

Around AUSL

VOLUME II



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President Obama visited Dodge in December. Read about it on page 3.

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AUSL Announces Three New Turnaround School Principals

CPS has entrusted AUSL with three new turnaround schools for the 2009-10 school year, and we are proud to announce the principals who will be responsible for the turnaround schools: Alice Henry, Johnson School of Excellence, Zipporah Hightower, Bethune School of Excellence and Pamela Creed, Dulles School of Excellence. We are excited to welcome these three talented individuals to AUSL.



Alice Henry
Johnson School of Excellence

Alice Henry has 20 years of experience as an educator. She started as an elementary school teacher and has taught in Chicago, Georgia and Milwaukee, WI. She earned a master's degree from the University of Illinois and bachelor's from Northern Illinois University. Most recently she was Vice President for Child and Adolescent Services for The Human Resources Development Institute, Inc, and Principal for Vivian E. Summers Preparatory School. Summers Prep is an alternative school for students who have been expelled from CPS. During her tenure, the school grew by 70% in both budget and population and she helped to successfully transition over 2,000 students back into CPS.

Zipporah Hightower comes to AUSL from the New Leaders for New Schools principal training program. She has taught middle and high school math and was a math department trainer for the CPS training academy as well as an instructor for the American Federation of Teachers. She has a bachelor of science in math from Chicago State University and two master's degrees. She did her principal residency at Metcalf Elementary School on the far south side and was principal of Kellogg School prior to AUSL.



Pamela Creed
Dulles School of Excellence

Pamela Creed is another New Leaders for New Schools graduate. She comes to AUSL after being the Director of the Washington Park campus of Chicago International Charter Schools. She has five years of experience as a teacher in addition to experience in the private sector and higher education. Pamela has a bachelor's and two master's degrees from Indiana University in addition to a master's from St. Xavier and a Certificate of Advanced Studies from National-Louis University.



Zipporah Hightower
Bethune School of Excellence

AUSL's Mission

Our mission is to improve student achievement in Chicago's chronically failing schools through our disciplined transformation process, built on a foundation of specially trained AUSL teachers.

“Yes! As always I am ready and prepared to reach the highest level of my potential!”

-Room 207

AUSL Alumnae Spotlight - Mauricia Dantes, class of 2008

When you walk into Mauricia Dantes’ second grade classroom at Morton, you are struck by the sense of community. Her classroom is colorful, fun and covered with class work, charts, reading and math lessons. You get the sense that this teacher would knock down brick walls for her students....you also get the sense that they might do the same for her.



Mauricia has eyes in the back of her head. She can tell when a student is excited and engaged and when someone isn’t getting it.

She knows when they need encouragement: “I like that you’re giving me examples. That shows me that you’re thinking.” She knows when they need a little restraint: “don’t step on anyone else’s thinking.” And she knows when they deserve a high five.



In Mauricia’s class, her children are always learning. Students who didn’t know their letters, can now read on their own. Her goal is to get everyone on grade level by the end of the year.

They also get important life lessons. She points out their wrong choices and lets them learn and practice better choices. Sometimes, she says, “it feels like they’re learning for the first time.” Students who were struggling and disengaged at the beginning of the year are excited about school for the first time. They come to school even when they’re sick. In fact, her class has a 98% attendance rate.

Room 207 is a safe place where children can risk sharing their thoughts. They get encouragement from each other. At the end of every day, they acknowledge each other’s successes. “She helped me get up when I fell in gym class today.” This class feels like a family.

Mauricia was born in the Virgin Islands and grew up in Savannah, Georgia. She went to Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina and worked for IBM after college. Many colleagues at IBM told her she was a gifted teacher and last year she decided to apply for AUSL’s residency program, because of AUSL’s focus on underserved schools. She did her residency at Dodge and Chicago Academy. This is her first year as a teacher of record.

If you would like to adopt an AUSL class, contact (773)534-0136 or baltenburg@ausl-chicago.org.

Mauricia gets teary-eyed when she thinks about this school year; where she was and where her students were when school started. She wakes up in the morning, ready to go, full of joy that she gets from teaching.



President Obama visits Dodge

Barely a month after winning the Presidential election, Barack Obama announced his choice for Secretary of Education at Dodge Renaissance Academy. The announcement took on special meaning for the small group of students who got to meet the President, Vice President and Secretary after the press conference. Mr. Obama stayed with the students until everyone had a chance to ask a question. Possibly less hard-hitting than Mr. Obama was used to, the questions ranged broadly from moving day at the White House to cleaning up after pets. The President finished with some advice from Dr. King: "No matter what your job is, you want to do your best."



AUSL Welcomes New Partner: The Erikson Institute

AUSL is pleased to announce the start of an early childhood residency certification thanks to our new partner. The Erikson Institute is the nation's premier graduate school in child development. They focus exclusively on children from birth to eight years old, the most important formative years.

Erikson residents will do their residency year during the second year of Erikson's two-year master's degree program. In addition to partnering to create a pre-kindergarten residency program, AUSL and Erikson will also collaborate to provide best practice induction coaching for early education teachers in AUSL schools. We are excited about this new partnership with a national leader!



Howe Wrestling Teams Win City Championship

The Howe wrestling teams won the City Championship in the first year of the program. Teacher Rob Harman joined Howe when AUSL took over the school as a turnaround school. Wrestling had turned his life around as a child, and Rob thought the same physical intensity and discipline would help some of the troubled students at Howe. His alma mater, Maine South High School in Park Ridge, donated uniforms and equipment. World Sport Chicago donated a new wrestling mat. Northwestern even donated tickets to a Big 10 match so that the team could see what college wrestling was like.

Rob encouraged some of the most troubled students to come out for the wrestling team. Instead of taking their anger out at school, they released it at practice. Parents and teachers noticed an immediate change as the boys worked hard in class so that they could stay on the wrestling team.

21 of the 26 wrestlers made the semi-final round in their weight class and 11 made the finals. Both the 5th/6th and 7th/8th grade teams won the city championship, showing an incredible level of dominance for such a new program.



"I feel like everyone should know about what these tough little guys were able to do."
- Rob Harman

Resident Spotlight



Name: Piper Deterding
 Hometown: Portland, OR
 Placement: Tarkington
 Grade/Subject: Fourth Grade
 Undergraduate: B.A. English, Portland State University
 Masters Degree Program: National-Louis University
 Why AUSL? *“I chose AUSL because the training, guidance, and encouragement to reflect on my practices seemed to be a powerful way to prepare me for teaching. Other options didn’t appear as structured, deliberate, or supportive as AUSL.. How could an aspiring teacher not flourish in an environment as contemporary and innovative as AUSL? I know that AUSL wants me to succeed as much as I want to, and I couldn’t imagine going into teaching any other way.”*

AUSL Schools and Teachers in the News

- Dodge took first place in Academic Olympics
- Chicago Academy made the finals of the city championships for 5th/6th grade boys basketball
- Holly Mullenix from NTA was one of five teachers nationwide who received the Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation Award.
- Regina Roberts won the CPS DRIVE Award
- Many AUSL teachers earned National Board Certification this year...too many to list them all!



Name: Chiffon Miller
 Hometown: Chicago, IL (Southside)
 Placement: Collins Academy
 Grade/Subject: Freshman/Sophomore World Studies
 Undergraduate: B.A. History, University of Illinois at Chicago
 Masters Degree Program: National-Louis University
 Why AUSL? *“AUSL provides excellent training for residents. I honestly feel more ready to go into any CPS school as a first year teacher than I would have with a regular training program. There is just no substitute for being in the classroom for a full year as opposed to just a few months. The growth I have seen in myself as a educator is substantial.”*



Principal Amy Rome gets “pie in the face” as part of her promise to students for meeting their reading goals for the quarter.

New Board Members Join AUSL

Two new board members joined AUSL in February. Dr. Kay Torshen is the President and Managing Member of Torshen Capital Management, LLC. Kay was a professional trader and member of the Chicago Stock Exchange. She has a PhD from the University of Chicago and is the author of numerous articles and a book on education psychology.

Eric Strobel is a Managing Partner of The Partnering Group (TPG), a strategic management consulting practice which primarily focuses on the consumer goods industry. Eric has over 20 years experience in marketing and general management and earned an MBA from Wharton.

You can help!

While most of our funding comes from Chicago Public Schools, AUSL relies on private donations for much of our programming. We raise private funds to cover each teaching resident stipend of \$32,000, and for school programs in arts, music, dance and sports. For every dollar raised over 90 cents goes into our residency or school programs.

If you or someone you know is interested in contributing, please send your donation to AUSL, 3400 N. Austin Ave, Chicago, IL 60634 or contact Bridget Altenburg at baltenburg@ausl-chicago.org. Your donation is tax deductible.

On behalf of the children of Chicago, thank you!

