

**U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION MARGARET SPELLINGS JOINS NFL PLAYERS AND CHANCELLOR RHEE TO HIGHLIGHT VOLUNTEERISM AT WASHINGTON, DC HIGH SCHOOL**

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**Three Members of Banneker High School Community Receive President's Volunteer Service Awards**

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, Chris Draft of the St. Louis Rams, Warrick Dunn of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and District of Columbia Public Schools Chancellor Rhee today stressed the importance of volunteerism during a visit to Banneker High School in Washington, D.C. During the visit, Secretary Spellings presented President George W. Bush's Voluntary Service awards to a student, parent and teacher at Banneker High School.

"If you're looking for models of good character and community service, you don't need to look further than these two guys beside me-Chris Draft and Warrick Dunn," said Secretary Spellings. "Chris and Warrick are fantastic role models, not just because they are world class athletes but because they are dedicated to giving back to the community."

The NFL players are two of 12 players being honored in Washington, D.C. this evening for their off-the-field volunteer work. The Chris Draft Family Foundation focuses on educating families on the importance of physical fitness, nutrition and healthy living. Warrick Dunn's Homes for the Holidays program helps hard working single parents own their first home.

After touring classrooms and visiting students and teachers with Banneker High School's principal, Anita Berger, Secretary Spellings, Chris Draft, Warrick Dunn and Chancellor Rhee spoke to the students at a school assembly about the importance of volunteerism and service to the community. Chris Draft and Warrick Dunn then assisted Secretary Spellings in presenting three of President George W. Bush's Voluntary Service awards.

Following are the recipients of the President's Voluntary Service Awards:

- \* Whitney Powell, senior, Banneker High School, for 262 hours of volunteer service since September 2007, including with the National Capital Coalition to discourage underage drinking.
- \* Jacqueline Armstrong, parent of a Banneker High School student, for over 500 hours of volunteer service at Banneker High School and an equal time commitment to Hyde Elementary School.
- \* Vernita Jefferson, counselor, Banneker High School, for over 800 hours of volunteer service at Banneker High School beyond her regular working hours to ensure students complete college applications and every possible scholarship application.

"In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush challenged all Americans to to make time to help their neighbors, communities and Nation through service," said Secretary Spellings. "Whitney Powell, Jacqueline Armstrong and Vernita Jefferson have risen to that challenge, and the Banneker High School community has reaped the benefits of their dedication."

The Secretary also announced the release today of a new publication, Partnerships in Character Education State Pilot Projects, 1995-2001- Lessons Learned, about integrating character education into schools, which describes the results and lessons learned from eleven years of character education partnerships funded by the Federal government. The report can help states and schools share strategies and best practices.

"This report shows that a key element of character education is increasing student involvement in their communities, and this an area where Banneker High clearly excels. Through the Community Laboratory Project, Banneker students are dedicating dozens of hours every year to community service," said Secretary Spellings. "You are helping others while learning about good citizenship and career options."

Noting that many of the Banneker juniors and seniors are preparing for college, Secretary Spellings highlighted two resources the U.S. Department of Education offers to help families making the necessary financial planning. To help maximize Federal financial aid, the Secretary recently released a user-friendly guide called Federal Aid First, which helps families navigate the application process and urges them to take advantage of Federal aid resources before seeking other options. In addition, the Department has a new tool called the FAFSA4caster that provides families with early estimates of how much financial aid they can expect to receive in the coming years.

To access Federal Aid First, visit [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov)

To access to the FAFSA4caster, visit [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov) <<http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov>>

To access Partnerships in Character Education State Pilot Projects, 1995-2001- Lessons Learned, visit [www.ed.gov/programs/charactered/lessons.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/charactered/lessons.html)