

Reading incentive program yields prizes and a lifelong love of books

YARED RUIZ, A SIXTH-grader at B.H. Macon Elementary School, is not sure what her favorite book is of the 225 books she has read this year through the school's Earning by Learning program.

But of the seven books she averages weekly, she likes scary ones the best, said the 12-year-old, who holds the school's record for most books read.

Her friends and fellow sixth-graders, Larissa Lopez and Koraima Moreno, also enjoy reading although they have not gone through quite so many books, they said.

The girls do have favorite

continued on page 3



Students at B.H. Macon Elementary School are among the district's most avid readers. Librarian Mary Bilbrey has seen the school go from low-performing to recognized in the five years Earning by Learning has been promoting reading at the school.

More efficient, better nutrition are on the district's menu, thanks to the new Maria Luna Food Services Facility

WITH THE dedication of the new 153,575-square-foot Maria Luna Food Service Facility, the district is turning the page to a new era of child nutrition.

The new facility "is somewhat pivotal in that we have the facilities and tools in house, at our fingertips, to better perform our jobs and be able to meet the needs of our students," said Dora Rivas, executive director—Food and Child Nutrition Services.

Until now, the department had occupied leased facilities in Duncanville that lacked the

kitchen and warehouse space the department needed to serve the more than 200 schools throughout the district, she said. It also lacked dedicated space to provide continual training to cafeteria staff.

The new building, located in southeast Dallas, centralizes the district's menu planning, training, purchasing, warehousing, and distribution capabilities. It also will allow the department to supply schools with hard-to-find items that have become staples of the improved nutrition efforts.

"When there are some items that we are not able to find,

like items with zero trans fat or whole grain bread, we can prepare them in the kitchen, blast freeze them, package them, and send them to the schools," she said.

The new location also will make it easier to transport prepared breakfasts, lunches and snacks to schools that don't have kitchen facilities, Rivas said. Before, these items would be cooked in schools with large cafeterias and then delivered to the schools that needed them.

"It is a more efficient and cost-effective system," she said.

The facility's 189-seat

continued on page 4

Thank a volunteer

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT the district have been busy thanking the almost 19,000 volunteers and 1,800 partner businesses and organizations that have helped make the 2007-2008 school year a success.

Volunteers this year have stepped up as tutors and mentors by sharing their professional skills with students or by spending many hours beautifying the campuses, whether by painting hallways in the school colors or digging in to create gardens.

Partner businesses and organizations have donated funds and resources to build playgrounds, encourage students to be more active, or provide internships.

"The work volunteers do in our schools is invaluable and their contributions are an integral part of the Dallas Achieves! transformation plan that will make the Dallas ISD the best urban district in the country," said Superintendent of Schools Michael Hinojosa.

To ensure the safety of students and staff, all volunteers must submit an application before they are approved to work in the schools. The application process includes a criminal background check, which is board policy.

Volunteers receive training related to the type of services they will be performing in the schools—tutoring, mentoring, chaperoning, support in the library, clerical work, assisting in classrooms. The training includes guidelines and regulations for working with students and deal-

ing with situations that may arise during their time in the schools.

Schools then are required by board policy to report the hours a volunteer spends working in the schools and all contributions made by volunteers or partners. This helps the district keep track of just how much support the community provides Dallas ISD schools.

Keeping accurate records of volunteer hours and donations allows the schools and the district to properly thank those who are involved for their valuable service.



Almost 19,000 volunteers and 1,800 partner businesses and organizations give their time and resources to help improve student achievement. Some volunteers are chaperones during field trips, others are tutors (top), and others participate in different events in the schools (left). All volunteers must register and be trained before working in the schools (above).

2008 Partners in Education Recognition Awards

Superintendent's Award

Sen. Royce West

Extra Mile Award

J.W. Bagley Foundation

School Partnership Coordinator Award

Cheryl Van Volkinburg, Maria Moreno Elementary School

Outstanding Elementary Volunteer

Kathy Shockley, Harry C. Withers Elementary School

Outstanding Secondary Volunteer

Francisco Lopez, Harold Wendell Lang Sr. Middle School

Outstanding Organization

Bishop Lynch Seniors, Walnut Hill Elementary School

Outstanding Business

Neiman Marcus, Herbert Marcus Elementary School



Reading program (continued from page 1)

books—*Charlotte's Web* for Larissa and books by Jenny B. Jones for Koraima.

The girls all like to read because it allows them to go into the world of the books and have some quiet time by themselves, they said, and added they will keep reading in the future.

That is the outcome the Earning by Learning program is looking for: children developing a lifelong love of reading and learning at an early age, said Thelma Morris, director of Earning by Learning.

Because incentives are a proven method to get children involved, EBL gives students in the district's 64 participating schools \$2 for every book they read up to 20 books during the program's 15 weeks. Students must take an electronic reading comprehension test about the book in order to receive the incentive.

Since the program began in 1996, 69,896 students have read 656,632 books and earned \$1.3 million. This year, thanks to partner Washington Mutual, in addition to receiving the prize money, Dallas ISD students will be able to open savings accounts and learn about the importance of saving for the future.

At Macon, which has one of the highest participation rates in the district, students who are enrolled in Earning by Learning read an average of 27 books per semester. Many students, like Yared, read beyond the incentive maximum. They also get prizes from school librarian Mary Bilbrey as they accumulate reading points, from small stuffed animals and school supplies to a Barbie house one year.

"They may get into it for the prizes but end up developing a love of reading," she said. "It's



rare that they continue to do it for prizes once they've participated the first year."

The program's aim is not only to instill a love of reading in children, but also to improve their reading level, which affects their overall academic achievement.

"When we started the pro-

gram five years ago, the school was low performing," Billbrey said. "Now, we are recognized, and last year we were just shy of being exemplary. If you're a good reader, you can do anything and accomplish everything you set your mind to."

BENEFITS

CORNER

Dallas ISD offers employees a one-stop health information event

Dallas ISD is committed to providing employees the resources and information they need to help keep themselves and their families healthy and safe. The Employee Fair, which will be held from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., May 7 and 8 at the P.C. Cobb Athletic Complex in Fair Park, is one of these resources.

At this event, employees will be able to hear prominent speakers talk about health and financial wellness, see informative demonstrations, and learn about safety topics.

Who'll be there?

- Dr. Kenneth Cooper from The Cooper Institute will be the keynote speaker.
- Dallas Fire and Rescue will be on hand with their "Hazard House" to

teach employees and their families how to respond in the event of a house fire.

- An animal expert from the Dallas Zoo will discuss how to avoid dangerous animals.
- Tom Landry Fitness Center's personal trainers will be there to talk about physical fitness.
- Representatives from all the health plan options (medical, dental, vision) and other benefit options, such as retirement plans and the Employee Assistance Program, will answer any of your questions.

Things to Do

- Visit booths from minority- and woman-owned businesses, health and welfare services, and retirement planning vendors.
- Get biometric data such as blood

pressure, pulse and weight.

- Get BMI readings.
- Have a vision test.
- Watch fitness demonstrations.
- Get a back massage.
- Visit a make-up artist for helpful tips.
- Donate blood at the Red Cross blood drive to help save a life.
- Enroll for your 2008-2009 benefits.
- Complete the Health Risk Assessment—the roadmap to a healthier you.
- Win great prizes!

The Employee Fair promises to be a fun, informative event. Come and go at your own convenience and receive 3.5 hours of Staff Development credit for attending. Pre-register online via Oracle Self-Service using Event Code #8144309 for May 7 and #8144310 for May 8.

calendar

APRIL

Alcohol Awareness Month
 Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month
 Mathematics Education Month
 Volunteer Recognition Month

- 29** Learning Communities Executive Directors' Meeting,
 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Haskell Bldg., Conference Room
- 30** Superintendent's Scholarship Reception,
 5-7 p.m., Southern Methodist University

MAY

Asian-American Heritage Month
 Better Hearing and Speech Month
 Mental Health Month
 National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

- 1** Elementary/Middle Summer School Enrollment
- 3** Parent Academy, 8 a.m.-noon, W.W. Samuell HS
 Eddie Williams Basketball/Cheerleading,
 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., James Madison HS
 Dedication of Maria Luna Food Service Facility,
 1:30 p.m., 1515 Grand Ave.
- 6** Learning Communities Executive Directors' Meeting,
 9-11 a.m., Haskell Bldg., Conference Room
 Learning Center Speech Therapists Meeting,
 1:30-3 p.m., Haskell Bldg.
 Learning Center Media Specialists Meeting,
 2:30-4 p.m., Haskell Bldg.
 The Piano Festival, 7 p.m., César Chávez Learning Center

Check the Districtwide Datebook at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/calendars for recent changes to the calendar.

Food service (continued from page 1)

auditorium, equipped with an industrial demonstration kitchen on the stage, will allow not only for staff training but also for nutrition and food preparation seminars for parents and students, Rivas said.

"In light of the problem of childhood obesity, it's pivotal that we can provide nutrition education and needed information," Rivas said. "We will be able to bring speakers and do food demonstrations for parents and students."

The department also plans

to have an ongoing Menu Advisory Council made up of students, parents, and employees who will taste recipes and make recommendations about the foods that are served in school cafeterias throughout the district.

"Good nutrition is important because healthy students perform better in the classroom," Rivas said. "Providing nutritious meals to the students, training and accountability will help [the district] meet its Dallas Achieves! goals."

Meals prepared each day	167,000
Snacks prepared each day	10,000
Meals served during the summer	12,000

Dallas Area Chess-in-the-Schools enhances students' academic skills

George Bannerman Dealey Montessori fifth-grader Kristin Ravenau, strategized her way to winning the Dallas Area Chess-in-the-Schools tournament and a four-year scholarship to The University of Texas at Dallas worth \$45,000.

For more than 15 years, the program has provided an opportunity for Dallas ISD students in kindergarten through eighth grade to learn to play chess and to participate in its annual chess tournament. The first Distinction Scholarship recipient—at the time, a Dallas ISD sixth-grader—recently graduated from UTD. The organization uses chess as a tool to build self-esteem and enhance the academic skills of school-age children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds in the greater Dallas area.

In addition to offering in-class chess instruction, DACIS provides chess equipment to the schools participating in the program and arranges at least two interschool chess tournaments each year to further stimulate students' interest. UTD chess players serve as instructors in the DACIS program.

