

It is auction week at Lafayette and everywhere you look you can see all the hard work that has been taking place for the last few months. As you enter the school building through the Broad Branch Road doors, the glass display cabinets are filled with class creations from prekindergarten, kindergarten and third grade. Down in the art room the fifth graders are hard at work sewing their long flying geese strips into their quilt top that will be part of the live auction. My quilt is hanging up outside the clinic. All week long there will be a buzz throughout the building as people come in and out checking various locations to make sure the decorations, caterers and display areas are ready for the big night. Friday after school will start the decorating and soon Lafayette will be transformed into a tropical paradise befitting the theme *Havana Nights*.

The auction is one of the main fundraising activities each year of the Lafayette Home and School Association. While planned to be a night of fun and games for the parents, its real impact will be on their children for the next school year. So as a big thank you to this year's auction committee I thought I'd highlight a few things that have been happening around Lafayette this year they have been a direct result of last year's auction.

Last year one of the live auction activities was raise a paddle for science. So this fall each grade level had a special visit from the Maryland Science Center. A big highlight was setting up a planetarium inside the cafeteria. Students got to participate in a lot of hands-on activities taught by science educators. For the past two weeks, part two of the science activities have been taking place at the school. The pre-K students participated in a presentation on dinosaurs complete with remarkable puppets with rolling eyeballs. Older students attended assemblies where the Science Center teachers created magical effects with gases, liquids, and solids. Every student enjoyed these special science experiences. They were a direct result of parents raising paddles last year.

As you visited your child's classrooms this year many of you have been able to see the new interactive whiteboards that have been installed throughout the building. Eventually DCPS would've gotten around to this task when the school is modernized. But should the children the Lafayette have to wait until 2015 to get to experience this new technology? So thanks to the Home and School Association, teachers either have an interactive whiteboard or a document camera in their classroom depending on the capability of their classroom space. We also significantly upgraded our classroom technology components with the addition of chrome books throughout the school. We did some testing over a year ago of these notebooks to see if they could withstand the use and abuse of small children. Did they meet what I jokingly call the Fisher-Price standard? They did. So thanks to the school auction each classroom now has enough chrome books to at least set up a small technology center and to have access to them throughout the school day.

Do you ever wonder where the materials come from that teachers use to make their classrooms attractive and inviting? They don't come from my DC PS budget allocation. Instead each fall HSA gives each staff member at the school an opening of school check. Most of that money is used to provide the classroom materials, posters, name plates, and other items that decorate each room. When professional development activities arise during the school year, teachers at Lafayette can count on HSA support. When the teacher wants a class set of books to use for a unit during the school year, the HSA budget

allows that to happen. And when we needed transportation for an extra fourth and fifth grade trip, the HSA could be counted on to help.

In the next few weeks you will be getting more information about next year's school budget. I worked on ours over last weekend but still haven't gotten final approval to share specific items with you. But as in the past Lafayette along with a few other schools in upper Northwest is again one of the minimally funded schools. It's hard to make our dollars stretch as far as all of our needs. Many of our needs are totally unexpected. Mr. Young and I do a pretty good job of estimating our custodial expenses each year. Whoever would have thought we would need all the snow melt we have gone through this winter? The good thing was we had stockpiled a little since the last few years have been pretty minimal in the snow category. But that cushion is gone now and it looks like we're going to have to do some replenishing for next year. So even though I would like to get to the day when DCPS meets all of Lafayette's needs, I don't see that coming anytime soon. We rely heavily on your support each year to make Lafayette such a special school. Our library is second to none in the city when it comes to resources and books for elementary school readers. A result of HSA fundraising. Ms. McClure puts on a field day people come from across the city to see. Done with the help of HSA fundraising. Everyone is hard at work right now finishing this year's edition of *Images*, the students' literary journal. Also supported through HSA fundraising.

So I hope to see many of you on Saturday at the auction. It will be a great party and everyone will have a wonderful time. But it also means the 2014 – 2015 will be another school year that will have unlimited opportunities for Lafayette students. So no matter what the weather is, get out those tropical clothes and come on up to the school. It's time to party.