

Press Clippings 11/4/2017

---Daily Herald--- 11/4/17

U-46 schools raise more funds for Puerto Rico, Mexico

BY MADHU KRISHNAMURTHY



Elgin Area School District U-46 students and staff members have raised more than \$7,200 for hurricane and earthquake relief efforts in Puerto Rico and Mexico, including flashlights for Puerto Rico.

Elgin Area School District U-46 students and staff members have raised more than \$7,200 for hurricane and earthquake relief efforts in Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Last month, students and employees at 13 schools collected more than \$9,000 and supplies for those affected by hurricanes Harvey and Irma in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean.

The latest collection -- toward relief efforts for Hurricane Maria affecting Puerto Rico and earthquakes in Mexico -- is from a variety of fundraisers. It includes schools collecting hundreds of flashlights and batteries for Puerto Rico.

"Many members of our district have ties to Mexico or Puerto Rico, so these fundraising efforts were very personal for some, while others were moved to donate based on the news reports of the devastation," U-46 CEO Tony Sanders said. "I am proud of how our district comes together to help others in time of need."

Otter Creek Elementary School in Elgin raised more than \$2,000 by hosting a "Coin Challenge," in which students could bring in change throughout the week. Many parents sent checks.

Employees at district headquarters held an "International Bake Sale," bringing in treats that reflected their heritage -- pudin de pan, pastelillos de guayaba, pizzelles, tembleque, cupcakes, brownies and cookies. Staff members wore jeans one day in exchange for a \$5 donation.

U-46 sent checks totaling \$2,956 to Chicago Con Mexico, an organization supporting rebuilding efforts in Mexico following two earthquakes there in September, and \$4,275

to the Puerto Rican Relief Fund, which is aiding those affected by Hurricane Maria. The district also collected 232 batteries and 176 flashlights donated to Happy Kids Chicago, which sent an airplane full of supplies to Puerto Rico last week.

Another fundraiser is planned 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 11 at Parkwood Elementary School in Hanover Park.

The school has been sponsoring a "Silver War" between the primary (kindergarten through third) and intermediate (fourth through sixth) grades with two water jugs being filled with money until Nov. 10. The winning grades will receive a surprise.

Parkwood also is collecting food to be shipped to Puerto Rico and has a packing event from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 11. Staff members, students and families are invited to assist with packing. Packages will be mailed to individuals along with notes from students.

Press Clippings 11/5/2017

---Daily Herald--- 11/5/17

U-46 aims to tackle barriers facing its black male students

BY LINDA MCDANIEL-HALE



John Heiderscheidt



Ron Raglin

Elgin Area School District U-46 officials gathered Saturday to explore local obstacles to academic success for black male students. And it started with a confession that U-46 is failing the more than 1,200 black males in its classrooms.

"We just want to say that this is our district's acknowledgment that your experiences have been different," said a teary April Wells, the district's gifted program coordinator. "We believe in your inherent value, and we are conveying that to you."

The rest of the "Brother 2 Brother" symposium quantified how different the educational experience is for the 6 percent of the U-46 school population who are black.

One of the most candid moments came in exploring the recent history of student discipline.

John Heiderscheidt, the district's director of safety and culture, shared information showing that black male students are disciplined at least twice as much as males of any other race in the district.

Those students also receive longer out-of-school suspensions than their white peers. District officials have reduced out-of-school suspensions over the past decade, thinking students are better off at school where teachers can influence better conduct. But even though out-of-school suspensions fell 83 percent from about 7,000 during the 2007-08 school year to about 1,200 in the most recent year, black males are still overrepresented.

"Are the interventions we're using to help make students more successful working? I don't think they are," Heiderscheidt said. "Our interventions, they are working for our white kids. For African-American students, they are disproportional. That's calling it what it is."

School resource officers no longer dictate student discipline in U-46. That change helped shunt what Wells described as a school-to-prison pipeline. Heiderscheidt called for a better approach to student misconduct.

"We have to go from what is wrong with the student to thinking about what is this student going through," he said. "That's a big shift for people."

Assistant Superintendent Ron Raglin said the No. 1 thing black male students are going through in U-46 is poverty. About 76 percent of black male students in the district receive free or reduced meals. Black males also represent more of the district's special education and homeless student population than any other group. At the same time, just 4 percent of black males are identified as gifted students or take AP courses.

"We need to be able to address this," Raglin said. "We have to make sure these students have clothes, make sure they have food. Those are issues that they should not have to deal with. We have to step forward and fill in those gaps if our students are going to have a chance."

Raglin provided several suggestions to address the racial disparities: The Brother 2 Brother symposium should become an annual event. The district should host a black male image award gala to recognize teachers and students who are succeeding. Faculty and staff need mandatory equity training. And every black man in the community should sign up to mentor three black males, one each at the elementary, middle and high school level.

School board member Traci O'Neal Ellis called for the recruitment of teaching staff that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of the student population. She challenged district personnel to recognize racism as a factor in the achievement gap for black males.

"I'm challenging us to call a thing a thing and acknowledge what we already know to be true," O'Neal Ellis said. "Young black males are suffering in schools across this country, including ours. And we are not doing all we can to address it. One of the critical factors we are missing is the impact of race and racism on intellectual achievement. There is a systemic problem affecting black males rather than a problem with black males."

---Daily Herald--- 11/5/17

U-46 partnering with Gail Borden to celebrate and honor veterans

SUBMITTED BY ELGIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46

Students and staff in Elgin Area School District U-46 will support and honor local veterans and troops with special ceremonies, concerts, breakfasts and assemblies the week of Nov. 6.

In addition, more than a dozen local veterans are visiting 80-plus classrooms in 16 schools across the district next week to talk to students about their service and their lives.

The district is providing this opportunity for living history lessons in partnership with the Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin.

"This is a great opportunity for our students to learn through stories told directly by the men and women who have served our country," said Chief Executive Officer Tony Sanders. "We're grateful for another great partnership with Gail Borden Library to provide a memorable learning experience."

Veterans in this special program, called "Veterans Voices," are scheduled to visit Clinton, Fox Meadow, Garfield, Hanover Countryside, Laurel Hill, Liberty, Lords Park, Nature Ridge, Oakhill, Ronald D. O'Neal, Parkwood, Ridge Circle, Spring Trail, Timber Trails, and Washington elementary schools and South Elgin High School between Nov. 6 and 10.

Veterans who may want to participate in future "Veterans Voices" events are encouraged to visit www.gailborden.info/veterans to learn more and submit a volunteer application.

Additional Veterans Day events are as follows:

- Abbott Middle School, 949 Van St. in Elgin: On Monday, Nov. 6 to Thursday, Nov. 9, students will write letters/thank you cards to active service members. At 3 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, students will participate in virtual assembly honoring Illinois veterans and active military service members.
- Bartlett High School, 701 W. Schick Road: Assembly from 9:15 to 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Canton Middle School, 1100 Sunset Circle, Streamwood: CMS partners with Salute Inc. to fundraise, host and salute veterans. Fundraiser involves principal, vice principal and dean taking a pie to the face. On Friday, Nov. 10, there will be an assembly from 9 to 10 a.m. followed by veterans in classrooms
- Century Oaks Elementary, 1235 Braeburn Drive in Elgin: Various classroom events, including writing letters to our veterans thanking them for their service, on Monday, Nov. 6 to Friday, Nov. 10.
- Hawk Hollow Elementary, 235 Jacaranda Drive, Bartlett: Students will give presentations for the veterans and veterans will go into classrooms to share their experiences in the armed forces from 8:15 to 11 a.m. Monday, Nov. 6
- Heritage Elementary, 507 Arnold Ave., Streamwood: Students will honor veterans during a ceremony at the flagpole from 8 to 9 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Hillcrest Elementary, 80 N. Airlite St., Elgin: Jerry Paulsen, veteran and founder of Operation Horses & Heroes, will present to fourth- to sixth-graders from 9:30 to 10:25 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Horizon Elementary, 1701 Greenbrook Blvd., Hanover Park: Day of Honor breakfast and schoolwide assembly from 8:30 a.m. to noon Thursday, Nov. 9. Band, orchestra and chorus will perform a musical tribute to the armed forces. Veterans welcome. Visits to classrooms by veterans as well.

- Huff Elementary, 801 Hastings St., Elgin: From 6 to 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, there will be a short musical presentation by fifth- and sixth-graders, followed by interactive breakout sessions where students and veterans can interact while enjoying a small reception.
- Kenyon Woods Middle School, 1515 Raymond St., South Elgin: Musical tribute to veterans at 2:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Kimball Middle School, 451 N. McLean Blvd., Elgin: From 2:25 p.m. to 3:25 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, there will be an assembly featuring Elgin AMVETS Post members and local historian Jerry Turnquist, presenting the colors, discussing the history of our country's flag and the importance that it has played for our veterans and current service members. They will also share the procedures for retiring a tattered flag. Kimball students and staff will also pay tribute to family members who are veterans or are currently in one of the service branches.
- Liberty Elementary, 1375 W. Bartlett Road, Bartlett: Breakfast for family veterans and program from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Lincoln Elementary, 1650 Maureen Drive, Hoffman Estates: Veterans Day celebration Nov. 6-10
- Parkwood Elementary, 2150 Laurel Ave., Hanover Park: Guest veterans will present an overview of the branches of the military service to Parkwood students. Veterans will also highlight their personal military experiences. The programs will be 11 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 8; 10 to 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9; and 9 to 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Prairieview Elementary, 285 Mayflower Lane, Bartlett: On Friday, Nov. 10, an assembly at 1:15 p.m., featuring School Boy and Girl Scouts Color guard, presentation, all school Pledge of Allegiance and national anthem, Veterans Day poems, and a talk from a member of the military services.
- Ronald D. O'Neal Elementary, 510 Franklin Blvd., Elgin: Assembly from noon to 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, at the Gail Borden Public Library.
- Spring Trail Elementary School, 1384 Spring Valley Drive, Carol Stream: Veterans Day Assembly from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- South Elgin High School, 760 E. Main St., South Elgin: Assembly held outside by flagpole from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10.
- Ontarioville School, 2100 Elm St., Hanover Park: Assembly at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9.

---Courier News--- 11/5/17

Column: Test results only one measure of students

BY LINDA MCDANIEL-HALE

The 2017 Illinois School Report Card data was released this week, with some results less than positive: Standardized test scores declined at a majority of suburban elementary and middle schools. High schools have no historic norm for current achievement testing.

School District U46 had below-average test scores on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SAT. There are statistics for the PARCC tests, which have been administered for three years, but there are no previous SAT scores for comparison purposes. This year was the first that high school juniors were required to take the SAT.

Ann Hamrick believes her three children have seen too many educational changes and wonders whether that is why test scores have declined.

“Math, especially, is so different since I was in school,” she said.

“My sons are in high school, and their teachers have mentioned many times that they need to attend so many more meetings to discuss changes being made to the curriculum,” she said.

Tom Coker, who graduated from college in the spring, remembers having to take his standardized tests and SATs on paper with No. 2 pencils.

“I heard that students now take these tests online. This could have made a difference in scores for high school students that are more familiar with taking standardized tests the way I had to,” he said.

The debate continues on what standardized tests measure. Do these tests truly measure how successful students will be in their lives? Do these tests merely measure how well a particular student does on a test?

A high test score on the SAT does not measure a student’s ability to communicate verbally. Hamrick said she worries that “no one is going to know how to talk to each other with so much communication being done electronically.”

Educator Cathy McCollum said she believes that “inclusion of special education students might be a reason for the decrease in test scores. With this being the push, special education students typically do not do as well on standardized tests as the average student. Special education student scores could drop the entire school or district results.”

Should parents be concerned over the drop in test scores? Time has shown that such tests do not show the entire picture.

When was the last time a prospective employer asked you what your SAT score was? In the end, your success or failure in life is not measured by the results of a standardized test.

Linda McDaniel-Hale is a Fox Valley resident who offers opinions on local topics.

Press Clippings 11/6/2017

NO U-46 RELATED PRESS CLIPPINGS