

## **George Washington High School's new George L. Tamvakis Fitness Center**

The Students at George Washington High School on Chicago's East Side received an early Christmas Present. On November 27, 2012 the new George L. Tamvakis Fitness center was dedicated in an area above the school's swimming pool. At this Dedication Mr. David Arredondo Teacher and coordinator of alumni events and George Washington High School Patriots Quarterback Aaron Cruz presented honorary plaques to Mr. George Tamvakis and Mr. Eddie Jarmuska for their commitment and generosity to George Washington High School. This fitness center is one that is unique to a Chicago Public School facility since most other schools have limited equipment if any. Mr. Tamvakis a successful attorney who grew up in Hegewisch and is a 1979 graduate of the school was instrumental in raising the money to purchase this work out equipment. This equipment is being used by student athletes and for Physical Education Classes.

This quest for the equipment began in the fall of 2011 when Mr. David Arredondo a History Teacher at George Washington High School and coordinator of the George Washington High School Alumni Association events was approached by senior class officers who said, "if we only had a health club in our school our athletic teams would have an edge and our student body as a whole would be healthier." Mr. Arredondo who has not been shy about his desire to raise money to provide items to make student life better went to work. He immediately reached out to George Tamvakis who has also been active in the GWHS Alumni Association; ironically Mr. Tamvakis had a conversation with another alum of George Washington High School Sam DeCero who was in the process of selling his gym equipment. The challenge was to raise the money to purchase the equipment. Mr. Tamvakis began talks with Mr. DeCero to hold the equipment until we were able to secure funding.

Mr. Tamvakis reached out to Mr. Eddie Jarmuska President of The South Shore American Legion Post 388 to inform him about the schools need. Mr. Jarmuska was enthusiastic about assisting the school in obtaining this equipment and agreed to donate half of the money for this equipment. Mr. Tamvakis who has been committed to the school through alumni activities and assisting the schools award winning mock trial team agreed to donate the other half of the money. The challenge did not end with just raising money to purchase the equipment, the next challenge was to get around the rules and regulation that guided donations to individual schools. Mr. Arredondo and Mr. Tamvakis then reached out to Alderman John Pope who assisted with the acquisition by helping to expedite the long and involved process for individual schools to receive donations. The process was approved by January of 2012 and remodel of a former spectator section above the George Washington Swimming pool was transformed into a class A fitness center which opened in September of 2012 and was dedicated to the honor of George L. Tamvakis on November 27, 2012. Aaron Cruz, Patriots quarterback said that him and the team have made extensive use of the area.

Mr. Arredondo who is committed to gradually building up the student amenities at GWHS is currently focusing on raising money to resurrect the GWHS marching band. The marching band is in need of a percussion set, uniforms and other instruments. If you are interested in assisting in this quest please contact Mr. Arredondo: Email [SunCA1999@msn.com](mailto:SunCA1999@msn.com) or 773-535-5725.