

NEWS



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For Immediate Release

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Father's Day Comes Early for Pittsburgh Dads *Pittsburgh Public Schools Celebrate Take a Father to School Day*

PITTSBURGH, May 17, 2012 –Hundreds of fathers across Pittsburgh took their children to school today. Instead of dropping them off and waving goodbye, they headed inside the buildings. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles and other adult males who have made an impact in the life of a Pittsburgh Public Schools student participated in various activities, such as field day, story time, arts and crafts and career talks.

Rahim El took time off from work to join his 7-year-old son Racari at Pittsburgh Liberty K-5. After breakfast and a musical performance, El attended his son's Reading class.

"The kids need it. There's so much going on in the city---even in the suburbs. Fathers could change that. If we're involved, we help decrease a lot of the negative behaviors that's happening in our communities," said Rahim El. "Even if it's only for one day, it makes a difference. Most of the time, moms are getting the kids dressed, taking them to school, meeting their teachers, etc. It's nice that so many fathers came out to do that. Liberty always gets a good turnout."

This is the 14th year Pittsburgh Public Schools held the district-wide event. This year it is receiving national recognition.

"Take a Father to School Day received a Magna Award from the National School Boards Association. The country has their eyes on us now," said Pittsburgh School Board Member Mr. Mark Brentley, Sr. "I jokingly tell school staff and the principals that I will get the men in their buildings, but it's their job to keep them there. They have been very creative in planning activities. We get dads in the door, and we tell them not to leave until they sign up to volunteer. They can chaperone an event or plant flowers in the schoolyard. We need them now more than ever."

At Pittsburgh Faison PreK-5, dozens of fathers gathered on the playground for field day. Dads jumped rope, threw Frisbees, and played football and kickball. Inside, they purchased books for their children at a book fair.

"I wanted to give my daughter support. I don't get to see her that much, so I made sure to come to this, said Ramon Robinson. "I tell her if she doesn't get an education, she won't get far in life. Most of our family went to college. I went to college. I want her to do the same."

"My daddy's smart!" says 7-year-old Ra-niya Robinson. "It makes me happy that he came. He tells me my hair looks nice and tells me to read books. I want to go to college like he did."

Omari Horton, father of 8-year-old Omari Junior and 11-year-old Amya, tossed a ball around with his children and met their teachers.

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“They need their fathers to have an identity,” says Horton. “If you’re dad’s not around, that impacts your self-esteem. I teach my kids values, like respect. I tell them to make eye contact when they talk to people. They need that.”

Although activities varied, every school in the District participated in Take a Father to School Day. With 278 men, Pittsburgh Carmalt PreK-8 had it largest turn out to date.

“We showed parents how to use rubrics, which are scoring guides. Fathers then rated their children’s public speaking presentations,” said Carmalt Principal Sandra Och. “Each class did something different. We wanted to show our fathers that this is a safe learning environment. Two of the dads were my former students. It was touching to see them come full-circle and believe in Pittsburgh Public Schools.”

The goal of this event is to bring men into the school building to establish better communications with schools, understand that they are always welcome, and explore opportunities for volunteering and becoming more involved in their child’s education.

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