addition to promoting the federal EITC, Mayor Webb announced several partnerships to recruit tax assistance volunteers to assist low-income families with the preparation of their federal and state tax returns. If you are interested in volunteering as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site volunteer, or have additional questions about the VITA program, please contact Paula Batson at 303-446-1361 or by e-mail at [Paula.M.Batson@irs.gov](mailto:Paula.M.Batson@irs.gov). If you have questions about the federal EITC, please contact Elisabeth Alkire of the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, at 720-865-5660 or by e-mail at [alkire@mowd.org](mailto:alkire@mowd.org). ■



*Barnum Elementary School students listen to a story at a recent pajama party after school as part of the DPS Million Word Campaign. Students were invited to come in their pajamas to lounge and read in the school auditorium. Milk and cookies were also served.*

## APPOINTMENTS

Cobi Chaney: Manager, Emily Griffith Opp. School  
 Marla J. Ladd: Special Ed Program Manager, Education  
 Valerie J. Pollitt: Special Ed Program Manager, Education  
 Ian Ahern: Teacher, Horace Mann  
 Liz Brazeel: Teacher, Ashley  
 Leslie J. Draper Geist: Teacher, Beach Court  
 Laurie A. Jackson: Teacher, Valverde  
 Katrina C. Kluth: Teacher, McGlone  
 Angelica M. Lastra: Teacher, Kunsmler  
 Maxine McCovy: Teacher, Philips  
 Susan L. McHugh: Teacher, East High  
 Isabel Palomo: Teacher, Ashley  
 Carlos M. Rivera: Teacher, Randolph  
 Emily A. Robb: Teacher, Baker  
 Jennifer Rowe: Teacher, Lake  
 Margaret P. Stanley: Teacher, Skinner  
 Caleb D. Sunderwirth: Teacher, Baker  
 Clara M. Martinez: Nurse, Education  
 Andrea M. Goduti: Psychologist, Whittier  
 Michelle L. Ankenbauer: Teacher, Lake  
 Jean Carrasco: Teacher, Green Valley  
 Sherrie Clapp: Teacher, North  
 Vanessa A. Diaz: Teacher, Force  
 Joel Fresquez: Teacher, Sandoval  
 Dane H. Haaf: Teacher, Noel  
 John Matos: Teacher, Horace Mann  
 Nancy M. Root: Teacher, Sabin  
 Nicole K. Von Lindenau: Teacher, Randolph  
 Marshall Washburn: Teacher, Kunsmler  
 Denyse Anderson: Secretary I, Fairview  
 Darleen M. Chacon: Secretary I, Cole  
 Sheila Chaney: Bookkeeper II, Administration  
 Norma Enriquez: Secretary I, Eagleton  
 Leona C. Gonzales: Secretary I, Randolph  
 Alejandra Gutierrez: Secretary I, Cole  
 Patsy J. Holland: Bookkeeper I, Montbello  
 Crystel S. Jackson: Secretary I, East  
 Jacqueline Linan: Secretary I, Sandoval  
 Maryann Mendez: Secretary I, Bromwell  
 Lisa A. Monzon: Secretary I, Administration  
 Angela Perea: Accountant II, Education

Cheryl Richardson: Secretary I, Manual/Leadership  
 Sarah L. Adkins: Tutor Interpreter, Florence Crittenton  
 John S. Elstad: Tutor Interpreter, East  
 Myrna Gaxiola: Tutor Interpreter, Manual/Arts & Cultural  
 Beverly A. Sunie: Vision Screening Technician, Education  
 Tamra Williams-Long: Vision Screening Technician, Education  
 Robert Freiberger: Warehouse Worker II, Administration  
 Kenneth R. Montoya: Painter, Operations  
 Robin L. Short: Locksmith, Operations  
 Marla J. Ladd: Special Ed Program Manager, Education  
 Valerie J. Pollitt: Special Ed Program Manager, Education  
 Maria T. Duran: Custodial Helper, Noel  
 Nicole M. Gray: Custodial Helper, John F. Kennedy  
 Jeremy Langdon: Custodial Helper, Place  
 Maria R. Rodriguez: Custodial Helper, Noel  
 Joel D. Spiller: Custodial Helper, Noel  
 Adrian A. Trejo: Custodial Helper, John F. Kennedy  
 Todd L. Walker: Custodial Helper, Thomas Jefferson  
 Michael C. Brewer: Library Technician I, Philips  
 Delores J. Dilworth: Library Technician I, Montclair  
 Monica R. Robertson Daniel: Library Technician I, Ashley  
 Jennifer H. Segall: Library Technician I, Amesse  
 Roy Graham: Computer Support Technician, Contemporary Learning Academy  
 Teronda J. Harris: MOET Career Specialist, Manual/Leadership  
 Olga L. Olivas: LAS Tester, Education  
 Walter Kramar: Deputy General Counsel, Administration  
 Jim J. Yaniglos: Budget Technician/Specialist I, Administration

## CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT

Luz A. McClure: Teacher on Special Assignment, Centennial  
 Rhonda A. Tucker: Employment Manager, Administration  
 Marilyn D. Mendelson: Teacher, Valdez  
 Mary A. Bash: Manager, Literacy Manager, Education  
 Cesar Cedillo: Acting Assistant Principal, Morey  
 Darryl E. Keeton: Acting Principal, CLA  
 Donald L. Manzanarez: Interim Principal, Randolph  
 Sophia Masewicz: Interim Principal, Special Assignment, Grants Office  
 Vanessa Bernal: Office Support II, Manual/Arts & Cultural

Irene S. Herrera: Secretary II, Centennial  
 Jessica Zubiate: Secretary II, Abraham Lincoln  
 Lidia I. Acosta: Special Education Assistant, Education  
 Kenneth J. Deruso: Facility Manager I, Smith  
 Warren R. Jones: Facility Manager IV, North  
 Dan Ortega: Facility Manager II, Grant  
 Rosa Aguilar: Food Service Manager II, Godsman  
 Cheryl L. Koehler: Food Service Manager III, Hamilton  
 James E. Reinhardt: Journeyman Carpenter, Operations  
 Bernard Allen: Custodian Costumer II, Service Building  
 Virginia Ayala: Custodian Assistant I, Southmoor  
 Randy J. Burg: Custodial Helper, Merrill  
 Jose M. Florez: Custodian Assistant I, Remington  
 Elana F. Frazier: Custodian Assistant II, Gove  
 Jorge Guerrero: Custodian Assistant I, Park Hill  
 Jeffery C. Leija: Custodian Assistant II, Operations  
 Arthur Mahoney: Custodian Assistant I, Lowry  
 Raymond C. Parker: Custodian Assistant I, Carson  
 John Stitak: Custodian Assistant II, Fairmont  
 Jose A. Vega: Custodial Helper, East  
 Selina Velasquez: Custodian Assistant I, Slavens  
 Alan Williams: Custodian Assistant II, Service Building  
 Richard M. Carter: School Technician Specialist II, Noel  
 Diana S. Ludwig: District Buyer II, Administration

## REAPPOINTMENTS

Antonio Arrieta: Teacher, Mitchell (Change From Appointment To Reappointment)  
 Michelle I. Dugarte: Teacher, Skinner  
 Soraya Garcia-Collis: Teacher, Horace Mann  
 Rene R. Rojas-Billings: Teacher, Ford  
 Ann Williams: Secretary I, Gove  
 Roxann McGrew: Food Service Manager I, Operations

## RETIREMENT

Barbara S. Greenwald: Teacher, Moore  
 Carol A. Basquez: Secretary, Abraham Lincoln  
 Margaret Y. Shane: Secretary, Rosedale  
 Tony J. Medina: Facility Manager, North  
 Davey L. Parker: Custodian Assistant, Park Hill  
 Daniel Pagliasotti: A/V Prod Specialist, Educational Resource Services

# New Director Brings Renewed Energy To ELA Department

While one eye was being kept on how the public would vote on a proposed English-only initiative, it was business as usual in the English Language Acquisition (ELA) department, with one exception. This year, ELA has a new head. Michele Bernadett was recruited from Cole Middle School where she was a principal to lead the ELA department.

"From day one, I was not in a holding pattern around Amendment 31 and there was so much work to do since there was no clarity," said Bernadett. "I've just been in a forward position since the very first day."

Still the initiative was in the back of Bernadett's mind. "Early on I was nervous that voters would not see through the superficial part of the amendment but they did," noted Bernadett. "My overriding concern was the quality of education in the district. So now learning can go on."

Now that the amendment is behind her, Bernadett looks forward to the challenge. "My hopes are to continue the good work that has been going on and focus more on compliance and the understanding of compliance," said Bernadett. "Then move from that to solid instruction."

Compliance is the new buzzword in Bernadett's department. "It's a process of educating everyone involved — administration, parents, students, teachers — about what quality ELA instruction is and how our programs can facilitate English language acquisition when students are correctly placed because only then can instruction move forward."

Last academic year, the ELA department did both — compliance and instruction. This year, the instruction portion is now under the Curriculum and Instruction Department run by Roseanne Fulton. Bernadett says she is thankful for the good partnership between ELA and Curriculum and Instruction.

While Bernadett hopes to take the ELA program to a whole new level, she also recognizes it can not be done without the schools and community. "What I really want to avoid is people not understanding what ELA is about and not ask questions," said Bernadett. "My goal is to provide a better understanding of the court order for everyone."

In addition, Bernadett says the community needs to take an active interest. While DPS is under a court order to transition students into English within three years, Bernadett wants to remind parents that the court order allows for options. An eligible student can be taught in Spanish or in English with assistance or be in a mainstream program. "It's very important for parents to know." ■

# hamilton boys create original computer games, cartoons

by tony monterastelli



Lincoln Elementary School students gathered outside Nov. 8 to recognize military veterans in advance of Veterans Day. Part of the service included giving cards – signed by all Lincoln students – to veterans, including Lt. Col. Randy Nielson, who heads up the George Washington High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

**D**riving a car is still a few years away, but Steven Canady can go places on a computer. A seventh grader, Canady is a member of the Macromedia User's Group at Hamilton Middle School in Denver. Boys in the group showed off the Internet-based computer games they created at the recent Computer and Technology Showcase at the Colorado Convention Center.

Canady used Macromedia's Flash to create his game, Xtreme Drivin', which operated a bit like a dodge ball game for cars.

"I started coming to the computer club because I wanted to get the pizza, but I stayed because I thought Flash was so cool," he said.

Each boy created a game or cartoon. Their work required knowledge of Macromedia's Flash programming language, as well as other languages such as Visual Basic, said Dan Cornell, the Hamilton computer teacher who founded the group in fall 2001.

For example, in plotting the space ship in "Arrow Fighter," seventh-grader Greg Jones used Macromedia ActionScript to write the formulas that control a character's movements on a grid.

"In many cases, they are using algebra and they are using geometry," Cornell said.

For "Arrow Fighter," Jones also wrote a soundtrack using DM2 Digital Music Mixer, a music composition program.

"I made it work up and down, left and right," said Jones, as he moved an airplane through the virtual battlefield he had created for "Arrow Fighter." He pushed another button to pull back a curtain on the screen. That revealed the mathematical coordinates he had devised to make the plane fly while shooting at floating airborne debris.

The club's members are mostly seventh- and eighth-grade boys. Some of them have moved on to other software, including DreamWeaver, Swift3D and Maya, he said.

Not all of the creations were games. For example, eighth-grader Anlong Deng used a music software, Plazma, to create "DJ in the House," a song with six musical layers, including guitar, bass, percussion and "record scratch."

In just a few months, Hamilton Middle School's group has surprised observers accustomed to seeing students use computers only in superficial ways, such as for surfing the Web, said Jo O'Brien, an official at the Colorado Department of Education, who introduced the group.

"Sometimes I get a little cynical when somebody comes to me and says, 'The kids are so excited about computers,'" she said. "I'll often just see them just playing around with computers, not really learning anything. Enthusiasm is great, but I also want the kids to be a little more accomplished with some higher-level thinking." ■

© Front Range Tech Biz May 21, 2002



New Rhythms Dance Company, a group of 25 dance students from Denver School of the Arts performed in front of Harrington Elementary School students on Nov. 14. The students have embarked on a 10 elementary school tour as part of the school's community outreach.

# Darlene Sampson

Licensed Clinical Social Worker,  
Montbello High School



Years with DPS: 3

**Greatest or Latest Accomplishment:** I wrote and received a grant for \$10,000 from the Safe City Program from the City and County of Denver, to establish the Willing Warriors Mentoring Program at Montbello High School. The program couples upper class students with 9th and 10th graders for support, socio-emotional enrichment, and academic assistance. My biggest personal achievement — losing 130 pounds, working on my doctoral degree, and dealing with the death of my father all within the last year.

**The Most Challenging Part About My Job:** Juggling the numerous demands of the school social worker. The role is so multi-faceted that you must switch roles, be prepared for every crisis situation, and maintain the mental and physical stamina to be available for every student that needs your support while maintaining your own internal personal boundaries and spirit.

**The Most Rewarding Part About My Job:** Witnessing the resiliency, humor, and determination of the students at Montbello High School.

**I've also worked:** For the past ten years as a manager implementing therapeutic programs, and conducting 100+ workshops in the areas of multiculturalism, family dynamics, adoption, and child welfare.

**When I'm not working I am usually:** Shopping—Shopping—Shopping—or dreaming about faraway places!

**Hometown:** Pueblo, Colorado

**Favorite book:** "A Lesson Before Dying," by Ernest Gaines

**Favorite movie:** My tastes range from the silliest to the sublime. My favorite lightweight movies are: "The Best Man," & "Holiday Heart." My favorite heavyweight movies are: "Rosewood," "Imitation of Life," and "My Funny Valentine."

**Family:** In my second life, I am on my own — parenting and preparing my beloved son for the world and college.

**Philosophy for life:** I have always lived by the wisdom and words of my mother who had a plethora of profound and humorous statements, such as: "Which do you choose, college or death?" "Whatever you do in the dark will always come to light" and "Never think you are so fast you can't smell yourself" (translation: never get too arrogant).

**Final Words:** Make Every Day Count

A DAY IN THE LIFE from page 1

about his friend as John pushes his wheelchair on to the lift. "Oh, he's not coming to school today. How are you doing? Did you get a good night's sleep?"

It was just yesterday that Ricardo was picked up wiping away tears. He'd had a rough morning. "Sure enough, by the end of the route. I had him laughing so he could start his school day on the right track."

It takes awhile to get Ricardo strapped in. There are hooks and belts that must be placed correctly and with the right resistance in order to keep Ricardo's wheelchair from rolling around and to ensure it meets safety standards. John has to fix Ricardo's jacket and position his body and head so that he is comfortable. "How's that Ricardo?" asks John. "Good John," responds Ricardo.

John drives Ricardo to Place Middle School where Ricardo can receive special treatment for his disability. For John, that means getting through T-Rex. But while some bus drivers dread the idea, John is a different bird. He loves it. He used to be an ironworker. So, he gets a kick out of watching the enormous construction project take shape.

There's a beautiful pink sunrise as he drives through T-Rex. John is pointing at the steel girders that will hold up one of the overpasses. He's been a bus driver at DPS since 1989 to supplement his pension. "Union all my life," he says.

While John finds great satisfaction in his work, with it, also comes great responsibility. His current students include those with Downs Syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, Autism and other disabilities. He recalls having one student with the rare Batten's Disease. On his route, the boy stopped breathing. John had to call 911. When the emergency service workers arrived on scene he handed them a Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR) he knew the boy had tucked in his wheelchair. Luckily, the boy did survive and lived for one more year.

This is the harsh reality and possibility that John must live with everyday. Still, he says he'd never trade his special needs kids for a busload of healthy ones.

John arrives at Place Middle School. This is just the beginning of his day taking special needs children to and from school. John unfastens Ricardo's belts, and lowers him down on the lift. "You have a nice day," says John. ■



insideDPS is a newsletter for and about Denver Public Schools employees. It is published monthly during the school year.  
**Public Information Office:**  
900 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: 303-764-3414  
Fax: 303-764-3413