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Indianapolis Schools Work With Their Communities To Improve Schools

By Stacy Andell

One Indianapolis Schools' Elementary School Gets New Playground

Parkview Elementary School 81 will receive a new playground on October 2nd but the work has already started. An asphalt lot will be a brand new playground thanks to the Allstate Foundation and Injury Free Coalition for Kids at Riley Hospital. About 50 volunteers are expected to be involved in the project.

The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by the Allstate Corporation. The Allstate Foundation works to create safe communities. The Allstate Foundation has offered a national donation of \$370,000, seven locations across the US have been chosen with Indianapolis Schools ' Parkview Elementary School 81 being the only one in Indiana. Parkview Elementary School 81 was chosen, in part, because their recess area has for seventy five years been the asphalt lot.

The partnership between the Allstate Foundation and Injury Free Coalition for Kids at Riley Hospital aimed to redo the playground because of the safety issues surrounding child injuries on the playground. According to the Allstate Foundation, over 200,000 children suffer from injuries on the playground. Indianapolis Schools' Parkview Elementary School 81's new playground will be fun and safe. It will be covered with a new soft rubber tile known as SoftTile and all equipment will have rounded edges. Safety was not the only goal; Indianapolis Schools wanted to improve access for students with special needs and make sure the equipment was durable.

Indianapolis Schools has discovered that play is important to the students' physical, developmental, cognitive, and social development. Playgrounds are great for providing opportunities to learn about conflict resolution, sharing, and relationship building. Recess time gives students the time to release energy so they can better concentrate during study time. Playgrounds allow students to begin focusing on physical fitness and exercise. Indianapolis Schools Superintendent Eugene G. White wants all children to grow up knowing the pleasure of climbing and sliding on a playground.

The 300 students of Parkview Elementary School 81 are not the only ones to benefit from the new playground. It is estimated that 1,400 children live in the area around the school; these children will

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have access to the playground when the school is not in session. The Riley Hospital for Children reports that the Northeast-side Community Organization found that this area has some of the highest childhood injury rates in the city. This new playground will decrease fall injuries.

Indianapolis Schools Project Seeks Tutors

A new tutoring project for the fourth grade that is a joint program with Indianapolis Schools and the United Way of Central Indiana is looking for tutors. The project was announced on September 4th. This project aims to help students with reading and language arts skills for the fourth grade.

This project was created because thirty percent of the Indianapolis Schools fourth graders read two or more grade levels below grade. It is believed that one on one tutoring in word recognition, vocabulary development and fluency will help students achieve higher scores. The United Way has been running

several similar projects in Madison, Wisconsin. The project aims to recruit at least 200 tutors who could spend one hour per week between the hours of 9:00AM and 3:30 PM at Indianapolis Schools.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. For more information on Indianapolis schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/indiana/indianapolis/index.html>

Indianapolis Schools Teachers Receive Awards Recognizing Positive Performance

By Stacy Andell

Indianapolis Schools Center for Inquiry Teacher Gets Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders

An Indianapolis Schools Center for Inquiry teacher, Maysee Herr, was among twelve young leaders from throughout Indiana to be awarded the Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders. The honor of the Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders is not the only thing the recipient receives; they also get \$1,000 to be used as an educational scholarship or as a donation to the charity of their choice. This year's recipients have chosen to donate their monetary awards to community organizations and to public scholarship funds. A special luncheon was held on June 8th at which Lt. Governor Becky Skillman presented recipients with their awards.

The Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders was introduced in 2003 in a joint effort by the Indiana Humanities Council and the Office of the Governor. These awards are designed to recognize outstanding young Indiana leaders between the ages of 19 and 29 for their achievements in entrepreneurial, community, education, and cultural arenas and for their commitment to Indiana. This is not the first Indianapolis Schools teacher to receive this prestigious award. The Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders serves to decrease Indiana's "brain drain"; identify emerging community leaders for further mentoring and engagement; raise the bar of expectation for all Indiana citizens-counteracting the notion that "good enough is good enough" by recognizing excellence and

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the personal achievement. The recipients are selected by an independent jury consisting of leaders in business, education, and culture.

Indianapolis Schools Center for Inquiry

The Center for Inquiry is part of a non-profit organization that promotes and defends reason, science and inquiry. The Center is also interested in providing rational ethical alternatives to the reigning paranormal and religious systems of belief, and in developing communities where like-minded individuals can meet and share experiences.

Indianapolis Schools Teacher Wins Indiana Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Constantine of Thomas D. Gregg School 15 in the Indianapolis Schools has received the Indiana Teacher of the Year award for her service and dedication to the students in her classes. She has worked at Thomas D. Gregg School 15 since 1986. This kindergarten teacher was nominated by the parents, peers and students of Thomas D. Gregg School 15. Mrs. Constantine serves on numerous school-based committees and is very active in the community partaking in events to support the Indianapolis Children's Guardian Home, judging the annual Halloween costume contest, and coordinating the Irvington Little League baseball teams. Her activities in the Indianapolis Schools have included: bringing acclaimed educator to the school to help her peers learn brain-based learning strategies, serving as a mentor teacher to college students, and by assisting colleagues to hone their craft. Mrs. Constantine will be the Indianapolis Schools representative in the Indiana Teacher of the Year statewide contest.

The Indiana Teacher of the Year is a program that is conducted by the Indiana Department of Education to recognize outstanding classroom teachers from across the state. One of the recipients

will go on to represent the state of Indiana in the National Teacher of the Year.

Stacy Andell is a staff writer for Schools K-12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K-12 schools. Stacy has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more on Indianapolis schools visit

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