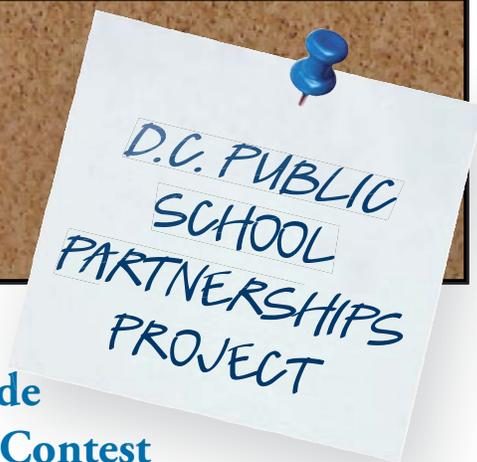


Partners Unlimited Bulletin Board

Fall
2010



GIRLS EMPOWERED student Kaylah Duvall, with her Patton Boggs mentors Ramona Quillet and Meredith Jolivett at their special end-of-school-year dinner.

Mentoring Program At Francis Stevens Launched by Patton Boggs

Recognizing that the low self-esteem of the school's older girls could prevent these students from achieving their academic and social potential, the administration at Francis Stevens Education Center turned to **Patton Boggs**.

Last January, the firm responded by launching GIRLS EMPOWERED™ as a pilot mentoring program at the school to give 7th and 8th grade girls the opportunity to participate in activities that challenged them to think critically about their personal and academic success. A description of these activities is at the end of this article.

The program was coordinated by Patton Boggs attorneys Dana Weekes, Ramona Quillet, and Mara Giorgio, and it was strongly supported by their 12 colleagues who served as mentors and participated with the girls in the program's activities.

(Continued on page 8)

6th City-wide GeoPlunge Contest Set for November 18 At Smithsonian American History Museum

The District of Columbia's 6th city-wide GeoPlunge Tournament will be held November 18 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History from 9:30 AM - 2:15 PM.

Three-person teams of 5th and 6th graders will be welcomed from all D.C. public elementary and middle schools. The Washington Lawyers' Committee's D.C. Public School Partnerships Project, **Arent Fox**, and D.C. Public Schools are sponsoring the tournament. The Committee is also actively recruiting coaches and sponsors for GeoPlunge teams from individual schools.

This year, a record number of firms will be coaching teams for the tournament. More than 50 sponsors supported teams for the 5th city-wide tournament in November 2009. The National Museum of American History is located at the corner of Constitution Avenue and 14th Street, N.W., in Washington, D.C. *(Continued on page 4)*

Check the Board

A Project Perspective	2
A Partner's Story	3
Newsworthy Events	4
New Partnerships	6
Higher Horizons	8
School Partnership List	11
Upcoming School Partnership Events	12
Contributors	12



P R O J E C T

E R S P E C T I V E



Elinor Hart
Coordinator
D.C. Public School
Partnerships Project

The D.C. Public School Partnerships Project and our school partnerships are off to a great start for the 2010-2011 school year. **Beveridge & Diamond** and **Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker** are ahead of the curve with summer beautification projects at their schools.

This year, we had the largest turnout ever, with over 70 attendees, for our Partners and Principals Fall Luncheon in September. We were especially pleased that a record number of principals attended, and we are grateful to **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld** for again serving as our gracious host for the meeting.

I am pleased to report that we are beginning the school year with five new partnerships. **Arent Fox** has launched a new partnership with Roosevelt High School, while continuing its long-term relationship with Randle Highlands Elementary School. Our other new partnerships are: the **Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC)** with Jefferson Middle School; **Paul Hastings** with Garfield Elementary School; **Perkins Coie** with Powell Elementary School; and **Steptoe & Johnson** with Walker Jones Education Campus.

Our annual GeoPlunge Tournament is always an important event for the Project. Judging from the enthusiasm of principals, teachers, and law firm coaches at the October 19th pre-tournament reception hosted by **Arent Fox**, this year's GeoPlunge competition on November 18 at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History promises to be another exciting one.

With so much said and written about school reform these days, we commend law firms with school partners for their strong support for school reform. Fourteen of our law firms have met the practical challenges of reform by following their students from closed schools to new schools, adjusting to principal turnover, and figuring out how best to contribute to reconstituted schools.

As Ron Flagg points out in his column on the opposite page, continued school reform depends on sustained support. We are very proud of the sustained support provided by our school partners.

Elinor Hart
Coordinator
D.C. Public School Partnerships Project

Providing high-quality public education remains one of the biggest civil rights challenges facing our community and our country. **Sidley Austin**, therefore, has made a sustained commitment to D.C. Public Schools, both inside and outside of the classroom, a core part of our firm's community service.

Our commitment includes the partnership we have had with Thomson Elementary School for over 15 years. The centerpiece of our partnership is a Peer Mediation program for students in the 3rd - 5th grades. Typically, 15 to 25 children participate in the program each year.

Through peer mediation, students learn to facilitate the resolution of conflicts between two people or small groups over issues such as cheating, stealing, bullying, gossiping and teasing.

Peer mediators are taught a process of communication and problem-solving through role-playing games designed to develop impartiality, empathy, bias awareness and respect.

The students learn mediation techniques, such as communicating verbally and nonverbally, active listening, problem analysis and identifying common interests. They also learn that conflict can be constructive and that disagreements can be resolved without confrontation or violence.

Young peer mediators at Thomson use the problem-solving strategies they learn in the program to assist their classmates in settling disputes and preventing minor incidents from escalating.

Over the past 10 years, we have worked with the Washington Lawyers' Committee on numerous reports, op-ed articles and legislative testimony concerning the D.C. Public Schools.



Ronald S. Flagg
Partner, Sidley Austin
President, District of Columbia Bar

This work has included two comprehensive reports, "Separate and Unequal: The State of the D.C. Public Schools Fifty Years after *Brown* and *Bolling*" issued in 2005, and "The State of the D.C. Public Schools 2010: A Five Year Update" published this year.

While the 2010 report reveals significant progress, it also clearly shows that we must support continued improvement in order to give our students the quality education they need and deserve.

Our school partnerships offer the legal community an opportunity to provide this critical support.



Preparing for the next GeoPlunge Tournament at the Fall 2010 School Partnership Luncheon. L/R: Christine Ladd, Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Department; with Arent Fox team Alan Fishel, GeoPlunge inventor; Missy Hudzik, displaying GeoPlunge cards; and Sara Rosinus.

Calling GeoPlunge Teams and Sponsors For 6th City-wide Tournament (cont'd)

GeoPlunge is played with a set of cards, each representing one of the 50 states. The first two tournaments included three different card games that combine geography and fun. *Guess the State* encourages students to learn the names of the 50 states. Playing *Race for the Borders* teaches participants where states are located geographically. When students *Play the Ranks*, they learn how the states rank in size, population and order of entry into the union.

Alan Fishel, a Partner at Arent Fox, invented the geography game and created the set of GeoPlunge cards. GeoPlunge was such a success with students at Arent Fox's partner school, Randle Highlands Elementary, that Alan and his law firm persuaded the Committee to co-sponsor the first two GeoPlunge tournaments. For the 2nd tournament, they were joined by 28 law firms that sponsored individual schools. The 3rd tournament had 48 team sponsors. The D.C. Public Schools will be publicizing the tournament among elementary and middle schools.

A number of schools have emerged as tournament winners over the past two years. A team from J. O. Wilson Elementary School won the 5th city-wide competition last November. J. O. Wilson also won the 3rd and 4th city-wide competitions in 2007 and 2008. The winning schools in the first tournament, which took place in April 2006, were Randle Highlands and LaSalle Elementary Schools. In an informal rematch shortly after that tournament, LaSalle came out on top. The winning schools in the November 2006 tournament were Cleveland and Gage-Eckington Elementary Schools. That tournament was followed by a mini-tournament among the winning schools from both tournaments. Gage Eckington prevailed in that "tournament of champions." A team from Cleveland Elementary School won another mini-tournament held in Spring 2008.

To sponsor a team from your partner school and/or another school, contact Elinor Hart at 202-387-2966; or hart1651@juno.com.

Commercial Real Estate Firm Willing To Provide Volunteers

Law firms looking for additional volunteers for a school beautification or labor-intensive project can turn to Studley Inc., for extra hands. Studley is a commercial real estate firm with many law firm clients. The firm's brokers can also be tapped for career education presentations. Law firms needing extra hands for these projects may contact Diana Sechrist at Studley, 703-722-5706, DSechrist@studley.com.

The National Aquarium, A Site for Field Trips

A field trip to the recently renovated National Aquarium in the basement of the U.S. Department of Commerce building in Washington, D.C., offers a convenient, enjoyable, and enriching experience for children of all ages.

Students from grades K-12 can tour the aquarium and participate in a variety of educational programs on marine topics ranging from coral reefs to invasive species. There is no admission charge for District of Columbia Public School students. For every six students visiting the aquarium, an accompanying teacher and/or chaperone is also admitted without charge.

The entrance to the aquarium is on 14th Street near Pennsylvania Avenue. To schedule a visit, call 202-789-2782 or visit www.nationalaquarium.org.



Maisha Riddlesprigger, Principal of Davis Elementary School with Bill Simpkins, Director of Education at the National Aquarium, during the Fall 2010 School Partnership Luncheon.



Beveridge & Diamond helps out at Savoy Elementary School on school-wide Beautification Day. L/R: Ben Wilson, Beveridge & Diamond's Managing Principal; Mr. Sherrod, event coordinator; Dr. Anne Evans, Savoy's Principal; and Arnold Hall, Beveridge & Diamond.

Law Firm Volunteers Take Part in Planting

The **Beveridge & Diamond**/Savoy Elementary partnership got off to an early start this year, when five volunteers from the firm helped beautify the grounds of the school during the District of Columbia Public Schools' annual Beautification Day on August 21.

Along with others from the community, the Beveridge & Diamond volunteers helped dig a flower bed and planted flowers in an area at the front of the school. They also helped to clean up branches and debris on one of the school playgrounds and freshen up the mulch surrounding some of the trees on the property. "It was a beautiful morning and we had a great time," reports Jim Esselman, an attorney at the firm who coordinates the firm's activities at Savoy.

Beveridge & Diamond also conducted a school supply drive and is helping Savoy students prepare for the 2010 GeoPlunge Tournament. This year, the firm will also have a reading program and hold its signature series of environmental classes at the school.

NEW PLANS

NEW

PARTNERS

T

N

E

R

S



Volunteers from Paul Hastings at Garfield Elementary School's Fun Field Day.

Paul Hastings Active at Garfield Elementary School

Among the D.C. Public School Partnerships Project's five new partnerships this year, **Paul Hastings'** partnership became active at Garfield Elementary School this past spring.

As Principal Angela Tilghman reports: "They were right here for Registration Carnival Day in May, lending a very helpful hand to our many booths and activities!"

"Since that time, we have had several meetings to plan activities for the school year. They bring a great spirit of excitement with wonderful ideas to benefit our students! This summer, one of the employees found out that Borders Books located on 14th and F Streets, N.W., was closing. She negotiated with them to sell us children's books at a discount. Paul Hastings staff held bake sales at the firm to raise money to purchase the books."

"Students are currently working on holiday pictures, one of which will be selected and featured on the Paul Hastings holiday greeting card. We will also have 12 winners who will be featured in the Garfield/Paul Hastings holiday calendar that will be sold as a fundraiser for our school."

Perkins Coie Launches Partnership With Powell Elementary School

Perkins Coie launched its new partnership with Powell Elementary School by attending Powell's Back-to-School Night in September. In October, several people from the firm began coaching Powell students for the November GeoPlunge Tournament. Perkins Coie will also sponsor the Powell teams for the tournament.

In the spring, every Powell student will research and prepare a portfolio presentation. Attorneys and staff from the firm will be attending many of the presentations. Principal Janeece Docal welcomes the involvement of Perkins Coie at her school because it will expand the horizons of her students.

Steptoe & Johnson Follows Students To Their New School

While the closing of Montgomery Elementary School created considerable anxiety for the students and faculty there, as well as for **Steptoe & Johnson** which had been the school's partner for 13 years, it also revealed how much the law firm's efforts had meant to the faculty and staff at the school.

When they learned that their school would close, the faculty and staff urged Steptoe & Johnson to form a partnership with Walker Jones Education Campus, the school to which the Montgomery students were being reassigned.

The firm responded by following the Montgomery students, faculty, and staff to their new school.

During this school year, Steptoe & Johnson will focus its activities on the 6th grade and move up a grade as the students move. The firm will have weekly mentoring sessions with students, and it is looking to develop monthly projects, including programs on financial literacy and the U.S. Constitution.

Roosevelt High School And Arent Fox Form Partnership

While many attorneys and staff at **Arent Fox** enjoy the activities with students from Randle Highlands Elementary School, the firm's school partner of 11 years, several people at the firm have a strong interest in working with older students. Because of this interest, Arent Fox has also formed a partnership with Roosevelt Senior High School.

This fall, the focus of the new partnership is career education. Up to 60 students from Roosevelt will come to Arent Fox and attend two of three panels on the following career areas: Communications, Information Technology, and Health Care. Each panel will have four experts who will make brief presentations. Most of the time during the panel will be devoted to interaction between the students and experts.

In the spring, when the focus is on debate, the Roosevelt students will explore whether the federal government should ban trans fats from school lunches. When Arent Fox used that topic last spring for debates between elementary school teams, it generated intense interest on the part of the students.



Paul Hastings summer associates cleaning Garfield Elementary School classroom.

Mentoring, Field Trips Are Partnership Focus For GWAC, Jefferson

The Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC) has launched a mentoring program for girls at Jefferson Middle School.

The partnership got underway in October when the GWAC mentors introduced 20 Jefferson students to the GeoPlunge games.

GWAC is coaching the Jefferson GeoPlunge teams and will sponsor them in the tournament.

The partnership will feature weekly mentoring sessions and monthly field trips.

The field trips will provide enrichment and recreation for the students as well as opportunities for community service.

While girls will have to apply to participate in the program, one candidate has already identified herself to Patricia Pride, Jefferson's Principal.

This 6th grader, who is determined to be a lawyer, came to the principal for advice on reaching her goal during the first week of school.



G!RLS EMPOWERED student Claudia Howard (center) with her Patton Boggs mentors Eugenia Edwards (left) and Samantha Petrich (right) at their special end-of-school-year dinner.

Girls Empowered Build Their Future (cont'd)

The pilot's culminating event was a dinner at Patton Boggs for the mentors, students and their parents. Francis Stevens' principal and assistant principal also attended. The presentations made by the girls at the dinner clearly demonstrated that they are confident and focused on being successful students and young citizens.

Due to its success, the G!RLS EMPOWERED program is continuing this school year and has expanded to include 6th graders. The 6th graders are involved in intense tutorial sessions that focus on grammar, vocabulary, writing, and mathematics. The objective is to help each student become academically competitive in preparation for the high-school application process. The 7th graders will participate in field trips that broaden their intellectual and social horizons. They will also prepare for their standardized tests.

The program for 8th graders will give the students additional support for the high-school application process while involving them in a Leadership Academy. The Academy will provide opportunities for students to take the lead on organizing programs that benefit G!RLS EMPOWERED, Francis-Stevens, and the greater Washington, D.C. community. For example, students will help organize a community service project and school-wide book club. The students will also research and conduct interviews with people throughout Washington, D.C., who hold public policy and leadership positions.

The G!RLS EMPOWERED pilot program included the following activities:

(Continued on page 10)

Sutherland Helps Columbia Heights Students Head For College

Early next year, mentors from **Sutherland Asbill & Brennan** will help nine Columbia Heights Education Campus seniors who worked at the firm over the summer apply for college admission and financial aid. These students are among more than 40 who have participated in the firm's Sutherland Junior College Program since the fall of 2006.

Four years ago, as she began her junior year in high school, Martha Medina had no serious plans for college, even though she was a good student. Yet she is now in her third year at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. What made the difference for Martha and 40 other students was Sutherland's mentoring program, known as Sutherland Junior College or SJC.

The program is designed for students who are intelligent enough to attend college, but may believe it is beyond their academic or financial grasp, may be concerned about the cultural or familial implications of going away to college, or may simply not know enough about college opportunities to be motivated to prepare for college.

The centerpiece of the program is a weekly after-school session. During the weekly sessions, students are coached for their SATs, learn about college, financial aid and admissions, and they take part in life-skill training needed for college and career success.

(Continued on page 10)



H. Patricia Blackshire (third from left) and Cardozo High School students at Covington & Burling's Saturday Academy.



Sutherland Junior College and Columbia Heights graduate Martha Medina in her Wake Forest marching band uniform.

Cardozo Students Spend Saturdays At Covington & Burling

Covington & Burling's 20th year of preparing Cardozo High School students for the world of work is underway at the firm's Saturday Academy.

During the 2010-2011 school year, a dozen teenagers will have hands-on experiences with resume-writing and interviews, and learn about a range of jobs and how to prepare for them. While most Saturdays will be spent at the firm, there will also be field trips for fun as well as enrichment.

H. Patricia Blackshire has been the coordinator of the program for the past seven years. However, she relies on the firm's attorneys and staff to make presentations on Saturday mornings. Cardozo faculty and staff help recruit students for the Saturday Academy. Participating students are also excellent recruiters.

Many Saturday Academy participants have had summer jobs at Covington & Burling. There are also a number of full-time employees at the firm who are Academy graduates.

Sutherland Helps Columbia Students Head For College (cont'd)



Columbia Heights students Martha Medina and Diego Pereira working at Sutherland.

Martha summed up her initial year in Sutherland Junior College this way: "SJC makes college seem a lot more important than I thought it to be, and SJC is opening up my eyes to possible colleges for me."

Summer employment at the firm is an important part of Sutherland Junior College. For the past four summers, eight to ten students from Bell Multicultural High School and later Columbia Heights Educational Campus worked at the firm. When Bell merged with Lincoln Middle School, located in the same building, both schools became the Columbia Heights Educational Campus.

During the summer between their junior and senior year, students work in the law library, marketing and technology departments, facilities, records, and recruiting. They also participate in a series of training programs, giving them a solid foundation in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and Power Point. More than 25 partners and associates and dozens of staff members work with and supervise the students. For Martha Medina, her summer internship at Sutherland was valuable. "I enjoyed my time in both the Services Department and in Marketing," she recalled. "While in Services, I got to work with different software, including Microsoft Word, which I will definitely use in the future."

In addition to Wake Forest University, Sutherland Junior College "graduates" are attending Bucknell and Penn State Universities in Pennsylvania, St. Johns University in New York City, Tufts University near Boston, Ferrum College in Virginia, Shepherd University in West Virginia, West Virginia University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges in upstate New York. One Sutherland graduate also joined the Air Force.

Girls Empowered Build Their Future (cont'd)

- Organize a Bake Sale to Benefit the Haiti Disaster Relief Efforts. The students set a goal to raise \$500 for Doctors Without Borders by hosting a bake sale at the firm. With the help of volunteer bakers and the generosity of Patton Boggs and Francis-Stevens, the students raised over \$1,700.
- Visit Georgetown University. The students visited Georgetown University to meet with the Vice President of Institutionalized Diversity and Equity. The students learned about taking responsibility and ownership for their own personal and academic successes. They also toured the campus.
- Prepare and Review for the DC-Comprehensive Assessment System (DC-CAS) Tests. Once a week during the months of March and April, the students prepared for these standardized tests through group exercises, worksheets, and a special Jeopardy game.
- Learn about Financial Literacy. The students learned about the importance of saving money and had the opportunity to open a savings account through a partnership with PNC Bank.
- Learn about Colleges and Universities. The participants received information about colleges and universities based on their interests and responses to a GIRLS EMPOWERED™ survey.
- Engage in a Mock High School Application Process. Each student participated in a mock application process that consisted of three stages: (1) research a selected school; (2) write sample essay; and (3) engage in a mock interview with a Patton Boggs attorney or staff person.

For each event or activity, organizers placed great emphasis on assignments related to self-discovery, such as keeping a journal and group discussions. The objective was to provide each student with opportunities for introspection, as well as to identify and understand the lessons involved in each event or activity.

PARTNERSHIPS

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

Arent Fox
Randle Highlands Elementary School
Roosevelt Senior High School

Beveridge & Diamond
Savoy Elementary School

Bracewell & Giuliani
Brightwood Elementary School

Brown Rudnick
Whittier Education Campus

Covington & Burling
Cardozo Senior High School

Dickstein Shapiro
Ellington School of the Arts

Drinker, Biddle & Reath
Ann Beers Elementary School

Epstein, Becker & Green
Emery Education Campus

Fannie Mae's Corporate Legal Dept.
Marie Reed Elementary School

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson
School Without Walls

Fulbright & Jaworski
Macfarland Middle School

**Greater Washington Area Chapter,
Women Lawyers Division, National Bar
Association**
Jefferson Middle School

Holland & Knight
Cleveland Elementary School

Howrey
Bancroft Elementary School

McDermott, Will & Emery
Amidon-Bowen Elementary School

Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker
Garfield Elementary School

Patton Boggs
Francis Stevens Education Campus

Perkins Coie
Powell Elementary School

Pepper Hamilton
Stanton Elementary School

Reed Smith
Bruce Monroe at Park View Elementary
School

Sidley Austin
Thomson Elementary School

Stephoe & Johnson
Walker Jones Education Campus

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan
Columbia Heights Education Campus

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

Williams & Connolly
Dunbar Senior High School

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

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

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

Elinor Hart, Editor

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

©2010 Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil
Rights and Urban Affairs

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

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

2010-2011 **PARTNERSHIP DATES**

November 18, 2010	Geoplunge Tournament
January 20, 2011	Partnership Luncheon
April 26, 2011	Partnership Luncheon

Partnership Luncheons
will be held at the law firm of
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld LLP.

CONTRIBUTORS

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

Black Entertainment Television, Inc.
Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Corp.
The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
D.C. Chartered Health Plan, Inc.
The Dimick Foundation
Government Scientific Source, Inc.
The Hanley Foundation
Corina Higginson Trust
Kiplinger Foundation
W. Buford and Linda M. Lewis Family Foundation, Inc.
Anthony Lucas-Spindletop Foundation

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