

— A National School Public Relations Association award-winning newsletter —



## APS Briefs

Fulton Elementary School teachers Grace Choi and Connie Payne attended the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Project Zero workshop over the summer. Read their story at [www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/harvard2.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/harvard2.html).

APS staff members are working hard to ensure a smooth transition to the new student data system, Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus will go live in elementary schools after fall break and at secondary schools after the Thanksgiving holiday. Visit [www.apsnet/infinitecampus](http://www.apsnet/infinitecampus) for more information.

To learn more about APS accomplishments, visit the showcases on the student and staff pages at [www.aps.k12.co.us](http://www.aps.k12.co.us).

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## Hurricane Katrina Impacts APS Lives

Although more than a month has passed, APS staff and students continue to be impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

APS has welcomed new staff from the Gulf States along with several volunteers. APS staff members are reflecting on their experiences at Lowry. APS has welcomed more than 50 new students, and APS staff and students continue to raise funds to help our new neighbors.

When New Orleans native Torrinal Kelly accepted an invitation to visit cousins in Aurora last June, she had no idea how much her life would change in just three months.

“I was ready for a change so I applied for a job in APS,” said Kelly. She was offered a position. Kelly returned to New Orleans and discussed possibilities with her husband. “My son was going to begin his senior year so we had to consider that.”

On July 26, Kelly returned to Colorado with four of her children while her husband remained in New Orleans with their oldest son. “Once we figured out how to make things work for my senior so he could finish school there, my other kids were packed and ready to go!”

One August weekend, Kelly’s aunt called from New Orleans. “She told me there was a hurricane coming, but it didn’t worry me much. Two years in a row, we were evacuated and all that happened was a lot of wind and rain.”

On Monday, August 29, Kelly spoke to her husband before work and learned that it was windy and raining. That night, Kelly tried to call her husband to check in but couldn’t reach him. “I called and called his cell phone for days but no answer. I even called the Red Cross but they could not help me locate my husband and son. I was so worried and my children were terrified.”

*See Katrina on page 2*





# APS Applause

## Help, there's a squirrel in the cafeteria!!

From clogged toilets to unwelcome rodents, Lora Ashelman responds to a variety of calls from APS staff members. As dispatcher for maintenance and operations, Ashelman answers more than 40 calls a day.

"I love my job. I like knowing that I help make things happen to ensure a safe, comfortable environment that enhances learning," Ashelman said.

Ashelman receives all incoming facilities work orders. "One of the most memorable calls I received was from a teacher who had dropped her cell phone in the toilet and could actually hear it ringing," Ashelman said. Ashelman dispatched the plumber to the school and he was able to retrieve the phone.

"Lora has a very stressful position. However, she always maintains her composure and ensures that she has the appropriate information to handle the customer's need. She's really the pulse of our department," said Mark Davis, Maintenance and Operations director.

Staff members in the maintenance and operations division are responsible for custodial services, exterior operations and maintenance.



## Katrina

*Continued from page 1*

It wasn't until Saturday that Kelly received a call from her husband and son. They were at Houston's Astrodome. "My husband said the water just started rising and soon it was chest-deep. They just had to get out of there."

Kelly was able to locate a rental car that her husband and son drove to Aurora. "I was so glad to see them; I was ecstatic! That was a very scary situation and I hope I never have to go through it again," said Kelly.

"When I left New Orleans with four of my children, we took a week's worth of clothes. My plan was to go back home at some point, rent a U-Haul and move our things. Well now we've lost everything," said Kelly.

But Kelly is grateful for the opportunity Colorado offers. "My kids will have the chance to see the mountains, snow and wild animals. We were so excited one day when we saw a deer on the side of the road!"

Kelly and her family have experienced additional challenges. "Since four of my children and I moved here before the hurricane, we're not considered evacuees although my husband and son are. We're waiting for relief aid. It's like being in a big maze and you aren't getting what you need. For now, I'm careful with my paycheck. I tell my kids that I may not be able to get them what they want, but we'll get them what they need."

Kelly's husband, an independent truck driver, lost his 18-wheeler. "He is still looking for work as a truck driver."

Despite the hurricane, Kelly is hopeful. "I'm enjoying being a bus driver for APS because I love children. I'm getting to know the kids on my route and am learning their stories. They know that I care."

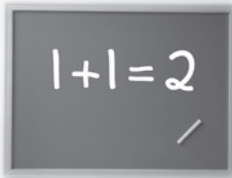
What about the future? "I'm looking forward to it," said Kelly. "Someday, I hope to go back to school to become a nurse. My husband dreams of again owning an 18-wheeler, and my children have made friends. I hope I can succeed here and make this my home. That's my plan."

## Did you know? .....

The APS Web site is an excellent resource for information about students, staff members and the community. Check out these the following sites for information about:

- **Fundraisers** [www.aps.k12.co.us/district-info/schools/fund\\_raisers.htm](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/district-info/schools/fund_raisers.htm)
- **Retirements** [www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/retirements.htm](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/staff/retirements.htm)
- **Reunions** [www.aps.k12.co.us/community/reunion\\_list.html](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/community/reunion_list.html)
- **School Performances** [www.aps.k12.co.us/district-info/schools/performances.htm](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/district-info/schools/performances.htm)

**We want to hear about your staff success stories. You can submit your good-news story ideas using an online form at [www.apsnet/news.htm](http://www.apsnet/news.htm).**



# APS In Action

## APS Staff and Students Assist with Relief Efforts

Jim Meskimen of North, Connie Payne and Michelle Krawchik of Fulton, Carolyn Lamb of human resources, and Kathy Zinter of accounts payable volunteered with hurricane relief efforts at Lowry.

North students motivated Meskimen. "When we first heard reports about the hurricane, one of our students wrote a letter urging us to help. I am really moved by how much our students care," said Meskimen.

Payne was watching the news and wondered, "What can I do?" She called the Salvation Army and was quickly invited to Lowry.

Meskimen was already there when Payne arrived. "Jim was organizing volunteers who prepared the dorms for our new families," said Payne. Volunteers had to make electrical repairs, paint, clean and get rooms ready for the arriving families. "We went from zero to hero in one day," said Meskimen. "The dorms had not been occupied in a while. We worked hard to make them welcoming and livable."

"The APS volunteers ended up answering a lot of school questions so we became informal APS reps. I think we showed how much APS cares about students," said Krawchik. "The parents I met were focused on taking care of their kids. They wanted to put their kids into a routine and get a sense of normalcy," added Payne.

Krawchik contacted the APS Incident Response Team. The next day, staff members from organizational support and the diversity office met with parents at Lowry and registered students. APS has enrolled more than 50 students from the Gulf States. "We're doing all we can to welcome our new families and make things easier for them," said one APS principal.

Zinter, also a member of the Aurora Human Relations Commission, spent two days volunteering at Lowry. One of the most moving moments for Zinter was helping a young girl and her aunt locate the child's mother. "They were separated during the evacuation and the child's mother ended up in a different state. I was able to help locate the child's mother and arrange a phone conversation. I have never cried so much in my life as I did when our new student first spoke to her mom," said Zinter.

APS students and parents have also been quick to act. Students at many schools, including Century, Columbia, Iowa, Jewell, Lyn Knoll, Murphy Creek, North, Pickens Tech, Vassar and West have collected money or donated services. Schools have raised from \$300 to \$3,500. "We're really proud of our students. I think our students are pretty happy about helping, too," said West teacher Crista Fabrycki.



Jim Meskimen



Connie Payne



Kathy Zinter



### STAFF FEEDBACK SURVEY

We want to hear from you! Please tear off, complete and return via school mail to Communication Department, Administration Building. You can also complete the survey at the online posting of *Clipboard* at [www.apsnet/Clipboard](http://www.apsnet/Clipboard).

1) If there were a situation, such as a weather emergency, neighborhood police activity, or power outage, that affected your site, staff and/or students, where would you turn first for information?

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2) On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being least desirable and 5 being most desirable, please rate how would you like to receive districtwide news that directly affects your job?

| 1                        | 2                        | 3                        | 4                        | 5                        |  |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | APS intranet   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | E-mail   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff meetings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Department newsletters, such as Instruction FYI, HR newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Memos  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Word of mouth  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please provide examples)                                |



# Building For the Future

## Bond Dollars at Work

Thanks to bond-funded projects scheduled over the summer, the school year brought some nice surprises for many students and staff members. While Murphy Creek K-8 opened its doors to more than 600 students in southeast Aurora, improvements were welcomed at nine other schools in the district.

Whole building remodels have updated and expanded Sixth Avenue Elementary and the elementary site at 875 Peoria, which will house Paris Elementary students during the construction of their new school. Remodels started at West Middle School and Hinkley High School will continue through 2007.

Wheeling Elementary School received a new roof, an air conditioning and heating system, and other building improvements. In addition, building renewal projects were completed at four schools: Montview, Side Creek, Tollgate and Yale.

Construction has also started on Aurora Frontier K-8 and the new Paris building. Both projects will be completed in August 2006.

For more information about APS bond projects, visit [www.aps.k12.co.us/bond](http://www.aps.k12.co.us/bond).

*“Thanks to our bond project, our students and staff members have a renewed sense of enthusiasm and pride in our school.”*

*– Karla Groth,  
Sixth Avenue principal*

*Community members  
celebrate the  
Murphy Creek K-8  
grand opening.*



*A student shows off a new classroom at Sixth Avenue Elementary.*



**CLIPBOARD SURVEY**  
Please return via interschool mail

**To: Communication Department  
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Your submissions are welcomed and encouraged. Please use the online submission form at [www.apsnet/comm/news](http://www.apsnet/comm/news).