



The Thomas Connection

April 2008

Building Bridges, Finding Solutions

Volume 2, Issue 4

The Newsletter of Ward 5 Council Member Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr.

THOMAS MEETS WITH WARD 5 MINISTERS

On March 20, 2008, Councilmember Thomas held a meeting with Ward 5's ministers at the Isle of Patmos Baptist Church. More than 30 members of the Ward's pastoral community attended, representing a variety of denominations.

The Councilmember and church leaders discussed ways that the pastoral community can increase its involvement in the Ward, such as through providing summer camps for Ward youngsters, building affordable housing for seniors, and sponsoring outreach programs for troubled teens.

Councilmember Thomas also reached out to the ministers to work with his office to create a Senior Assist program. The program would entail calling senior Ward 5 residents who are house-bound once or twice a week. The purpose of the calls would be to check up on the seniors' well-being and provide them with a friendly voice and some conversation if they are feeling lonely.

The Councilmember and ministers also discussed at length the wave of violence gripping some of the communities in Ward 5, and the disturbing number of youth homicides occurring in the Ward. Councilmember Thomas indicated that he is organizing an anti-crime initiative with MPD, community residents, business owners, and church leaders.



Councilmember Thomas met with members of Ward 5's pastoral community on March 20, 2008.

THOMAS PARTICIPATES IN RIF RALLY

Ward 5 Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr.—along with DC State Superintendent of Education Deborah Gist and Reading is Fundamental (RIF) President and CEO Carol Rasco—hosted an entertaining salute to Dr. Seuss during a school-wide reading rally and book give-away at Noyes Elementary School on March 4, 2008. As part of the rally, Councilmember Thomas joined Ms. Gist and Ms. Rasco in a dramatic reading of Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who!*

RIF's book distribution events allow children to choose their own books and provide an array of fun activities to help motivate children to read. RIF, along with the support of volunteers and the DC Public Schools, holds three, free book distributions a year .

"The RIF program does a tremendous job of encouraging children to read," said Councilmember Thomas. "The RIF rallies are a great way to motivate children to read for fun. I know the children in Ward 5 look forward to the rallies each year. And it was a true honor to join Ms. Gist and Ms. Rasco in reading *Horton Hears a Who!*"



Councilmember Thomas saluted Dr. Seuss during a school-wide reading rally and book give-away at Noyes Elementary School on March 4, 2008.

SPRING BREAK "SWING SPORTS" DAY CAMP A HIT

In his capacity as Chair of the Council's Committee on Libraries, Parks, and Recreation, Councilmember Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr. recently announced DC's first-ever spring break "swing sports" day camp for 100 youngsters. The day camp—an initiative of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, the Greater Washington Sports Alliance, Langston Legacy, and Team Thomas—was held at Turkey Thicket Recreation Center during the week of March 24, 2008. The camp coincided with the spring break of DC Public Schools and provided instruction in baseball/softball, tennis, and golf.

"Too often our children have nothing constructive to do during spring break," said Councilmember Thomas. "I wanted to change that and provide kids with a fun week of physical activities that exposes them to the various swing sports."



Councilmember Thomas teaches kids how to properly swing a bat during the Spring Break Swing Sports day camp held during the week of March 24, 2008.

FIVE WARD 5 BUSINESSES TO RECEIVE FREE ADVERTISING FROM JOZ PROGRAM

Councilmember Thomas, Jr. announced at a press conference on March 25, 2008 that five small Ward 5 businesses that have been selected to receive free advertising from Wal-Mart's Jobs and Opportunity Zones (JOZ) initiative. The initiative works with small, local businesses and suppliers located near Wal-Mart stores to spur job creation and economic development.

The five Ward 5 businesses chosen for the program are Bobby's Q, 3301 12th Street, NE; Bubba's Muscogee Restaurant, 1544 Rhode Island Avenue, NE; Café Sureia, 3619 12th Street NE; Capital Construction Group LLC, 3321 12th Street, NE; and Windows Café & Market, 101 Rhode Island Avenue, NW. Each business is minority-owned, and they represent different Ward 5 neighborhoods. The business owners also hire from or live in the community, and each is an active community partner.

COUNCIL HEARINGS ON FY2009 CITY BUDGET BEGIN

The DC City Council begins its hearings on the city's proposed FY2009 budget in April 2008. Mayor Adrian Fenty officially released the proposed budget on March 20, 2008. As Chair of the Council's Committee on Libraries, Parks, and Recreation, Councilmember Thomas will hold budget hearings on these two agencies. The hearing for DC Public Libraries is slated for April 14, 2008, and the hearing for the DC Department of Parks and Recreation is scheduled for April 15, 2008.

EASTER BUNNY COMES TO WARD 5'S FORT LINCOLN FIELD

Councilmember Thomas—in partnership with the DC Department of Parks and Recreation—sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt for youngsters age 4 to 12 at the Fort Lincoln Field and Gazebo on March 24, 2008.

To make the Easter Egg Hunt as memorable as possible for the kids, Councilmember Thomas appeared as the Easter Bunny. The kids also participated in an array of fun activities and were served a picnic-style lunch of grilled hot dogs.

"Creating enriching and memorable experiences for our kids brings me tremendous personal satisfaction and is one of the best aspects of my job," said Councilmember Thomas. "The traditions of Easter as a new beginning provide a perfect opportunity to celebrate the joys of youth, and host an event that offers kids wholesome fun," said Thomas.



Councilmember Thomas entertained youngsters as the Easter Bunny at a March 24, 2008 Ward 5 Easter Egg Hunt.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
HARRY "TOMMY" THOMAS, JR.
SUITE 107, 1350 PENN. AVE., NW
TEL. NO. 202.724.8028
WEBSITE: WWW.HARRYTHOMAS5.COM