

# Shabazz Updater, April 2009



## Heart - Heritage - High Expectations

### MEAP Performance Improves In Reading And Math

Shabazz Public School Academy's students made remarkable gains on the statewide MEAP assessment in reading and mathematics. Notable mathematics and reading increases were made by grades 3, 4, and 6. For example, 85% of grade 3 students scored at the proficient or advanced level in reading; they scored at the same level (85%) for mathematics. Our fourth graders performed at the 80% proficient or advanced levels for both



Mr. Mahan's High Achieving 6th Graders

math and reading. Sixth graders received outstanding scores in reading (77%), writing (82%), and mathematics (86%). The sixth grade math performance was the Academy's highest MEAP mathematics performance to-date. Mr. Mahan is the 6th grade instructor.

### Shabazz/YMCA Pact

Shabazz Academy and Lansing's Westside YMCA recently entered into an agreement that allows Shabazz Public School Academy students to use the Y's facilities during school hours on selected dates. While the students will have access to a wide variety of activities, learning to swim will be the primary focus of their visits. Thanks to Marcus Kirkpatrick,

Director of the Westside YMCA, for his assistance in the creation of this agreement.

### Les choses vont bien à Shabazz!

If you speak French, you know that the fore-mentioned expression means " Things are going wonderful at Shabazz!" This expression aptly describes how Shabazz students have taken to heart their French instruction. Presently, all of our K-6 students take French; it has become an instant hit with our students. It is not unusual these days to see our students trying out their mastery of French on their



Mr. Diouf

school peers and staff.

We owe our successful French language instruction to Mr. Abdoulaye Diouf. He hails from

Senegal where French is the national language. In addition to teaching French, Mr. Diouf sponsors an after- school French/German language club. An accomplished drummer and dancer, Mr. Diouf's passion for French keeps his students at rapt attention with drama and humor as he extolls the joys of speaking French.

# READING MONTH CELEBRATION



Mr. J. J. Jackson reads to third graders as Ms. Miller, Shabazz Reading Specialist, observes.

## Reading Month Highlights

Across the nation, schools celebrated reading during the month of March. Organized by our reading specialist, Ms. Miller, Shabazz Academy's reading month celebration started with two big kick-off rallies in the school's gym. At the opening event students and staff had the opportunity to learn of the many exciting reading related activities at Lansing's downtown Main Library. Lynx, the cool and friendly cat, came along to greet the students and staff and to encourage them to use the Lansing Library System to widen their world and increase their knowledge by utilizing the many free features and services of the various branches.

Students in several classes also had the opportunity to have Mr. J. J. Jackson, a blind, yet talented and successful person visit them. Mr. Jackson shared with students the challenges and opportunities of blindness. However, throughout his remarks, Mr. Jackson encouraged students to never let anyone deter them from achieving their dreams of becoming successful. He encouraged them to take advantage of all opportunities that come their way.

The highlight of Mr Jackson's Shabazz visit came when Mr. Jackson shared with Ms. Jones's and Mr. Sehvela's fourth graders the fact that he and Stevie Wonder were long-time best friends. As he discussed his relationship with Stevie Wonder, Mr. Jackson played a video showing Stevie Wonder driving his Rolls Royce ( a gift from Oprah Winfrey) as he ( Mr. Jackson) sat in the back seat. Mr. Jackson ended his visit by making a call on his cell phone to Stevie Wonder. Needless to say, everyone went "WOW" when Mr. Wonder answered the phone and sang to them!



Lansing Public Library's Lynx greets Shabazz 6th graders.

# CHAMPIONS



The Shabazz Fourth Grade Basketball team had a spectacular season this year! Our team not only won the year-end tournament, but we were also the league's undefeated champions! The dedication and heart of this team shone throughout the season, as we met and defeated all comers.

Besides our weekly victories, our basketball team also learned a lot this season. We learned that hard work pays off. Teammates learned that working together and always hustling can reap big rewards. We learned that working together as a unit is the best way to proceed. Also, hustling, playing "deny" defense, and passing to the open player holds huge dividends for a winning game.

I would like to thank the parents of our team. You were very supportive, and you adapted many times to changes in our practices. You filled the stands to cheer us on.

A big thank you also goes to our squad of cheerleaders who cheered us on during the games. I also want to thank Dr. Cain, Mrs Wills, and Mr. Edwards, who were always willing to help in any way possible. Thanks!

**(Article submitted by Mr. Svehla, team coach and fourth grade teacher)**



Mrs. Rina Risper

## Support Our Supporters

In this edition of the Shabazz Updater, we salute Mrs. Rina Risper, owner, editor, and publisher of the **New Citizens Press** newspaper. Mrs. Risper, along with her husband Frank, have two children enrolled in Shabazz Academy; a third child, who is now a student at Eastern High School and columnist for **New Citizens Press**, also attended Shabazz Academy. Mrs. Risper is very supportive of Shabazz Academy as she is always providing us with opportunities to move our students forward. For example, this year was the second successive year that she arranged a tour for our students to the State Capitol. Additionally, she has arranged and hosted trips for students to Lansing's Old Town to talk with business owners about their individual businesses and how one starts a business. She has identified merchants and politicians who have supported the school

with books, clothing, and toys for students, especially during the Christmas/ Kwanzaa holidays.

Last year, Mrs Risper arranged, through **MO's Barbershop**, free hair cuts for students. She also frequently uses her personal funds to buy clothing and school items for our students. Never at a lost to help the school, Mrs. Risper has even been known to provide free edible treats for staff and students! For all the many things that she does, as a citizen, and as a parent, for Shabazz Academy, we are truly thankful and encourage our supporters to support her.

## Computer Lab Improvements

New hard drive units were recently installed in the Shabazz Academy Computer Lab, thereby giving students and staff more powerful means of accessing the internet. Funds for this upgrade came from a recently received e-rate grant. Shabazz's computer lab is used widely by the school for student assessments, class assignments, and computer-based instruction.

# In Celebration of Black History Month

Shabazz's African Dancers And Drummers Perform for Lansing City Council

