

## Annie E. Casey Foundation

### *Schools that Work: Parent Involvement Contributes to Results*

October 2008

- Narrator: Welcome to schools that work, voices from the inside, a podcast of the Annie E. Casey foundation. Parks Middle School in Atlanta went from failing school to best in the district. This is the fourth of six episodes about people and partnerships that have improved results for kids and families at Parks.
- Karren Mitchell: My daughter is Kaitlin Webb, sixth grade here at Parks Middle School. Since she started this year in sixth grade, I'm a member of the PTA and found out about the council and I guess they saw that I was very interactive. Ok, they said let's put this woman to use cause she's going to be up here all the time so she needs to get on the council.
- Reporter: *(Behind the camera)* What difference do you see it making for Kaitlin?
- Karren Mitchell: Oh she sees me being there and she knows ok, well gosh, if my mom, she comes up here, they might tell her I'm doing well so she knows that ok, I'm going to always be active and involved. That makes the most difference because if she thinks I'm not interested in her education then she may not be interested.
- Reporter: *(Behind the camera)* What do you bring to the council?
- Karren Mitchell: Well I think I bring the student in mind and creating the well-rounded student and not just the student who wants academics or who just wants sports, but I'm thinking about academics, athletics, and the arts. I want to make sure that I'm doing all I can as a parent, as a voice for the other parents that may not be able to make it. Yeah, I have more flexible time to be able to come. It not only gives them the thought that they are just the teachers and they're involved, but they need to know that the parents are involved as well.  
*(Transitions to speaking in front of a group of parents)* I have noticed a difference with my daughter since I'm the only parent. Her mode of thinking, if the teachers aren't on her she can be lazy if the academics or the curriculum is not where she will have a tendency to, I have mothers

throughout this year, that the challenge has been consistent and that she has actually, she has more of a mother vision or a passion to just step it up. (*Transitions back to speaking with Reporter*) It's time-consuming, but it's once a month and I feel like this is the least I can do. I need her to understand that I along with my husband, we're interested and we're going to be watching and the teachers know us. They know us by face. It makes a big difference for her.

**- End of video -**

Video participant:

Karren Mitchell – Parent, Parks PTA and Local Schools Council