



CALENDAR

March

3rd - Big Brother Bear Day
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Playground (see p. 2)

6th - School Governance
Meeting 6-8 p.m. Library

6th-9th - Scholastic Book
Fair Library

8th - International
Women's Day In-School
Celebration

8th - Culture Night and
Scholastic Book Fair 6-8:30
p.m. Cafetorium (see p. 4)

13th - DEAR Day (see p. 2)

13th - PTA Meeting Dinner
at 6:00 (cafetorium);
meeting 6:30-8 (library).

16th - Fuerza Latina 6-8
p.m. Dinner and childcare
provided. Library.

20th - School Governance
Meeting 6-8 p.m. Library

22nd - DAC/DELAC English
Learner Meeting (see p. 2)

30th - Cesar Chavez Day

April

2nd-6th - Spring Recess
(No school)

Hip-Hop Program Thrives at Washington

By Hilary Mitchell, 5th grade teacher

Hip-hop at Washington began five years ago from my love of hip-hop music and dance. I had been taking a hip-hop dance class at the YMCA and loving every minute of it. I knew that many of my students shared a love of this music and dance and I wanted so badly to invite my students to class.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized I needed to find a way to bring hip-hop dance to Washington, to my students--to those who felt disenfranchised at school and not motivated to learn. I knew a hip-hop class could help motivate many students to improve or maintain high academic standards. I talked to Lateef, my hip-hop teacher, and he said he would be willing to come and teach

a class at Washington due to our diverse student population and our great efforts to improve our students' academic skills.

The big question left for me was funding - I hoped not only to run the classes, but also put on a performance that would also be shown on Berkeley Cable Channel 33. How was I going to pay Lateef, create a set, buy T-shirts and videotape the performance?

I researched and wrote grants. Two organizations were willing to help: The Downey Fund and In Dulci Jublio. I got the funding I needed that first year and have been applying and receiving these grants every year for the past five years, allowing hip-hop to continue at Washington. *Continued on p. 3*

Black History Night Focuses on Inventors

Kindergartener Gimarion Hutson and fifth-grader Miranda Taylor (pictured) each won first prize for their grade group in the Black Inventors' Art Project Competition at Washington's Black History Celebration on February 22. Gimarion's project featured Garrett Morgan's traffic signal, and Miranda's poster featured Patricia E. Bath, the first African American woman to obtain a patent (in 1988, for a laser device to remove eye cataracts).

Other students whose projects received awards were: K-1--Jordan Watson and Abdulwahid Ahamed; 2nd-3rd--Kelly Kim, Tara Pruzansky and Amy Bitar; and 4th-5th--Sarah Kim and Makayla Miller.

Fifth-graders Dameian Hunter and Dereck Spears performed a spirited rap tribute to black history, which will be featured in next month's Acorn.



Nominate an Outstanding Teacher

For the past 14 years, Prudential California Realty's Education Foundation has been recognizing deserving teachers in Northern California. To date, they have awarded unrestricted cash grants of \$570,000 to 973 special teachers. To date, five Washington teachers have been chosen: Ted Watson, Joel Scholefield, Dawn Bail, Tom Fairchild and, just last year, Denisia Wash.

Anyone can nominate a teacher -- students, parents, other teachers, or community members. Forms are available in the office, or you can fill out the electronic form at www.prurealty.com/educationfoundation. A hotline is available (925-988-3475) for additional information or help. Teachers can only be chosen for the award once.

Award recipients are honored at an awards ceremony.

Staff Room Policy

Parents, please remind your children that students are not allowed in the Staff Room at any time, even when accompanied by parents. This is the only kid-free space available for staff.

PTA Coffee Hour

Join parents Wednesday mornings from 8-9 a.m. in casual conversation at the PTA's coffee hour, directly across from the office.

Washington News Shorts

Washington Book Fair

Washington will host a Scholastic Book Fair March 6-9 in the Library, which is being graciously organized by Librarian Suzy Mead. Volunteers are needed to fill 1-hour shifts from 8:40 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (1:45 on Wednesday), 4:30-6 p.m. on Tuesday, and Thursday evening during Culture Night. Classrooms will be coming in to look at the books and create wish lists and/or to purchase books.

Parents can purchase books throughout the school-day week and during Culture Night. A volunteer sign-up sheet is posted in the hallway across from the office, or you can contact Suzy at the school. (To find out which classrooms are coming in when, check the classroom sign-up sheet in the staff room.)

Big Brother Bear Day

Boys in Kindergarten to 5th grade - and a "big brother" if you can (brother, uncle, father, friend, etc.) -- are welcome to join Coach Don Burl and Tom Fairchild at Big Brother Bear Day at Washington on Saturday, March 3rd, from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Please bring a bag lunch.

Coach Don and Mr. Fairchild will organize the morning's activities: fun fitness games and sports. Participants will be matched in various ways: older Washington boys with younger ones, big brothers with younger brothers, and same-age groups.

No RSVP is necessary, but please send an email if you can to tom_fairchild@berkeley.k12.ca.us to provide some idea of attendance - as well as any ideas. Special treats to share at lunch are also welcome. Look for a Girls Sports Day coming soon!

4th-Grade Parents Sought for 5th-Grade Graduation

Planning for the graduation ceremony and celebration for the fifth grade class is underway! Please contact Kathy Stafford if you have ideas for a commencement speaker, or can help with the event. It is traditional for the parents of 4th-graders to assist with the event so that 5th-grade

parents can relax and enjoy. Call Kathy at 848-7223 or stop by and see her during Wednesday coffee hour.

Read-a-thon Planned for DEAR Day

This year once again, all Washington classes will participate in DEAR Day, March 13, by conducting a read-a-thon. Children will seek modest sponsorships from family and friends. Each class will keep half of what their students raise. The top three classes will be rewarded with pizza parties. The winning class will take a \$200 check to the Berkeley Emergency Food Project. The balance of funds will go to the PTA's school-support activities.

Last year, the read-a-thon raised over \$2,800 -- twice as much as the year before. Let's see if we can top that this year! Flyers were recently sent home, and sponsors can be signed up until the event.

English Learner Meetings

A District Advisory Committee (DAC) & District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC) are mandated groups for School Districts who receive State and Federal funding for low-achieving and English Learner students. School sites appoint at least one of their Governance Team members to attend the committees. The meetings are meant to give parents information about services for their children and how parents can support their kids and the schools.

The next meeting is March 22 at the Berkeley Tech Academy, 2701 MLK Jr. Way, Multipurpose Room (parking & entrance on Derby Street). Child care available.

School-wide Survey Coming Home

A school-wide survey has been sent home with students. The results will help determine which programs will be funded for the 2007-08 school year. Please complete and return it to your child's teacher by Friday, March 2. Each child returning a survey will be entered into a drawing for a free day of rides at Santa Cruz Boardwalk. An upper and a lower grade class with the most returned surveys will win a pizza party.

Parent Network Addresses Special Education Needs

By Janet Guastavino, Washington Parent

There are 1,024 students in the Berkeley Unified School District who require special education services. The Berkeley Special Education Parent Network (BSPED) is an inclusive, parent-led organization consisting of Special Ed and General Ed families, staff, administrators, community advocates, and others. BSPED's 300 members have an interest in information, efforts, and activities that are directed at improving the educational experience for children with exceptional needs. BSPED represents students with disabilities and their families to ensure that educational needs are met so that students may realize their potential.

Section 504 of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* states that no special-needs child should be discriminated against on the basis of his/her disability in any federally funded program. All public schools—including charter schools—receive federal funds, as do many programs in the private sector. California State law also prohibits discrimination against the disabled in publicly funded programs. Depending on physical or emotional impairment, a student may qualify to be protected under Section 504 (mandating accommodations in the learning environment) or even stronger federal law, the IDEA ("Individuals with Disabilities Education Act", which mandates necessary programs, accommodations, and services.) Two principles are foremost in the IDEA: that a special-needs child receive a *free and appropriate public education* (FAPE) and is educated in the *least restrictive environment* (LRE).

Hip-Hop ...

... Continued from p. 1

Every year, the popularity of the program grows with more students wanting to participate than I can accommodate. I work with the students' teachers to ensure I accept students who will benefit in their academics and self-esteem from the hip-hop program. I continue to be pleasantly surprised at the

Generally, students with disabilities qualify for what is called an "IEP", or Individualized Educational Plan. An IEP is a *binding contract* between a student and the school district to provide appropriate educational programs, placement, and related services, so the student will progress in the educational environment. Federal and state laws define who is eligible for an IEP, what an IEP is, the breadth of its contents, who the IEP team members are that craft and refine the plan, and the responsibilities of the school site and school district in carrying out the IEP.

An IEP may contain modifications in a child's learning resources or classroom setting, such as a clause that specifies enlarged print textbooks and materials or a seat in the least busy part of a classroom. Related services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, various assessments, adaptive physical education, 1:1 instructional or behavioral aides, psychological therapy, art/music therapy, and tutoring, to name a few.

If your child already has a 504 plan or an IEP—or if you believe your child has a disability and would benefit from a 504 plan or IEP—you should join BSPED and learn more about how you can work with fellow BSPED families and the district to help your child be successful in school.

For more information on the 504 and IDEA, go to the Web site,

<http://www.idonline.org/article/6086>

For more information about BSPED, email bspedfamilies@yahoogroups.com or call Janet Guastavino at (510) 653-2159.

numbers of boys and students from all cultural backgrounds who want to give hip-hop a try and hope I can continue to organize, manage, and find funding for this amazing program for many years to come.

Hip-hop class is held during the school day on Tuesday afternoons. A performance will be held at Washington in late May, and will then be shown on Channel 33.

PTA After-School Classes Still Enrolling

There are still spaces left in the following after-school PTA classes, and half-scholarships are available:

Kindergarten Art - Mondays 1:25 - 2:15 (1 space available)
Art Class (1st - 3rd) - Mondays 2:25 - 3:25 (2 spaces available)
Chorus (K- 5) - Tuesdays 2:25 - 3:25 (2 spaces available)
Music Fun (Kindergarten) - Thursdays 2:25 - 3:15 (2 spaces available)
Engineering Fundamentals with LEGO - Thursdays 2:25 - 3:55 (6 spaces available)
Chess - Fridays 2:25 - 3:25 (11 spaces available)

Parents should contact Charlotte Worsley beforehand to enroll a child in class to be sure there is still room: 510-548-1820 or charworsley@yahoo.com.

Stay Connected, Electronically!

You can keep up to date on all Washington School events and other information on our website: <http://washington.berkeleypta.org>. The current and all past issues of *The Acorn* are posted there in full color.

Get the latest news from Washington School by email -- sign up for Washington Talk! To join wTalk, send a blank email to: wTalk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

PTA Officers

Please contact any one of the officers if you have ideas, questions or concerns.

Abigail Surasky - President.
Phone: 649-9413, email:
acubabe_2000@yahoo.com

Kathy Stafford - Vice-
President. Phone: 848-7223

Sahoko Tamagawa -
Secretary. Phone: 848-0780,
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Margaret Norman -
Treasurer. Phone: 848-8338,
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Rader, phone: 510-845-5077,
email: nrader@igc.org.
Ideas, information and
articles for *The Acorn* are
welcome!

We're on the Web! [http://
washington.berkeleypta.org](http://washington.berkeleypta.org)

Washington Elementary

2300 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Way, Berkeley, CA 94704
Phone: 644-6310
Fax: 644-7718

Rita Kimball, Principal.
Email: rita_kimball
@berkeley.k12.ca.us

Paula Shoemaker, Secretary.
Email: paula_shoemaker@
berkeley.k12.ca.us

Kidz Club: 644-6939

Teacher Voice Mail: 644-
4500, extension 21XXX
replacing XXX with the
number of the classroom.

BUSD

2134 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Way, Berkeley, CA 94704
Phone: 644-6348

Meet Washington's Movement Teacher: Ruth Bossieux

Washington students benefit from many wonderful school-day enrichment classes (see schedule insert), most of which are funded through Berkeley's special tax to support our schools. One of the most popular classes for grades K-3 is Movement because the teacher, Ruth Bossieux, is so extraordinary.

On a recent morning, Ms. Bossieux was leading Kindergarteners in imagining themselves as spiders in their webs busily catching flies (pictured). She then set up a "French fry roller coaster" – a runway covered with chunks of foam which the kids rolled over before moving on to many other elements of an imaginative obstacle course. Watching the strength, grace and ease of her movements, you would never guess that she is 70 years old.

Kindergarten teacher Jeremy Armes remarks, "she has twice as much energy as I've ever had. Ruth brings a love of movement that is impossible to resist. She's a Berkeley treasure."

Ms. Bossieux has been teaching dance to children for over 25 years and created the Dance-in-Schools program for the San Francisco Ballet. She teaches only at Washington now, having worked in the past throughout the school district, because "Washington is a wonderful school -- such good teachers, such a good principal and such a warm community. I can't imagine anything more enjoyable,"



she says.

It is clear that she reaps back much of the warmth that she sows. Parent Magi Kiurciev is effusive: "She is such a wonderful inspiration to kids, and has such an amazing spirit -- so vibrant and magical." Her 1st-grade daughter Kira broke her ankle this year, and was most heartbroken about not being able to participate in her favorite class.

Ms. Bossieux co-teaches with Jim Newton, who she describes as a "marvelous man" -- a sentiment obviously shared by the children.

Ms. Bossieux has created a 3-CD set to pass along her techniques to other teachers, and has a DVD teaching film in the works. If you want to witness the magic, stop by the Cafetorium on any Tuesday, Thursday or Friday morning.

Culture Night: Call For Volunteers

The theme for Washington's cultural event this year is "Rice, Noodles and Art from Around the World," to be held on Thursday, March 8th from 6-8:30 p.m. in the Cafetorium. Two of the beautiful piñatas made by students with art teacher Laila Solaris will be filled and broken open. The Scholastic Book Fair (see p. 2) will also be open.

Please bring a rice or noodle dish (a big bowl full) from a culture related to you or of interest to you. Plates, utensils, and

beverages will be provided.

You are also welcome and encouraged to participate by bringing a simple art or craft project from a culture related to you or of interest to you - the PTA will cover the cost of supplies if you provide the idea!

Volunteers are also needed to help out at the event: set up, clean up, and help staff the art stations. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Washington parent Joal Arvanigian at 510-843-3085 or arvanigian@yahoo.com.

Special Supplement: Spring Enrichment Class Schedule

| Classroom | Music | Art | P.E. | Science | Cooking | Garden | Library | Sports 4Kids | YMCA Swim | Movement |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Armes | Tues 10:05 | Thurs 12:15 | Mon 9:30 | | Weds 12:15 | Weds 12:15 | Tues 12:15 | | Tues 10:30 (May) | Tues 8:30 * |
| Fairchild | Tues 10:40 | Mon 12:15 | Tues 9:25 | | Weds 12:05 | | Thurs 12:15 | | Tues 10:30 (March- April) | Thurs 9:30 * |
| Wash | Tues 9:30 | Weds 9:30 | Tues 8:20 | | Tues 12:05 | Mon 9:35 | Weds 12:15 | | Tues 10:00 (March- April) | Thurs 8:30 * |
| Hardy | Mon 12:30 | Mon 1:15 | Mon 10:30 | Thurs 8:15 | Weds. 12:15 | Thurs 12:15 | Weds 9:15 | Tues 10:20 | | Tues 9:30 * |
| Talbott | Mon 1:40 | Thurs 1:15 | Mon 10:00 | Thurs 8:15 | Tues 10:15 | | Weds 10:30 | Thurs 10:20 | Tues 10:30 (Feb- March) | Fri 9:30 * |
| Skowronski | Mon 1:05 | Weds 12:15 | Tues 12:40 | Thurs 10:25 | Tues 9:25 | Mon 9:45 | Fri 12:15 | Thurs 1:40 | Tues 10:00 (Feb- March) | Fri 8:30 * |
| Scholefield | Thurs 1:15 | Thurs 9:50 | Mon 11:30 | Thurs 12:15 | Weds 10:20 | Tues 10:00 | Weds 9:50 | Weds 1:05 | | Fri 9:30 ** |
| Watson | Thurs 12:20 | Mon 9:50 | Mon 2:20 | Thurs 1:15 | Tues 9:55 | Tues 12:15 | Thurs 10:30 | Mon 1:05 | | Fri 8:30 ** |
| Bruno | Mon 10:25 | | Mon 12:30 | | Weds 8:20 | Weds 8:20 | Fri 1:25 | Tues 1:05 | | Thurs 8:30 ** |
| Geminder | Thurs 8:15 | | Tues 8:50 | | Weds 9:50 | Weds 9:50 | Fri 10:30 | Fri 1:10 | | Thurs 9:30 ** |
| Moustakas | Fri 8:15 | | Tues 12:10 | | Weds 8:15 | Thurs 9:50 | Thurs 12:45 | Mon 1:45 | | Tues 8:30 ** |
| Clark- Riddell | Tues, Thurs 11:05 | | Mon 2:00 | Weds 10:15 Fri 8:15 | Tues 8:20 | Tues 8:20 | Tues 1:10 | Thurs 1:05 | | |
| Bail / Cobeen | Tues, Thurs 11:05 | | Tues 2:00 | Tue 8:15 Wd 11:40 | Tues 8:15 | Mon 1:05 | Fri 9:30 | Fri 10:20 | | |
| Laurance | Tues, Thurs 10:15 | | Mon 1:30 | Wed 8:15 Fri 10:15 | Tues 8:20 | Tues 8:20 | Thurs 2:00 | Tues 1:45 | | |
| Mitchell | Tues, Thurs 10:15 | | Tues 1:30 | Weds 9:10 Fri 1:05 | Tues 8:20 | Mon 1:05 | Fri 9:00 | Weds 10:20 | | |

* Movement class taught January 9 through March 16 ** Movement class taught March 20 through June 1