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Save the Date!

This year's Big Cheese Reads Gala is taking place on April 29 at the InterContinental Hotel Boston from 6-9 PM.

Watch your mail for your invitation!

If you're interested in sponsoring our Gala, contact:

Karen Tefft at

ktefft@bostonpartners.org

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NEWS FLASH
Winter 2009

The "Mid-Term Report" Issue

Success Story: Interview with Math Initiative Volunteer, Jolene Singh

How did you come to be a Boston Partners in Education volunteer?

I worked with high school and college students at Kaplan before becoming a Boston Partners in Education volunteer. One of my Kaplan GMAT students wrote an essay about volunteering in the Boston Public Schools. Soon afterwards I saw the Boston Partners in Education advertisement outside of the Boston Public Library (near the Copley T station) and I applied to be a volunteer. I started working with the Math Initiative in late 2006.

What was your first experience volunteering in the Boston Public Schools like?

I really enjoyed working with Mrs. Diaz's fifth-grade class (at the Orchard Gardens k-8 School). I stayed on to work with those students for another year. And now that I live in Cambridge I have been making it over to the North End to work with Jennifer DiSarcina (I met her at the Orchard Gardens last year) and her fifth-grade class at the Eliot K-8 School. The teachers and the students have made the experience worthwhile.

Tell me a little bit about your background and about what you think you offer mentees.

I came into the program as someone who really enjoys working with students and using math. I work as a Student Researcher at the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program and I am a part-time Kaplan teacher. In the research lab, I use elementary math every day. The Investigations exercises allow students to have fun with math. Since I learned math in a more traditional atmosphere (largely through memorization and repetition), it's exciting to see how the concepts are taught in the Boston Public Schools today.

I am also not done with my math education. To complete the data interpretation and math modeling associated with my research projects, I have had to take calculus, linear algebra and classical geometry courses. The logic and analytical techniques I have learned in these classes directly apply to economics and engineering. Math can help students prepare for careers in accounting, science and medicine. The Math Initiative can help students take advantage of opportunities in these professions later on.

What do you gain from your experience as a volunteer?

I enjoy working with the students and teachers. It's a team effort. I am impressed by the commitment and dedication of the teachers and other volunteers. I like working with the Math Initiative because the program



provides students with an opportunity to master basic arithmetic, geometry and data interpretation

skills that they will need before tackling algebra, trigonometry and calculus in secondary school. The students also get help in class, which means that they are able to get the most out of the classroom lessons without feeling lost. This program is unique and I hope more public schools are able to adopt it.

What's different about teaching math?

Math involves procedural memory and critical thinking skills. These skills are crucial components of scientific investigation. Learning how to dissect a problem and apply basic math formulas to different situations will help students become more mature thinkers.

You recently hosted a training session for volunteers at Boston Partners in Education. How did you get into training? How does training help volunteers, teachers and students?

I wanted to make more of a contribution to Boston Partners and thought other volunteers might benefit from some of the techniques I have used with fifth and sixth grade students over the last few years. I appreciate the fact that it can be difficult to provide help for students "on the spot." The workshop was designed to provide volunteers with a "toolbox" for helping students work through problems dealing with proportions, fractions, decimals and percents. Of course, the session was more of a workshop than a lecture and it was great to hear some of the concerns and suggestions other volunteers had about working with students.

What is your favorite memory/biggest accomplishment as a volunteer academic mentor for Boston Partners in Education?

I love it when students say that math is their favorite subject. I suppose I also get excited when students enjoy the natural sciences (biology, chemistry and physics). I enjoy what I do and I hope that the students in the Boston Public Schools will have the math knowledge they need to enter the field of their choice—whether they want to be astronauts, teachers or lawyers.

Boston Partners in Education Welcomes New Board Member, Janet Smith



Boston Partners welcomes new board member Janet Smith, Managing Director, Putnam Investments. Janet, a resident of Natick, grew up in Wellesley, Massachusetts where she later earned a B.S. from Babson College. She went on to earn her designation as a certified public accountant (CPA) and began her career with the firm formerly known as Coopers and Lybrand.

It was fellow board member Vicki Benjamin, a partner at KPMG (and former Coopers & Lybrand colleague), who first introduced Janet to Boston Partners.

Janet resonated with the mission of Boston Partners, particularly seeing the many advantages her own son has in his school that are not always available in a large urban system.

“Boston Partners in Education is a high-quality, well-established and well-run organization,” Smith said. “It is a good fit for my interests and Putnam’s commitment to the community.” “Through Boston Partners I feel like I can make a meaningful impact on children’s lives as well as the community,” she added.

We extend a warm welcome to Janet Smith.

Annual Fund—Thank You for Your Support!

Boston Partners in Education would like to thank you for your support to our Annual Fund.

To date, the FY 2009 Annual Fund has generated 121 pledges and donations for a net total of just over \$80,000.

If you haven’t already, but would like to make a donation, please visit www.bostonpartners.org and give!

Meet the Winner of the iPod Touch

And the winner is!

Piper Orton (on the left) receives her iPod Touch from Boston Partners in Education’s Development Director, Judy Harrington.

Piper is the COO for Connors Center for Women’s Health and Gender Biology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

She was a first time donor to our Annual Fund.

Thank you everyone who entered the drawing and congratulations, Piper!



Boston Partners in Education Program Update by Erin McGrath

The first half of the school year is over, and Boston Partners in Education is excited to tell you what the students and volunteers have accomplished to date.

From October until the end of January, 1190 students in 52 schools have worked with a caring adult! Among the many accomplishments are sharing stories, learning math concepts, memorizing poetry and preparing for the MCAS.

Our 664 dedicated volunteers have spent a total of 4915 hours in the classroom already, with four and a half months of school to go.

Through our Big Cheese Reads Initiative, 352 students have been reached by 16 Big Cheese Readers in six middle schools. These students are inspired by the personal stories of the readers who attribute their current success to their educations and life-long love of reading.

Thank you to all of our current volunteers and donors who've made this possible! We're very excited about all of these accomplishments!

There's still plenty of time to make a difference for a Boston Public School student. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer academic mentor or sponsoring The Big Cheese Reads Initiative, contact us at: bostonpartners@bostonpartners.org.

Matt Allen Talks About Running the Boston Marathon® for Boston Partners in Education!



Have you ever run a Marathon before?

When I joined the team, I had never run even a double-digit distance before. This will not only be my first marathon, but my first road race as well.

What motivated you to run the Boston Marathon to raise money for Boston Partners in Education this year?

As an AmeriCorps* Vista volunteer, I started my service with Boston Partners in Education in September. I began volunteering in the Power Lunch program shortly afterward. I've been impressed with the passion that my coworkers display and the effectiveness of Boston Partners' programs. I think the organization does great work and sincerely cares about its mission; I'm honored to support such a noble cause.

Tell me about the Boston Partners Marathon team.

Our team is 15 runners strong. We all have strong connections to Boston and most of us are local runners. We have a good mix of experienced runners among our beginner runners. Everyone on the team is very passionate about Boston Partners in Education's work, and the majority of us are deeply involved in education—either as a career or as volunteers through Boston Partners in Education. For many of us, the Marathon Charity program is not a one and done deal and we'll continue to support Boston Partners long after we cross the finish line in April.

How is training going? I hear you have a coach this year!

Training has been exciting! It is challenging to put in the necessary miles every week, and at times it can be difficult finding the time and staying motivated. We are lucky though, because no one is doing this alone. Not only is Coach Rich Muhr helping to keep us running, but we are also working with Bottom Line and the Esplanade Association, two other official charities of the Boston Marathon. Working together has been a wonderful experience. Every other week we complete our long runs as a group, which makes the ordeal much more tolerable (almost to the point of being enjoyable), and the support and camaraderie among the teams has been amazing. We recently crossed the half-marathon point distance-wise, and 26.2 miles doesn't seem so far away.

What is the overall fundraising goal for the Boston Partners in Education Marathon team?

Every runner who participates in the Boston Marathon Charity Program is required to raise at least \$3,000. We're hoping to greatly exceed that goal! As a team, we're hoping to raise more than \$75,000—or \$5,000 per runner.

How can people donate?

If you'd like to support our team, you can mail a check to Boston Partners in Education at 44 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210. Be sure to indicate what the donation is for! Additionally, you can make online donations at www.firstgiving.com/bostonpartners.

Can I donate in general or to a specific runner?

You can do both. Every runner has a personal firstgiving website set up to receive donations. These sites are listed, along with short runner profiles, at bostonpartners.org. While general donations are greatly appreciated, as a runner I can say that seeing new donations on our personal webpages is a great source of motivation!

Good luck to Matt! We wish you much success in running your first marathon for our Boston Partners in Education Marathon Team. If you have words of encouragement for Matt, he can be reached at mallen@bostonpartners.org and you can support his run at www.firstgiving.com/mattallen.

12009 Big Cheese Reads Gala Honorees

Planning is underway for the 2009 Big Cheese Reads Gala. This year's Gala will take place on April 29 from 6-9 PM at the Inter-Continental Hotel Boston. Watch your mail for invitations.

We are pleased to announce this year's honorees, Gerald and Kate Chertavian. Both have been "Big Cheeses" and have attended our gala and supported our cause in the past. Gerald and Kate's work with top national nonprofit Year Up and its Boston program is a testament to their commitment to the youth of our community.

If you're interested in sponsoring our Gala, please contact Karen Tefft at ktefft@bostonpartners.org.

Big Cheese Reads—On Our Way to 100 Readers in Our 5th Year!

The Big Cheese Reads Initiative, celebrating its 5th anniversary this year, is more than half way to achieving its goal of reaching a record number of 100 readers.

Kicking off the 5th year was Mayor Thomas M. Menino and the roster so far includes Keith Lockhart; Boston School Committee leader Rev. Gregory Groover; Heidi Brooks from John Hancock; Juan Carlos Morales from BNYMellon; humorist Loretta LaRoche and Ray Magliozzi from PBS's *Car Talk*—among many others.

If you're interested in becoming a Big Cheese Reader, contact Karen Tefft at ktefft@bostonpartners.org.



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44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210
617.451.6145
617.482.0617 (fax)

Letter from a Volunteer

Boston Partners in Education's Recruitment & School Volunteer Program Manager received this letter recently in response to her monthly check-in email with volunteers:

Hello Hillary:

I am having a great time in the reading/literacy classroom of Miss Donovan at the William Blackstone Community School in the South End. She is so easy to work with and it's a real pleasure to have someone so welcoming and open to having me do such a variety of things. I have been there for 6 Friday mornings so far and it is a great experience to be working with 2nd graders on their reading skills. The kids signed a Valentine for me last Friday and one of the boys made one specially for me and said "thanks for being my friend." These are the great rewards that come from teaching kids who are eager to read better and who enjoy having someone from the outside come into their lives and help them reach for higher goals in their reading levels. It has been a great experience for me and I look forward to the next 4 months of school.

All the best,
Bob Page