

## Sumner Academy Among Top 100 Schools in the Nation

Sumner Academy of Arts and Science has been ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* magazine as number 62 on their list of top high schools in the country. Sumner was the only school in Kansas to receive a gold medal ranking, and the top ranked school in either Missouri or Kansas.

The December 9 issue of the national news magazine includes its annual “America’s Best High Schools” section. According to the magazine, “The America’s Best High Schools project is an annual report that identifies the country’s top-

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■ **Dr. Gene Fite,**  
Principal

performing high schools. The goal is to provide a clear, unbiased picture of how well public schools serve all of their students – from the highest achieving to the lowest achieving – in preparing

them to demonstrate proficiency in basic skills as well as readiness for college-level work.”

“It is gratifying to have *U.S. News and World Report* magazine recognize the excellence that has become a tradition here at Sumner Academy,” said the principal, **Dr. Gene Fite**. “Our staff holds our students to the highest expectations, and the students live up to those expectations.”

The entire *U.S. News and World Report* article can be found here: <http://www.usnews.com/sections/education/high-schools/index.html>.

## Holiday Schedule

In observance of the upcoming holidays, the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will maintain the following schedule:

Administrative Offices will be **OPEN** from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday, December 21-22 and again on Monday and Tuesday, December 28-29. Offices will be **CLOSED** for the holidays on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, December 23, 24, 25 and again on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, December 30, 31 and January 1, 2010.

Schools will be closed for the holiday break beginning Monday, December 21. Offices return to their normal 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. hours when schools reconvene on Monday, January 4, 2010.



### *Keeping Kids Warm . . .*

*Turina Lopez, secretary in the Special Education Department, helps sort coats as part of the KMBZ Coats for Kids program. More than 2,000 coats are estimated to be given to needy children and families in the district this week.*



## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*Staff Notebook* will resume publication on Thursday, January 7. Have a great break!

# Multicultural Partnership Provides Enriching Experiences for Argentine Students

By **Karri Mazzapica**  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science/Social Studies Teacher  
Argentine Middle School

"I want to go to college!" said Claudine Niyonsaba, a sixth grade student at Argentine Middle School.

What encouraged this desire for higher education? It was a field trip to the University of Kansas. Seventy sixth grade students from Argentine traveled to KU this fall as part of a partnership with the university's Multicultural Department.

Junior and senior education majors from KU visited Argentine several times during the months of September and October. The goal of their visits was to interact and observe students learning in a diverse environment. The KU students were able to work in small groups and one-on-one situations with the Argentine students. They also were able to converse

with the Argentine faculty about the benefits of pursuing careers in urban education.

On October 29, the Argentine students traveled to the KU campus to see where the multicultural students attend school. They were paired with one of the KU students throughout the morning. During that time, they were given a tour of the campus. Some were able to see the inside of a classroom, like Olga Salas-Dias who commented, "It would be scary to take a math class with 1,000 other people!"

The sixth graders then regrouped to eat like college students at the Kansas Union. The afternoon ended with a Student Council-funded visit to the Natural History Museum on the campus. This is the third consecutive year for this field trip, which was expanded last year to occur twice in order to provide even more students with this enriching experience.

But these field trips are just a portion of what the partnership has to offer. This spring, teleconferencing will take place between KU and Argentine classrooms to allow the students multiple chances to learn from each other.

"We are very excited about the direction this partnership is moving," said **Heana Farney**, assistant principal at Argentine. "We feel that it has been and is going to be a phenomenal collaborative opportunity that benefits our students at all levels."

Through the partnership, Argentine students leave with a desire to work hard so that they can get into a college like KU some day. And KU students leave with a desire to return to an urban setting where they can complete their internships, with the hopes of one day working in a district like Kansas City, Kansas.

## An Honor for Daryl Garrison

Congratulations to **Daryl Garrison**, Kidzone program specialist for the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, for his recent recognition by the Heart of America Council, Boy Scouts of America.

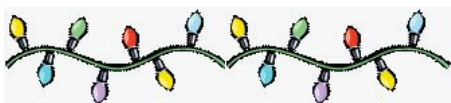
Congratulations!

Last week, Garrison received the 2009 Scoutreach Service Award from the organization during a dinner celebration. The award recognizes outstanding service in the development of Scouting for low-income urban youth in Wyandotte County.

## Holiday Lights Made Easy

Do you want to see the Plaza lights without fighting all the traffic? The City of Mission and the Johnson County Transit Agency (The JO) are partnering to provide the Holiday Mission/Plaza Express Service. This service will provide bus transportation every 20 minutes between the City of Mission and the Country Club Plaza Area on weekends (Friday through Sunday) through December 27. Fares are \$1 per ride. Buses will depart every 20 minutes from 6000 Lamar (NE Johnson County Offices) where parking is available. Hours are:

- Fridays 6 – 11:30 p.m.
- Saturdays Noon – 11:30 p.m.
- Sundays Noon – 8:30 p.m.



## Students Learn About Career Opportunities in Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing creates some of the highest paying, skilled jobs in the workforce. To introduce students to career and educational opportunities available in this field, a group of students and staff from the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) recently attended an Advanced Manufacturing Awareness Event held at the Kansas City Kansas Community College Technical Education Center.

During the event, the teachers and students had the opportunity to interact with postsecondary instructors and professionals from the Fairfax Manufacturing Association. They learned how strong academics tie into high-wage, high-skill and high-demand careers. The event highlighted manufacturing careers and training in welding, electrical,

machine tool technology, and mastercam technology.

The event was sponsored by KCKPS, the Kansas City Kansas Community College Technical Education Center, Fairfax Industrial Association, OneKC Wired and PREP-KC.



### STAFF NOTEBOOK

is a weekly publication for employees of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.

Submissions are welcome and are due by noon on Monday for the following edition. Direct them to:

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