



Newsletter
Spring 2010

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Alliance Française Educational Initiative

A PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO YOU! MERCİ TO OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

L'Alliance Française Educational Initiative is made possible thanks to the generous support of French Ambassador Pierre Vimont, who graciously hosts the annual AFEI benefit dinner. Among the contributors to the 2009 and 2010 events* are:

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The Florence Gould Foundation

L'Alliance Française Educational Initiative is delighted to have received during the past year two major gifts totaling \$20,000 from the Florence Gould Foundation. This funding supports the educational initiative's cultural programming. The Florence Gould Foundation is devoted to French-American exchange and friendship. Born of French parents in San Francisco in 1895, Florence Gould lived both in France and the United States and demonstrated a passionate commitment to arts and letters. At her death in 1993, she left the bulk of her fortune to the foundation bearing her name. Many of the cultural workshops and outings that are benefiting AFEI students are funded with this generous contribution.

Opening Doors to a Wider World

L'Alliance Française Educational Initiative (AFEI) is an expression of the long-term commitment of l'Alliance Française de Washington to the local community. Established in 2002 thanks to Anne Bujon, wife of a former French Ambassador to the United States, this initiative provides a tangible connection to the French language, culture, and way of life for several hundred third, fourth, and fifth graders in high-need public elementary schools in the District of Columbia.

Each week l'Alliance Française sends its native French-speaking teachers into city classrooms to offer a lively mix of rigorous language training and cultural enrichment. Our committed teachers bring with them the energy and fresh perspectives that encourage children to aspire.



Alliance Française Teacher Kevin Gaudry-Smith at Randle Highlands

FRENCH LANGUAGE TEACHING

MIDDLE SCHOOL FRENCH PROGRAM LAUNCHED THANKS TO L'ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

BRAVO! French is “the” foreign language of choice at the new Burroughs Education Campus in Northeast Washington. With the expansion of the elementary school to the middle grades, and thanks to the headmaster’s strong commitment, l’Alliance/DC Public Schools partnership has established an extended and comprehensive French language program. Now, Burroughs students can enter high school having completed six years of French.

Providing elementary school language classes that feed directly into a middle school French program has been a long-term objective of AFEI. For l’Alliance/DC Public Schools

partnership, the new instructional sequence at Burroughs is a major achievement.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SING TO THE TUNE OF CAROLE FREDERICKS

The Carole D. Fredericks Foundation held a second successful professional workshop at l’Alliance Française in September 2009. The foundation is named for Carole Fredericks, an African-American singer/songwriter who put her distinctive rhythm and blues signature on French pop music of the 1980s. Not since Josephine Baker has the French public held an American black woman in such high esteem.

Since the singer’s death in 2001, Fredericks’s dedication to overcome economic, racial and cultural adversity through music has found its expression in the foundation. Foundation president and workshop leader Connie Fredericks Malone pursues her sister’s dreams through the pedagogical musical approach she created.

GOOD EVALUATION TOOLS ARE A KEY TO SUCCESS

A survey by the Center for Applied Linguistics states that “students who study foreign languages outperform their monolingual peers on a wide range of academic achievement tests and experience cognitive benefits, such as increased problem-solving, creative, verbal and spatial abilities.” L’Alliance Française is

“Being a part of the AFEI program for nearly six years now, I have succeeded in establishing a unique connection with my students and every visit is a personal enrichment for me.”

**Alice Rousie,
Alliance Française Teacher**

developing new indicators of students’ progress and new tools to evaluate its program. AFEI’s rigorous curriculum now includes graded homework, oral participation in class, quizzes, and tests.

L’Alliance is keeping pace with the comprehensive standards of learning adopted by DC Public Schools, as well as the school system’s standardized testing program. It is widely recognized that learning a foreign language improves a child’s general academic results, and l’Alliance looks forward to fully quantifying the results of its full-immersion instructional methods.

L’ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE BY THE NUMBERS

- **4** Underprivileged DC Elementary Schools
- **400** Hours of Classroom Instruction Every School Year
- **300** Enthusiastic Students Annually
- **20+** Exciting Cultural Events Each Year
- **8** Years of Dedicated Service
- **1** “Bonjour” Generates Hundred of Smiles!

“Every Tuesday I love to go to school because we have French and I see Miss Abi. We sing in French, sometimes we eat, we always have fun!”

**Nydia Cooper, fourth grade,
Ketcham Elementary School**

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES: AN EXCITING WAY TO DISCOVER LA FRANCOPHONIE

HIP HOP KAIRO JUMPS TO THE JOB

It is hard to imagine Jacques Brel's poetry and voice put to hip hop rhythms, but that is precisely what French dance sensation Aurélien Kairo did along with 40 Randle Highlands third graders. The hip hop workshop was a success on all fronts, especially the high-energy break-dance solos that wrapped up the session.

THE MIME IS ALIVE



Mime-extraordinaire Guerassim Dichliev revealed the wonders of Marcel Marceau's imaginary world to River Terrace's enchanted students. As the celebrated French mime's heir-in-chief, Dichliev speaks the language of a "wordy silence" that, like all great French mime performance, goes beyond basic language skills. After seeing a French chef baking an apple pie and a Venetian gondolier in mime, the crowd went wild over the grand finale: an almost-real elephant ride!

"LAFAYETTE, NOUS VOILÀ!"

As the US soldiers said when they arrived in France in 1917, so can Burroughs students say after working for the second consecutive year with the acclaimed French Baroque music company, L'Opera Lafayette. Their initiation to the world of opera and workshops on its music, language, and choreography culminated in a live performance of Charpentier's 17th-century opera, *Les Arts Florissants*. The May 2010 performance of Philipidor's opera buffa *Sancho Pança* is the students' third operatic experience in an ongoing relationship with L'Opera Lafayette.

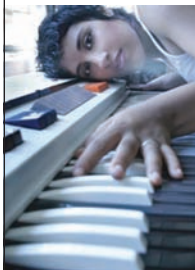
"We particularly appreciate the Alliance's long-standing commitment to provide international exposure and experience to some of the city's poorest children in ethnically isolated communities who would not otherwise have this opportunity."

**Michelle Rhee, Chancellor,
DC Public Schools**

2010 BRINGS A VARIETY OF CULTURAL OFFERINGS

March – This is the time of year to celebrate "*le mois de la francophonie*." Internationally recognized urban folk singer **Tété** leads an informal jam session at Burroughs. Music is a universal language, crossing cultural, generational, and ethnic barriers; it is a key tool in the Alliance's results-driven instructional method.

April – Slam-music artist **Queen Ka** from Quebec brings a woman's voice and celebrated talent to the male-dominated world of slam. With poetry crossing time and space (from Baudelaire to Prévert to Chekov), she accompanies Ketcham's students through their own poetic creations. The collaboration is a way for both poet and students to communicate. "*Very young I learned classic poetry by heart,*" she says, "*but slam fulfills my need to express myself on a personal level.*"



May – French cinema is on the program, with a screening of the much-acclaimed classic film, ***The Red Balloon***, directed by Albert Lamorisse. Generations of French children have grown up with this beloved story in both its book and film versions. AFEI students will read the book and watch the French-language movie in their classrooms

before attending a theater interpretation at Glen Echo Park in Maryland. This end-of-the-school-year event performed by Adventure Theater will also include "*jambon-beurre*" sandwiches and other delicacies of the French version of a "*quick lunch*."



Students celebrating their birthdays in French at Randle Highlands Elementary School



“The French classes have been a priceless gift over the years. They serve to enrich the lives of the children by giving them a wonderful learning experience that they would never have had in elementary school. Merci!”

Joyce Grimes, Principal,
Ketcham Elementary School

FACULTY NEWS: FRANCOPHONE INSTRUCTORS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE JOIN FORCES

New faces in l’Alliance’s team include Outra Nayek from Mauritius and Kevin Gaudry-Smith from Normandie, France. Alice Rousie from France and Abibata Barry from Burkina Faso continue their outstanding work with the children. *La francophonie*—the global community of French-speaking peoples—is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, and AFEI teachers bring the full range of that diversity to their students.

■ **Alice Rousie**, an Alliance Française veteran teacher now serves as a language specialist at the International Monetary Fund. However, once a week Alice returns to her AFEI classroom to work magic with her students.

■ Every Tuesday for the past two years, “**Miss Abi**” (Abibata Barry) shares her African culture with Ketcham’s children. They enjoy listening to tales from Burkina Faso and love dancing to the sound of African drums.

■ Hailing from Mauritius, **Outra Nayeck** studied in London and has taught French to children all over the world including Russia, London, and Mauritius. She brings her “savoir faire” and knowledge of *la francophonie* to the classroom.

■ **Kevin Gaudry-Smith** has worked in South Africa, Mozambique, and India before settling in Washington, DC. An accomplished musician, Kevin loves to incorporate music in his teaching to the delight of his students.

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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.