

King's team representing USA

Stephanie King, former teacher of the year and National Board Certified Teacher, created a team of 4 students and one alternate to compete in a nationwide contest sponsored by UNICEF to be the USA entry for the student G-8 conference and their entry won. They were selected from the entire country to be the student reps at the G-8 conference which will be held in Italy in July. The group will travel to New York City for orientation the weekend of May 15-17 and then to Italy sometime in the first two weeks of July. They will have the opportunity to meet with the student reps from the other countries at G-8. The group calls themselves the GLOBAL PIONEERS and their application spoke of making the planet "green." Congratulations to Stephanie King and her students!



Stephanie King with her winning students.

Upcoming Events

MAY 2009

- 16 Safe Schools South Florida workshop
- 20 School Board meeting
- 21 Council of Stewards meeting

UTD SUMMIT CHALLENGE: Create change through actions

Over 200 people attended UTD's fourth annual Education Summit on Saturday, May 2, 2009. The event was hosted by Westland Hialeah High School, a state-of-the-art high school led by principal Alberto Rodriguez.

The day started with a lively panel discussion moderated by UTD President Karen Aronowitz. Panel members included Alberto Carvalho, M-DCPS Superintendent; Jacqui Colyer, Regional Director for the Department of Children and Families; Tracey Johnson, Staff Consultant for the Columbus Education Association in Ohio; Gepsie Metellus, Co-founder and Executive Director of Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center; Jeff Murphy, Director of Instruction, Florida Virtual Schools; and Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky, Dean of University of Miami's School of Education. Elinor Adler, immediate past President of the Broward County Council PTA could not attend due to a family emergency.

Aronowitz challenged the panelists on various topics ranging from what new

models for public education might look like to creating opportunities to engage stakeholders at new levels.

The goal of this year's summit was for each participant to leave with a new awareness of the many options for collaborative action with a focus on planning and implementing action steps in their own school, community, or family life.

Breakout sessions stimulated discussions on Quality Teaching Practices; Innovative and Effective Schools; Teaching Excellence Partnerships; and School-Home Connections.

A common theme emerged during the panel discussion. Panelists challenged participants to use their voice as educators in articulating the need for change and to challenge current practices. Echoing this theme, Tracey Johnson emphasized that educators must, "Change our mindset in order to change our role."

Gepsie Metellus added, "If we (as educators) were in business, we would

(continued on page 2)



(L to R) Ingrid Robledo, 2009 Education Summit Chair with Summit panel members: Jeff Murphy, Karen Aronowitz, Tracey Johnson, Gepsie Metellus, Jacqui Colyer, Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky and Alberto Carvalho.

A Teacher's Viewpoint on the "Target Tallahassee" Experience

by Myriam Garcia, Amelia Earhart Elementary

"Target Tallahassee" provided me, along with other UTD members, the opportunity to experience the legislative processes live in action. During the three days spent in Tallahassee, twenty UTD members walked through the halls of our state capitol to get one message across—Preserve the quality of public education so that our future generation can be adequately prepared with the necessary skills to compete in tomor-

row's job force. And that we did. The legislators we visited listened to our pleas, as we recounted how the cuts already made to public education have affected the classrooms, and the negative impact that further cuts will have on the future livelihood of our children.

Target Tallahassee was an enriching experience. The bond that grew among 20 individuals from different backgrounds

and walks of life in pursuit of one common goal - to seek quality education for all our children - will not be forgotten.

I am very proud of UTD for their never-ending quest to improve the quality of education in our district and for their efforts toward increasing the respect that hard-working teachers and education support personnel deserve for their daily efforts in the classroom.

QUICK UPDATE ON FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE BUDGET

Largely due to the efforts of our UTD and FEA lobbyists and the Target Tallahassee participants, we were collectively able to keep several bad policy ideas from becoming law. Successes included defeating the attack of tenure, class size, unionism and unfunded mandates like the high school graduation bill. It's truly unfortunate that our state has to measure success by how many bills were stopped or killed this legislative session.

Education Funding: Overall funding for Florida's public education system was maintained and not cut. However, overall funding for Florida's schools is down since 2007, and our state will still be 47th compared to other states for funding of public education.

Pay Teachers First bill: It would have forbidden school districts from not fulfilling their contracts with teachers to balance their budgets. While it barely got off the ground, the intent of some of its provisions, like putting strings on salaries of school board members, superintendents and district administrators, made it to the compromise education budget - including tying administrators' salaries to the average pay of beginning teachers, something many districts already do.

Tenure: The original bill would have removed the "Due Process" steps that provide teachers with some protections from being fired without cause. The proposal cleared the House but died in the Senate.

UTD SUMMIT CHALLENGE: Create change through actions

(continued
from page 1)

look at our clients' interests to be sure that what we offer our clients meets their needs."

Some of the most grounded comments came from panel member Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky. He challenged the current system to invest in early education and to end the culture of fear, saying, "Educators thrive in an effective, reflective and supportive environment that is not driven by fear. When fear prevails, nobody is creative." Dr. Prilleltensky also suggested a need for systems to be put into place for educators to support what they learn in professional development once they return to their worksite.

UNITED TEACHERS OF DADE



Superintendent Alberto Carvalho advocated for adequate funding for all aspects of public education from class size to professional development, calling on the Florida Legislators to, "Get serious and stop

the deliberate underfunding of public education in our state." He also advocated for accountability and involvement of parents in their child's education.

Participants left the summit with a wallet size card that gave them action steps to take on behalf of public education.

The sponsors for this year's summit were Creative Benefits, FEA, NEA, ING, VALIC, Colonial Bank, and American Fidelity Assurance Company.

ESP SCHOLARSHIPS

FEA is offering ten \$1,000
scholarships for UTD Educational
Support Personnel



All application materials
must be submitted
in hard copy by 5:00 p.m.
on Monday, August 31,
2009.

For rules and guidelines
www.feaweb.org/cms/ESP+Scholarship/130.html

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Reading Strategies to Remember



1. Quickly number all the paragraphs in the focused reading passage.
2. Read the title of the passage.
3. "If applies" Look at all pictures, graphs and charts and read the captions.
4. Paint a picture in his/her mind and make connections while reading the passage.
5. Read the entire reading passage, and then read all answer choices before selecting an answer choice.
6. Think about what choices are just not true; and cross those choices out. (*This strategy will allow the reader(s) to eliminate at least two of the answer choices, leaving only two answer choices to choose from.*)
7. Read and understand all instructions before choosing an answer.
8. Check responses by rereading the passage to clarify the answer choice. (*Remember, details from the passage may be found in the answer choice, but may not necessarily be the correct answer.*)
9. Carefully read and follow instructions for all words and phrases written in bold print and italicized text.
10. Carefully "Think all Answers Through."
11. "Narrow Answer Search": Talk to the text (Silently in his/her mind). Ask questions, Revisit the text, and Re-Read to find the best possible answer from the remaining answer choices. Once he/she has narrowed the answer choice down to one best possible answer based on the reading passage, then bubble in that answer choice.
12. Go directly to the specified place in the passage anytime the author directs the readers' attention to a particular part of the story, reread the text, and then choose the best possible answer.
13. Proceed to answer the remaining questions and come back to the questions that are challenging. Remember to answer all questions.
14. Be alert to the fact that authors sometime include the answer to a prior question in another answer choice.
15. Use his/her time wisely.
16. Stay Focused.

Sheila Mitchell
3rd grade teacher
Poinciana Park Elementary

Teachers, heroes every day

by Karen Aronowitz

UTD President



The following message was one I presented at the April 22 School Board Meeting in response to an Agenda Item on Teacher Appreciation Week.

Good evening. I am Karen Aronowitz, President of United Teachers of Dade. Today, the Board recognized our administrative assistants and our teachers in the acknowledgement of Administrative Professionals Week and Teacher Appreciation Week. I, too, want to speak about teachers and ESPs. I want everyone to hear about teachers through these words. Columbine. 9/11. Lockdown.

Where are our teachers when catastrophe occurs? With our students. We are now familiar with the drills and security measures, the rehearsals against the unimaginable. But even before the drills and the security measures, even before we became practiced responding to terror, our teachers acted. They acted out of the basic humanity that is part and parcel of being a teacher: the greater concern with the safety and well-being of the students in a teacher's care than concern about self. We saw a teacher who offered his body to shield the students in his care at Columbine. We saw teachers leading little ones away from schools during 9/11. Here at home, when we didn't know where the attacks would happen next, we saw teachers remaining with their students as terrified parents rushed to schools to pick up their children. We stayed with our students because we trusted that another teacher would not abandon ours.

So teachers are heroes, everyday heroes who go about work with children in ways large and small that are taken for granted by our communities as just part of the drill. Unheralded. Unacknowledged. In truth, unappreciated.

UTD has come before this Board on behalf of our students many, many times. We have come to demand that art and music are the right of every student in our system, not an add-on or extra, but central to an appropriate education

for all children. We have come before the Board to say that a world-class education requires bilingual education. We have come before the Board to say that recess cannot be withheld from young children, that physical education is part of a total education. We have marched with the PTA, have rallied throughout the state, and demanded proper funding from our state. We have also made demands of this Board – demands for transparency, for access to public records, and for support of our teachers and ESPs in their mission – the education of our students.

We have little confidence left in this District and this Board. We are asked to sacrifice over and over again, and when we say that the sacrifice is too deep, that we cannot sustain the cut, that we, your teachers and ESPs are not a separate class of taxpayers that must fund our schools through give-backs of our modest wages, we are treated as enemies. We are vilified and ridiculed from the dais. We are labeled obstructionist when all we call for is the truth, and honoring promises already made.

I and my fellow officers are always available to talk with Board members and the Superintendent. If you are as dedicated to public education as we are, you will not allow our talks to fail. But our willingness to talk is not the same as saying yes to each additional loss we have been asked to bear.

We stand united as teachers and education support professionals. We are steadfast in our belief in the value of a public education and those who are on the frontline for children every day. We look forward to a time when we can be certain that our superintendent and our school board supports the work of the professionals we honor today.

A day of professional growth for ESPs



Education and Support Professionals from Miami-Dade County: Natalie Moton, Esmeralda Gray, Cornelius Hines, Mildred Slocum and Dorothy Gatlin.

The Florida Education Association (FEA) Program and Policy Council presented its 2009 Education and Support Professional (ESP) Regional Conference on April 18, 2009 at the University of Phoenix Cypress Creek Learning Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

ESPs attending from Miami-Dade and Broward County Public Schools enjoyed a day of professional growth, leadership and knowledge. It was also a "Get to Know Your Neighbor Day."

Topics of discussion included Florida's Economic Crisis, Bullying, and Mandated

Reporting and Classification Conversations. Members also participated in large group break-out sessions and discussed topics including: First Class Member, First Class Leader, It All Starts With A Conversation, and Fighting Privatization.

UTD member Mildred Slocum said, "I thought this was one of the best conferences for ESPs. This training was really worthwhile."

Cornelius Hines, UTD member and Paraprofessional, commented on the conference saying, "It was educational, informative and enlightening!"



UTD members, sign up for

Summer Internships

Learn the nuts & bolts operations during a three-day internship at UTD headquarters



What: UTD Member Summer Internship

When: June 16 - 18, 2009
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Where: UTD Headquarters
2200 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida

Who: UTD Members
(limited to the first 24 members who RSVP by June 5, 2009)

Master Plan Points will be offered to all summer internship participants.

RSVP to Beth Hernandez at 305-854-0220, ext. 234 or email Beth@utofd.com.
RSVP Deadline is June 5, 2009.

INSIDE...
2 Target Tallahassee
experience
3 Teachers, heroes
every day
4 ESP training
conference

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