



Adopt-A-School Newsletter

Sponsored by: The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, Tuscaloosa City & County School Systems

Chamber Website | Adopters | Sustainers

February 27, 2009

Adopt-A-School Week

February 27 - March 8
University Mall

Read Across America Day

March 2, 2009

State of the Schools

Address

April 8, 2009
Hotel Capstone

Roundtable Discussion

COORDINATOR MEETING

April 28, 2009
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Place TBD

Corporate Sponsor



2008-09 Board Level Sustainers

Inside this issue

- [Mercedes-Benz & Town of Brookwood Help Brookwood Middle School Students "Get Connected"](#)
- [Adopt-A-School Week](#)
- [Adopt-A-School Coordinator Meeting Date Change](#)
- [BFGoodrich Tire Manufacturing Brings Career Day 2009 to Cottondale Elementary](#)
- [Robertson Banking Company Donates Furniture to Duncanville Middle School](#)
- [Walker Elementary Students Spend the Day at Rite Aid Distribution Center](#)
- [Bank of Tuscaloosa Brings Job Shadowing to Verner](#)
- [Buhl Elementary School Students Enjoy a Job Shadow Day at RADICISPANDEX](#)
- [Partnership Provides Assistance to Adopt-A-School](#)
- [PLEASE REMEMBER...](#)

Mercedes-Benz & Town of Brookwood Help Brookwood Middle School Students "Get Connected"

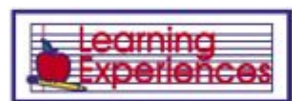
Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc. (MBUSI) and the Town of Brookwood joined forces to provide a much-needed computer lab for the students of Brookwood Middle School. On Wednesday, February 25th, representatives from MBUSI, the Town of Brookwood, the Tuscaloosa County Board of Education and the Adopt-A-School program were on hand to "cut the ribbon" and officially open the new computer lab. During the ceremony, BMS principal Mark Franks told students and community leaders that the computer lab would be a tremendous resource for establishing a globally competitive educational climate for the Brookwood students.



Diane Smith, Adopt-A-School coordinator for MBUSI was instrumental in making sure the project was completed. When Diane asked the BMS teachers to complete their "wish list" for the school, the teachers were hesitant to include such a "big wish" on their list, but with Diane's encouragement, they listed a computer lab for the students as their "ultimate list." Diane's persistence and resourcefulness assured that the "wish" was granted and the computer lab was made available for the students.

MBUSI donated funding received from a credit for computers returned to a computer recycling service. "We considered donating the actual computers we pulled out of circulation from our plant, but we thought a better option would be to provide Brookwood Middle School students with new computer technology," said Brigitte Gebertz, Manager of Information Technology (IT) for MBUSI.

Last fall, when officials from the Town of Brookwood learned about the project, they also wanted to contribute and they provided funding for all the furnishings



for the computer lab. "Participating in this project has been exceptionally satisfying for all of us," said Brookwood Mayor Alton Hyché. "This is our way of helping Brookwood students to become whatever they dream they can be in our rapidly changing world."

MBUSI Team Members from the IT and Communications departments worked hand-in-hand with Brookwood and the Tuscaloosa County School System over several months to determine the needed infrastructure, to install the equipment and provide training for teachers and students.

"We are very excited to make these resources available to our students," said Mark Franks, Principal at Brookwood Middle School. "Providing our students with first-hand experience and knowledge of how to work with and benefit from technology is an invaluable tool. The technology donated in this project will improve our students' learning experiences and translate into skills to be used in other aspects of their lives for success in our increasingly connected world."



Through this partnership project, Brookwood Middle School received 34 computers located in a lab located on the 8th Grade Wing. "It will be nice to be able to do research in the lab and have the chance to work on them (the computers) during the school day," said one Brookwood student. "I don't have a computer at home so these new computers will help me a lot."

"It's often easy for those of us in the business community to take technology for granted, however, many children in our schools still don't have the easy access to the resources they need to enhance their ability to learn and understand the world around them," said Gebertz. "We feel it is fundamentally important to ensure our schools have the technology they need to prepare our children for the global economy, and Mercedes-Benz is proud to be part of this."

[Top](#)

Adopt-A-School Week

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL WEEK 2009 will be celebrated February 27- March 8. This week highlights the partnerships that exist between the 54 public schools in the Tuscaloosa City and county systems and 86 area businesses and community organizations that serve as adopters for the schools. The purpose of Adopt-A-School Week is two-fold: to express appreciation to all Adopt-A-School partners and to inform the community of the many projects and activities that are provided to schools through Adopt-A-School.



Using the theme "**Partnerships: Opening Doors to the Future**" creative and informative

Support our Schools



Click Here
To find out
how to become
an
Adopt-A-School
Sustainer

displays depicting the value of each public school's Adopt-A-School Partnership currently line the corridors of University Mall. These displays will demonstrate the extensive relationships that develop between the partnerships. The public is invited to view the many displays at University Mall and to participate in selecting this year's "People's Choice Awards". Anyone viewing the displays will be eligible to vote for the partnership exhibit that best illustrated each of the following categories: *Most Creative Display*; *Most Informative about the Partnership*; and *Best Theme-Related Display*.

In addition to displays at University Mall, schools and adopters will celebrate their own Adopt-A-School partnerships on-site at schools and places of business. Specifically, "Banner Day", Monday, March 2nd businesses and schools will display banners saluting their partnership. On Wednesday, March 4th special activities will be planned for "Honor Your Partner Day" in which the schools participate in activities honoring their adopters. Furthermore, many partnerships have planned special activities that include sending letters of appreciation to adopters, constructing banners to salute the adopters, distributing flyers and letters to parents informing them of the partnership activities, planning partnership-appreciation luncheons and additional activities designed to celebrate each unique partnership.



Adopt-A-School is a business-education partnership program sponsored by the Tuscaloosa City and County Schools and the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama. The Adopt-A-School Week provides an opportunity to highlight the partnerships that are developing Tuscaloosa's future as they provide resources from the business community to enrich the educational process at their partner school. While all schools currently have an at least one partner, several schools have requested additional partners. For more information about becoming an adopter, contact Loo Whitfield 391-0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com

[Top](#)

Adopt-A-School Coordinator Meeting Date Change

The last Adopt-A-School Coordinator Meeting for this year has been rescheduled. Originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 24th, the "Roundtable Discussion" Coordinator meeting is now scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th. The meeting place will be announced at a later date.

[Top](#)

BFGoodrich Tire Manufacturing Brings Career Day 2009

to Cottondale Elementary

On Wednesday, February 18th, BFGoodrich put on a show for their adopted partners, Cottondale Elementary School. BFGoodrich Adopt-A-School coordinator, Nicole Henderson, put together a threesome that “wowed” the Cottondale fifth-grade students! Three Goodrich employees visited the fifth-grade classes shared information with the students about their careers.

Will Myers, a quality technician, explained to the students the importance of good science, math, English, spelling and writing skills in order to attain a successful career. He told the students that his life in college would have been much easier, particularly due to all the papers he wrote in college, if he had paid better attention in his English and grammar classes in elementary and high school. He also stressed how important it is to take care of the environment – to plant new rubber trees where the old ones had been harvested. He passed around a block of rubber, and also brought the additives, sulfur and carbon black to show the students.



Ryan Sims, who is a quality engineer, quickly involved the students by having them come to the front of the classroom and giving them a chart-making and measuring assignment. Ryan stressed the importance (and the fun) of math. He also encouraged the students to get a good education and to listen to their teachers.

Holly Geraux brought play dough for the students, and showed them how to make tire tread with it. She gave each table of students a recipe to follow, using the play dough and differently-shaped cookie cutters – a very creative and tactile way to help the students process the information she shared. From mixing nail polish as a teenager, to mixing ingredients to make tires, she explained how she gradually became interested in chemical engineering.

All three speakers had very interesting presentations and they helped the students realize the importance of working really hard to acquire a job they could enjoy. They emphasized to the students that it would be worth the hard work to have an interesting and challenging career.

Photo caption: BFGoodrich employee, Ryan Sims helps students calculate their measurements.

[Top](#)

Robertson Banking Company Donates Furniture to Duncanville Middle School

When Robertson Banking Company moved from their temporary Tuscaloosa location to their new permanent home on Greensboro Avenue, some of the furniture did not make the move with them. Several pieces of the furniture used in the temporary building was not appropriate for the new facility and the bank donated the furniture to Duncanville Middle School. Among the donations were a

conference table with six chairs, a computer desk and file cabinet.

The conference table and chairs were a very welcomed addition to Duncanville Middle School as the new school had a great conference room, but no furniture! “It is wonderful to know that Tuscaloosa has such a caring business in Robertson Banking Company. Duncanville Middle School greatly appreciates the kindness and generosity of these gifts,” stated principal Dottie Dockery.



If you (or your business) have surplus office furniture or materials that would be appropriate for school use, please contact Adopt-A-School office, 391-0563 or email loo@tuscaloosachamber.com . We will try to find a “new home” for your casually used furniture and materials in one of our area schools.

[Top](#)

Walker Elementary Students Spend the Day at Rite Aid Distribution Center



“Can we come next year?” “I had a great time” “I learned teamwork and safety accomplishes more” “I really liked the teamwork game because it is impossible to do by yourself” “I really had fun taking those orders” “I didn’t know that there was so much to everything they have to do” “I learned conveyor belts are almost a mile long” “We had to work in a team” “Going to Rite Aid was a very exciting experience”... “Thank you

for making it so special for us” These were just a few of the comments from the Walker Elementary School fifth-grade students after their Job Shadow Day experience with their Adopt-A-School partner, Rite Aid Distribution Center. It was a great day for everyone and the students were still buzzing days later about the things they learned and how much they enjoyed being at Rite Aid

Rite Aid planned several activities to introduce the students to the “real” world of work. The students were given the opportunity to actually perform some of the jobs required to run a Distribution Center. Walker’s fifth-graders rotated between five modules designed to expose them to the everyday operations at Rite Aid. They participated in a team building and leadership training exercise, toured the Distribution Center, played a merchandise picking relay, met a truck driver and explored his big rig, and enjoyed a snack and activity books while their very own Rite Aid employee badges were being made.

Walker and Rite Aid enjoy an outstanding Adopt-A-School partner relationship and this special day is only one example of the many ways they work together to

provide opportunities for the students. Job Shadow Day was a lot of fun, but also a very educational day for the fifth-graders. Rite Aid and Walker truly partner for the good of the students!

[Top](#)

Bank of Tuscaloosa Brings Job Shadowing to Verner

Six employees from the Bank of Tuscaloosa spent the day at Verner Elementary presenting a banking seminar for Job Shadowing Day on February 3, 2009. The 5th graders at Verner rotated classes and participated in the program during their regularly scheduled math block. The students were separated into four groups and rotated to stations that focused on the following:

- Spotting counterfeit money and the security features on \$5, \$10, \$20 & \$50 bills
- Different ways to access funds on deposit through ATM, check writing, debit card and ACH transactions
- How compounding interest works and the benefits of saving
- Counting money and making change

The children were thrilled with the hands-on learning experience as they handled real money, identified the parts of a dollar bill, counted out change with their peers, and saw how a penny (if doubled daily) can turn into over \$5 million in just 30 days. The Bank of Tuscaloosa participants were from various departments of the bank and included commercial loan officers, personal bankers and private bankers. They gave a short description of the roles they fulfill at the bank and answered many questions the children had about their jobs. We just may have recruited some future young bankers!

[Top](#)

Buhl Elementary School Students Enjoy a Job Shadow Day at RADICISPANDEX

On Friday February 6th Radicispandex hosted their annual Job Shadow Day for their Adopt-A-School Partner. Five students from Buhl Elementary visited RADICISPANDEX Corporation and worked with several employees for the day. The students rotated and spend time with the engineers, the office staff, the environmental and safety department, the QC Lab and the production coordinator.



First, each student learned about the importance of safety and how to perform each job with the proper safety equipment. Then the students rotated among the different departments and performed tasks pertinent to each department. They assisted the engineers with their daily temperature and lube checks. Then when visiting the office staff they assisted with a variety of office duties. When helping in the QC lab, the students were able to test samples of hair strands to see who had the strongest hair. Additionally, the students



observed the production staff in motion and collected different samples of spandex and the products made from spandex.

During lunch with several of the staff members the students discussed the event of the day. The students had a great time and the staff was glad to have some extra help for the day.

[Top](#)

Partnership Provides Assistance to Adopt-A-School

The following article was reprinted with permission from "Hunt Up Close", the Hunt Refining Quarterly Newsletter. The article was written by Margaret Burrell.

In 2008, Hunt Refining Company (HRC) entered into a contract with PeopleCore to create a training curriculum for the Hydrobon and selected processes in the Black Warrior Project. PeopleCore contacted HRC in December about an offer to partner with HRC to impact the surrounding community. "We know that HRC is working to impact the communities where its employees work and live and we want to partner with HRC in a way that goes beyond the dollars and cents of our contract" said CEO Tom McDougal. Upon hearing about the Adopt-A-School program and the budget reductions that were coming to the local schools in 2009, Tom expressed the desire of PeopleCore to make a contribution to Oakdale Primary School, HRC's Adopt-A-School.



Lucille Prewitt, Oakdale Principal, was pleasantly surprised after returning from Christmas break to discover a check for \$1,000 from PeopleCore in recognition of its partnership with HRC. Mrs. Prewitt said "This money, without strings attached, could not have come at a better time to assist us (Oakdale) with the decrease in budget we will see beginning early 2009."

During Oakdale's monthly Character Awards assembly held January 12th, the students, faculty and staff expressed their appreciation to PeopleCore's Senior Consultant Harry Williams and representatives from HRC. HRC has been an Adopt-A-School partner with Oakdale Primary for six years.

[Top](#)

PLEASE REMEMBER...

We Have the Best Community Calendar Around

Please do check out our online calendar at www.tuscaloosachamber.com to see what's going on in the area and remember to utilize the interactive feature to add

your own listing.

Hit Your “Forward” Button to Share Chamber News

All employees and associates of Chamber-member firms are members, too. So, please simply hit your forward button to share this issue with all team members in your business/organization. Thanks a lot!

[Top](#)