

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL NETWORK

the

NSN SUN

FOUNDATIONS NSN WINTER 2006 NEWSLETTER



Dr. Dexter Davis

Welcome!

I am very excited to join Foundations, Inc. as the new Neighborhood School Network (NSN) Administrator. Foundations, Inc. is committed to providing students and their families with a free and appropriate education. Their dedication to improving urban education is precisely what attracted me to this position. I have a passion for urban education. I bring more than 28 years of experience in urban education to my new role.

My professional career spans from pre-kindergarten to college level. I have served in public education as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and CEO Superintendent. The School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia has awarded Foundations, Inc. a contract to manage six schools. These schools are located in the Northwest Region of Philadelphia. I believe that the established partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and Foundations, Inc. will have a long-lasting, positive impact on the more than 4,000 students being educated.

Foundations, Inc. is also committed to providing both human and educational resources to the Neighborhood School Network. As the NSN Administrator, I will work with all school and community stakeholders to insure that the human and educational resources are meeting their targeted goals. To that end, I will work to bridge the gap between our schools and their communities. I believe that everyone shares the responsibility of educating our students.

As the year progresses, I look forward to meeting with the myriad of school personnel, parents, students, and civic leaders who comprise and support the NSN. Please feel free to stop by the Foundations NSN Offices located in Martin Luther King High School to learn more about our plans to provide a high-quality education for all of our students. ☀

Our Schools—Your Schools:

**ROBERT FULTON
ELEMENTARY**

**JOHN L. KINSEY
ELEMENTARY**

**FRANCIS P.
PASTORIUS
ELEMENTARY**

**ADA H. LEWIS
MIDDLE**

**CLARENCE E.
PICKETT
MIDDLE**

**MARTIN
LUTHER KING
HIGH**

From the desk of Rhonda H. Lauer CEO, Foundations, Inc.

This school year marks the fourth year in our three elementary and two middle schools, and the third at Martin Luther King High School. Previously referred to as some of the lowest-achieving schools in Philadelphia, our Neighborhood School Network (NSN) schools no longer have such a reputation! All indicators now point to success in reaching our two major goals: Improving Achievement and Building Community.

One just has to step inside most of our classrooms to witness active, engaged teaching and learning. In fact, ask our elementary school students to explain a "rubric." Notice the walls outside of their classrooms—you won't find graffiti—you'll see student work and projects in math, science, poetry, essays about heroes, current events, artistic creations, and more. Demonstrations of knowledge and key learnings are directly related to Pennsylvania standards, which serve as the framework for instruction.

"Quality" is not just a word: it's a way of life in our NSN schools!

Our parents are truly our partners! In every school you'll find parent volunteers in classrooms, more parents becoming actively involved with their Home & School Associations, and parents using the evolving Parent Resource Centers, where meetings and workshops can be held and materials are available that can assist in the effective education of their children.

To see all six NSN schools making a positive difference in so many lives fills me with enormous "PRIDE" and provides me with the greatest reward. I am proud of the changes we are making in school safety, leadership, quality of staff, instruction, student participation in school, and after-school activities, parent and community support, and increased partnerships.

I continue to be energized by all of you and I look forward to the future, because every day you are living up to our motto:

"Success is Our Only Option."

With appreciation,
RHL



NSN Schools Calendar

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 20th—Presidents' Day, All Schools & Administration Offices closed
- Feb. 21st—Kinsey Elem., Inspiration Writing Contest Essays due
- Feb. 21st—Kinsey Elem. Home & School meeting
- Feb. 22nd—Kinsey Elem. Black History Evening Program
- PSSA Testing—Through February 24th, Writing, grades 5 to 8, and 11

MARCH

- Mar. 3rd—Schools Closed, Professional Development Day; Staff Only
- Mar. 8th—School District Reform Commission meeting

- Mar. 20th-31st—PSSA Testing: Math, Reading, and Science, grades 3 to 8, and 11
- Mar. 29th-31st—Early Dismissal; K-8 Report Cards issued; Parent-Teacher Conferences

APRIL

- Apr. 10th-14th—Spring Recess, All Schools & Administration Offices closed
- Apr. 12th—School District Reform Commission meeting
- Apr. 24th—High School Report Cards issued

MAY

- May 10th—School District Reform Commission meeting
- May 17th—School District Reform Commission meeting



NSN School Principals attend weekly meetings and professional development sessions on Wednesdays to keep up-to-date on the latest in education, school issues, and activities. Seated left to right are Sandra Dunham, Assistant Principal Pickett Middle School; Jane Adams, Campus Principal King High School; Lynda Benhaim, House Principal King High School. Standing left to right are Gregory Hailey, House Principal King High School; Steve Hawkins, Assistant Principal Pastorius Elementary School; Deborah Lee, Principal Fulton Elementary School; Cassius White, Assistant Principal Lewis Middle School; Judy Seibert-Burns, Principal Pickett Middle School; Michael Dillman, House Principal King High School; Steven Sykes, Principal Pastorius Elementary School; Edward Roulhac, Principal Kinsey Elementary School; and Woolworth Davis, Principal Lewis Middle School. Not pictured is Kristina Diviny, House Principal King High School.

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The **Foundations NSN** (Neighborhood Schools Network) consists of three elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The NSN serves 4,500 students, their families, and 400 professional and support staff. The two main goals are to **improve achievement** and to **build community**.





“WITHIN THE FAMILY” M.L. King Home & School

By Marty Young, Parent Involvement Liaison

The February meeting was a great success thanks to the Executive Board sharing their special guest with parents from the other “partner” High Schools. The invited guests were 12th grade parents from Imhotep, Hope, and New Media Charter schools. They all had the opportunity to get information needed to complete the FASA form and find sources for Financial Assistance for their soon-to-be graduates.

The joint sessions are a result of monthly PAAC (Parent Advisory Action Council) meetings. Home & School Associations realized they often use the same topics for their regular meetings and in some instances the same presenter. Last school year, Dr. Stephen Jones spoke at three different schools on the same subject. This year, since PAAC meetings are held in different partner schools, parents have a better idea of the many educational options for students in Northwest Philadelphia.

The PAAC has representation not only from the six schools that Foundations operates under a contract with the School District of Philadelphia, but also with the four charter schools in the area (West Oak Lane, Hope, Imhotep, and New Media). The Home & School Associations support events at the other schools and look forward to the monthly meeting to share success stories and plans for exciting events.

The most exciting this school year, however, was the Martin Luther King Day of Service. The highlight of the day was the Philadelphia Orchestra Concert and reception. 🌞

Community M

By Anthony Turner, NSN Comm

From nine months old to 90 years, people from near and far came to enjoy the performance at Martin Luther King Jr. High School held in honor of one of the world’s greatest individuals, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra took its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert into the community for the first time this past January.

By Day, Thousands Came to Help

“I am very proud to be able to announce that the Philadelphia Orchestra is taking our Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert into the community, and presenting it free to the public for the first time,” said Harold A. Sorgenti, Chairman-Elect of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association. “This continues the Orchestra’s commitment to celebrating the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and of taking our music out of the concert hall and into the community.”

Martin Luther King Jr. High School is managed by Foundations, Inc., which is dedicated to transitioning the school into a high-performing, competitive school of choice.

“This concert and partnership is a perfect example of unique collaborative efforts to provide the highest quality education and cultural experiences to the community we serve,” Foundations, Inc. CEO Rhonda Lauer said. “We’ve been working on it for months to bring the orchestra into the community, and it’s a dream come true.”

The 2006 Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert marks the first time the Orchestra has taken this concert outside of its regular performance venue. And the community thoroughly enjoyed the presentation, with many people gladly standing as the capacity crowd of over 1,800 filled the high school auditorium.

“For everyone to come here, it means a lot,” said Cpl. Christine Henry, one of many Junior ROTC cadets who helped direct concert goers. “It says a lot.”

Taking the concert into the community reflects the Orchestra’s commitment to reaching new and diverse audiences. Since its centennial in 2000, the Orchestra has performed free Neighborhood Concerts throughout the Philadelphia region, bringing the gift of music into the communities where people live in an attempt to break down the barriers



Makes MLK Jr. Day A Success

Community Builder, & Tom Melchiorre

that separates it from many people in the community.

It was a fitting end to a day that began very early, with nearly 2,500 community members, organizations, and others taking part in the annual Day of Service, held each year on the Dr. King holiday. MLK High School campus principal Jane Adams arrived at 5:30 AM expecting to be one of the first only to find many ahead of her.

At Night, Phila. Orchestra Salutes

"We've had community service before and it continues to grow," Adams said excitedly. "The Day of Service, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, it's phenomenal."

The annual Tribute Concert began in 1991 and reflects the beliefs and convictions of famed civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., combining the traditions of African American culture and Western classical music. The concert pays tribute to Dr. King's vision of a society free of prejudice and racial division, his religious beliefs, and his belief in the power of music to effect change. This year's tribute featured many selections, including traditional favorite classics and African American spirituals.

"It was very nice," said community member Joi Thompson, who attended the concert with her very well-behaved nine-month-old, Xavier, who smiled throughout most of the performance and was as quiet and enthralled by the music as everyone else.

"It was lovely," said her mother-in-law, Joyce Thompson, who, along with her husband, James E. Thompson, were visiting the family.

Thomas Wilkins, the Detroit Symphony resident conductor and recently-named music director of the Omaha Symphony, who led the Philadelphia Orchestra's 2004 Tribute Concert, was the evening's guest conductor, joined by famed saxophonist Branford Marsalis. The program also featured a Community Concert Choir (Jonathan Coopersmith, guest chorus director) assembled from area churches and schools, including Martin Luther King Jr. High School.

Outstanding African American students from high schools throughout the Greater Philadelphia region shared their personal reflections on the life and work of Dr. King at the start of the second half of the performance. This is the fourth year the Orchestra honored high school seniors who,



Community members Joi and Xavier Thompson were joined by Joyce and James E. Thompson, who live in Queens, New York. The New York Thompsons came down to visit their daughter-in-law and grandson, and to attend the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Tribute Concert.

through their superior academic and personal achievements, exemplify the ideas of Dr. King.

Support from Representative Dwight Evans enabled the Orchestra to present the concert, sponsored by CIGNA Corporation, free to the community. His leadership and vision were instrumental in changing the venue for the Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert.

"I'm very enthusiastic about the Philadelphia Orchestra, Foundations Inc., and Martin Luther King High School partnership," he said. "King High School has once again served as the signature site for the King Day of Service activities. Residents across the Philadelphia region were able to join together for a full day of tribute to Dr. King.

"I encouraged everyone to spend the day at King, joining us in the morning for a variety of volunteer activities and spending an evening listening to a special musical tribute," Evans said.

"It's all the values of Martin Luther King Jr. in the community here," said Lauer, Foundations CEO. "It just tops the day. 🌟"



ROBERT FULTON ELEMENTARY • JOHN L. KINSEY ELEMENTARY • FRANCIS P. PASTORIUS ELEMENTARY
ADA H. LEWIS MIDDLE • CLARENCE E. PICKETT MIDDLE • MARTIN LUTHER KING HIGH

Fulton Kings Chess Team is a Winner

By Deborah A. Lee
Principal

Robert Fulton Elementary School has a new team, the Chess Team, and we call them the "Fulton Kings."

The team is a collaboration of Robert Fulton School and the Germantown Beacon Center. The team is coached by Mr. Gil, a chess master from the Beacon Center.

The Fulton Kings has participated in four city-wide chess tournaments that

were held at Community College of Philadelphia. This new team has experienced success with student Wali Cain coming in fourth place in our first tournament. And our team won medals and trophies for earning the most team points at our last tournament.

"Our students love chess. They love the opportunity to compete with students across the city, and the game develops algebraic thinking and problem solving skills."

Student Theodore Pan says that the game has helped him to learn to deal with real-life situations as he uses step-by-step strategies to overcome conflicts and obstacles.

Coach Gil is very proud of this young team and has registered them to participate in several upcoming events,



including an all-female tournament. The Fulton Kings has students in grades 4, 5, and 6. They are Niteesah Rivers, Larry Gross, Wali Cain, Theodore Pan, Mark Jones, Brittany Bishop, Brittany Overlton, Karron Belser, Tamira Designolia, Isley Robinson, and Andre Wims 🌟

Pickett Points of Pride s for the Holidays

By Sandra Dunham, Assistant Principal

Listed below are just some of the exciting programs and activities that take place in our school:

- ☆ Home & School Association
- ☆ Talent Development Middle School Program
- ☆ Our Community Partners are Center in the Park, Germantown Settlement Family Center, Singing City, Rites of Passage, and Maplewood Manor
- ☆ Service and the Philadelphia Cares Day
- ☆ We celebrate our students on the Honor Roll each

marking period. Also honored are the Students of the Month. The Anti-Bullying Campaign is up and running along with the High 5 A's & B's. Our students participate in the Outward Bound Intergenerational Studies program.

- ☆ Faith Partner Canaan Baptist Church provides incentives for our students with Perfect Attendance on a monthly basis
- ☆ We have Boys & Girls track, Boys Basketball Team, College Access, the SMART Program, Library Aides, and Safety Patrol. Extended Day and SES are integral parts of our school program. 🌟

Picket Middle School congratulates Ms. Kelly Hughes and her students in section 7-4, 7-5, and 7-6 for participating in the "Hearts for the Holidays" campaign, sponsored by the Student Pediatric Medical Association at the School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Ms. Hughes, her students, and others' creativity made it possible for the Student Pediatric Association to distribute over 450 holiday cards to children in the Philadelphia and southern New Jersey area during the past holiday season. 🌟

Lewis Mothers & Daughters Club

By Woolworth Davis, Principal

Mothers and daughters have a unique relationship: it can bring them so very close together, and sometimes push them apart.

Our Mothers & Daughters Club is our way of helping both to understand each other. Being a female-only event, I couldn't attend, but parents, students, staff, and the school police officer, a parent of a student at Lewis, all reported it was a terrific Mothers/Daughters dinner meeting.

The students were impressed with how they could talk openly about the

"challenges" they had with their moms without anger and hostility. The challenges ranged from dating, chores, allowances, bedtimes, clothing, cell phones, and baby-sitting. Students talked about the wonderful speaker, a published poet, and were thankful to interact this way with their moms. Each parent and daughter had to say what they liked most about the other. Some statements left a few teary-eyed. Parents began to understand a little more about the middle school child, often wondering what happened to their little girl.

What did the parents say? "We all

want to stay together as a club. Can we meet each month?" Another said that we'll need a larger room because of huge turnout.

The 2nd meeting ended with parents planning trips to Cheney University and/or Hampton and Atlanta, the home of five HBCU's, and of fundraisers for the trip(s).

Hats off to Zelda Davis Jones and Marty Young, who planned our new club! Home & School President Mrs. Conway prepared the first event's spaghetti dinner and Young the second's soul food dinner. Mothers and Daughters are all looking forward to the next meeting and "potluck supper." 🌟

Kinsey Scores Well on Terra Nova

By Edward T. Roulhac, Principal

Hello parents, caregivers, students, leaders in the community, and faith-based leaders. I'm proud to report that Kinsey students have posted "11 Points of Pride" based on the results of the 2005 Terra Nova tests. Our students have made new academic achievement records since the Terra Nova test was taken by Kinsey students in the spring of 2003.

A BIG, colossal thanks go to you, our devoted parents and caregivers, for entrusting your children to us. Next, a mighty thanks to our teachers who work on the educational frontline each and every day to help your children climb to greater academic heights. Also Kinsey has made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for three consecutive years '03, '04 and '05 as a result of the PSSA test.

KINSEY ELEMENTARY TERRA NOVA 2005 TEST 11 POINTS OF PRIDE

(compared to 2003 test results)

Kinsey Pride Point # 1

* Highest reading score of **35.0%** at or above the national average in the 1st grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 2

* Highest reading score of **32.6%** at or above the national average in the 3rd grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 3

* Lowest # of 3rd grade students in the bottom quartile in reading, **28.3%**

Kinsey Pride point #4

* Lowest # of 5th grade students in the bottom quartile in reading, **21.1%**

Kinsey Pride Point # 5

* Highest language arts score of **37.0%** at or above the national average in 3rd grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 6

* Lowest # of 3rd grade students in the



bottom quartile in language arts, **30.4%**

Kinsey Pride Point # 7

* Highest language arts score of **38.9%** at or above the national average in 4th grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 8

* Highest mathematics score of **54.3%** at or above the national average in 3rd grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 9

* Lowest # of 3rd grade students in the bottom quartile in mathematics, **15.2%**

Kinsey Pride Point # 10

* Highest mathematics score of **64.9%**, at or above the national average in 5th grade

Kinsey Pride Point # 11

* Lowest # of 5th grade students in the bottom quartile in mathematics, **17.5%** 🌟



Caught in Pastorius! Doing the Right Thing

by Steven Hawkins
Assistant Principal

The mighty F.D. Pastorius Cougars are on a hunt.

The students at the Pastorius Elementary School are prowling throughout the building the way they have been taught according to our School-Wide Rules. In an effort to improve school climate, student achievement scores on standardized tests, and general safety for all who enter the building, the staff has imple-

mented school-wide rules that guide conduct throughout the school day.

To reinforce positive student behaviors, our staff implemented a student rewards system called "Caught-Doing-the-Right-Thing." Students who are caught displaying positive behaviors are rewarded with tickets. After a student receives a ticket, his or her name is entered into a school-wide weekly drawing, where 20 students are selected at random. Every other month students have an opportunity to win "Big Ticket"

prizes, such as Sony PS2s, CD/Stereos, Digital Cameras, and the list goes on.

Every adult staff member in our building has tickets to hand out to the students for displaying positive behaviors and using good manners.

If your child has not been bringing home tickets, *please encourage them to get "Caught-Doing-The-Right-Thing" TODAY!!!!!* 🌟



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Parents Kick Off PSSA Testing 2006


By Marty Young, Parent Involvement Liaison

Parents are all “a-buzz” with the things they learned about the PSSA test at the Buffet Breakfast meeting at the Hilton. They were greeted by Dr. Dexter Davis, the dynamic NSN Administrator and Sherrine Wilkins, the Executive Director of School Services. Everyone was excited because over 300 parents and caregivers were in attendance. We especially acknowledged the presence of the “Grands,” a support group for grandparents who are primary caregivers.

The major foci of the day were the Math, Literacy (Reading & Language Arts), and Science curriculums. After the opening session and a full-course, hot buffet breakfast, the parents attended sessions designed for each key testing grade. Exemplary teachers provided the grade-specific workshops.

Indeed, work was the key word. After explaining the purpose of the PSSA Test, parents had the opportunity to sample test items from the student’s perspective. This part of the session brought some of the same expressions on the faces of the parents that are seen daily in our classrooms.

Everyone was relieved when they were provided with a demonstration of each type of test item. This activity gave parents a good indication of what the students experience during testing. Each parent left with a packet of activities to use at home with their children.

An issue that concerned parents of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 was the possibility of students who are “below basic” being retained. We shared with them the information from the School District of Philadelphia relating to promotion. In the follow-up sessions at the schools, more information and the support available for the remainder of the school year was given, including Supplementary Education Services (SES), Extended Day, and Saturday School. 

Below are several of the Junior ROTC Cadets who provided seating and general directions at the Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert. Pictured, left to right, are (Men) SSgt. Timothy Golden, 2nd Lt. Deon Henry, Cpl. Terrell Johnson, Cpl. Dorrn Hunt, (Women) 1st Sgt. Marashah Brown, Cpl. Christine Henry, Sgt. Sade Dillard, PFC Cieaira Matthews. Turn to page 4 for the for the full article on the Tribute Concert.

