



INSIDE

the School District of University City

A publication for and about the staff of the School District of University City

May 2009

Education is Our Foundation

Op-Ed article written by Joylynn Wilson, Superintendent of Schools

Where did you go to school? In most U.S. cities this question is answered with the name of a college or university. But as any St. Louis-area native understands, around here we instinctively answer this question with the name of our high school.

As a Soldan High School graduate and lifelong St. Louis-area resident, I have heard countless theories as to why this is the case. One explanation is because it instantly indicates the neighborhood in which a person grew up. As an educator, I like to think it's because we inherently share a tremendous amount of pride in our primary and secondary education experience.

As University City works to build stronger neighborhoods and increase community pride, one of the primary building blocks is an effort called "Destination U. City." This is a program aimed at moving our community forward, as a collection of stronger neighborhoods, beginning with strengthening our public schools.

Why? Just talk to a St. Louis-area newcomer who has moved to the City of Clayton in recent years and ask them why they moved there. Most will tell you that one of the most important considerations in the location decision was the city's well-deserved reputation for having outstanding public schools, even for those who don't have school-age children.

When a city has good schools, it becomes a "destination" for living. In effect, everyone benefits when public education works.

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Honorees & Retirees Reception, May 21

The School District of University City will host the 2009 Honorees & Retirees Reception on Thursday, May 21 at 7 p.m. This year's event will have a new venue at Brittany Woods Middle School cafeteria, 8125 Groby Road.

Retirees include Sylvia Roach, JGECEC; Beth Brightfield, DH; Kathleen Dunham, DH; Darlene Norfleet, FP; Patricia Tessler-Helmich, FP; Jody Tyus, FP; Lynn Young, FP; Janice Maclin, JP; Sheryl Peterson, JP; Elaine Laura, NH; Cathy Fleming, Per; Lisha Grady, Per; Laura Bethany, BW; Rida Cooper, BW; Ron Ray, BW; Stanley Topfer, BW; Patricia Whitney, BW; Dennis Whitworth, BW; Jeffery Hoskin, UCHS; Rick Mace, UCHS; Leslie Sabol, UCHS; Barbara Shapiro, UCHS; Sandra Smith, UCHS; Tony Taylor, UCHS; Margaret Williams, UCHS; Gwen Prince, McN; Willie Spencer, McN; and Ann Rich, McN.

Honorees include PACEsetters Beverly Brandt, Bryce Cooper, Pearl Jones, Jim & Marcia Loomis, Judy Maffitt, Marva Miller,

Diana Nichols, Acme Price, Byron Price, Barb Reilly, Howard Sallis, Erica Tepper, Cindy Thierry and Jan Vieth; along with Uniquely University City award recipients Mayor Joseph Adams, Nicole Adawale, Walter Daniels, David Harris, Rodney Jennings Sr., Meg McClelland, Gene Ruth and Kristin Sobotka.

Also honored are the 2008-09 Teacher of the Year Margaret Williams, UCHS and Educational Support Personnel of the Year CarolAnn Cole, McN; along with the 2009-10 Teacher of the Year Lillian B. Blackshear-Summers, FP, and Educational Support Personnel of the Year Tony Curtis, McN.

Special recognition will be given to the 2009 Bond Issue Committee and other supportive individuals in appreciation of their dedicated efforts in helping to pass Proposition U - *Destination U. City Schools* - \$53.6 million bond issue measure.



BRIDGES

ACROSS RACIAL POLARIZATION®
in the School District of University City, Missouri

Focus St. Louis' Bridges Update

The School District of University City is no longer associated with the FOCUS St. Louis' Bridges Across Racial Polarization training program.

District administration is redesigning the process to engage the community on issues specifically relating to race and its impact on education and academic achievement.

More information regarding the new program and meeting schedule will be emailed to all Bridges attendees and publicized via the District's website and other local media outlets.

In preparation for the next meeting, interested participants are asked to read "Seedfolks," a book by Paul Fleischman. A free copy can be obtained by calling the District's Department of Curriculum & Instruction at 314/290-4020.

Mark calendars for
District Staff Picnic on Monday, June 1.

More details to come.


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The cycle of relevance between outstanding schools and stronger communities is relatively simple:

1. A city with good schools attracts more families.
2. An increased number of families looking to live in a municipality pushes property values higher.
3. Increased property values ultimately benefit the municipality in terms of reputation, taxing, and other perspectives.
4. Besides a more vibrant culture, those cities become more enticing for businesses looking to start or relocate.
5. And because more people have moved there for the schools, those businesses have a greater chance of success as they have a larger captive audience to which they can sell products or services.

Our plan to transform U. City into a destination because of our schools has not been a fly-by-night proposition. It's been a calculated effort started in July 2008 by gathering hundreds of people who have a stake in the success of U. City schools. School district staff members, parents, community leaders, and others helped us narrow our focus on four imperatives - student achievement, finances, facilities, and community and family involvement.

The feedback we have received has helped craft a blueprint for academic reforms and growth measures intended to boost achievement at all grade levels. And we believe these measures build pride and increase the quality of education in U. City's public schools and make it a place where people want to live due in part to the schools.

After 64 percent of U. City voters supported funding this effort through Proposition U, the cornerstone of "Destination U. City" will begin with \$53.6 million capital campaign to rebuild Barbara Jordan and Pershing Elementary Schools on their existing sites and renovate four other existing schools including Jackson Park and Flynn Park Elementary Schools, Brittany Woods Middle School and University City High School.

These upgrades are essential as we recognize that children don't learn the same today as they did just 20 years ago. Countless studies demonstrate that the interior designs of schools directly impact academic achievement, and the tools our children are using are very different than the ones many of us used not so long ago. If we are to continue to develop the leaders of tomorrow, our educational facilities must - and now will - meet the demands of 21st century students.

Ultimately, educational reform will indeed help U. City become a destination district, and ensure a solid foundation for strengthening our communities and city.

Celebration of Learning, May 6

The School District of University City has scheduled Celebration of Learning 2009 for Wednesday, May 6, at Brittany Woods Middle School. Come join the excitement of hands-on activities for students, 42 Academic Improvement Award presentations, four extra special student awards and the Brittany Woods Marching Band! It's not too late to volunteer to help, call Nikki Davenport at 314/290-4013.

Teacher of the Year throws first pitch

Missouri Teacher of the Year Margaret Williams, a history teacher at University City High School and University City's 2008-09 Teacher of the Year, has been invited to throw the first pitch during the Friday, May 22 U. City Night at the ball game at Busch Stadium. A limited number of tickets may still be available for the Cardinals versus Royals game that begins at 7:05 p.m. Contact your school PTOs.

UCHS Loop Dine-Out Tuesday, June 2 - details to come.

BEYOND OUR WALLS

Nikki Davenport, District math/science coordinator, was elected to the St. Louis Audubon Society's governing board, effective April 11.



Jennifer Ice, UCHS Latin teacher, was selected Missouri Latin Teacher of the Year.



University City High School has once again been selected as a MSHSAA Leadership School.



Margaret Williams joined 54 other teachers in being honored at the White House in Washington D.C. on Tuesday, April 28, during which she met with President Obama and his wife, and Dr. Jill Biden.



Timothy R. Wernentin from Davenport, Iowa, has been named the new principal of University City High School, effective July 1. UCHS interim principal **Christopher Blumenhorst** will serve as an associate principal in the upcoming school year.

INSIDE the School District of University City is published 11 times per school year the first week of each month except July. The August issue is mailed to all staff homes, subsequent issues will be emailed to all staff with District e-mail addresses. Building secretaries are asked to post the current issue for all staff to read. If you have any information to contribute to this publication, please contact CarolAnn Cole at ccole@u-city.k12.mo.us, phone 314/290-4019, fax 314/725-7846 or inner-office mail to McNair Administration Building.