

Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 06-64 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ACCEPT A DONATION OF \$66,478.45 FROM THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF JENNIFER BETH TURKEN, DAUGHTER OF ROBERT AND DANA TURKEN, TO FUND THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW PRIMARY PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ALONG WITH A FUND TO ESTABLISH A PERPETUAL STUDENT AWARD TO BE AWARDED YEARLY TO DESERVING STUDENTS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Jennifer Beth Turken Playground is named after, and in dedication of, a sweet, beautiful little girl who, in her short life, touched the souls of everyone she ever came into contact with through her remarkable courage, spirit, and zest for life.

Jennifer was only 5 years old, and was just entering kindergarten at North Beach Elementary School, when she was diagnosed with a brain tumor, a glioblastoma—the most virulent brain tumor there is. She passed away three years later in September 1996, when she was 8 years old.

Jennifer was brilliant and her thirst for knowledge was unquenchable. She had a confidence and a contagious laugh that lit up a room. Even after she became ill and lost her hair, her confidence never abated. She knew she was beautiful and always felt good about herself, and made everyone around her feel the same way about themselves. It never mattered to her what someone else looked like, and by her actions she taught her friends to feel the same way.

But perhaps more important than Jen's beauty and intelligence and pure goodness of heart was her remarkable courage, spirit, and strength of heart. For three years she fought her horrible illness. She endured twelve brain surgeries, intense chemotherapy, six weeks of radiation, two gamma knife treatments, a bone marrow transplant, and experimental immunotherapy. Throughout all of this she hardly ever missed a beat. She remained a student in the gifted and bilingual programs, kept up with her classes, continued her after-school activities, played with her sister and friends, and – two days after one of her major brain surgeries—actually went roller blading around the neighborhood wearing her helmet.

Jennifer's doctors always said that one of the goals of her treatments was to preserve the quality of her life, and Jen did just that. It is in tribute to Jen's life and what she taught all of us about the importance of enjoying every minute we are on this planet that Jennifer's family and their extraordinary friends have raised \$70,000 to re-build the Jennifer Beth Turken Playground at North Beach Elementary School.

It is also in honor of Jennifer that North Beach Elementary School will select one student from each grade as a recipient of the Jennifer Beth Turken Heart Award. As long as there is a North Beach Elementary School, this Award will be given to those students who demonstrate the kindness, compassion, and strength of character that Jennifer embodied, and will be presented by a member of the Turken family.

Authorization is requested to accept a donation of \$66,478.45 from the family and friends of Jennifer Beth Turken, daughter of Robert and Dana Turken to fund the purchase and installation of new primary playground equipment. The playground equipment to be donated will be purchased from Advanced Recreational Concepts, LLC as per the donors' request and will serve as a reminder of Jennifer's strength and spirit.

The remainder of donated funds will be held by a North Beach Elementary School Trust account to enable a perpetual award to be given each year for students who exhibit those characteristics which exemplify the courage, strength and love Jennifer Beth Turken exhibited during her years at North Beach Elementary School.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami Dade County, Florida authorize the Superintendent to:

1. accept a donation of \$66,478.45 from the family and friends of Jennifer Beth Turken for the purchase and installation of new Primary playground equipment purchased from Advanced Recreational Concepts, LLC to be installed at North Beach Elementary School; and
2. establish a trust account to enable a perpetual award to be given each year at North Beach Elementary School in the memory of Jennifer Beth Turken.

RESOLUTION NO. 06-64

OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
AUTHORIZING THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ACCEPT A DONATION OF
\$66,478.45 FROM THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF JENNIFER BETH TURKEN,
DAUGHTER OF ROBERT AND DANA TURKEN, TO FUND THE PURCHASE AND
INSTALLATION OF NEW PRIMARY PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ALONG
WITH A FUND TO ESTABLISH A PERPTUAL STUDENT AWARD TO BE
AWARDED YEARLY TO DESERVING STUDENTS

WHEREAS, Jennifer Beth Turken, daughter of Robert and Dana Turken, was a remarkable young person with unmatched courage, spirit and strength of the heart; and

WHEREAS, at age five and entering kindergarten at North Beach Elementary School, Jennifer was diagnosed with a virulent brain tumor; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Beth Turken demonstrated incredible kindness, compassion and strength as she battled her 3 year illness. She never missed a beat; she kept up with her studies in the gifted and bilingual program, continued her after school activities and played with family friends until her passing in 1996; and

WHEREAS, The Jennifer Beth Turken Playground at North Beach Elementary is named in honor of this beautiful little girl whose zest for life reminded all of us to enjoy every minute we have on this planet; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer Beth Turken's family and friends will donate nearly \$70,000 to rebuild the playground named in her honor and establish a fund to honor a student from each grade each year that demonstrated the compassion and strength of character that Jennifer embodied;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 06-64 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorizing the superintendent to accept a donation of \$66,478.45 from the family and friends of Jennifer Beth Turken, daughter of Robert and Dana Turken, to fund the purchase and installation of new primary playground equipment along with a fund to establish a perpetual student award to be awarded yearly to deserving students.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent record of this Board.

Presented this twenty first day of November, A.D. 2006

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary

