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WITS WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME OUR NEWEST CORPORATE PARTNERS. WE'RE THRILLED TO JOIN FORCES WITH THESE COMPANIES. THANKS TO ALL FOR THEIR ENTHUSIASM AND COMMITMENT!

In October, Segall Bryant & Hamill launched their Workplace Mentoring program with 12 students from Drake Elementary and 24 volunteers. Credit Suisse First Boston's Workplace Mentoring also began in October with 34 volunteers and 15 West Park Academy students. Thirty-two Akzo Nobel volunteers started Workplace Mentoring in November with 14 Smith School students. Joining Power Lunch in December, Kirkland & Ellis' 55 volunteers will ride the bus to Walsh Elementary School.

Segall Bryant & Hamill



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THANK YOU

TO OUR NEWEST CORPORATE SPONSORS

SAVE THE DATE

WORKING IN THE SCHOOLS (WITS) IS A LITERACY ORGANIZATION THAT INCREASES THE READING PROFICIENCY AND LEARNING CAPACITY OF LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY STUDENTS IN CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WITS RECRUITS AND SUPPORTS DEDICATED BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS WHO DELIVER MEASURABLE AND CONSISTENT TUTORING AND MENTORING SERVICES.

MAY 5, 2006
WITS 5th Annual Junior Board Blackboard Affair
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MARCH 28, 2006
First Night Performance of
The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
Drury Lane Theatre Water Tower Place

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Full of Grace & Hot to Trotter



Chef Charlie Trotter & Dick Grace

Surprising the 45 guest crowd, Chef Trotter announced between courses that he would donate his services for a private 10-course, 20-guest dinner at a bidder's home; two dinners went for \$50,000 each. "The pleasure and gratification associated with partnering with WITS is only exceeded by the benefit it brings to the students. Over the past three years, I am truly pleased we have been able to raise so much for students that are so deserving," said Chef Trotter.



Trotter's staff gives Brown students a culinary crash course

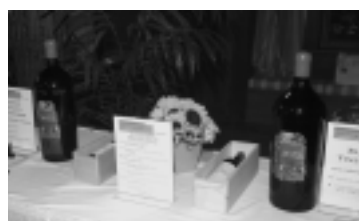
"We are grateful to everyone who makes this event so wonderful—guests all the way from London, California, New York and all over Chicago," said Board Co-Chairs Ginny and Roger Carlson, the tireless forces behind the event. "It's rewarding to know that this night will benefit more than 3,650 WITS children." ■

Nibble on whole roasted squab, sip a rare 2003 Grace cabernet and raise \$205,000 for WITS? All in a night's work. On Monday, October 10, the third Grace Wine & Trotter Dinner Event combined exquisite foods, rare wines and excellent company for a final time in support of WITS. The last of these unique benefit evenings for years to come, the 2005 dinner party was the biggest success in WITS history.

Dick & Ann Grace of Grace Family Vineyards in St. Helena, CA and Chef Charlie Trotter rejoined efforts at the home of Abby O'Neil and Carroll Joynes, the 1896-built former Playboy mansion. Globally recognized as the maker of one of the world's premiere cabernets, Dick Grace is also a renowned humanitarian. "I've been honored to be associated with WITS for the past few years," he beamed. "It is very reassuring to see corporate as well as retired women and men coming together to address the needs of our underserved young people."

While creating an eight course meal to complement various donated wines is no problem for Chef Trotter, he and his team of 20 got a little extra help this year. Five WITS 8th graders from Brown School worked diligently with Trotter's staff to learn about food prep and service. Their enviable training paid off as each student oversaw and introduced a different course, announcing the "Arkansas Rabbit with Braised Escarole" or another delicacy and describing its preparation.

A silent auction featured two unique donated imperials—a Blank Vineyards 2003 and a Grace Vineyards 2003—hand-etched with a label designed by a Jordan Elementary WITS student.



WITS student designed Imperials raked in \$20,000

A Night to Remember

By Contessa Rathers, 8th Grader, William H. Brown School

My name is Contessa Rathers and I attend William H. Brown Elementary School. I am in Ms. Ponder's 8th grade classroom and I am the class president. My experience at the WITS Fundraiser Dinner with the O'Neils, Grace Family Vineyard, and Charlie Trotter was amazing. I had so much fun experiencing new things and tasting new foods that I had never tasted before. It was fun describing and serving the food. It was also fun in the kitchen how they let us prepare some of the food with them. They also let us taste the food. That was very kind of them. The chefs also described to us what the food was, because we had never tasted or heard of the food they were serving. It was a wonderful experience.



Brown teacher Sharon Ponder & her WITS students

I was a little nervous when I had to say my speech, thanking WITS for volunteering in our class. I had never had an experience like this one with my classmates. I will always remember this event for the rest of my life. And at the end of the evening some of my classmates and I were given Be Optimystic watches from Dick and Ann Grace, who also came out to visit our 8th grade class with inspirational stories of hope. Everyone was so kind and nice to us even though that was our first time meeting them. They made us feel comfortable. My overall experience that evening was awesome and I will never forget that experience. And I would like to thank Dick and Ann Grace, Ms. Ponder, the O'Neils, the Carlsons, and Chef Charlie Trotter for giving us this opportunity. ■

GIFT REPORT

WITS IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR DONORS. YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WITS TUTORING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS IS CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS IN SERVING CHILDREN IN THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Below is a list of WITS supporters from January 1, 2005 through December 10, 2005. Due to space limitations, we are listing contributions above \$200. Please know that all donors' names will appear in the WITS annual report and accept our heartfelt gratitude.

WITS sincerely regrets any omissions or misspellings. In the event of an error, please call us at 312.368.9487 to allow us to make the necessary correction.

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14 year volunteer and Chairman Emeritus Bud Lifton with WITS students

WITS Launches Two New Programs

1 EXPERIENCE CORPS

New WITS Volunteers Offer Lifetime of Experience

Chicago's population is aging. Nearly 400,000 Chicagoans—or 15% of the city's overall population—are over 60. But as Baby Boomers age, the face of retirement is changing to one of active and purposeful engagement. One of WITS' two new programs, **Experience Corps** engages older adults, an essentially untapped national resource, to help solve serious social problems including illiteracy.

Earlier this year, Experience Corps—a national service program for adults over the age of 55—conducted an extensive search for a local organization to bring its award-winning program to Chicago. "WITS is the ideal partner for Experience Corps, given its mission, exceptional leadership and outstanding record of success," says John S. Gomperts, CEO of Experience Corps.

Chicago is the 14th city to host the program, joining the ranks of 1,800 volunteers nationwide.

Experience Corps, which connects older adults with students in their neighborhood schools for after-school tutoring, was launched in a hugely successful 2005 summer pilot at Copernicus School on the South Side. This fall, WITS has

already expanded Experience Corps into two additional schools, Bontemps and Sullivan Elementary Schools, and plans to grow to 10 sites within the next four years.

During the individualized 50 minute sessions, volunteer and student pairs focus on sight words and graphic organizers, as well as reading aloud from Scholastic Reading Skills Kits and the WITS provided book bin. Each tutor spends 15 hours a week with a total of five students. Each child works with the same tutor three times a week, establishing an intergenerational rapport that is rarely found at home.

Experience Corps members in Chicago are retired nurses, teachers and bus drivers, among other vocations. While many live or grew up in the schools' surrounding neighborhoods, it is not a requirement. Members who commit to at least 15 hours a week also receive a \$225 monthly stipend.

WITS is still looking for volunteers. Experience Corps candidates must be 55 or older, complete an application and interview, get TB tested and fingerprinted, and undergo a background check. Contact WITS for more info. ■

2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

"Lap Time" Leads to Learning

The average child growing up in a low-income family receiving welfare hears 1/2 to 1/3 as many spoken words as children in more affluent households. By the age of three, a low-income child has only heard 10 million spoken words, compared to 20 million heard by a middle-income child and 30 million by a high-income child.

With each of its programs, WITS aspires to minimize the learning gap. On December 6, WITS launched its 6th tutoring and mentoring program, the **Early Childhood Volunteer Program (EC)**. EC allows nurturing adults to engage in responsive reading sessions with 3- and 4-year old preschool students. Combining "lap time" with *dialogic reading*, EC strives to plant an early seed for the enjoyment of reading and writing.

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the Fall semester, the EC pilot program transports 20 adult volunteers by bus to Nash Elementary School in Lawndale. Early Childhood volunteers spend their two-hour sessions reading one-on-one with preschool students for 20 minutes at a time. Trained by Erickson Institute staff in dialogic reading, a technique for reading aloud, volunteers allow the child to be actively involved in telling the story. With the adult serving as the listener, questioner and audience, the child is able to



An EC volunteer and student, buried in their book

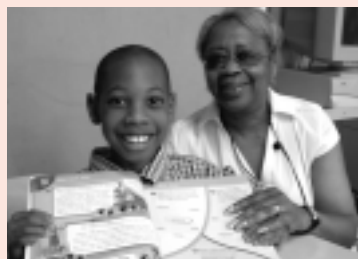
use his imagination and engage in conversation about the book, deepening his understanding of the story. Research has found that children who are more actively involved while listening to a story learn more.

"We are excited that WITS is bringing reading volunteers into the Early Childhood classrooms. The benefits of a strong pre-K education carry over into the first years of school and even well into adulthood," said Arne Duncan, CEO of the Chicago Public Schools

With employees already participating in Power Lunch and Workplace Mentoring, LaSalle Bank, our longest standing partner and largest volunteer group, will be the first to join EC second semester. Plans for subsequent WITS EC Programs include adding two schools in the 2006 Spring semester and expanding to a total of four schools during the 2006-2007 school year. Please contact WITS for information on becoming an EC volunteer. ■

The first few times Emma Nesbary sat down to read with Altwan Ross, a 3rd grader at Sullivan, she could barely get him to speak. Luckily, the retired sheriff and new Experience Corps volunteer has a lifetime of experience being patient.

One day as Altwan read the *Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* at just above a whisper, Nesbary noticed the student's Jamaican accent. She asked him if this was the reason for his quiet voice and he revealed that his classmates made fun of his speech. "I told him that I thought it was so nice to have an accent, that his sounded beautiful," Nesbary said. "The next story he read aloud, he just belted out. There was so much excitement in his voice."



Experience Corps volunteer Lizzy Brown and Copernicus student

Emma Nesbary is one of 24 WITS Experience Corps members working with 120 K-8 children to improve literacy through intergenerational, one-on-one mentoring. These children "need someone to help them if they want to graduate," said Lizzy Brown, 65, Experience Corps member at Copernicus. "They've got so many issues. Some come to school everyday hungry. Some get no attention at home at all."

Research shows that Experience Corps boosts student academic performance, strengthens ties between schools and surrounding neighborhoods and enhances the well being of the volunteers.

Emma Nesbary and her fellow Experience Corps members are only too happy to do so. "We just read a book about a child who planted a seed in a jar and watched it grow. I was thrilled when Altwan said he wanted to plant his own seeds. Now we watch our jar in the tutoring room to see how the seeds will grow." ■

WITS Works!

2004-2005 Power Lunch Evaluation Highlights

For the fourth consecutive year, WITS proves that Power Lunch is a simple equation—one adult, one child, one book at a time—with impressive results.

The WITS lunchtime literacy program continues to achieve its goal of instilling both the skills and love of reading by connecting business volunteers with 1st through 3rd grade students for one-on-one reading. With the help of **1,256 volunteers** representing 35 local organizations, Power Lunch reached **778 at-risk students** in 20 Chicago schools in 2004-2005. Our students outperformed their non-participating classmates in the following areas:

READING SKILLS & PROFICIENCY

Power Lunchers were more likely than non-participating students to achieve high enough ITBS scores to be immediately promoted to the next grade (50% vs 40%). Also, fewer Power Lunchers needed to attend summer school.

According to teachers, **Power Lunchers improved 50% in reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading ability, listening comprehension, attention span and ability to articulate thoughts**, more than non-Power Lunchers.

READING ATTITUDES & MOTIVATION

63% of Power Lunchers maintained or bettered their attitudes toward academic reading when, universally, elementary school students' reading attitudes decline; only 47%

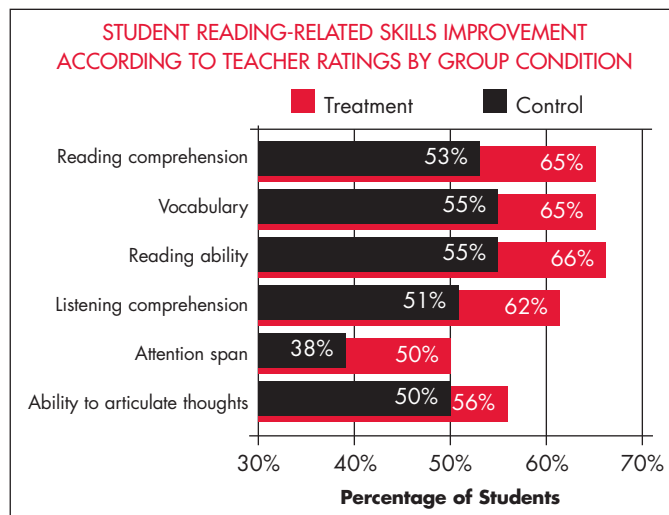
of non-Power Lunchers maintained or improved their attitudes.

82% of Power Lunch 2nd graders enhanced their motivation to read on their own.

READING FOR FUN

By the end of the year, **more Power Lunch students reported enjoying reading for fun than non-Power Lunchers (61% vs. 55%).**

Yet again, evaluation data demonstrates that a little one-on-one reading can go a long way. Congratulations to all 1,256 2004-2005 Power Lunch volunteers for making a real and measurable impact.



Give Thanks! Give Books!

This year, WITS is the lucky beneficiary of the **Barnes & Noble Holiday Book Drive!**

Customers who shop at select Barnes & Noble locations this holiday season will have the chance to purchase books for WITS students from the WITS Wish List. At the end of December, our Junior Board will gather their ribbons and bows at a book-wrapping party to dress up the donated books before their delivery to the students. WITS would like to acknowledge and thank Barnes & Noble for their tremendous generosity.

Please visit one of the following Barnes & Noble locations between November 1st and December 31st and give the gift of literacy:

659 W. Diversey (Halsted)

1130 N. State (Elm)

1441 W. Webster (Clybourn)

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS

Power Lunch Snapshot: Equity Office

Strike a pose! WITS is proud to be featured in the gorgeous lobbies of two Equity Office buildings in the Loop, 10 S. Wacker and 200 W. Adams. On prominent downtown display since September 6, the beautiful 3.5' x 4' signs pay homage to the real impact that Equity Office's Power Lunch volunteers are making.

"Equity Office's philanthropic mission is to support children's health and welfare. We value our partnership with WITS and wanted to provide this unique service to share the good work of WITS with the thousands of people who pass through our buildings each day," explained Michele Beck, Equity Office Corporate Communications Manager.

Emblazoned with "Share. Succeed. Learn. Grow," the signs feature WITS volunteer Alyce Taxe reading with a child. WITS is grateful to Equity Office for the stirring signage and, moreover, for their longstanding enthusiasm. An active Power Lunch partner for four consecutive years, Equity Office currently sends 50 volunteers twice a week to tutor students at Gladstone Elementary. "The experience has been extremely positive and rewarding. We look forward to the break in our days and love the children," said Beck of their volunteer efforts. Many thanks to Equity Office for their hard work and support! ■



Gobble Gobble!

CBOE 7th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

For the seventh year in a row, the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE) hosted a delectable Thanksgiving dinner for its Workplace Mentoring students and volunteers. On Monday, November 21, 46 3rd through 8th grade Drake Elementary students joined their WITS volunteers in the Executive Dining room for a traditional holiday meal. The feast featured everything from turkey and stuffing to turkey-shaped cookies. With assistance from CBOE Civic and Governmental Affairs Manager Christy Hahn, the WITS staff sported chef's aprons and hats to ceremoniously serve the guests. CBOE's Marc Brown welcomed the group, commending



CBOE Chairman and CEO Bill Brodsky, Joanne Alter, Marc Brown



Drake students and CBOE volunteers enjoying Thanksgiving dinner

them for their dedication and offering thanks for everyone's participation. As students returned for seconds, CBOE Chairman and CEO Bill Brodsky extended another warm welcome to the students, CBOE volunteers, parent volunteers, Drake Principal Yvonne Jones and WITS Board members and staff, offering his best wishes for the holiday season. ■

Principal for a Day: Ron Sonenthal Honored

The ninth annual Principal for a Day (PFAD) took place on Thursday, October 27 with 1,650 corporate, community and civic leaders from across the city serving as principals in Chicago's public schools. For the first time since WITS brought the event to Chicago in 1998, Chicago school officials collaborated to nominate exceptional school partnerships. WITS President and PFAD Ron Sonenthal was honored for his outstanding commitment to West Park Academy.

According to Principal Sandra Jones, reading scores have increased significantly since Ron brought WITS to West Park three years ago. Forty-four Deloitte employees currently volunteer in the Workplace Mentoring program and hundreds more participate in other service activities. Ron has personally sponsored arts programs and an assembly at West Park. Principal Jones congratulated Ron and Deloitte for "positively affecting the learning environment at West Park through impressive contributions of time and resources."

At Mayor Daley's press conference at the Orr High School campus, Ron was asked to speak on behalf of all honorees. He spoke of the importance of PFAD, reminding the audience of principals and participants that "Principal for a Day has exposed thousands of local business leaders to the everyday challenges of improving schools and produced partnerships that have generated millions of dollars in added resources and other benefits for schools and students. I don't think that there is anyone here who doesn't recognize the importance of our local companies and businesses being involved with the Chicago Public Schools, and I would encourage all of our leaders in this room today to remain committed—it means the world to our kids." ■



CPS Board President Michael Scott, Principal Sandra Jones, Ron Sonenthal, Mayor Richard M. Daley

LaSalle Bank was also honored for their dedication to Tilton Elementary School. Each week, the entire 3rd grade class travels downtown to participate in Workplace Mentoring, which involves 60 employees. Another 150 LaSalle employees dedicate their lunch breaks to reading with Tilton students, riding the weekly bus to the school through the Power Lunch program.

We are extremely proud of Ron and our partners at Deloitte and LaSalle Bank. ■

WITS Partners with DonorsChoose!

WITS is proud to announce a new partnership with DonorsChoose! DonorsChoose is a simple way to provide public school students with much-needed resources. At www.DonorsChoose.org, teachers submit ideas for materials or experiences their students need to learn. Any individual can search projects by areas of interest, learn about classroom needs and choose compelling projects to fund. Donors receive a feedback package of student photos and thank-you notes, a teacher impact letter and an expenditure report showing that their tax-deductible gift was spent as directed.

WITS volunteers understand the great need that exists in many of our city's public schools. We hope volunteers will encourage teachers in our partner schools to submit requests for classroom projects at www.DonorsChoose.org.

We also hope that WITS volunteers will spread the word about these projects and DonorsChoose as a simple, direct way to make a difference in the lives of Chicago students!

Linda Erlinger, Executive Director of DonorsChoose Chicago, sees great potential for this partnership. "As individuals and organizations committed to serving our city's students and teachers, we know that the need is great in our schools. Our partnership with WITS is an exciting opportunity to see what is possible when organizations work together toward the same end—ensuring that all students have the quality of education they deserve."

We look forward to developing our partnership to ensure that every child in every community is equipped with the resources to succeed! ■

"BEE" is for Broadway

The buzz is already bee-ginning about March 2006. Hosting the **3rd Annual Corporate Spelling Bee** AND the first night of the Tony® Award Winning musical **The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee**, WITS is the center of a-t-t-e-n-t-i-o-n.

In early March, local organizations will spell off under the watchful eye of Pronouncer Bill Kurtis and a panel of celebrity judges headed by our "Queen Bee," Donna LaPietra. UBS is the team to bee-t this year as they return to defend their title and bee-shaped trophy. For moments of alphabetical uncertainty, teams can buy Ask the Audience and Phone My CEO life-lines for the price of another WITS donation. Stay tuned for details about the upcoming evening of crustless PB&Js, chocolate chip cookies, cocktails and comedic corporate competitiveness.

In keeping with the spelling spirit, WITS will soon "bee" selling tickets to the March 28 performance of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at the Drury Lane Theatre Water Tower Place. Under Wicked producer David Stone, the



Corporate Spelling Bee



Putnam Bee has received rave reviews; the *Wall Street Journal* calls the show "perfect in every possible way—that rarity of rarities, a super-smart musical that is also a bona fide crowd-pleaser." Tickets will be available soon at www.witsontheweb.org or by contacting WITS. ■

