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Page 1 of 3

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4 jpgs ATTACHED

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RON BANKS, CFO OF BELMONT BANK & TRUST, BECOMES PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY AT CANTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON CHICAGO'S NORTHWEST SIDE

Chicago, IL (November X)...Arthur E. Canty Elementary School principal Lucja Mirowska-Kopec, Ph.D., recently welcomed Ron Banks, CFO of Belmont Bank & Trust, as guest principal along with other business leaders from Bearing Point, Inc. and the Polish National Alliance & Polish National Congress at the recent Principal for a Day event held each year at Chicago public schools in an effort to build strategic alliances between schools and area businesses.

Banks joined the ranks of more than 1600 guest principals on October 30, 2008 comprised largely of corporate and civic leaders who were invited to visit Chicago public schools for a morning of classroom observation and participation.

Canty Elementary School located at 3740 N. Panama serves 708 pre-kindergarten to eighth grade pupils. It is situated in close proximity to Belmont Bank & Trust at 8250 W. Belmont. Principal Mirowska-Kopec offered a full itinerary for Banks that included greeting the entire teaching staff before the day officially began and then visiting seven specific classrooms to observe and answer student questions.

Before introducing Banks, Dr. Mirowska-Kopec addressed the assembled teachers and guests. "I am honored to work in this school," she said. "We are ranked seventh among the area's 18 elementary schools. Our teachers do a great job and we have wonderful students and wonderful parents. Despite limited funds and very little additional money, the staff is doing a good job using available resources. Fund-raising is very important for us and the parents work hard on our behalf."

Banks, a former student of the Chicago Public School system said, "It is an honor for me to be here today and take part in this wonderful program. Although I've lived in this area all my life, Belmont Bank & Trust is a relatively new business to the community – just

PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY – Page 2.

under three years old. As a business, we look forward to becoming more involved with the school, particularly its math programs.”

Several teachers approached Banks after his presentation to discuss organizing field trips to the bank where students could more readily see the daily application of math skills.

Next, student journalists from the Journalism Club interviewed Banks asking what he would do if he were the school principal and his impressions of their school.

“I’d ensure each grade would be more integrated with the other grades,” Banks replied. “Students gain additional perspective from other students which helps them in their own growth. In my first thirty minutes today, I learned just how much is happening here – easily two dozen different and exciting programs from Math Nights to the Journalism Club, this is a very vibrant school.”

Of all the classrooms Banks visited, Ms. Geller’s third grader class peppered him with the most questions. From how he got his job at the bank to if he saved money when he was little, the students learned about the importance of setting up savings accounts, saving for a specific goal such as college, and the benefits of earning income over time through the principle of compounding interest.

As the morning closed and the guests once more convened in the principal’s office, Banks reflected on what he enjoyed best about his experience as guest principal.

“The best part for me was hearing the students’ questions and answering them,” he said. “Having the opportunity to tell them about my job and listening to their stories about money – saving and spending – was really enlightening. I’ve learned a lot this morning and am so impressed with how bright, eager, and perceptive the students are. Hopefully, I’ve helped them understand, just a little, how important math skills are to their future.”

As for the real principal, Dr. Mirowska-Kopec, she summed up her role easily. “I love the job,” she said. “It gives me the possibility to have influence on more students than if I were teaching in just one classroom.”

Banks presented the principal with a large supply of piggy banks for the students. In return for his participation as guest principal, he received a “Canty” coffee mug filled with small gift items.

“The student experience today and their classrooms have certainly changed a lot since I was a kid in the Chicago Public School system,” Banks concluded. “The pupils seem so much more mature, aware, and involved compared to when I was in elementary school – such a positive difference.”

Principal for a Day is an annual event started by Mayor Richard M. Daley in May 1998. It recruits and places civic, business, and community leaders along with individuals into

PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY – Page 3.

one of the 600 Chicago Public Schools to experience a day as “principal”. In previous years, such famous alumni as Vince Vaughn, Joan Cusack, Steve Harris, Michael Clarke Duncan, Bonnie Hunt, David Schwimmer, and Harold Ramis have attended. Participating corporations have included Chase, Bank of America, AON, Exelon Corporation, Motorola, and many others. Merrill Lynch has been the sponsor of the event since 2006. ###

Belmont Bank & Trust, 8250 W. Belmont in Chicago, IL practices a relationship-based approach to all its customer interactions and strives to be the best provider of financial services to personal banking clients as well as small- to medium-sized businesses in the Chicago area, especially to the neighborhoods it serves. For more information, please visit www.BELMONTBANKTRUST.COM



Canty Elementary School Principal, Lucja Mirowska-Kopec, Ph.D., welcomes Belmont Bank & Trust CFO, Ron Banks, as Principal for a Day to sit behind her desk and experience her job for a half day.