

Burns Park Foreign Language Initiative

2201 Brockman Boulevard
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
www.bpffi.org

Status Report — October 2008

¡Bienvenidos a Burns Park!

A warm welcome to all new and returning families at Burns Park Elementary! We are already well into our fourth academic year (and third full year) of Spanish language instruction at Burns Park. Supported by individual contributions from members of the Burns Park community, our program has been a great success and generated a lot of enthusiasm among both kids and teachers.

New this year is intensive instruction for the fifth grade, in line with the plan to add a grade level each year. All grades above kindergarten now receive the full language program, twenty minutes three times per week. Our curriculum continues to evolve, reflecting the dedicated efforts of Señora Eileen Orta Alfonso, our instructor. Our program will continue

even as the AAPS rolls out their elementary language program; see the discussion in the article below.

This is also the time of year when we organize our annual fundraising drive. Spanish language instruction is organized under the auspices of our school and the Ann Arbor Public Schools, but our program is entirely funded by contributions to the Burns Park Foreign Language Initiative, a non-profit organization formed by parents to get the program off the ground. Our school community has been so generous that we have been able to secure funding a year in advance so far, and we hope to do so again. We're now working to raise \$30,000

for the 2009-10 school year. Please help us insure that this opportunity is available to every child at school; you can contribute with the attached form or on our web site (www.bpffi.org), where we can accept gifts by credit card.

For more information about how our program works and how you can support foreign language instruction at Burns Park, check out the article on the reverse and the FAQ section of our web site at www.bpffi.org.

District Launches Language Program; What Now?

Thanks to over one hundred contributors and community supporters, the Burns Park Spanish language program is fully funded for the 2008-2009 school year. This year, grades one through five will receive Spanish instruction in the classroom during three, twenty minute, sessions a week. The Burns Park Foreign Language Initiative will fundraise for the 2009-2010 school year beginning in mid-November and ending on January 31, 2009; we fundraise in advance to allow for curriculum planning and to provide job security for our Spanish teacher. We hope that you will consider supporting this valuable and unique program that provides world language instruction to all Burns Park students during the school day.

As many of you have already heard or read, the Ann Arbor Public Schools have partnered with the University of Michigan School of Education to provide instruction in world languages to elementary students. Beginning in September 2009, the partnership will offer Spanish language instruction to third graders in all twenty-one elementary schools; in September 2010, the program will expand Spanish instruction into the fourth and fifth grades, while continuing in third grade.

How does this impact Burns Park? The District recognizes that we have an established Spanish instruction program for grades one through five and they will

not take away from our program. Instead, as they take over the instruction in grade three in 2009 and grades three, four and five in 2010, we will be able to continue fundraising to support language instruction in the grades the District is not teaching and therefore, maintain Spanish instruction at Burns Park in grades one through five. Put another way, in September 2009 the District program will provide Spanish instruction in grade three and BPFLI will provide Spanish instruction in grades one, two, four and five; in September 2010 the District program will provide Spanish in-

continued overleaf



Señora Alfonso teaching vocabulary to a first grade class.

(Photo by Helen Starman)

District Program (continued)

struction in grades three, four and five and BPFLI will provide Spanish instruction in grades one and two.

Some families might question the need to raise funds to support Spanish instruction in the extra grades. The first year of the District's program, continuation of our own program will be especially important as that year's fourth and fifth graders have been studying Spanish since first grade and continued instruction will be beneficial. In the following years, providing Spanish instruction for our first and second graders will only increase the chance that they will reach our goal of language proficiency. Research shows that younger students are more receptive to the introduction of a second language and significantly more willing to use the

language in a social setting than their older peers. The program provided by the District will start our students at the appropriate level in third grade given their advancement in language from studying during their first and second years.

Again we thank you for your past support of the Spanish program at Burns Park

and hope that you will continue to support us in the future. Please look for fundraising materials to come home in mid-November. If you would like to learn more about the District's world language program feel free to contact one of us or to contact the program directly at A2LP@umich.edu.

| Foreign language offerings at Burns Park | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 and beyond |
|---|----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Burns Park students receiving AAPS Language Program | None | 3rd only | 3rd-5th |
| Burns Park students receiving Spanish through BPFLI | 1-5 | 1st-2nd, 4th-5th | 1st-2nd |
| BPFLI fundraising schedule | Nov 2007 | Nov 2008 | Nov 2009 |

Frequently Asked Questions

How is Spanish taught?

Students have their Spanish lessons during the school day in their classroom, with their regular teacher participating. Rather than have another separate "class," our school is incorporating Spanish instruction into the daily classroom schedule three times a week for 20 minutes each time. Our aim is to link Spanish instruction to regular classroom subjects, such as social studies, science, calendar, math and so on. This way the Spanish instruction does not take time away from core academic subjects but instead, enhances and reinforces them; for example, last year fourth graders practiced their multiplication facts

in Spanish. Additionally, the Spanish program does not take time away from special subjects such as art, PE, or music.

What are the children learning?

Students in grades one and two are taught the building blocks of the language and vocabulary to help them talk about what they are learning in school. Spanish instruction focuses on learning relevant vocabulary (including: foods, colors, shapes, numbers, vehicles and weather terms) and practicing simple conversations using this vocabulary. Students in grades three, four and five receive more advanced instruction, with the

aim of achieving proficiency after five years in the program. Spanish instruction continues to focus on vocabulary acquisition as well as grammar, sentence structure, reading in Spanish and more complex conversation.

Who is the instructor?

Our instructor is Eileen Orta-Alfonso, an experienced teacher who was already working with students in the "English as a second language" (ESL) program at Burns Park. Señora Alfonso was chosen by a search committee headed by Principal Kathy Morhous and composed of Burns Park teachers and parents. Sra. Alfonso is a member of the AAPS instructional staff, though her position is supported by funds raised by BPFLI. See more FAQs at bpfli.org

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Contribute!

Help keep Spanish language instruction at Burns Park!

Every contribution helps, no matter the size.

Use the attached contribution form, or to make a contribution by credit card, please visit our web site: www.bpfli.org

Or, simply mail it to this address:

BP-FLI
 c/o Fei Fei Metzler, Treasurer
 1430 Cambridge
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Thank You!