



Turning the Page

TTP Newsletter

January 2010

Volume 8, Issue 1

Friends,

We hope you have had a safe and happy beginning to the new year! Here at Turning the Page, we have been busily preparing for the second half of the school year. We have a new curriculum to introduce at Community Nights, new classrooms participating in our Literacy Through Photography program, and new parent projects to support. As we look forward to the rest of the school year, we wanted to share stories of our work and invite you to join us for a Community Night or other school event this spring.

Funder Spotlight: The Institute of Medicine

IOM employees lend a hand

When Turning the Page President Jason King sent a plea out this past August to TTP's friends and supporters requesting financial support during a very challenging economic time for the organization, we were overwhelmed by the response of the community. The plea from Jason came at a fortuitous time for Amy Geller and her colleagues at the [Institute of Medicine](#). As she explained it:

Up until a few years ago I had worked with TTP as a Community Nights facilitator and truly enjoyed the time I was able to spend with the parents and children at the schools. I was able to see firsthand how well the community embraced the program and how much they got out of it...To support these programs, IOM participated in the Carpe Librum book drive for the past four years. Every year the staff comes through with boxes and boxes of donations, and I know many attend the sale each year. Just before the community service team met to decide who should be the recipient of our annual fundraiser, I received the message from Jason... I brought the idea of donating to TTP up at the meeting and everyone...voted to make TTP this year's recipient.

The IOM employees came through for TTP once again. Over the course of two months, through silent auctions, bake sales, penny wars, individual donations, inter-agency competitions and a corporate donation from IOM, their efforts raised \$5,881.00 for TTP! As Ms. Geller stated, "IOM staff appreciates the work TTP does and didn't want to see the programs suffer [from lack of funding]. Literacy and community are very important to IOM Staff."

Turning the Page expresses our heartfelt thanks to Amy Geller, Erin Hammers, Amy Haas and Cathy Liverman for spearheading these fundraising efforts, and to all the employees of the Institutes of Medicine and National Academies of Science who supported this year's fundraising efforts. Your generosity could not have come at a better time!



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Fall Community Nights

By the Numbers



2009-2010 Partner Schools: 7

Fall 2009 Community Nights: 28

Number of Parents Attending at Least One Community Night: 536

Average Community Night Parent Attendance: 34.6

Number of Students Attending at Least One Community Night: 564

Average Community Night Student Attendance: 42.64

Average Percentage of Student Body Attending at Least One Community Night: 26

Number of Books Given Away: 2,413

Number of Books Signed by Authors at Author Visits: 253

Number of Community Night Mentors (volunteers and Federal Work-Study Students): 54

Number of Hours Worked by Child Mentors: 1,539

Number of Staff Hours Invested at Community Nights: 652

Project Planning 101

Parent-teacher organizations take part in custom-built workshops

This fall and winter, parent-teacher organizations from all of our partner schools welcomed TTP staff members to their meetings for specialized training sessions. The topic at hand? Selecting and planning a “first project” for the year. Officers and members in attendance were first challenged to think about the missions and goals of their organizations—What can we offer our school community? How can we contribute to student learning and achievement? What can we accomplish this year? Then, parents brainstormed ideas for projects that fit their missions and goals. Having selected a project, the workshop shifted to the details of project planning:



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creating a task list, identifying a project leader, setting a timeline, and delegating responsibilities. Through interactive discussions and role-playing exercises, parent leaders walked through their project ideas from inception to implementation.

In the short time since these workshops, several parent-teacher organizations have already begun to translate their ideas into action. At M.C. Terrell Elementary, the PTA has led the formation of a “Classroom Garden” project, wherein teachers work with students and families to grow plants for display in the school, bringing hands-on science lessons into the classroom. At [Garfield Elementary](#), parent leaders decided to invite the [Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative](#) (FSEFSC) to present at their first PTA general body meeting of 2010, which took place on January 19th. Garfield’s PTA



decided on this project after identifying the school community’s need for establishing relationships with community organizations. This collaboration between the FSEFSC and the Garfield PTA exemplified the parents’ mission to “renew, revive, and reconnect” the Garfield school community. Dozens of community members turned out for the event, which included a band led by a Garfield dad, dancing, a cheerleading performance, food, and a chance for parents to connect with each other, the school community, and FSEFSC. TTP will continue to support parent projects at each of our schools in the coming months.

School Spotlight: Aiton Elementary School

School gives new meaning to TTP’s “walking together” theme

Aiton Elementary School spent the first half of the 2009-2010 school year walking together with parents, teachers, and school principal, Ms. Peggy Mussenden. Parents gathered to share their sentiments and solutions at the fall Community Night series. Across the four fall [Community Nights](#), 70 parents attended at least one event, helping foster and build relationships within the school family. Aiton is located in the Deanwood neighborhood of Northeast, DC, and has 312 pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students.





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Principal Mussenden has noticed the “walking together” theme impacting her school’s community, noting that “Aiton ES is happy to say that our parent participation at the Parent/Teacher Conferences has improved from last year. There [was] about a 10% increase in parent participation from last year.” Increased parent-teacher interactions, coupled with contagious enthusiasm for building a stronger community will certainly impact the second semester of Community Night events at the school, where parents will take part in [workshops](#) focused on overall wellness—from healthy eating to raising a healthy child—an [Author Visit](#) by author Auntie Oye, and a workshop focused on district-wide testing policies. Additionally Ms. Burleson has just begun implementing the [Literacy Through Photography](#) program with her students.

Finally, Aiton’s Parent Teacher Association has been busy working on the new “Boys Club,” a mentoring program with the aim of offering support and guidance to the male students at the school. Other events this year will include Game Night and School Jeopardy. The PTA, led by parent leaders Michael Burriss and Kelly Woodall, continues to work on other successful programs. We all expect exciting things from the Aiton community during the second part of the school year.