

NEWSLETTER



SBCS

Southwest Baltimore Charter School

Where academics, family, and community come together.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laura Boydston
– *Chair*
Abigail Breiseth
– *Vice Chair*
Erika Brockman
– *Executive Director*
Betsy Nix
– *Secretary*
Randy Befumo
– *Treasurer*
Shannice Anderson
– *PTO Liaison*

Mary Briggs
Karen Brown
Sherita D. Harrison
Gwen Landahl
Jennifer Nail
Darline Terrell-Tyson
Dagmar Wheling
Christy Wyskiel

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.

Volume VII, Issue 1 - Focus on Community

January 2012

At SBCS we're always exploring, so we've decided to try something a little different with our newsletter. For the next few editions, we will include stories about all the exciting programs happening at SBCS (of course), but we'll also focus our reporting on values that have been so important to us since the beginning. Those who know us will have an opportunity to revisit some of the touchstones that set the course for us to learn and grow together. Those who read about us for the first time will, we hope, gain insight into the values that make SBCS such a special learning environment and that help us pursue our mission with passion and joy.

Enjoy this edition of our winter 2012 newsletter and let us know what SBCS values you treasure. We would love to put your comments in our spring edition.

OUR COMMUNITY: WHAT MAKES US WHO WE ARE

By Ms. Erika Brockman, Executive Director

I think we grew up last year. I still can't believe we came out on the other side, still smiling and determined. How did we do it? How did we hire 20 new staff, add a middle school, start an autism program, move into a new building and keep our school community intact? How did we retain all of our new staff and 90% of our old staff? How did we help our new middle school students make incredible academic growth in one year? How did we successfully merge a welcoming, safe, loving elementary school with a low performing, "persistently dangerous" middle school? What was it about the SBCS community that helped us weather a storm that could have ravaged a sweet little school started by mommies and teachers?

Our community survived – and in many ways thrived – because we relied on several "ways of being" that have emerged over the last six years and that make us, well, us! These "ways of being" are not the character traits we teach our students; they are not the pillars that make our Expeditionary Learning school design model so effective; they are not the



SBCS 1st Graders in art class.

major tenets of the Baltimore City School's master plan; nor are they a neat and tidy list of words you'd expect to see in an article like this. Instead, our "ways of being" seem kind of messy. Yet they speak of how we approach our work: looking both ways as we cross the street, confident we know where we've going, but careful about how we proceed and mindful that we're in a place where we must move swiftly as well as cautiously. So what are those curious "ways of being"?

SBCS is *Open to Partnerships* that expand all educational horizons. The Next Generation Investing Event is a great idea that represents the investment community's commitment to supporting a broad spectrum of educational solutions for Baltimore's children. This means that a public charter school like SBCS can share the spotlight with Children's Scholarship Fund Baltimore, an organization that provides

(See COMMUNITY, continued on page 2)



Christy Wyskiel, SBCS Board member and Co-Chairman of Next Gen 2011

(COMMUNITY, continued from page 1)

opportunities for private education, and both organizations can learn from the other. Next Gen's inspiration, and ours, is that Baltimore's educational community should have a range of options that meet the very different needs and desires of Baltimore's families.

We Cross Many Boundaries. In this issue, Director of Middle School Education Jaime Stone and Director of Elementary Education Turi Nilsson give us a overview of fall expeditions that looked at community from many different perspectives – from family relationships (K-1st), to our relationship to those cultures and societies that came before us; from the Civil Rights Movement, to Occupy Baltimore; from the loss of community in the Holocaust, to our community responsibility to act as environmental stewards of our precious Chesapeake Bay.

We look Outward and Inward. Two of Ms. Maynard's students (Jake and Jillian) have written short essays on the similarities between the SBCS community and the Occupy Baltimore Movement.

We are Nurturing. Before the winter holidays, we hosted an amazing week of mini-courses for our students. The depth and breadth of the offerings showed off the hidden skills of our faculty and staff, introduced our kids to a broad range of boundary-busting topics, and made learning fun. In this way, we brought together small groups to share big ideas.

We hold ourselves Accountable to parents, students, teachers, City Schools, and the state of Maryland. This issue of our newsletter provides a brief explanation of one of the ways we chart academic growth: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. Here we

describe how MAP works, how it can guide classroom instruction, and what it means to engage students in their own assessments.

After last year's successes, we accept that these intangible attributes of our community make us a place where teachers want to teach, and students want to learn. They make us who we are. They bring us together and set us apart.

As you read this season's newsletter articles, I hope you get a feel for what makes the SBCS community so special and how our "ways of being" impact our teaching, our programming, our partnering, and our school design. If the written word doesn't adequately convey what makes us who we are, come see for yourself! I know you'll appreciate our "ways of being" the minute you walk in the doors.

BALTIMORE INNER CITY OUTINGS

By Ms. Marilyn Powel, Director of Development

During the spring and fall, SBCS elementary students learned about the great outdoors by participating in week-end and after-school trips to local parks led by Baltimore Inner City Outings (BICO). BICO is an outreach program of the Sierra Club International that offers urban youth and adults the opportunity to explore, enjoy, and protect the natural world. Last year, our very own Coach Brad Hunter organized a BICO club that helps its members improve outdoor skills and learn the importance of teamwork.

Academic practice comes in the form of trip reflections and research about animals and plants found on the "trek site." Students keep personal journals that prepare them for their trips and strengthen their reading, math, and science skills. Coach Hunter and other faculty volunteers serve as the club's sponsors, using their wilderness training to teach students to be comfortable and safe in the great outdoors.

The SBCS program has been so successful that two of our students were asked to speak in support of outdoor education and BICO during fall hearings in Washington, D.C.

Over the past 11 years, BICO has organized nearly 400 free outings for city kids and served almost 4,300 young people and adults. By working with SBCS, BICO volunteers aim to decrease Nature Deficit Disorder among our families and make our community a healthier place.



6th Grader Artaz lobbies for Outdoor Activities in Washington, D.C.

Thank you!

The following individuals, companies, and foundations made generous contributions to Southwest Baltimore Charter School between May 1, 2010 and December 15, 2011. We gratefully acknowledge their annual fund gifts and special project grants, as well as gifts from our anonymous donors.

We also applaud the corporations, partners, parents, and friends who have contributed goods, services, and countless volunteer hours to help make SBCS a vibrant and thriving part of our community. Thank you!

Eric and Sarah Aasheim • The Abell Foundation • Debbie and Bill Adler • The Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc. • Peter and Anne Angevine • Anonymous (14) • AOL Matching Gifts Program • The Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers • Joshua Auerbach and Nicole Leistikow • John Avirett • B&O Railroad Museum • Baltimore City Forest Conservancy District Board • Baltimore Community Foundation • The Bank of America Matching Gifts Program • Barry Bannister • David and Cindy Bardwill • Barnes and Noble Booksellers • Anthony Pearce Batton • Randy Befumo* and Andrea O'Dell • Bruce Behrens • Bernita and Avon Bellamy • Nan Bentley • Richard Berndt • Willa Bickham and Brendan Walsh • Marc Blum • Roger Blumenthal, MD • Laura Boydston* • Abigail Breiseth* • Alan and Kristina Breiseth • Chris and Jane Breiseth • Greg Breiseth and John Linngren • Jeff and Suzy Breiseth • Kristin Breiseth • Lydia Breiseth and Marco Vargas • Steve and Cecily Breiseth • Frank and Elvira Brockman • Ted and Margaret Brockman • Will and Erika Brockman • Brown Advisory • Karen Brown* • Denise Budnitz • Marc Bunting • Tim Burdette • Mark Bussard • George Butwin • Howard and Judy Cardin • Beverly Carroll • Charity P. Enriquez and Francis Padolina • Ann K. Clapp • David and Allison Clapp • Judith and Keith Clark • Christie and Ward Coe • Betsy Condron • The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation • Patricia Cruz and Geoffrey Godfrey • J. Joseph and Barbara Curran • Timek Dah • Jane W. Daniels • Keith Davidson • Stan and Pattie Davies • Matthew Dent • Darlene De Remer • Vaishali Dharmadhikari • Claudia and Philip Diamond • The Community Resource Greening Network • Anna Dopkin • Mr. and Mrs. Edward Dunn III • Jeff Durkee • Jon Nathanson and Richard Feldman • Anne Ferris and Harry Greenberg • Gloria Ferris • Susan Ferris • Financial Advantage, Inc. • Sandra and Roger Fink • Matt Fleming • Kenneth and Ann Fligsten • Flynn and O'Hara Uniforms • Michael Foss • Ardebella Dean Fox • Donna Franklin • Nigel Frankson • Travis Freund • Fuel Up to Play 60 • Mary Chris Gay • Leanne Gibson • Lucille and Michael Gibson • Saul Gilstein • Douglas Godine, Jr. • The Goldseeker Foundation • The Goldsmith Family Foundation • Stephen Goldstein • Susan Grayson • William J. and Marilynn M. Grayson • Diretha and Clarence Harper • Michael Harrington • Dana Harris-Trovato • Sherita Harrison-Flowers* • Hardesty Capital Management • Tim Hathaway • Scott Headd • Saul Ewing • Eva Higgins • Don Hoelting • Robert Hopkins • Craig Horner • Jeff Huber • Leah and Marc Huete • Caroline Howard Hyman and Edward S. Hyman, Jr. • The I Do Foundation (In honor of Lauren and Andy Dale) • Investment Counselors of Maryland • Qadry Ismail • Robert Jacapraro • Jon Jacobson • Anne A. Jamison • Angineeki Jones • Brian Kaplan • Barbara Kent • Robert Killebrew • Gwen Landahl* • Michael Landweber and Gillian Flory • George Lebanidze and Hulya Sakarya • The Legg Mason Charitable Foundation • Legg Mason Capital Management • Jay and Jenny Leopold • Michael and Kathleen Lester • Priscilla Lightbourne • Scott and Meghna Lipcon • Sarah Littlepage and Phil Hildebrandt • The Lockhart Vaughn Foundation • Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation • MTB Investment Advisors • M&T Bank Foundation • The Lois and Philip Macht Family Philanthropic Fund • Ira Malis • Brigitte and Donald Manekin • Emily M. Manus* • Aimee Maron • Marshfield, Inc. • Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation • Cheryl Maynard and J. Anthony Mountain • Susannah Maynard • Samantha McLemore • Kristi and Charles McNeilly • Heather Menchinger • Miles and Stockbridge • Murray Miller • William Miller • William Miller IV • Sanford Morehous and Patty Hogan • Michael Morrill • Meredith Mowen • Thomas Mulligan • Jennifer and Scott Murphy • Jennifer Nail* • David Nelson • Mr. and Mrs. Paul V. Niemeyer • Betsy Nix* and Andy Imparato • James and Sheryl Norris • Patrick O'Brien • Dan and Abby O'Haver • Tricia O'Neill • Lee Owen • Carly Page • The Parks and People Foundation • Sam Peters • The Pfizer Foundation • Playworks • Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Plunkett • Michael Poggi • Powel/Shapiro Family Fund • Greta Pruitt • Fran and Debbie Rahl • Raymond James Investment Advisors • Lisa Rapuano • Elizabeth and Charles Reichelt • George Roche • Sandra Roche • Dorie Rosenband • Elisabeth Sachs and David Sheehy • E. Charles and Wendy Sanborn • Stephen Saunders • Southwest Baltimore Charter School PTO • Southwest Baltimore Charter School Students • David Schaffer • Jeff Schechter • Dave and Abby Schick • Sterling Partners • Stifel, Nicolaus & Co. • Jack Skeen • Susan Snyder and Paul Giragos • The Sowebo Landmark 5k • Rudy and Marjory Spraycar • Brian Stansky • Mary Elizabeth and Nevelt Steele, Jr. • Jaime and Kevin Stone • The Aaron Straus and Lillie Straus Foundation • Supporting Public Schools of Choice (SPSOC) • T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc. • T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation • Darline Terrell-Tyson* • The University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation, Inc. • The University of Maryland School of Law • Julie Vaughn • Venable LLP • Daniel and Kristin Verbic • Susan and Hutch Vernon • Hugh and Monica Warns • Betsey and Laddie Waters • The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation • Dagmar Wehling* • Wells Fargo Securities • Ashley Lee Williams • John T. Williams • Lena and Benjamin Woods • The Wright Family Foundation • Christy W. Wyskiel* • Louisa Wyskiel • Rhonda Wyskiel • Matthew Wyskiel • Jason Yeung

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our contributor list. Please accept our sincere apology for any errors in our listing and feel free to contact Marilyn Powel in the Development Office (443-984-3385 x231) to make corrections.

**Member of SBCS Board of Directors*

Visit us online at www.sbc school.org

WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER AND SETS US APART

This trimester, our fifth graders studied the Civil Rights Movement, guided by the question, "How does a committed group of people work together to create change?" Two students in Ms. Maynard's class wrote these reflections on what makes a community after their November visit to the Occupy Baltimore camp in McKeldin Square.

The 99% and SBCS

By Jillian

Just like the 99% is a community, we are too. The Occupy Wall Street protest is an organized committee of thousands of brave people who want to make a change in our world. This planet we all share will never be perfect, but we are getting there.

The definition of a community is a group of people who are working together. Like it is at SBCS, the Occupy Baltimore Protest was a community. The Protest was very organized. There were many different tents set up in the place, similar to the different classrooms that we have here. The protesters were split into committees. It's kind of like how the teacher splits you up into groups to solve a problem.

The Occupy Baltimore protesters were working together to create change. I think it's a good idea for people to work together because, as we learned from the Civil Rights Movement, it's easy to arrest one person, but when all of the people start fighting for what they believe in, it gets a little overwhelming. It's hard to keep everyone contained. If you throw a peanut at somebody, it doesn't hurt, does it? But when you throw 1,000 peanuts, it does hurt! So doing something in a group is more effective than doing something alone.

A group of people may decide to come together because they want to start something or create a change. Why would they want to create change? When something isn't right, you don't just sit there and let it keep happening! You can't be afraid. Why did Ms. Erika and Ms. Turi come together and start SBCS? Maybe they wanted to create change. Maybe they believed children weren't getting a good education and wanted to fix that. Now you can see how SBCS and the 99% relate. The Occupy Baltimore protesters were speaking out about their rights!

We can take a valuable lesson from this: Sometimes it doesn't work to refuse to help. We're better together than we are apart.

SBCS Meets Occupy Baltimore

By Jake

At SBCS we have a very strong and healthy community. Our class started to wonder what other communities are like. This fall, we went to see the Occupy Baltimore protesters and experience how their community worked.

The protesters are a group, like us, but while we have classes, they have what they call "committees." There are the cooking committee, the arts committee, and many more. This is like SBCS has a third grade, a first grade, and other grades. In both SBCS and the Occupy Baltimore Protest, splitting into smaller



5th Graders on a fieldwork visit to Occupy Baltimore.

groups helps. If you are better at cooking, to the cooking community you go. If you are a 1st grader, to 1st grade you go.

Another thing that makes the Occupy Baltimore community strong is that everyone gets a voice in what happens. It's the same with our community. We have a principal, but teachers get a voice. We have teachers, but the students have a voice.

I've learned that these two different communities, SBCS and Occupy Baltimore, are run similarly and both are strong.

FALL EXPEDITIONS SHOWCASE

By Ms. Turi Nilsson, Elementary Grades Director of Instruction and Ms. Jaime Stone, Middle Grades Director of Instruction

There's no better time to celebrate the hard work of everyone in our community than during the Fall Culminating Event, which was held on Friday, December 9th. Parents, students, faculty, and friends were treated to a musical performance by the K, 1st, and 2nd graders; performing arts presentations by our own Glee, Drum, and Dance classes; and, of course, classroom and hallway presentations that showcased the quality products created by every class.

Kindergarten, K-Wonders, and First Grades

The Kindergarten and 1st grade classes studied family roles and responsibilities, traditions, and what makes families unique. Students learned about developing ideas in writing and wrote about different family members in their artists' journals. Kindergarten students focused on writing and drawing with a purpose, forming letters, and spacing. Students in 1st grade focused on writing mechanics such as capitalization, punctuation, and spacing.

Second and Third Grades

Students in 2nd grade studied Eastern Woodland Indians as a way to learn more about the communities that were here before we arrived. They toured the Native American Museum in Washington, D.C., explored a trunk of artifacts, and read books and stories to develop their understanding of the Native Americans that lived in our

(See EXPEDITONS, continued on page 6)

I CAN DO THIS!

The SBCS community got an early holiday present from faculty and staff who shared some of their special talents during a week of mini-courses, December 12-15. Who knew that our amazing teachers could have so many hidden specialties? Students had a blast choosing from a list of 34 classes that included cooking, the history of the Philippines, fencing, computer graphics, tap dancing, rocket science, folk arts and crafts, chess, photography, classical rap, and internet safety. Here are just a few examples of what they got into:

In the library, Ms. Becky and Mrs. Lagatare's students were hard at work reading Leo Leonna books and making bookmarks using the author's brilliant cast of characters. Just down the hall, middle grades students watched vintage video of the Chicago Bears doing the Super Bowl Shuffle (and other great moments from professional football) while Mr. Sliwinski shared his encyclopedic knowledge of National Football League history. In Ms. Stone's office, children got their hands dirty painting holiday ornaments created from natural materials (and lots of glitter), while Miss Kendra and Ms. Siobhan taught budding artists to recycle magazines and newspapers into colorful jewelry and bowls. Miss Millie gave 3rd to 5th graders a chance to try their hands at photography while Miss Suthers and Miss Njeri taught K-2nd graders how to make masks and use them in storytelling.

So much knowledge passed between our multi-talented faculty and our army of eager learners that the building was literally humming. The students had a wonderful time learning new skills and stretching their imaginations and our faculty got to know children outside their regular classes. Thanks to everyone who made the mini-courses possible, especially Linn Thorburn, Susannah Maynard, Lena Woods,



8th Grader Jacquon suits up in Baltimore Ravens gear as part of the "Hey Rookie: The History of Professional Football" mini-course.

and Katie Fox, who, when they weren't planning their own mini-madness, coordinated the week of events.

THE SBCS LIBRARY GETS A MAJOR UPGRADE THANKS TO THE WEINBERG FOUNDATION

SBCS is one of four Baltimore City Public Elementary/Middle Schools that have been honored with a special grant from the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation. The Foundation and a group of more than 15 community and government partners will work with us to build, equip, and staff a completely renovated, state-of-the-art library that will be twice the size of our existing space. The Library Project grant will include new technology, reading materials, furniture, computers, and a "reading corner" where parents and guardians can visit and share the library with their children.

The December 8th Project launch was hosted at Moravia Park Elementary and included addresses by Senator Ben Cardin, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, City Schools CEO Andres Alonso, and the President of the Weinberg Foundation, Rachel Garbow Monroe. In thanking the Weinberg Foundation, Dr. Alonso commented, "Love of reading leads to love of learning, and a lifetime of self-

improvement and continuing education for our children and our families. The Baltimore Elementary/Middle School Library Project is focused on our areas of greatest need and designed for success."

In addition to the leadership provided by the Weinberg Foundation, the Elementary/Middle School Library Project includes the following partners: Baltimore City Public Schools, Diamond Book Distributors, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Office of the Mayor of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, the U.S. Department of Education, The Fund for Educational Excellence, the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers, the Baltimore Community Foundation, the Baltimore Sun, Comcast, Barnes and Noble, Wells Fargo, the Enoch Pratt Library, Kirk Design, Inc., Incite Creative, Inc., JRS Architects, the Parks and People Foundation, and the Maryland Food Bank.

The library design team, Librarian Becky Thomson, Executive Director Erika Brockman, and SBCS Director of Facilities Dan Sliwinski have begun discussions about the layout and we expect construction to begin during spring break. In the meantime, we will post progress reports on the website. Stay tuned!

(EXPEDITIONS, continued from page 4)

area. A Native American visitor came to the 2nd grade class to talk about the community as it is today and to discuss enduring customs. For their final product, the 2nd grade researched a topic of their own choosing related to Eastern Woodland Indians. They made an illustrated book that will be included in a trunk for Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. The 2nd grade expedition helped students learn about the connections between Native American communities and our community.

Third graders researched two groups of Native Americans in order to compare and contrast their communities in the past and in the present. One of their goals was to discover how a community of people changes over time. During their study of Eastern Woodland Indians, they did fieldwork at the Irvine Nature Center where they learned about native shelters, sign language, games, and foods. The second part of the 3rd grade expedition included a trip to the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. where they began their study of the Nez Perce tribe in the past and today. The 3rd graders practiced using watercolor paints to illustrate the important information they read about and studied during fieldwork. For their final product, students wrote essays and painted pictures for an illustrated book on the lives of members of the Nez Perce tribe then and now.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Students in 4th grade learned about how a group of people can come together to make change. They studied different time periods when people wanted to address unfairness, inequality, and the lack of human rights. They learned about the First Amendment and how it can be used to stand up for what we believe in and to fight for what needs to be changed. Students were tasked with writing an information report on the life of an individual who fought to change our country. This project helped them learn paragraph structure, how to write a topic sentence and support it with details, and how to write a concluding sentence. During their writing project, 4th graders also practiced working independently, being productive members of a learning community, and persevering through a difficult task.

The Fifth Grade explored the work of famous civil rights activists by asking the guiding question, “How does a committed group of people work together to create change?” They studied Elizabeth Cady



2nd graders take in the view of the harbor and Federal Hill at the World Trade Center during fieldwork.

Stanton’s efforts to gain rights for women and examined how exercising the freedoms found in the First Amendment eventually led to women gaining the right to vote. During their study, students completed fieldwork at the National Archives and the Sewell-Belmont House in Washington, D.C. They also visited the Occupy Baltimore protest to learn more about how a protest is organized and what might compel such a diverse group of people to come together. The 5th graders spent the second half of their expedition in expert groups researching activists throughout history. Through these case studies, the students made connections and drew conclusions about what inspires people to create change. They also learned about the kinds of leadership and work that are necessary to see that change comes to fruition.

Middle Grades Humanities

Humanities students focused on the guiding question, “What is the responsible use of power?”

During their expedition titled, “The Use of Power – Living in Hitler’s Shadow,” students studied Hitler’s rise to power, *kristallnacht*, and what life was like for the Jews of Europe during the Third Reich. Students analyzed four power roles (oppressor, victim, bystander, and rescuer) and found examples of each in various texts. With the support of interns from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), they created art and personal compositions about times in their lives when they experienced one of the power roles. Their fieldwork included a trip to the Baltimore Holocaust Memorial and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. While learning the social studies content, middle grades students practiced reading strategies such as questioning and determining importance in order to develop literacy skills. Students read biographies and historical fiction to help develop their skills in reading and responding to text.

Middle Grades Science

The middle grades have been studying the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and the principles of ecology. They learned how animals and plants have adapted over time for survival and the different roles that organisms play in the ecosystem. For their final product, they created a Visual Concept Map that shows the interdependence of the living and non-living parts of the Chesapeake Bay. Students read *The Hunger Games*, the first book in a science fiction trilogy by Suzanne Collins. Many students connected with the book and several went on to read the remaining books in the series.

Learning expeditions give students opportunities to create, perform and respond to a variety of subjects and to connect with broad academic content. At SBCS, we teach the arts using the same rigorous instructional practices used in language, math, and sciences. In addition to producing their own work, students enjoy opportunities to attend professional exhibitions and performances in the larger community.

We are so proud of the work our students have accomplished and of the experiences that give them a new way to look at the world. The quality products created by our students during the fall trimester are still on display in the hallways outside each classroom.



Race Organizer Babette Leshinsky and Mr. Geoff Godfrey with his gold medal for the Landmark 5K Race.

INAUGURAL SOWEBO LANDMARK 5K A HUGE SUCCESS

By Ms. Jessica Nizamoff, 2nd Grade Teacher

Another important community event was the First Annual Landmark 5K and Kids Fun Run which lit up Sowebo on October 2nd. Runners and walkers started at the University of Maryland Bio Park and wound their way through the neighborhood passing local landmarks (and SBCS partners) such as Hollins Market, the B&O Railroad Museum, and Carroll Mansion. The finish line was in Union Square where everyone enjoyed music and refreshments.

Many SBCS faculty members and students sponsored, volunteered, and participated in the Run. Race Coordinators were delighted with the turn-out and our community's level of commitment. "The Landmark 5K was designed to encourage our children and young adults to become more active in pursuit of a healthy life style," they said. "We're definitely moving in the right direction. Hopefully we'll grow every year."

The Race Committee named our school as one of two recipient organizations for proceeds from the event. Their \$1,000 grant will be used in our Fitness and Adventure programs to promote healthy activities that help prevent childhood obesity.

ACCOUNTABILITY: MAPPING ACADEMIC PROGRESS IN EVERY SBCS STUDENT

By Ms. Becky Thomson, Librarian

The entire SBCS community wants to learn as much as we can about each child's academic growth so we can celebrate his/her achievement and make well informed decisions about what works best for him/her in the classroom. Last year we took a big step toward assessing student growth by introducing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) evaluations.

MAP is a computerized test developed by and for teachers to track student growth and inform instruction. All SBCS students take MAP tests three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring. The results measure individual student progress in Mathematics, Reading, Language Usage, and Science.

During MAP testing, each student sits at his/her own computer station. The computer screen displays one test question at a time and students select their answers using the mouse or the keyboard. The difficulty of the test adjusts based on how each student performs on the questions they answer. When questions are answered correctly, the test moves on through higher levels of difficulty. If a student struggles in a particular area, the computer displays easier questions that help guide the student's progress.

Since SBCS students take MAP often and at their own rate, they experience less "test anxiety." Many students enjoy the

process because they are given multiple opportunities to improve their skills and experience success. That doesn't mean that the test isn't serious business. MAP assessments are challenging and dynamic. Results are available almost immediately so that teachers and students can work together to set achievement goals. When the test is given again, growth is measured and new goals are established.

MAP is aligned with Maryland State Department of Education curriculum standards and scores can be used with data from the Maryland School Assessments (MSA). Teachers also use other information on student achievement, such as classroom performance and portfolio review, to determine the specific areas where students excel and where they need additional support.

We have scheduled a special family orientation meeting for the spring when we'll have a full year of MAP data to share. At that time, we'll be able to give parents a complete overview of the program and answer specific questions about how MAP results relate to your child's classroom experience. In the meantime, please contact your child's teacher at 443-984-3385 if you want more information about MAP. You may also want to visit the Northwest Evaluation Association website (www.nwea.org) for details about the MAP process. There's also a link to the NWEA website under the Resources section of the SBCS website www.sbc school.org.



Where academics, family, and community come together.

1300 Herkimer Street, Baltimore, MD, 21223

443-984-3385 • 410-244-0410 Fax

www.sbc school.org

PRESORTED STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT NO. 5536

CHECK IT OUT!

By Ms. Becky Thomson, SBCS Librarian

Just last month we received a \$1,500 check from the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation to purchase books for our library. This is a family foundation based in Sacramento, California, so they aren't part of our neighborhood. Happily, one of the family members lives right here in Baltimore City and made a visit to our library. The result of our application was a wonderful grant that will bring a whole list of new titles to school for our children to enjoy. It's nice to know that our community support extends all the way out West!

I hope you read about the wonderful new library we are being given by the school system, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and community and government partners. Construction will begin in the spring and be completed by the fall. Walls will come down, doors will be moved, and a beautiful central reading area will be added. Our library footprint will increase and the interior design will be gorgeous! Watch for renderings of the new space in the hallways.

Finally, the best news of all is that our students of all ages are regularly visiting the library. I had 24 students come in after school one day to exchange or check out books. The crowds steadily increased during the December 5th-9th Book Fair which was an enormous success. Way to go young readers! Don't forget to return your borrowed books and check out more.



SCHOOL-WIDE TITLE I

This spring, school administrators will have the opportunity to present to the MD State Department of Education the reasons we should become a schoolwide Title I school. Right now, the Title I funds we receive are targeted to a small percentage of our school. We are seeking a schoolwide designation so that we can provide interventions across the school that will move all our children forward. We are working very hard to receive this designation, and have received positive feedback on our application.