



### J.O. Wilson Has Recess

I was so pleased to read Kyle Johnson's coverage of J.O. Wilson Elementary School ("Recipe for Success") in last month's Hill Rag. As a parent of a preschooler at J.O. Wilson, I have

been impressed by Principal Warley's leadership, as well as the level of both public and private support that have shaped the school in recent years.

I was puzzled, however, by a reference to a lack of outdoor recess at

the school. One of the best parts of the beautiful new outdoor recreation grounds at J.O. Wilson is that all students now have an incredible space to get outside and play. In addition to physical education curriculum, Princi-



pal Warley and J.O. Wilson's teachers make sure that outdoor recess (and the subsequent opportunity for free, unstructured outdoor play) occurs daily ... weather permitting, of course.

And I am just delighted that this commitment to creating great places for students to play appears to be the norm, rather than the exception, for area schools. There is also beautiful new playground equipment at Ludlow-Taylor and Brent Elementary. These types of outdoor play areas not only provide places for students to be active; through school-community partnerships, revitalized school playgrounds can provide much-needed recreation space for local families.

As a newcomer to the DCPS scene, it is encouraging to hear stories of parents and schools that are passionate about the crucial role that play "plays" in children's academic performance. In an era of standardized tests and academic rigor, outdoor play can sometimes be seen as a luxury and not a necessary part of the school day. I imagine many families would agree with a statement first lady Michelle Obama made in late November, saying, "Anyone who has kids knows they need recess and exercise to focus. If you own a dog, you know that."

Play combats childhood obesity and fosters confidence in our little ones. And in addition to the health and social benefits, play positively impacts academic performance. Outdoor unstructured play improves attention, fosters creativity and boosts memory – skills that are critical to overall learning.

And so as the academic year progresses and local education discussions turn toward key topics such as AYP (adequate yearly progress) goals and language programs, it is essential to not only recognize the importance of recess but to celebrate our local schools

that are making it a priority for their students to get outside and play.

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### Another View of Dulce

After your fairly glowing review of Dulce Café, I thought it best that you understand what Mr. and Ms. Humphries were really attempting. They were attempting to open a nightclub with entertainment, open until the latest hours available. After a preliminary hearing at ABRA (Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration), the neighborhood and Dulce reached a vocal agreement. The Humphries have reneged on that agreement. And that indicates a bit of bad faith.

I think the Humphries overstate the amount of restaurant money they will lose after 10 p.m. Granted, they'll lose alcohol money ... but not much restaurant money. And finally, I was never initially opposed to Dulce Café ... if they want to operate as a restaurant. Indeed, I and my neighbors will likely be part of their clientele. But after the 4th & Goal and Heart & Soul fiascos, I'm not inclined to allow another nightclub to impose upon my neighborhood again.

Especially with the incident at the Martini Lounge on H Street, I would suggest that the Hill Rag dig a little deeper into the Dulce Café story.

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### We Support Street Cars, Not Wires

CHRS RESOLUTION  
-- November 17, 2009

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Government has announced a plan to introduce a 38 mile, \$1.5 billion dollar new streetcar system on to the

streets and avenues of the city; and

WHEREAS, a properly designed streetcar system could improve public transportation and do so at less cost than a below grade rail system and,

WHEREAS, the streetcar system, once installed will be in place for decades and

WHEREAS, the L'Enfant Plan for Washington (generally, the area south of Florida Avenue/Benning Road, west of the Anacostia River, sometimes referred to as the "old city") is on the National Register of Historic Sites and Places; and

WHEREAS, the L'Enfant Plan's status on the National Register of Historic Sites and Places is a bar to the wires and the various supporting structures which might impose on the streets and avenues, and the District's Comprehensive Plan protects vistas, open spaces, natural settings and public thoroughfares, and the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC) has correctly described Washington as having one of the most significant wire-free networks in the world; and

WHEREAS, the NCPC in carrying out its duties to protect the Federal interest in Washington, has informed District representatives that it would defend against wires in the L'Enfant Plan streets; and

WHEREAS, Washington is a planned city with vital vistas and views that make it unique in the world, and those views are located throughout Washington, including areas outside the L'Enfant Plan that deserve protection from unsightly overhead wires used to power streetcars, now:

THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved by CHRS that before any official action is taken to introduce a streetcar system to the District of Columbia, the City should conduct a study of streetcar powering systems that are not dependent on overhead wires, including systems in the US, including the system being installed in Charlotte, NC, and in Europe and other parts of the world.

### Happy Holidays from Kabul

Snow covers the magnificent majestic mountains surrounding Kabul. It seems more than ironic that such beautiful peaks look down on devastation, corruption, IEDs, sui-

cide bombers, dead and wounded warriors and civilians, sorrow and unending fear. As I stare up into the distance, my head fills with rushing thoughts of this past year.

I came to Afghanistan to serve our beloved country, to try to make life better for the noble Afghan people, and to help create a safer world. During the course of the past year, the situation here has deteriorated rapidly and life has changed dramatically. You have heard much about it in the media, but being "on the ground" and living the reality every day is sobering.

As I write this, our president grapples with the way forward—a daunting task with innumerable repercussions. I pray for his strength and courage as he struggles with one of the toughest decisions a leader ever has to make. By the time I return home in January, a new course will have been charted, and we'll have much to discuss together.

With the holidays approaching, my thoughts turn to you and how much I have missed my family and friends. You have buoyed me during the toughest days with your e-mails, Facebook entries, boxes of goodies and endless encouragement. On this Thanksgiving, I feel especially grateful to all of you for your love and caring during a very challenging year. As I share a turkey dinner on this NATO base with my new friends from many parts of the globe, I shall be thinking about you and looking forward to joining you very soon on American soil.

I send warmest holiday greetings to all of you, along with endless thanks for the bounty your friendship bestows.

PS - Three pictures attached are of my colleagues and I at the base of a mountain in Kabul, me with one of the many kittens on our base, and getting ready to head out on a mission.

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### Thank You, Hill Rag

Thanks for the beautiful pictures and nice review. We are always grateful for those who appreciate what we do.

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