



LaSalle Elementary school students met with Nacer Khemir, writer / filmmaker.

NEWSLETTER  
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## REACHING OUT TO WASHINGTON'S SCHOOLS

Each year nearly 300 students in six high-need DC public schools learn to speak French, meet artists and performers from the French-speaking world, sample French pastries, and, for a short time, step into another culture. The Anne Bujon Educational Initiative (ABEI), established in 2002 and named in honor of the wife of former French Ambassador François Bujon de l'Estang, offers students in grades 3 through 6 a tangible connection to the French way of life. Each week the Alliance Française de Washington sends native French-speaking teachers into these schools to offer a lively mix of rigorous language training and cultural enrichment. Cultural outings supplement the classroom experience. The program is expanding horizons, raising aspirations, and opening doors to a wider world of international understanding.

### ANNE BUJON EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

#### A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

In May 2007, the Alliance Française de Washington and the District of Columbia Public Schools concluded a Memorandum of Understanding establishing shared goals and reciprocal commitments. Also during the past year, Alliance staff and DC school administrators implemented a rational sequence of ABEI classes to ensure a pedagogically correct progression from elementary school to middle school language programs.

At a sparkling event at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in June 2007, the Alliance Française was recognized with the prestigious

Nonprofit Global Education Partner Award presented by the DC Center for Global Education and Leadership in cooperation with DC Public Schools. In commending the Anne Bujon Educational Initiative, Director Sally Schwartz said the program is proving that "global citizenship is not just for some; it's for all."

The Alliance Française staff is coordinating closely with the office of Chancellor Michelle Rhee to ensure that the Anne Bujon Educational Initiative is fully supported by its participating schools and integrated into the wider elementary school curriculum.

*"The ABEI program has broadened the awareness of our students to the French culture and inspired many of them to pursue French when they enter into Middle School."*

*Leonard Massie, Principal,  
LaSalle Elementary School*



*Randle Highlands elementary students practicing their soccer skills.*



## OPENING DOORS TO A WIDER WORLD

The Anne Bujon Educational Initiative is not only about irregular verbs and dictées. Through classroom visits by French musicians and artists, theater workshops, sports clinics, and forays to French restaurants, Washington’s children are learning that French rocks. Among the highlights of the past year’s cultural activities are:

**Manuel Wandji**, a singer, percussionist, and drummer from French-speaking Africa and in Washington to perform for the Smithsonian Associates at the Francophonie Festival, made time to stop by LaSalle Elementary School. He electrified students with his distinctive blend of traditional African and contemporary urban music. As part of the event, the kids enjoyed a workshop with famous African dancer Merlin Nyakam.

**The Magic Lantern** is a French 19th-century precursor to the modern slide projector, and all of this year’s ABEI students enjoyed this extraordinary entertainment created with lenses, hand-painted slides, lights, movement, and music.

**Nacer Khemir** is a noted filmmaker born in Tunisia who recently visited Washington for the C’est Chic! film festival. Mr. Khemir stopped by LaSalle to chat with students for nearly two hours (all in French!) about movies and creativity.

Cool French soccer coaches from DC Soccer ran two clinics at Randle Highlands Elementary School. In

addition to practicing their passing, heading, and trapping techniques, kids practiced their French soccer vocabulary and learned about the importance of soccer in French life.

**Dee Dee Bridgewater**, in Washington to perform at the Kennedy Center, is a noted African-American jazz vocalist who makes her home in Paris. A long-time supporter of ABEI, Ms. Bridgewater was back again this year, this time at Ketcham Elementary School, where she sang for students and talked about the importance of aiming high.

**Le Noël des Enfants** was again a marathon of back-to-back holiday parties at the Alliance Française. With traditional French treats from the kitchen, songs, games, and cartoons, all our ABEI kids and teachers celebrated the season and even got to perform their own skits.

**Monica Neagoy**, the French-speaking mathematician for kids who hate mathematics, visited ABEI classrooms to help students find the power and beauty behind the numbers. Dr. Neagoy has taught at Georgetown University, served as head judge for the prestigious Mathcounts Foundation, and consulted for PBS and the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

“ABEI c’est l’histoire d’une porte et d’une fenêtre.

Eux, une porte un passage, une entrée un miroir, un autre monde, un mode de compréhension des autres.

Moi, un être, une langue une fenêtre, un regard vers l’ailleurs, la rencontre de sons et d’images, un agrandissement du temps et du terrain de jeu.

ABEI, c’est nomade face à monade.”

François Noverraz  
Professeur de Français

“...principals, teachers, students and parents are enthusiastic, grateful, and turned on to French. I wish we could clone the Alliance Française.”

Sally Schwartz, Director of International Programs District of Columbia Public Schools

## GENEROUS FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

The Alliance Française is grateful to the many friends of its school outreach effort. The program is entirely funded by an annual gala benefit dinner hosted by the French Ambassador. Last year Ambassador and Madame Jean-David Levitte opened their residence for a wonderful dinner on Valentine's Day, and this year Ambassador Pierre Vimont has graciously offered to do the same for an April event. Former Ambassador and Madame Bujon de l'Estang will be special guests at this year's benefit dinner, which is chaired by Alliance board members Mr. and Mrs. Philip W. Pillsbury, Jr. Our much-appreciated corporate sponsors have most recently included AREVA Enterprises, CIC Banque Transatlantique,

the Minneapolis Foundation, the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, The Folger Fund, Normanstone Foundation, and D. Porthault.

A special event supporting the Anne Bujon Educational Initiative is planned for this summer at the Alliance maison on Wyoming Avenue. A photographic exhibit of ABEI students, teachers, outings, and events will be on display beginning in June. A silent auction will accompany the exhibit and offer to the highest bidder two weeks of eight-hours-a-day intensive French instruction at the renowned French Institute in Villefranche-Sur-Mer. All proceeds from the silent auction will support the ABEI program.



*Jo Wilson students at the Alliance Française enjoying the Twister Game during Christmas parties*



*Student focused on studies*



Anne Bujon Educational Initiative

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The Alliance Française is the largest network of French language and cultural centers in the world. There are 1,200 chapters in 112 countries serving 400,000 students. Founded in 1949, the Alliance Française de Washington offers French classes for all levels, numerous cultural events throughout the year, and a multi-media library open to all members. For more information visit [www.francedc.org](http://www.francedc.org).



*Dr. Monica Neagoy showing a math trick to the students at Lasalle Elementary school*

### OUR SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS

The ABEI program is active in six elementary schools with extraordinary principals:

<b>Northeast Washington</b>	<b>Principal</b>
Burroughs	Linda Little
LaSalle	Leonard Massie
River Terrace	Richard Patterson
J.O. Wilson	Cheryl Warley

<b>Southeast Washington</b>	<b>Principal</b>
Randle Highlands	Sheron Colston
Ketcham	Joyce Grimes

We look forward to our continued collaboration with DC Public Schools and the dynamic administrators who tirelessly support the program and help smooth the way, Claudia Bezaka, World Language Coordinator, and Sally Schwartz, Director of International Programs.

Our skilled and dedicated Alliance Française teachers bring French style and vibrancy into these urban classrooms. Although Alice Milbrink has moved on to a demanding career at the World Bank, she continues to make room in her life for the kids of Washington's low-income communities. "Being part of the ABEI program for nearly four years now, I have succeeded in establishing

a unique connection with my students at River Terrace." Dalynda Benassou, who completed her education in Algeria and has taught in France, now teaches at LaSalle and Ketcham. "Although I am the teacher, every visit is personal enrichment for me," she says of her experience. François Noverraz, sees the ABEI program as a series of doors and windows of exchange and discovery for himself and his students at Burroughs ES. Sylvain Cornevaux, our Deputy Director and Cultural Manager who brings energy and vision to the Alliance staff who taught the last school year at Burroughs.

Sophie Medodovic, Children's Program Manager, leads the ABEI program at the Alliance and brings to her position years of teaching in Alliance classes and Washington schools. Herself the mother of school-age children, Sophie is working to build an ABEI program with a "strong curriculum so the kids can go on to middle school with a basic level of French."



*Students at work at Burroughs Elementary School.*