



St. Bridget Church & Blackwell School

“Joining Hands across Richmond”

Volume 1

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*“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8*

HISTORY OF BLACKWELL SCHOOL

Blackwell, originally named Maury School, was one of the earliest schools established in the city of Manchester. Located on the corner of 17th and Maury Streets, it was opened in September, 1888. It combined Maury Elementary and Manchester High School. James H. Blackwell, a Manchester teacher became the school’s first principal.

In 1916 a second unit of 12 more rooms plus a basement was added. Then another unit containing 11 more rooms was constructed in 1951. The three buildings were connected by hallways and encompassed a complete city block. This larger facility opened as a combination elementary-junior high school. The school was renamed James H. Blackwell in memory of his dedicated service to the school and the south Richmond community.

Then in August, 1999, this original school was demolished, and in September 1999, a new multi-million dollar state-of-the-art structure opened across the street. This present school houses over 700 students, pre-K through 5th grade. Approximately 75% of the students are bussed from Hillside Court. Blackwell is a Title 1 school (95% of the families are below the poverty level). About 98% of the students are African American.

ST. BRIDGET ADOPTS BLACKWELL

Principal Conrad Davis of Blackwell School was invited to speak to St. Bridget Parish Council in November. He told them a bit about the school demographics and also some of the needs of Blackwell. Parish council discussed this outreach program and voted to “adopt” Blackwell. Thank you Parish Council for your support and enthusiasm!

MATH FACTS RACE

15 St. Gertrude Girls and 15 Benedictine Cadets tutored 30 Blackwell students in subtraction and multiplication. It was a sight to see! Watching those teens working with the children renewed my faith in the future. They were so dedicated, so kind, and a wonderful role model for the children. Thanks to each and every one of them for the time and dedication they put into this project. Thanks also to **Valerie Hubbard, Lynn Marshall, David Meyer, Pat Seitz and Donna Weber** who helped facilitate the program. Another round scheduled for the spring!

(Please turn page over for more news)

MEET SOME OF OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS

St. Bridget parishioners are **GREAT!** 16 parishioners signed up this school year to help “make a difference” in this city by tutoring the children at Blackwell School. We welcome: **Pat Accardo, Susan Aprahamian, Kathy Calhoun, Anne Fitzsimmons, Ann Gill, Valerie Hubbard, Carter Johann, Cindy Keane, Carol Kozak, Lynn Marshall, Mary Lloyd Parks, Mary Ann Peppiatt, Matthew Pike, Pamela Pike, Pamela Sweeney and Carla Thomas.** These parishioners join 15 volunteers from last year who continue to change children’s lives each week. Our thanks to all of them for the excellent job they do!



OUR FIRST EVER MEETING

We are a “working” group! Our time is spent in front of the children, but we decided it was time to get together and meet each other and also develop our skills. So on January 28, we met at St. Bridget. **Ann Gill**, one of our own volunteers, gave a Reading workshop, showing us ways to improve the student’s comprehension. **Ms. Britt**, a math teacher at Blackwell, shared many resources which will help the student get “caught up” in learning. Then we brainstormed on additional ways St. Bridget can become involved at Blackwell.



COMING EVENTS.....

READING PARTNERS: Planning to participate in READ ALOUD VIRGINIA, a program having volunteers read one-on-one with the younger children. Details will follow soon!

FUN SATURDAYS: Youth of St. Bridget heading up “Fun Saturdays” program. Youth group will plan activities for the Blackwell kids one Saturday each month. Then they will join the fun and get to know each other also. We may call on parishioners for donations of drinks and snacks. This program looks to be a winner!

SOCCER CAMP: Oakgrove Bellmeade and Blackwell schools are planning a soccer camp for spring break week (April 18-22). The camp will be at Bellmeade Rec Center. We hope to involve soccer players from our parish Youth Group, Benedictine and St. Gertrude. Looks like **Rob Ukrop** and some of the **Richmond Strikers** are on-board also! WOW! Making a difference? You bet!!

For more information contact: Alicia Meyer at 740-4272 or aliciabmeyer@comcast.net.

Thank you!

