

NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

To empower each student to achieve authentic academic success by harnessing the kindness, cooperation, and trust of faculty, family, and community.

VISION

SBCS is a vibrant, rigorous school of active learners at the heart of a thriving Southwest Baltimore community.



Southwest Baltimore Charter School

Where academics, family and community come together.

Volume III, Issue 1

November 2007

A Message From The Executive Director

Well, I can't believe Year III is underway! So many people made last year a remarkable year. I applaud the commitment of our staff and parents and the generosity of our funders. Without you, we wouldn't have nearly as much to cheer about. Of course, my biggest thanks goes to the hard-working, inquisitive, playful, loving students who come through our doors every day. It is our privilege and our passion to work with them. They truly inspire us.

Some accomplishments from 2006-2007 include:

- By the time of the admissions lottery in March 2007, we had a waiting list for all grades. The phone continues to ring off the hook, and we are at maximum capacity.
- For the second year, 100% of our classroom teachers came back for another year. We did bid farewell to some wonderful staff members, but we welcomed 8 new highly qualified, exceptionally gifted and experienced staff members. They are already showing us that we hit the jackpot by hiring them.
- One of our field trips last year was to the Washington, D.C. Zoo. It was the first time many of our students and parent chaperones had been to our nation's capital.
- We maintained a strong partnership with the Friends School, and we formed two major new partnerships. St. David's Episcopal Church visits our Kindergartners every week for reading time, and Black Cherry Puppet Theater performed for our school twice.
- We raised over \$120,000—exceeding our \$90,000 goal—from individuals, foundations, corporations, and through parent-sponsored fundraisers.

Of course, we expect Year III to be even more spectacular. Our goals for this year include:

- Developing a student support and crisis intervention team.



1st Graders Taylor Peters and Lee Verzier.

- Providing more parent training in the school's educational philosophy, in Choice Theory (our behavior intervention model), and in our curriculum.
- Integrating test taking strategies into our arts-infused, experiential, hands-on curriculum.
- Building the Board's capacity to fundraise, provide oversight, and implement strategic long term plans.
- Finalizing plans for a permanent facility.

Our current success in reaching these goals will be directly linked to the success of our children and teachers in the classroom. In addition, as we build our reputation and foster new partnerships, we accept the responsibility that we are fast becoming an anchor in this community. As such, we are more eager than ever to find a permanent location. With the help of several knowledgeable advisors, we are getting closer and closer to finding a home.

Clearly, we've got our work cut out for us. BUT, we welcome the challenges of Year III. We've earned them. If we hadn't so successfully overcome the obstacles of Years I and II, we wouldn't be here to ask you to keep supporting us! Fasten your seatbelts. Year III is coming at you!

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Thank you

Southwest Baltimore Charter School would like to thank all of the wonderful donors who supported us during our second year:

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If we inadvertently forgot or misspelled your name, please notify us at 443-984-3385.

2006-07 THEMES

There Is More That Unites Us Than Divides Us: Kindergartners studied Mexico, First Graders studied Kenya, and Second Graders studied the Philippines. Learning about people from different countries showed our students, that, while we may eat different foods, sing different songs, and play different games, we have much in common with our fellow citizens of the world.

Folk Tales and the Art of Storytelling: During this unit, students in all grades thought like writers, artists, and cultural anthropologists as they examined the stories of cultures from around the world. Through this genre study, students also identified the elements of folktales, fables, and porquoi tales, using those structures to write and perform tales of their own.

Ancient Civilizations: Building sarcophagi, making mummies, and wrapping a mummy for the afterlife all taught our 1st and 2nd graders about Ancient Egypt. Grouping dinosaurs by their eating habits, the number of legs they had, their travel habits, and the period in which they thrived, taught our Kindergartners valuable classification and social science skills.

The Human Body: How Do We Work?: Children learned about the circulatory system, our bones, and our guts. In addition, students also learned how to take care of their bodies through good dental hygiene, exercise and healthy eating.

FUNDRAISING FOR SBCS

Three great ways to help:

Good Search

Use GoodSearch.com like any other search engine. Each time you do, money is generated for SBCS. On the GoodSearch homepage, enter Southwest Baltimore Charter School as the organization you support. Fifty percent of the revenue generated from advertisers is shared with the charity, school or nonprofit organizations like SBCS. Happy Surfing!

Box Tops For Education

Earn cash for SBCS with Box Tops for Education. Make a difference every time you go to the grocery store even if you live across the country! All you have to do is clip Box Tops from hundreds of your favorite products and mail your Box Tops to SBCS. Twice each year, Box Tops will send our school a check worth 10¢ for each Box Top redeemed. Visit boxtops4education.com for a current list of participating products.

Matching Gifts Program

Does your employer offer a matching gift program? Contact your human resources office to find out if your employer matches gifts. The following companies do:

Black & Decker Corporation
Constellation Energy Group (BG&E)
GEICO Insurance
McCormick & Company
T. Rowe Price
Procter & Gamble
Sheridan Hotels

DirecTV

If you sign up for or renew a DirecTV subscription, give this code to your salesperson: A1019. SBCS will get \$50-100!

CHOICE THEORY

Southwest Baltimore Charter School (SBCS) continues to reap the benefits of ongoing, intensive training in Choice Theory. Through the generous support of the Straus Foundation over the last two years, SBCS has enjoyed two weeks of staff training in the summer, as well as periodic refresher trainings in Choice Theory. Also, nearly 100 of our parents have attended one of three workshops on Choice Theory. These trainings have not only been a means to present the Choice Theory model, but have also given staff and parents opportunities to build tight, trusting relationships.

Based on the teachings of William Glasser, Choice Theory promotes the idea that children can be intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated if their caretakers and teachers help them meet their five basic human needs: the need for **love and belonging** (or connectedness), the need for **power** (or accomplishment), the need for **survival** (or predictability, routine and structure),

the need for **freedom** (to make choices when appropriate), and the need for **fun**.

By using this framework to guide our student discipline policies and classroom management strategies, SBCS has seen a steady decline in student referrals to the office for behavior problems. In addition, children have repeatedly expressed their happiness with their school environment. SBCS students like coming to school. Instead of giving children stickers and lollipops for good behavior (extrinsic motivation), SBCS staff work very hard to make the school a fun, enjoyable place to be, where children are treated fairly, where they feel part of a classroom community, and where they see that their own choices determine whether or not they are going to have a good day at school.

SBCS will be forever grateful to the **Straus Foundation** for supporting our fledgling school in its effort to build a strong school culture around a simple, well-researched framework that gives the children and the staff clarity and consistency when it comes to managing student behavior.



A St. David's volunteer reads to a group of kindergarten students.

ST. DAVID'S VOLUNTEERS

This past year, every Tuesday was a delight for Southwest Baltimore Charter School Kindergartners and three Very Special Ladies: **Mary Gibson, Louise Reilly and Elie Randrup**. Hailing from **St. David's Episcopal Church** on Roland Avenue, these women offered to come read to our youngest children on a regular basis. Responding to the need all children have for as much one-on-one or small group reading as they can get, Mary, Louise, and Elie committed to coming weekly to the school to pick out a fun book, sit with two or three children in a comfy corner, and allow themselves to be transported to magical places through the power of the written word. "It's exciting to see the varied perspectives that the children bring—and always a treat to connect youngsters with a good book!" says Elie Randrup. Indeed the pleasure is mutual. Thank you, Very Special Ladies, for sharing your love of reading with our students! Every single day you come, you help make reading fun.

SC&H VOLUNTEERS AT SBCS

On Friday, June 22, a team of over 20 volunteers from **SC&H State and Local Tax Group** descended on SBCS. They had arrived for one thing and on thing only: to beautify our school! Because SBCS was given permission to use some additional space in the James McHenry school building—our temporary home—we had a lot of cleaning and moving to do. In addition to cleaning out a former storage space to use for small group instruction space, we also needed to clear out two classrooms and ready them for our 3rd graders.

Led by Corinne Bragg, the SC&H volunteers, over the course of 6 hours, filled up a dumpster with all kinds of items and moved two entire classrooms from the 3rd floor to the 2nd floor. With a can-do attitude, smiles on their faces, and a willingness to do



SC&H Volunteers

pretty much anything, the SC&H team saved our school thousands of dollars in moving, cleaning, dumping, painting, and labor costs. Thank you, SC&H! You helped make SBCS a bright and cheery place for Year III.

Getting to know...

In this issue, we would like you to learn more about Southwest Baltimore Charter School's Director of Instruction, Ms. Keturah Nilsson.



Ms. Keturah Nilsson

Keturah Nilsson (Ms. Turi) is the Director of Instruction at Southwest Baltimore Charter School. In addition to being one of the principal founders of the school, Ms. Turi also designed the framework for the curriculum and is the parent of a 2nd grader at the school.

Ms. Turi is a certified reading specialist with a Master's Degree from Loyola College and a Bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia. She taught in public schools in Southwest Baltimore for many years and then began working as a reading specialist in a private setting.

Her passion for instilling a love of reading in young children, coupled with her extensive experience in public education, made her the perfect person to build a charter school from the ground up. Ms. Turi developed the school curriculum and mission for over a year before the school's doors even opened, and she continues to be a tireless advocate for providing an enriched, age-appropriate curriculum that will inspire Southwest Baltimore Charter School's students to be the leaders and great thinkers of tomorrow.

Support Our School! Donations Accepted

Be a part of an exciting educational opportunity for your children in Southwest Baltimore by supporting our charter school. Here are some supplies that make wonderful donations:

- Packages of white and colored copy paper**
- Paper towels**
- Paper cups**
- Liquid hand soap(both dispensers and refills)**
- Dry erase markers**
- Glue sticks**
- Gift cards to Home Depot or similar stores**
- Gift cards to Staples or similar stores**
- 8 foot ladder**
- Digital still or video camera**

Visit us online at www.sbc.school.org