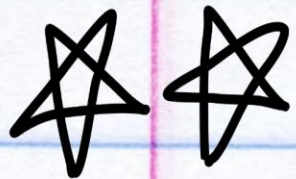
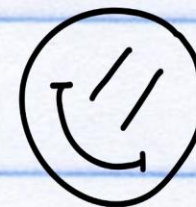


# ***The Detroit Teacher***



**April 2025**



*The Detroit Teacher* is the official publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers,  
American Federation of Teachers Local 231, AFL-CIO.



**Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins, President**  
**Jason Posey, Executive Vice President**



## From the Pen of the Organizing Fellow



Yolanda King

This message emphasizes the critical role of having a complete and active School Union Committee—consisting of a Building Representative, an Alternate, and at least three Union Committee Members—at every school site. Why is this so important?

- Representation & Enforcement:** The DFT relies on building reps to enforce the collective bargaining agreement. Without them, rights and protections secured through the union may not be upheld effectively at the worksite level.
- Communication Bridge:** Building reps and committee members are the direct link between union leadership and members, ensuring timely and accurate communication about policies, support, and changes.
- Support & Advocacy:** They support members through conflicts, hearings, and administrative challenges, ensuring due process and fairness.
- Union Strength & Unity:** A complete and active committee builds union power within the workplace, creating solidarity and proactively solving issues before they escalate.
- Local Knowledge:** Site-based reps understand the unique culture and challenges of their school—making them essential problem-solvers and advocates.

If your school doesn't have a full committee, now is the time to get involved or help organize for the upcoming May elections. The goal is to have a School Union Committee in place at every work location for next year. Reach out to the Organizing Fellows if you have questions.

Together, we are stronger.

# From the Pen of the Political Action Committee Chairs



Marcus Walton  
and Robin Jennings

This month let's focus on the positives!

1. The most powerful positive is the record-breaking speech New Jersey Senator, Cory Booker, delivered on the Senate floor—25 hours and 4 minutes. He stood for the entire time, didn't stop to use the restroom or take a meal break while taking questions from his fellow Senators. He prepared for the long speech by fasting and curbing his water intake. He did not focus on one issue; he spoke about the dismantling of the Department of Education, proposed Republican cuts to Social Security and Medicare to mass firings of federal workers to immigration enforcement policies, among many other issues. When you fight back and stand up against a bully, you then inspire the next person to do something. It's the model we need to follow, as educators and union members, so that our parents and community know what we believe in.
2. The voters of Wisconsin were not swayed by the estimated \$25 million which poured in from Elon Musk and his affiliated groups and elected a Democratic candidate for the State Supreme Court. This race was the first major test of the political impact of Musk, but keep in mind that most presidents' parties lose ground in the midterm elections. However, this race became the most expensive judicial race in history.
3. In Florida, the GOP margin in their special elections was not as high as was hoped for. This has caused some anxiety with Republicans about the midterm Congressional seats.
4. Over in Louisiana voters rejected all 4 state Constitutional amendments pushed by the Republican governor. Nearly two-thirds of voters said "No on All" and the voter turnout was higher than anticipated. The amendments included overhauling the state's tax and budget laws, sending minors to adult jails and prisons for longer sentences, and adjusting the rules for special elections.
5. A positive sign is that turnout in the special elections in Wisconsin, Florida, and Louisiana was higher than predicted. We want this trend to continue as we know that approximately 36% of Americans did not vote in the 2024 presidential election. This meant roughly 89 million Americans eligible to vote did not, which is greater than the number of people who voted for either Trump 77,302,508 or Harris 75,017,613.
6. April 5<sup>th</sup> was a day across American in a peaceful protest for "Hands Off My Union", "Hands Off My DEI", "Hands Off My Social Security", "Hands Off My Medicaid" and many other issues. Many DFT members showed up at these rallies across metro Detroit. State and federal lawmakers from around the country spoke to the attendees. Here is a TikTok that features rallies from the 50 states: [Hands Off All 50 States](#).

Stay Informed!

**CALL TO  
ACTION**



## **MICHIGAN EDUCATION JUSTICE COALITION (MEJC) ADVOCACY DAY**

 **Lansing, MI**  
 **Tuesday, April 29, 9am-4pm**



## **PICK UP THE PHONE TODAY!**

Couldn't make it to Lansing? No worries, you can still help us amplify our message. Read off a brief message (written below) showing solidarity with us and echoing our asks!

*"I couldn't make it to Lansing with the Michigan Education Justice Coalition, but I'm calling to say I stand by their asks. Can I count on you to prioritize funding increases for special education, mental health, and the Opportunity Fund (also known as 31a)? We are also urging you to pass an education budget by June 30. Our children and their education **MUST** be prioritized if we want Michigan to have a vibrant future."*

We want to make it clear to Rep. Ann Bollin, Rep. Carol Glanville, and Rep. Tim Kelly that constituents across Michigan are demanding investments in student mental health, special education, and equity for those who need it most. **We also need them to pass an education budget by June 30th and not play political games at the expense of our kids.**

Can you call these legislators to elevate our budget asks and show strength in numbers for public schools to our elected officials?

- ❖ Rep. Ann Bollin @ 517-373-7515
- ❖ Rep. Carol Glanville @ 517-373-0476
- ❖ Rep. Tim Kelly @ 517-373-1778



DFT joins other PK-12 advocates from AFT Michigan.



President Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins speaks about the proposed School Aid Bill to education advocates. Standing on her right is State Senator Darrin Camilleri and to her left is State Senator Danya Polehanki. Both State Senators are teachers.



There were 55 planned protests in Michigan, which were part of the 1,400 events held in all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, and 6 European nations. The protests in Michigan were north to south, east to west, in large cities and small towns. The largest rallies were in Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing.



# Hands Off! -- Detroit



# Hands Off! -- Detroit



# Hands Off! -- Canton



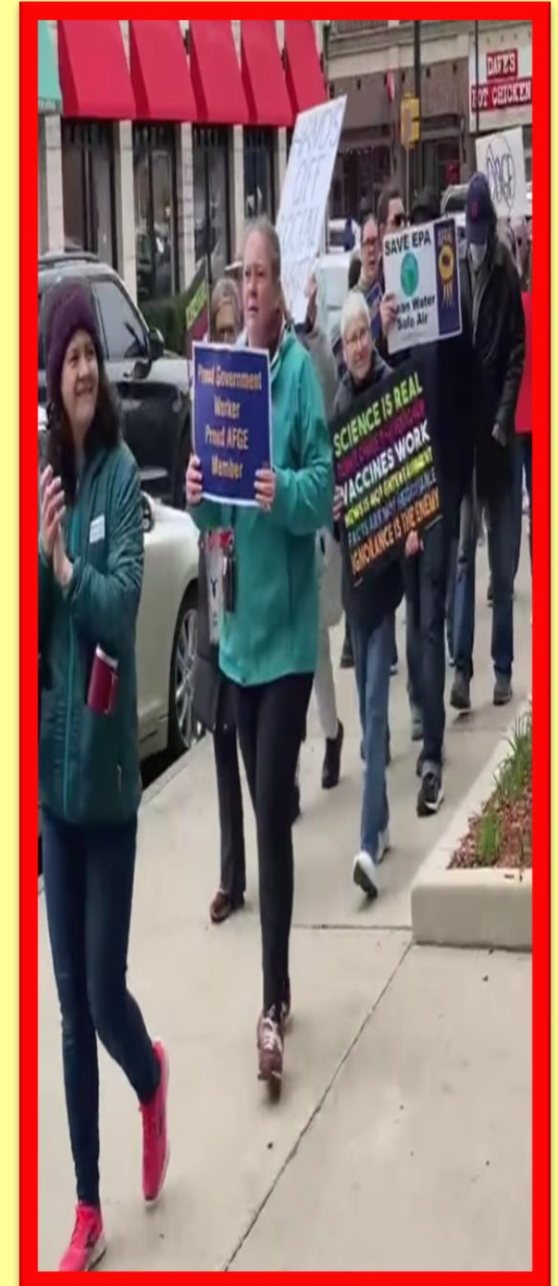
# Hands Off! -- Canton



State Representatives Matt Koleszar, Ranjeev Puri, and Reggie Miller



# Hands Off! -- Dearborn



Speakers were Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (left) and State Representative Erin Byrnes (right)

# Hands Off! -- Ferndale





**Hamilton**



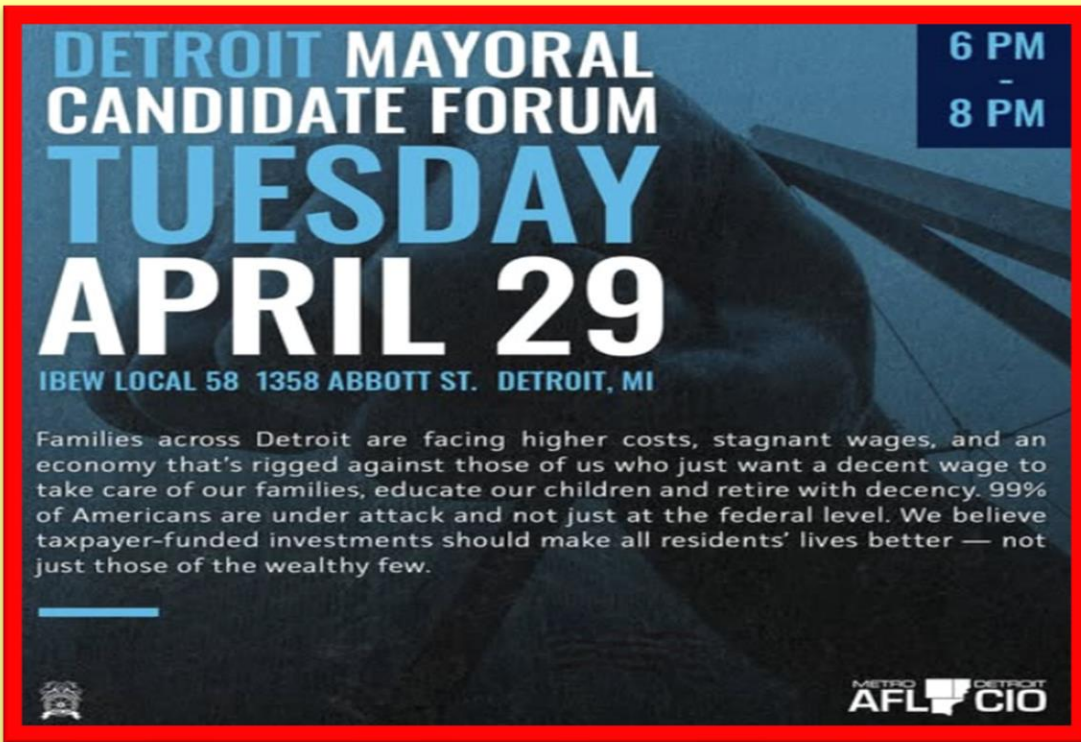
**Thirkell**



**Bagley**



**Palmer Park**



## DFT Members Attend the Mayoral Candidate Forum



**[Click here for a Facebook video of the Detroit Mayoral Candidate Forum](#)** featuring 5 candidates, from left to right: James Craig, Saunteel Jenkins, Solomon Kinloch, Todd Perkins, and Mary Sheffield.

# CALENDAR

May	June	July and August
<b>1</b> Executive Board 4:30 p.m. <b>8</b> DFT General Membership 4:30 p.m. <b>12</b> Progress Reports <b>13</b> DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m. <b>14</b> SSW Chapter 5:00 p.m. <b>15</b> Middle School Chapter 5:00 p.m. <b>15</b> ESE Chapter 5:30 p.m. <b>19</b> Academic Interventionists 6:00 p.m. <b>20</b> DFT Retirees Chapter 11:30 a.m. <b>22</b> Early Childhood Chapter, 5:30 p.m. <b>26</b> Memorial Day, district closed <b>29</b> Executive Board 4:30 p.m.	<b>5</b> Executive Board 4:30 p.m. <b>10</b> Last Day for Students <b>10</b> DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m. <b>11</b> Professional Development <b>12</b> Teacher Records Day <b>23</b> Summer School begins <b>24</b> Last day for payroll deducted union dues for 24-25 school year	<b>July</b> <b>8</b> DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m. <b>25</b> Summer School ends  <b>August</b> <b>12</b> DPSCD School Board 5:30 p.m. <b>18</b> Staff reports for 25-26 year <b>25</b> Students report <b>29</b> No school, Labor Day Weekend

Dates and times are subject to change.

DFT events are on website @ <https://dft231.mi.aft.org/events>.

DPSCD information can be found @ <https://www.detroitk12.org/>



## Work Locations Represented at the April 2025 General Membership Meeting

- |                       |                   |                        |                    |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| ❖ Academy of Americas | ❖ Charles Wright  | ❖ Earhart              | ❖ Moses Field      |
| ❖ Adult Education     | ❖ Clippert        | ❖ EIDC                 | ❖ Munger           |
| ❖ Bennett             | ❖ CMA             | ❖ East English Village | ❖ Noble            |
| ❖ Bethune             | ❖ Cooke           | ❖ Edison               | ❖ Northwestern     |
| ❖ Brenda Scott        | ❖ Davis Aerospace | ❖ Gardner              | ❖ Priest           |
| ❖ Bunche              | ❖ Davison         | ❖ Golightly EC         | ❖ Ronald Brown     |
| ❖ Burns               | ❖ Denby           | ❖ Hutchinson           | ❖ Schulze          |
| ❖ Carleton            | ❖ DFT Office      | ❖ Jerry L. Wright      | ❖ Southeastern     |
| ❖ Carstens            | ❖ DFT Retirees    | ❖ John R. King         | ❖ Speech & Hearing |
| ❖ Carver              | ❖ Drew            | ❖ Keidan               | ❖ SLP              |
| ❖ Central HS          | ❖ Duke Ellington  | ❖ Mann                 | ❖ Thirkell         |
| ❖ Chrysler            | ❖ Durfee          | ❖ Marcus Garvey        | ❖ Turning Point    |
|                       |                   | ❖ Marquette            | ❖ Wayne            |
|                       |                   |                        | ❖ Western          |

# Jodi Willard

## Burns Elementary



Jodi Willard admits that she was hesitant and nervous to participate in the virtual teach-in held by the DFT for the March 4 Education. She doesn't necessarily like to put herself out there for all to see and certainly didn't consider herself an expert. But the current state of our country moved her to action. This is what she says: "There has been a feeling of helplessness in the face of the first 100 days of the Trump administration. It's easy to feel powerless. So, the virtual teach-in was a moment to step up, even if it was uncomfortable. If I was unable to overcome my discomfort about speaking as a representative for teachers during this "unprecedented" moment, then when would I speak? I've realized, the time is now, regardless of whether it is comfortable. The experience overall was empowering for me personally but also left all participants with a sense that we are together, that there are many of us, and that small actions have meaning."

It is important for her to be a union member because she believes there is strength in solidarity and strength in numbers, that standing together to represent our own interests will result in a better working environment, which results in a better learning environment for students. One of the biggest ways that Union Membership has impacted Jodi and her colleagues is through the negotiation of a favorable contract for members. It may not be possible to make everyone perfectly happy, but she feels like the strides made for all parties in pay has been huge for her personally, and for the district's ability to attract and retain teachers and other staff. A building staffed with fairly-paid people is a building that runs more smoothly.



Congratulations to the following members as they took the Oath of Office at the April General Membership meeting. They were sworn in by President Lakia Wilson-Lumpkins.

Left to right: Jacqueline Robinson, Election Committee; Taneshe Vernon, Election Committee; Tracie Diggins, Executive Board; Tamika Merchant, Election Committee; Crystal White, Election Committee



Ten students will win \$50,000 and 40 students will win \$10,000 cash in a [Michigan Education Savings Program](#) account. That's money that can be used for tuition at a community college, university or career training program, as well as room and board, living expenses and more!

#### JUST THREE STEPS TO ENTER!

1. Create [StudentAid.gov](#) accounts (both student and parent)
2. Fill out the [FAFSA](#) form together (It takes most families 30 minutes or less to complete)
3. Text CASH to 855-50K-TICKET (855-505-8425)

#### ALREADY COMPLETED THE FAFSA?

You're still eligible. Just text CASH to 855-50K-TICKET (855-505-8425) to enter.

FOR ALL DETAILS: <https://tickettotuition.com/>



CMA HS Featured on  
AFT Voices

# DFT in the Media



AFT Voices: Education  
Cuts: Robbing Our  
Children



Target and the Black  
Boycott

This article from Forbes Magazine features a DFT member from Edison Elementary. The author is a former AFT Communications Specialist.

# DFT in the Media



An Academic Interventionist at Mark Twain and a Cass Tech HS Teacher are interviewed by Chalkbeat

[Read Here: threat of federal funding cuts looming, here's what's at stake in Michigan](#)



President Wilson-Lumpkins stands next to State Senator, Darrin Camilleri, at a press conference in Lansing

Read here: [Detroit News Senate Dems PC](#)

# DFT in the Media



A student at Cooke STEM won the Bookstock 2025 contest and she is interviewed with her teacher.

[Video: Live In the D Interview](#)



Education  
Healthcare  
Public Services

#ProtectOurKids

I just want to put a face on it. Because I had a student that had an internship from a CTE program, and her internship was put on hold because the funding was put on hold. We have students taking speech online because there aren't enough speech teachers. **The playing field is already unlevel. Now you're just going to put a crater in the middle of the playing field, and it's just morally irresponsible.**



**RODNEY FRESH**, high school social studies teacher from Detroit and treasurer of the Detroit Federation of Teachers

# Bethune Dance Program

## 96th Annual Spring Dance Concert *Moving Messages*

Artistic Directors  
**MRS. KAREN PRALL AND DR. RAS MIKEY COURTNEY**

with guest artists Ballethnic Dance Company

and a special performance by  
**BETHUNE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Sound Design  
**BRIAN COLE**

Production Stage Manager  
**JOHN R PIERRE**

Lighting Design  
**JUSTIN GIBSON**

Costume Design  
**CALEETHA STEPHENS-JONES**

Scenic Design  
**ALEX ZERO PORDON**

Projections Design  
**SASHA KUZNETSOVA**

### RUN TIME

1 hour and 40 minutes, with a 15-minute intermission

### PERFORMANCES

(In order of appearance)

#### Tomorrow

Choreographer: Gianna Burright

Music: Original Composition by Sio Tepper

Performers: Adari Torres, Vanessa Galaviz, Mary Renko, Emily Pegley, Becca Ferragut, Savanna McFadden, Jade Moore, Madison Collier, Erin Potvin, Abby Gorgerat

#### The Ghost of You

Choreographer: Adari Torres

Music: "Desperado" by Lucas Imbiriba, "Think of Me Once in Awhile, Take Care" by Take Care, "fantasmas" by HUMBE

Live Musicians: Cayden Cox and Mackenzie Jones

Performers: Maddie Angst, Cadence Ferrence, Malaak Aburahmeh, Allie Issacson, Ryan Willford, Tebria Vaughn, Adari Torres

#### Joy- (Saturday Matinee Only)- Bethune Middle School

Choreographer: Jazmine Leath

Music: "Joy (Unspeakeable)" by Voices of Fire ft. Pharrell Williams

Performers: Ca'Niya Thomas, Ta'Neja Davis, Ja'Niya Thomas, Dakota Kirtz, Jayla Mack, Aaliyah Pouncil, Aniyah Jones, Aaliyah Thompkins, Ava Cooper, Deannah Brownleaf, Dianna Bently, Makyliah McIntosh, Aaliyah Long

#### Reality of this World

Choreographer: Malaak Aburahmeh

Music: "This Bitter Earth/On the Nature of Daylight" by Clyde Otis, Max Richter, Dinah Washington

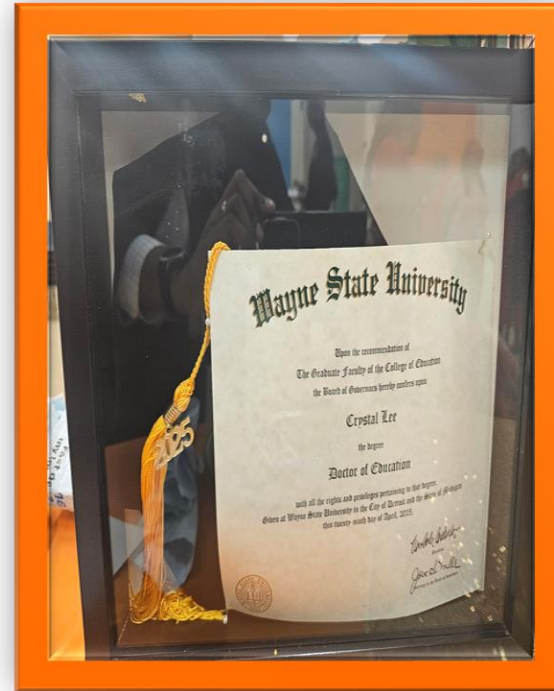
and Louisa Fuller  
Performer: Malaak Aburahmeh



Jazmine Leath is the choreographer, dance teacher, and motivator for the dancers. She is a full-time staff member and teacher at Bethune. Many dancers from Bethune go on to audition for high school at DSA--to participate in their dance program after working with Ms. Leath. The Bethune Dance Workshop is comprised of mostly middle school students and performs at arts engagements all over the city of Detroit.

# In Honor of Crystal Lee

Drew Transition Center held a special recognition for Dr. Crystal Lee on what would have been her 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. Making the day even more special was that Wayne State granted her posthumous doctoral degree, which was picked up by her sister, Michelle Lee, who also works at Drew. The Drew Steppers performed a dance wearing Sister Lee's favorite color **orange**. The students and staff did a clap around in the hallways and colored bookmarks that had Crystal's face and some of her favorite sayings.



# DFT Retirees Learn About the Master Plan of Palmer Park in Detroit

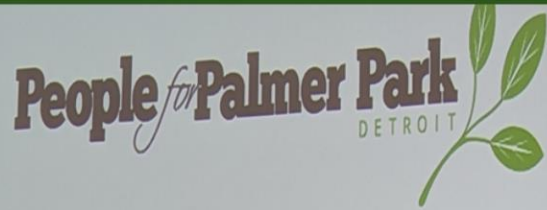


## About Palmer Park

- Originally owned by Senator Robert Palmer. Donated the first 140 acres in 1893 with the stipulation that it would never be developed or Witherell Woods be logged.
- Original park design was by famed architect Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.
- Log cabin was used by the Palmer's as a getaway from downtown Detroit.
- It is now 296 acres of Forest, Prairies and recreational amenities for the people of Detroit
- People for Palmer Park was created when parks were slated to be closed during Detroit's economical downturn. Local citizens got together and created our non-profit to keep the park going and push to keep it a viable place to enjoy and the outdoors. Our board consist of 16-18 members that are selected at out annual meetings by vote by our members.
- We have a master plan that we created to continue to develop the park and events

**Palmer Park is one of 13 regional parks in the City of Detroit parks system. One of the largest parks in Detroit, located at 910 Merrill Plaisance, it has acres of woodlands, meadows, recreational areas, and athletic fields. Over the past several years the city of Detroit, together with various foundation and community partners, have invested in major improvements. Roy Raines, a board member of People of Palmer Park, presented a slide show to retirees about the future of Palmer Park. Many retirees expressed fond memories of spending time at Palmer Park and are ecstatic about the investments being made to keep the park a treasure for the City of Detroit.**

# DFT Retirees Learn About the Master Plan of Palmer Park in Detroit



## Things to do at Palmer Park

- Best youth tennis program in the country led by Coach Lee King. Pickle ball courts with lights
- Handball courts, Basketball court, New Disc Golf course with youth teaching section
- Community garden, butterfly garden and rain gardens. An over 400 apple tree orchard
- Two playgrounds, a splash pad, volleyball court, outdoor gym facility
- Refurbished State Fair Bandstand, Dog park and new restroom facilities on 7 Mile Rd.
- Great events like Winterfest, Log Cabin Day, Art Fair, Earth Day Cleanup and many Corporate volunteer days.
- Great walking/biking trails



# DFT Retirees Learn About the Master Plan of Palmer Park in Detroit



## Sneak Previews Of Current Projects



**Left: The bandshell from the old Michigan State Fairgrounds was brought to Palmer Park and is being restored. It will be in the Northwest portion, accessible at 7 Mile Road. There will also be a parking lot to accommodate visitors for events planned for the bandshell.**

**Right: The plan for Merrill Fountain, which has been at Palmer Park since 1926, is to get the water flowing again.**



## Habitat Restoration Project

City of Detroit and PFPP with help from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation working to make Lake Frances Witherell Woods healthier and beautiful.

- Drained lake Frances and dredged goose waste out
- Installed 3 filtration systems
- Removed invasives and planted new shoreline species to discourage geese activity. Fenced off to keep deer out till established
- Planted huge bird meadows to attract native flora
- Wayfinding signage and kiosks to be installed this spring.



## The intended outcomes for the Habitat Restoration Project are:

- **Provide an exciting/dynamic ecological setting, connecting park visitors to the park's restored natural landscapes, through education, programs, activities**
- **Control goose population**
- **Improve water quality and clarity of Lake Frances and create an aquatic habitat to support it**
- **Restore or re-create ecological habitats that connect Lake Frances and surrounding areas to the adjacent Witherall Woods**
- **Begin to restore the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the woods**

## Learn More About Palmer Park



PFPP functions as a membership organization and welcomes new members and volunteers. Donations are always appreciated. Members of the PFPP include residents and representatives from a variety of neighborhood and community organizations. To volunteer and for up-to-date information about events that are happening in Palmer Park, go to

<https://www.peopleforpalmerpark.org/>.

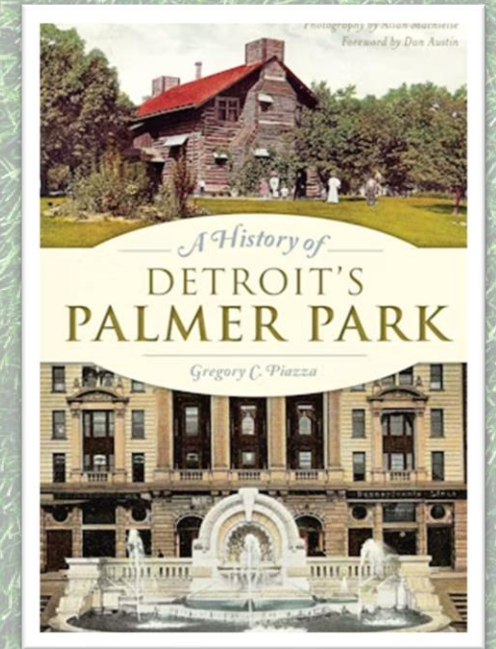


### City of Detroit: Palmer Park

**2 Books have been written about Palmer Park.**

**Left: *Souvenir History of Palmer Park, Detroit, Michigan* can be found at <https://www.forgottenbooks.com>.**

**Right: *A History of Detroit's Palmer Park* can be found at <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com>.**



# DFT Events



Wayne County Commissioner, Monique Baker McCormick, spoke to members at a General Membership Meeting. A DPSCD alumna, she represents Northwest Detroit and Redford Township. She wanted to let members know about the Wayne County Commission Youth Council. She let members know she is a strong advocate of the Union.

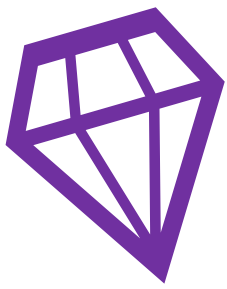
Here is her official Wayne County webpage:  
[Wayne County Commission District 6.](#)



DFT Staff enjoy a working lunch, courtesy of a Union member.



Ms. Bianca Gonzalez's classroom at Earhart.



# REMINDERS AND UPDATES

## DUES/MEMBERSHIP CONCERNS:

Contact an Organizing Fellow: West Side locations handled by Yolanda King; East Side locations handled by Regina Fuqua. You can also contact Office Assistant, Mae Winters.

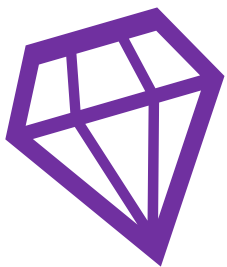
## ADDRESS, EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER CHANGES:

Please make sure your correct personal email, home address and telephone number are on file with the DFT Office. If you change it with the district, that information is not sent to the Union Office. You may send corrections to [dues@dft231.com](mailto:dues@dft231.com). *We are not allowed to send communications to your DPSCD email address.*

## SEPARATION FROM THE DISTRICT:

It is the member's responsibility to notify the DFT Office when you separate from the district, whether resignation or retirement or Please contact an Organizing Fellow or the Office Assistant, Mae Winters.

**ALL CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DFT STAFF IS ON THE LAST PAGE**



#### VIEWING PAYROLL COMPENSATION HISTORY

1. Log in to PeopleSoft with your DPSCD credentials.
2. Click on the **Compass** icon in the top right corner to open the Nav Bar. A drop-down menu will appear.
3. Click on **Navigator** icon.
4. Click on **Self Service**.
5. Click on **Payroll and Compensation**.
6. Click on **Compensation History**.
7. View your current salary with its location on the DFT Salary Schedule.

# REMINDERS

## ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS

If you are called to a meeting with management that you suspect will be disciplinary in nature you have the right to request union representation under the U. S. Supreme Court ruling, NLRB v. Weingarten.

If in a meeting with management you are questioned to obtain information and you have reasonable apprehension that your answers could be used as a basis for discipline or other adverse action, it is your responsibility to ask to reschedule the meeting or resume when your union representative is present. If you choose to remain you may refuse to answer.

If you are in a situation where Weingarten may apply, read or present the statement exactly as outlined below.

## WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

*If this interview could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion.*

# CONTACT INFO FOR DFT STAFF

<https://dft231.mi.aft.org/contact-us>



- Lakia Wilson, President, 313-875-6788, [LWilson@dft231.com](mailto:LWilson@dft231.com)
- Jason Posey, Executive Vice President, 313-875-6786, [JPosey@dft231.com](mailto:JPosey@dft231.com)
- Karin Whittler, Labor Affairs Administrator, 313-875-6776, [KWhittler@dft231.com](mailto:KWhittler@dft231.com)

East Side locations (east of Woodward), also Cass Tech, DSA, Burton, Frederick Douglass

- Jason Posey, Labor Affairs Administrator, 313-875-6786, [JPosey@dft231.com](mailto:JPosey@dft231.com)

West Side locations (west of Woodward)

- Yolanda King, Organizing Fellow, 313-804-5580, [YKing@dft231.com](mailto:YKing@dft231.com)
- Regina Fuqua, Organizing Fellow, 313-875-6775, [RFuqua@dft231.com](mailto:RFuqua@dft231.com)
- Patrick Falcusan, Retirement Counselor and Financial Analyst, 313-875-6783, [PFalcusan@dft231.com](mailto:PFalcusan@dft231.com)
- Mae Winters, Office Assistant, 313-875-3500 press 6, [MWinters@dft231.com](mailto:MWinters@dft231.com)
- Vida Bonacci, Communications, 313-875-3500, [VBonacci@dft231.com](mailto:VBonacci@dft231.com)