

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# 2020



Beye School celebrated Black History Month with an interactive presentation by award-winning storyteller and musician Oba William King! Oba led the community in stories, poems, music and drums to uplift and recognize African-American heritage and culture and promote peace, respect and connections.

Artist Eric Stiles (bottom row center) with the beautiful Harriet Tubman mural he designed to help Beye School welcome Black History Month

Please see additional photos of the Xenobia Bailey project on page 7.

# NEWS FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Portrait of Mr. E. Layla G.

February is Black History Month, and so it seems right to pause and reflect on the words of Carter G. Woodson, the historian and writer who worked to see that black history would be studied and honored: “What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice.”

We must admit that for most of us, most of the history we have been taught has been selective, and that the goal of an unbiased lens through which we can view history and our place in it remains aspirational. As we celebrated and learned in a variety of ways, our students had the chance to consider new ways of thinking, seeing and being.

When we left our 140th anniversary retelling of the history of Beye School, we had just rebuilt the southernmost portion of the building, which had burned in 1930. During World War II, Beye students did their part for the war effort. In 1944, they saved \$1,225 through the “Schools at War” program for the purchase of a Jeep, a bayonet and a submachine gun for the fighting men. Ninety percent of the students participated in the war bonds savings program. They also wove afghans for the wounded, donated to the Red Cross, and filled 148 Christmas stockings for “the boys.” That year they also donated three truckloads of food for the needy at Thanksgiving and took 135 flowering plants to World War I veterans at Hines Hospital. In the fall of 1953, the old frame north unit, known as “the Gym,” was torn down and construction began on a two-story addition that includes the present auditorium, gymnasium, and rooms for art, industrial and home arts, and music. Next month: reorganization brings junior highs to Oak Park!

The selection process for the next principal of Beye School will soon be coming to a close. The superintendent received recommendations from parents, faculty members and central office administrators and is now in the process of selecting a few candidates for a site visit. We still expect a candidate to be named just before or just after spring break. When that person is announced, we’ll begin working together on how the transition process will begin and proceed, between now and the end of the school year, and until my last day, June 30.

Somehow, Beye managed to rally in the last days of the 5 Essentials Survey and emerge once again with the highest parent response rate in all of D97! Thirty five percent is not a personal best for us, but it is a high participation rate as such surveys go, and will help to ensure that the results will be reliable and useful for our school improvement planning for next year. Thanks to all of you who took the time to share your experience!

In March we will begin IAR (Illinois Assessment of Readiness) testing. This is the state test for 3rd-8th graders that replaced the PARCC test. Each grade level has a week designated for testing, and each student will take tests in reading and math; 5th graders also have a science assessment. We know that these tests do not tell us everything, but they do tell us something, and they allow students to practice being successful with a test format they will be seeing many more times in the years ahead. We expect the results before the end of the year.

It is that time of year when the PTO leadership begins looking for new faces to step up and join the executive board and to lead many activities and events that will only happen next year if people are willing to make them happen. We have been blessed with an incredibly diverse group of leaders this year, and we hope very much to build on that diversity for next year. Please consider what you might give, and when the list of vacancies is published, please know that a willingness to serve is the most important qualification. We have a tradition of outstanding parent leadership, and that’s no small part of our overall tradition of excellence. Keep that tradition alive by looking for a way to say “yes” to the call when it comes!

As always, I welcome your questions, ideas, concerns or causes for celebration. Together we are always in a position to make things better at Beye, and that usually begins with conversations. Please feel free to email, call, or make an appointment to sit down with me. I appreciate and need your support and partnership!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Ellwanger, Principal

# PANCAKE BREAKFAST & ASK MR. E

Thanks to the Beye community for braving the winter weather for the 2020 Pancake Breakfast, and thank you to the volunteers who made it a success!



## Ask Mr. E

*Thank you to Mrs. Buckley's kindergarten class for supplying the questions for Mr. E!*

**Why do you make funny jokes on Fridays? Do you get jokes from other people? (Celeste G. and James N.)**

Well, I started telling jokes on Fridays to have some fun at the end of a week and to give students exposure to more language, since many jokes play with words in interesting ways. I get jokes from a few books, from the internet and from students who share them with me.

**What do principals do all day? (Jack W.)**

Principals have a job where no two days are ever the same. Most days I spend some time in classrooms, some time meeting with students, teachers and parents, some time answering emails and phone calls, some time planning and preparing for upcoming meetings, activities and events, some time working with the other office staff, some time outside before and after school as well as at lunch, and some time responding to things that just happen over the course of a day and need my attention right away.

**What is your favorite thing to do when you leave school? (Elise K.)**

I love being outdoors, especially with my family. That might be skiing, camping, hiking or traveling. I also enjoy all kinds of music, so playing, singing or listening is something I do a lot when I'm not at school.

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND BEYE PTO LETTER



<http://www.beyeschoolpto.org>

Greetings Beye Families!

Hope that everyone is staying as healthy as possible; I'm pretty sure everyone I know has had a cold or the flu in the past couple weeks, so trust that you are not alone. Lots of tea, lemon, honey, vitamins, sleep, and healthy and hearty food tends to be the best remedy.

Thanks for everyone who supported Beye School at Q-BBQ this Wednesday—20 percent of proceeds went to Beye School! Coming up on February 29, we are hosting the 3-on-3 basketball tournament in the Beye gym from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.—“Who’s got next?” And our next PTO general meeting is March 7, featuring March Mathness activities hosted by the Beye School teachers. Your support makes the Beye School community what it is, so we appreciate you, and all that you are.

**INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INVOLVED?** The PTO is always looking for volunteers for a wide variety of roles. Whether you have a few or many hours to give during the school year, the school and students will benefit from your help and your child will see that you are invested in our school and become more invested in themselves.

We look forward to continued success in the 2019-2020 school year, and if you see us out, don't hesitate to come up and say hi! You can also drop myself or Deborah Levine a note at [president@beyeschoolpto.org](mailto:president@beyeschoolpto.org).

Cheers...CT

Chris Thomas

(parent of Noah Thomas-Sanchez, 1st grade)

Beye PTO Co-President



March 7: March Mathness and PTO General Meeting

April 4: Fun Fair

May (date TBA): Multi-cultural Day Beye-In

April (date TBA): Progressive Dinner Beye-In

March 17: No School Institute Day

March 23-27: Spring Break

February 29: 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament

May (date TBA): Adult Talent Show Beye-In

**Mr. E's Farewell Celebration**  
June 4, 2020, End-of-Year Picnic  
Picnic from 5-8pm

# BEYE DISCOVERY



## BEYE PTO'S AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM WITH A FOCUS IN ART AND SCIENCE

[jocelyne@bydiscovery.org](mailto:jocelyne@bydiscovery.org)

### February 2020 Beye Discovery Highlights

#### Black History Month

This year we have highlighted two artists whose artwork is completely tied to their identity:

**Fiber artist Xenobia Bailey** was born in 1950, and her bold, colorful work was inspired by her mother's resourcefulness, repurposing print materials to make decorations that beautified their home. She was also influenced by African culture and 1970's funk. Our students were mesmerized by Xenobia's large-scale crocheted medallions, hung to create pulsating, rhythmic wall installations. Using these as our inspiration, students created boldly colored radiating designs with oil pastels on repurposed packaging. These were shared as exemplars at a school-wide workshop on February 20. Every Beye student had the opportunity to learn about Xenobia and to create a colorful medallion for a community mural in the Commons, celebrating her artistic vision!

**Jean Michel Basquiat:** We loved reading the story of Basquiat's life, *Radiant Child* by Javaka Steptoe, and watching his paintings come to life in a musical video of Maya Angelou's poetic book *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* at All. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oV21Q5axKV4>

Jean Michel's style was "messy" -- different from the traditional idea of art. Since childhood, he drew and painted continually and intended to become a famous artist. We engaged in a discussion to explore students' ideas of what art is and what words describe art. The discussion showed that students connected deeply with Basquiat's work, and they fully engaged in employing some of his signature techniques -- scribbling, symbol use and writing to express themselves and visually communicate their personal feelings and life experiences. Our students' artwork will be displayed at Wise Cup on Lake Street in late February. We hope you have an opportunity to stop in and enjoy!

#### Oba William King Performance

Beye Discovery students LOVED Oba William King's performance, hosted by the Beye PTO's Diversity Committee! This high-energy, interactive experience was fun and packed with learning about traditions, respect and the power of collaboration.

Many Beye Discovery students were thrilled to show off their performing talents as story actors for Baba Oba's tales. They loved learning the words to songs and how to play African drums to accompany the chorus! It was beautiful to see the Beye community enjoying this playful and compelling performance. "Working together we get so much done" was a potent message instilled by Baba Oba that resonated strongly with Beye Discovery students.

**Visiting textile artist Pamela Penny** is a fellow Oak Parker who has extensive experience working with youth via her own textile studio; the Oak Park Education Foundation; and the Oak Park Art League. At Beye Discovery, she had a very captive audience, demonstrating how drop spindles and spinning wheels make quick work of transforming materials like wool and plastic into yarn/"plarn." Students enjoyed spinning plarn using repurposed plastic bags (who knew?) and then using their plarn or multicolored yarn to weave a small sample. To connect with Black History Month, Pamela also brought examples of African Kente Cloth and introduced how contemporary artists integrate these historical designs into their work in new ways. Students found the weaving process to be peaceful and meditative. They also marveled at the patterns created by weaving with multicolored yarn!

#### Mythical, Magical Theme

Students expanded their imaginations and stretched their 2D and 3D artistic skills as we explored mythical and magical worlds. They chose a special creature then designed elements -- scepters, trading cards, spells, maps, a coat of arms and finally a treasure box to showcase these magical artifacts. The possibility for continued play at home was an especially appealing aspect of this project.

Interested in joining us? REGISTER NOW, space is limited:

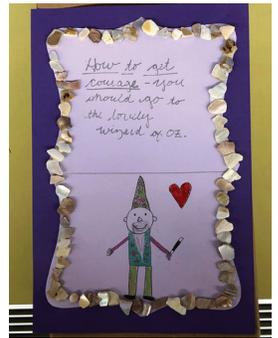
Beye Discovery Summer Adventures Camp: <https://forms.gle/ztgtTMaeYfEWNKjZA>

Beye Discovery 2020/21 School Year: <https://forms.gle/MVkJPei4c6P9Y3rkMA>

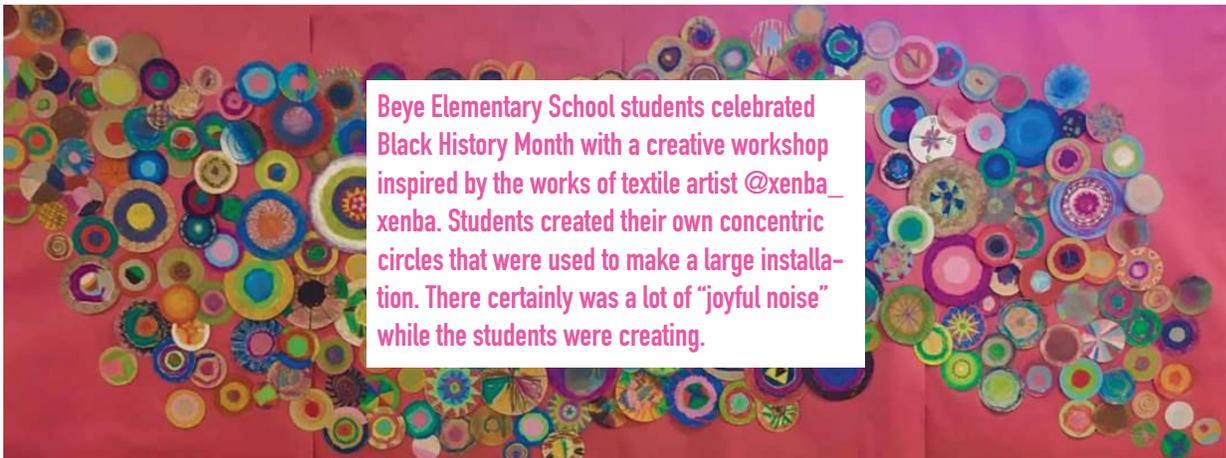
Beye Discovery is an enrichment program of the Beye PTO that offers children opportunities for exploration and growth through creative project-based learning in art and science. It is facilitated by Stacey Grieff, Lead Educator; Nguyen Tran, Teaching Assistant; and Jocelyne Adkins, Program Director.

For questions about Beye Discovery please contact: [jocelyne@bydiscovery.org](mailto:jocelyne@bydiscovery.org).

# BEYE DISCOVERY CONTINUED...



# XENOBIA BAILEY (BLACK HISTORY MONTH CONTINUATION)



Beye Elementary School students celebrated Black History Month with a creative workshop inspired by the works of textile artist @xenba\_xenba. Students created their own concentric circles that were used to make a large installation. There certainly was a lot of “joyful noise” while the students were creating.



Special thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time: Mark Adkins, Kim Becker, Curtis Cox, Jennifer Dunk, Stacey Grieff, Krys Rollins, and Marietta McDuffy & Tanya Fisher of Beye's Diversity Committee, who collaborated with Beye Discovery for this workshop.

# TALENT SHOW

“We should always be helping students find their talents and then use them. If they’re lucky, they might just find one they can use for 33 years someplace, like me!”

-Mr. E



# TALENT SHOW CONTINUED & GREEN TEAM COMING UP



## GREEN TEAM UPCOMING EVENTS

### Joey FineRhyme Assembly

On March 9, Joey FineRhyme will be back to participate in two assemblies (K-2 and 3-5). Joey is an environmental “rap-tivist” who presents STEAM content around energy, climate, and waste in multimedia assemblies that inform and empower kids to think and care about our environment -- and to take environmental action in their schools, in their communities, and at home. His assemblies have been a big hit with the students and we’re excited to have Joey back!

### Green Movie Night

Save the date! On April 30, the Green Team will host the next Green Movie Night in the Beye Auditorium. Snacks will be provided and a discussion will follow after the film to inspire ideas for how to help protect the planet. All ages are welcome! Children who attend can also choose to make green-themed crafts and watch short films made by local green youth filmmakers in the Commons.

For more information about events, questions about the Green Team, or to volunteer, please email [beyegreen@gmail.com](mailto:beyegreen@gmail.com).



## HELP US SAY FAREWELL TO MR. E



**After 33 years of sharing his heart and soul with William Beye Elementary School, principal Jonathan Ellwanger is retiring this summer!**

Encouraging, energizing, and ebullient, “Mr. E” has made an everlasting impression on our hearts and is nothing less than extraordinary. The William Beye Elementary School community, past and present, can honestly say that Jonathan Ellwanger has captured our imaginations and inspired us to live lives that are rich with music, service, compassion, and, above all, love.

**There are a few ways you can help us celebrate Mr. E and leave a lasting impact:**

- **Make a gift to the Mr. E Legacy Fund.** The PTO is raising money to make several gifts to the school in Mr. E’s name. To learn more about what we plan to purchase in Mr. E’s name, and to make a donation, please visit <http://bit.ly/MrEFund>
- **Submit a personal video clip, a handwritten note, a photo, or artwork for his memory book on the JE web page.** Current families and alumni are encouraged to contribute! Visit <https://www.beyeschoolpto.org/mre.html> for more information.
- **Come to the end-of-school picnic on June 4, as we give Mr. E a sendoff you won’t forget.** Join us for music, memories, cake, and some surprises. The picnic is 5-8 p.m., with a ceremony at 6:30 p.m. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**

# JETS AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM & FUN FAIR REMINDER

Registration for the JETS afterschool program opened on Monday, February 24, for K-5th grade.

JETS is an afterschool program that combines the positive impact of running with academic support for grade-school students. No running experience is necessary. The spring session will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays between March 9 and April 22 with no programming during Spring Break (March 23 and 25).

There are two options available for the upcoming session:

**Run Club only:** dismissal at 4 p.m. Students will train for the Youth Mile in the April 26 Good Life Race in Oak Park; students will learn proper warm-up and drills and will gradually add to their workouts each week. Students will set goals and mark their progress. Cost does not include race registration. Race fee can be waived if needed. Recommended fee: \$0-\$60.

**Run Club + Study Buddy:** dismissal at 6 p.m. After participating in the run portion, students return inside Beye School, pair up with high school buddies, and work on homework and other academic needs; weekly personal growth themes are also included in the curriculum. Students will participate in planning and making their own healthy snack for each session. 10 spots are available; if those fill, you will be notified and added to the waitlist. Recommended fee: \$0-\$396.

Click here to register: <http://bit.ly/JETSBEYE>

Visit the JETS website to learn more: <https://www.oakparkjets.com/>

Questions? Contact Colleen via email at [oakparkjets@gmail.com](mailto:oakparkjets@gmail.com) or via text/call at (708) 613-0190.

## Save the Date! Fun Fair, April 4

Mark your calendars for Beye School Fun Fair on April 4 —the Beye PTO's biggest FUNdraiser of the year! Stay tuned on Konstella and the [BeyeSchoolPTO.org](http://BeyeSchoolPTO.org) for details in the coming weeks for more information!

In the meantime, the Fun Fair team is looking for your help to prep for the raffle and silent auction. Do you have anything to donate — concert or sports tickets, guest passes to museums, gift cards, toys, games, or giant stuffed animals? Or do you have time to assist with picking up donations from local businesses? If so, please contact [Tanya at Trfisher@gmail.com](mailto:Tanya at Trfisher@gmail.com).



# VOLUNTEER AT BEYE

Beye School's PTO fundraising team is looking for volunteers! Time commitments vary. Get involved as much as you would like. Meet new people and show your kids your school spirit. Visit the PTO home page and scroll down to the bottom of the page to indicate your interest(s): [www.beyeschoolpto.org](http://www.beyeschoolpto.org) or [www.beyeschoolpto.org/volunteer.html](http://www.beyeschoolpto.org/volunteer.html).

## CONNECT WITH US



[www.op97.org/beye](http://www.op97.org/beye)



Beye School Families



Mr E. @BeyeTheWay

## ABOUT BEYELINES

Beyelines is a monthly newsletter that highlights the past month's activities and events at Beye School, both inside and outside the classroom. If you are a Beye School parent, community member, teacher, or student and would like to submit an article for consideration, please email: [communications@beyeschoolpto.org](mailto:communications@beyeschoolpto.org).

BeyeBytes is a weekly electronic newsletter that highlights upcoming events at Beye School and in the community. If you would like to submit a news item, or if you are not currently receiving BeyeBytes and would like to be added to the distribution list, please send and email to: [communications@beyeschoolpto.org](mailto:communications@beyeschoolpto.org).

### Editors:

Emily Dagostino and Sean Flynn

### Graphic Designers:

Blake and Lindy Novotny



## 2nd Grade Dinosaur Projects