

# KIPP gets a boost from The Gap

Doris and Donald Fisher, co-founders of clothing retailer The GAP, Inc., visited KIPP Ascend Charter School in the Austin community on Wednesday morning, May 26, to see firsthand how their charitable investment in KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) is making an impact on the lives of neighborhood children.

The Fishers toured KIPP Ascend, which is currently located in the McNair Elementary School building on West Walton Street. After touring the facility and observing classroom lessons, the Fishers had the opportunity to speak with fifth grade students about the importance of a good education. Students also asked questions about how the couple started their business and why they decided to get involved with KIPP.

KIPP Ascend was the first stop for the Fishers on a 3-day, 9-school tour of KIPP schools across the country. They also visited KIPP Chicago Youth Village Academy, which is located on the South Side near the Dearborn Homes complex.

In 2000, Doris and Donald Fisher formed a unique partnership with the co-founders of KIPP to start a fellowship program that recruits, trains, and supports dedicated educa-

tors as they establish and operate new KIPP schools across the United States. In the past four years, the Fishers have contributed over \$25 million to the KIPP School Leadership Program (KSLP). KIPP Ascend Principal Jim O'Connor was trained through the KSLP in 2002.

KIPP Ascend Charter School is a free college preparatory middle that opened in the Austin neighborhood in July 2003 as part of the Chicago Public Schools system. Through skilled teaching, longer hours, and a structured learning environment, students at KIPP Ascend are being equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed at top high schools, universities, and the world beyond. KIPP Ascend is one of 31 KIPP Schools nationwide, which are located in 13 states and the District of Columbia.

KIPP Ascend is currently enrolling fifth grade students for the 2004-05 school year, and is also recruiting outstanding fifth and sixth grade teachers. Please contact the KIPP office at 773/261-9972 for more information.

—Submitted by Sheri Barrette,  
KIPP administrative assistant

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## Wal-Mart

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never be allowed to do business in the city. I'm saying let's do business on our terms."

Wal-Mart has told the council that it would not give a written guarantee of paying union wages and institute minority contracting. According to the company, the average employee makes about \$9.64 per hour and 36 hours a week. The average full-time Wal-Mart employee earns about \$18,700 a year, just above the federal poverty level for a family of four.

Moore said for every job that is offered by the company, another 1.5 jobs are lost because Wal-Mart would displace other private businesses.

"What Mr. Moore just said doesn't make any sense," Ald. Bernie Stone (50th) countered. "He didn't talk about that this was an empty lot. Zoning votes are about what, not who [would use the land]," Stone explained.

The Wal-Mart slated for 83rd Street and Stewart Avenue on the South Side received only 25 votes, one vote short of passage by the council. But the aldermen agreed to discuss the store again this week with the council's Zoning Committee.

Mayor Daley who has been supportive of having both Wal-Marts in the city said the delay could provide more time for Ald. Howard Brookins (27th), whose ward includes the South Side store, to persuade other aldermen to change their vote.

Brookins admitted that he might have been more successful if he discussed the zoning with fellow aldermen before the council's vote—a large reason why Mayor Richard M. Daley thinks Mitts was able to lobby colleagues and gain approval for the West Side Wal-Mart.

"Each alderman has to go to their colleagues

and talk with them," Daley explained in a news conference following the vote. "[Mitts] worked very hard."

During the contentious meeting, Brookins wasted no time blasting opposing aldermen and labor unions like the Illinois Hunger Coalition and the United Food and Commercial Workers, who claim that Wal-Mart would be a step backwards for the local workforce.

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**Richard M. Daley,**  
mayor, City of Chicago

"What am I supposed to do to get those [community members] a job?" Brookins said. "The unions didn't fight for my people. I'm here for my people. How dare they."

The South Side neighborhood of Chatham where that Wal-Mart would be located, has a household income of about \$32,000, and is largely without private businesses. Brookins said Wal-Mart couldn't displace local businesses because there are no local businesses. The proposed Wal-Mart on the South Side would provide about 250 jobs, according to the company.

"Where are all the businesses?" Brookins shouted.

Ald. Freddrenna Lyle (6th), whose ward adjoins the 27th ward, said the discount retailer would be a major threat to the stores in her community.

"How do you compete with Wal-Mart?" Lyle asked.