



Adopt-A-School Newsletter

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

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February 22, 2008

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April 2, 2008

*State of the Schools
Breakfast*

Four Points by Sheraton

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Adopt-A-School Week 2008 to Be Celebrated February 22 - March 2, 2008

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL WEEK 2008 will be celebrated February 22 - March 2, 2008. This week highlights the partnerships that exist between the 48 public schools in the Tuscaloosa City and county systems and 80 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.

2007-08 Board Level Sustainers



Using the theme "**Tuscaloosa's Hidden Treasures**" creative and informative displays depicting the value of each public school's Adopt-A-School Partnership will 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, February 26th, businesses and schools will display banners saluting their partnership. On Wednesday, February 27th 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



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are developing Tuscaloosa's future as they provide resources from the business community to enrich the educational process at their partner school. For more information about becoming an adopter, contact Loo Whitfield 391-0563 or loo@tuscaloosachamber.com

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Area Students Participate in Job Shadow Activities with Their Adopt-A-School Partners



Punxsutawney Phil may not have seen his shadow on Groundhog Day, which is traditionally an indicator that spring, is just six weeks away. However, many local businesses did see their shadow during Job Shadow events with their Adopt-A-School partners. In an effort to expose students to the world of work and to encourage them to prepare for career choices, the Adopt-A-School program encourages partnerships to participate in job shadow and career exploration activities.

On Friday, February 1st, selected students from Crestmont Elementary School spent part of the day with their Adopt-A-School partner, Spiller Associated Furniture Stores. Students spent the day in the showroom, the stockroom and in the offices. Students wrote an essay explaining "Why I Want to be a Spiller Intern" and were chosen to participate according to their essay.

Also, on February 1st, the Radiology Clinic provided a tour through several of their departments for students from their Adopt-A-School partner, Tuscaloosa Middle School. The students observed different types of MRI machines and learned how open MRI's work effectively. Chris, a member of the Radiology Clinic team, showed the students the many exciting aspects of the human brain and how the test performed at the Radiology Clinic can save lives. The students viewed X-rays, in which the Radiology Clinic employees demonstrated stomach acids expanding with a balloon. The students were able to get a first hand look at a PET scan and were informed about the radio active materials used in the testing process. The students also observed an ultrasound in which they had opportunity to see internal organs on the sonogram.



On February 8th, students from Walker Elementary enjoyed the morning with their Adopt-A-School partner, Rite Aid Distribution Center. The job shadowing activities have become a tradition for the fifth grade students at Walker. The classes had an opportunity to tour the facility, participate in a simulated selecting and packing activity, participate in team building activities and learn about security and the importance of wearing the identification badges.

Also, on February 8th selected students from Echols Middle School spent the day at First National Bank of Central Alabama, their AAS partner. The students visited several different departments in the bank and Jenny Marlowe, the AAS coordinator for FNBCA, explained to the students the importance of budgeting and maintaining a good credit record.



Several students from Central Primary School had the opportunity to visit their Adopt-A-School partner, Stillman College. The students spent time in a variety of departments at Stillman and the music department, particularly the band instruments, was a very popular department for the students. After spending time with the professors, the

students were treated to lunch in the cafeteria and really enjoyed being around the "college kids".

Three groups of students from Holt High School participated in a two-day event of job shadowing at Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa on February 11 and 12. The first group of students worked to prepare Health Bags for Nucor's Health Fair to be held the following day. The second group of students worked with Nucor employees to assist with the Fair. Students assisted nurses with tasks such as taking blood pressure and finger sticks. FBLA members from Holt worked in the business offices of Nucor. Students worked in the Accounting, Clerical Offices and Information Systems Office. A total of 10 students participated in the job shadowing.

Throughout the year, Adopt-A-School partnerships make available time and places for students to observe mentors at work providing for students the link between academics and careers. As students observe on the worksite, they see first hand the importance of good math skills, communication skills, people skills and use of technology as important tools that are required at all levels of generally all occupations. Additionally, many partnerships plan and coordinate annual "Career Day Activities" providing an opportunity for business professionals to meet with students and talk about the specific careers.



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"JA in a DAY" - Volunteers from Local Businesses Present JA Curriculum to DEMS Students

"The message was "Stay in School". This is a message that is growing ever more important as the drop-out rate continues to be an area of concern for many of today's teens," explained Nisha Warbington, guidance counselor at Davis Emerson Middle School. On Friday, February 15th, every student at Davis Emerson Middle School experienced a full day of exploring his/her future.



Local businesses and corporations provided volunteers to teach all twenty-two classes, sixth through eighth grade students the JA curriculum in one day. Participating businesses included Tuscaloosa One Place, Phifer Incorporated, Almon and Associates, Coral Industries, RBC Centura Bank,

First National Bank of Central Alabama, Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa, Ameriprise, Alabama Power, Randall-Reilly Publishing, University of Alabama Women's Initiative, and Publix Supermarkets.

Lois Palecek, district program manager for Junior Achievement of Tuscaloosa County and Nisha Warbington, counselor at Davis Emerson Middle School began making plans for the "JA in a Day" event last spring. Once the date was set and the commitment made, the staff and the students became involved in organizing and planning the day.

Each JA volunteer was assigned to one teacher and to his/her classroom and the students followed their regular school schedule. Each class period the volunteers all taught the same lesson to avoid overlapping or duplicating the presentations. By the end of the day, the entire curriculum had been presented to the students and the students received a certificate acknowledging their graduation. The students and presenters dressed in business casual attire as the importance of good interview skills and business attire were addressed in one of the lessons.



Junior Achievement worked with the Davis Emerson staff to select the most appropriate program for the students. The JA curriculum for sixth, seventh and eight grade students is specialized to meet the needs of middle grade students and focuses on career exploration, planning for education and the economics of staying in school. The program presented to the DEMS students was specifically chosen to challenge the students to make good decisions, including finishing high school.

The comments heard from the students, teachers and volunteers all indicated that the initial impression of the day was very positive. Data collected from a pre-test and a post-test given in conjunction with the event will be analyzed to determine how much the students learned from the experience. "Our hope is to see a lower drop-out rate for the class of 2012 and the classes to follow because of the impact made in the Junior Achievement Program," stated Ms. Warbington.

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Brookwood Middle School Students Job Shadow at Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.

This article was written and submitted by Brookwood Middle School Students, Dakota Delaurier and Katelyn Hicks, who participated in the Job Shadow Program in the Communications Department.

Mercedes-Benz has always been such a great Adopt-A-School sponsor. They have sponsored Brookwood Middle School in a lot of events. One of these events was Job Shadowing, February 13, 2008. Twenty-two students completed job applications and were chosen for the event. These students were offered an opportunity to work one day with the department they chose. After arriving at the plant, the group was greeted by Diane Smith of the Communications Department. Before splitting up to go with their groups, they were oriented to safety procedures by Cicero Bevelle, the plant Safety Specialist. Cicero talked about safety hazards and how to keep from getting hurt. As BMS students were in the Mercedes-Benz plant, they learned what to expect if considering working there. Mercedes-Benz sets a great example for our fellow Americans and also our community. They are always in tip top



shape.

MBUSI always lets people know how everyone at Mercedes is important. They also try their hardest to keep all their workers and tourists safe. For example, when the BMS students went on the production floor, there was a green line we had stay behind so we would not get hurt. Mercedes is a very high tech place and feels responsible for everyone working in each department. With the experience of job shadowing we have learned that there is much more to Mercedes than just building cars.

The students participating in Job Shadowing and their Host Departments were as follows:

Communications - Dakota Delaurier & Katelyn Hicks; Environmental - Jacob Johnson & Haley Hampton; AQS - Keaten Hicks & Cory Hudson; IT - Aubrey Guadarrama, Faith Adams, Ervin Suttles & Rob Lowery; Service/Parts - Jacob Blackstock, Austin Alexander & Austin Junkins; Facility Engineering - Kendal Gamble & Jonathan Grider; Purchasing - Destiny Slayton & Jonta Davis; AIDT - Mason Chatman & Jami Huggins; Human Resources - Quay Taylor; Museum - Barklie Chancellor & Brandi McPherson.

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The Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa's SpectraFest at Westwood Elementary

Every year in the fall, The Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa teams up with Westwood Elementary to provide a full day of fine arts activities and hands-on learning. This cultural arts day is called SpectraFest. This year, it was held on October 26, 2007. Enriching activities included Bach to Rock performances with Shelton State Singers, theatre games with Rachel Howell, creative movement with Amy Ahmed, storytelling with Drew Baker, and mosaics with Jackie Greene. The artists and parent volunteers gave of their time and energy throughout the school day to make Spectra-Fest a memorable and exciting event for all Westwood students.



This year, Westwood was given a very special gift to hang in the front hallway as a reminder of their partnership with the Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa. Jackie Greene, one of the talented artists at this year's SpectraFest, created a mosaic of the school mascot, the alligator, while demonstrating the art of making mosaics to over 300 students. To prepare for her demonstrations, Jackie enlarged a picture of Westwood's mascot and traced the image on MDF. Next, she cut $\frac{3}{4}$ inch tiles into thirds and used three different colors of green for the skin. The students at Westwood were amazed at Jackie's ability to arrange the beautiful pieces in a way that would create a lasting image of their mascot. To give the surface texture, Jackie used the back side of the tile and black stained glass for the outline and small details. She also used white tiles and stained glass for the teeth, eyes, and claws. To complete the mosaic, Jackie used gray grout and finished the sides and back with black paint.

If you would like to learn more about Jackie Greene's mosaic art and her remarkable story that led to her artistry in mosaics, please visit her website at www.mosaicsbyjackie.com. Fifty percent of the proceeds from the sale of her crosses are donated to mission projects through her church, First United Methodist Church of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

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Hillcrest Middle School Students Tour Shelton State Technical Programs



Area school counselors met with leaders of industry at the October Adopt-A-School Counselor tours and meeting. Business leaders stressed to the counselors the importance of educating our adolescent youth about the technical opportunities made available to them through training and local job placement. In response to this *call*, eighth grade students from Hillcrest Middle School and their guidance counselor, Mrs. Shannon Hamner, toured the technical programs at Shelton State Community College. Mr. Ryan Sabbagh, Shelton's Technical Program Recruiter/Advisory led students through the training facilities so students could learn first-hand about programs in cosmetology, welding, industrial maintenance, and other fields of interest.

Mrs. Hamner stated, "We hope to increase interest in technical careers. Seeing the relationship between school and career will enable our students to make informed decisions about their futures." Teachers and students in the Tuscaloosa County School System also have access to "Career Cruising," a web-based program that allows them to explore, research, and plan for their education and future careers.

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Brookwood Middle School Students Participate in Mercedes

Marathon



Twenty two Brookwood Middle School Sixth Graders ran in the Mercedes Kid's Marathon in Birmingham on Saturday, February 9, 2008. The group, sponsored by the School's Adopt-A-School partner, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc., began training in October 2007. Each individual on the team logged at least 25.2 miles at home and at school before running the last mile on the race day in Birmingham. Members of the School's Mercedes Kid's Marathon team are Marlee Adib, Spencer Benton, Dakota

Blackwell, Ashley Blackwell, Makayla Brown, Kelsey Burt, Zach Calhoun, Sam Cate, Blakely Channell, Brittany Duncan, Kayla Fomby, Brooke Hallman, Brett Herring, Brooke Herring, Jaron Hicks, Kelsey Hunnicutt, Julie Middlebrooks, Brittany Montz, Breanne Odom, Kayla Rawlins, Shelby Rowe, Corey Sanders, Rebekah Skelton, Emily Suddeth, Gavin Taylor, Megan Tingle, Joseph Vick, Pete Wasson, Issac Weston, Hannah Woodyard.

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The Credit Union of Alabama Federal Credit Union and Huntington Place Elementary Participate in Drive Thru BBQ

On Tuesday, January 29, 2008 Huntington Place Elementary School and its Adopt-A-School partner The Credit Union of Alabama Federal Credit Union hosted the school's "Third Annual Drive-Thru BBQ Dinner". This is an event that allows individuals from the community to purchase BBQ dinners in advance and then drive thru and pick up their meals. This annual event has grown into one of the schools most highly anticipated fundraising activities. The success of this event is evident through the sale of approximately 622 dinners and over \$ 2,500.00 in raised funds, all of which will go toward purchasing new computer equipment for the school. Be sure to mark your calendar next year as Huntington Place Elementary and their Adopt-A-School Partner The Credit Union of Alabama FCU look to make this event bigger and better than ever.

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Mercedes-Benz Adopt-A-School Students Compete in Road Naming Contest

Two students from Brookwood Middle School came up with the name chosen for the road that borders the east side of the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance. Students were asked to write an essay of 500 words or less about how the plant has had a positive impact on their life or the life of someone they know. The essay contest was open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at the school.



Winners Joshua Boler and Spencer Hill received Mercedes jackets, backpacks, a \$100 savings bond each, and passes to Alabama Adventure Park for submitting the name "M-Class Boulevard" in the contest. Judges were representatives from MBUSI, the school and elected officials from the towns of Vance and Brookwood. A special luncheon ceremony was held on February 10th at Mercedes for the students who wrote the top 50 essays.

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Third Annual "State of the Schools" Breakfast Meeting

When it comes to today's rapidly changing, always changing educational system, it's important for the business community to know and understand what's happening in

their local systems.

That's why The Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a "State of the Schools" breakfast meeting on April 2 at the Four Points by Sheraton hotel. The meeting starts at 7:30 a.m., and there is no charge, however reservations are requested. A light continental style breakfast will be available.

Headliners for the report to the community will be the superintendents of Tuscaloosa County's two public school systems: Dr. Joyce Levey, Tuscaloosa City Schools, and Dr. Frank Costanzo, Tuscaloosa County Schools.

Each school leader will give a status report on their system and will take questions from the floor. Chamber members are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive an update on the school systems that are preparing our students for the workplace.

Participants can register on The Chamber's website at www.tuscaloosachamber.com or call 391-0556.

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Volunteers Needed for Junior Achievement Presentations

According to Teresa Vaccaro, Senior Director of District Operations for Junior Achievement, there is an urgent need for classroom volunteers for local Junior Achievement spring classes. The most urgent need is volunteers for the middle school classes and a total of 43 volunteers are needed to meet all of the current requests for the Tuscaloosa County and Tuscaloosa City schools. Scheduling of the classes and coordination of the volunteers is handled locally by Lois Palecek, District Program Manager for Junior Achievement of Tuscaloosa.

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, JA Worldwide provides programs for students which focus on three key content areas: work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. For more information regarding JA of Tuscaloosa and to volunteer to help with spring classes, please contact Lois Palecek at 205-759-3576 or lois@tusc.k12.al.us.

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Fun for All in Eastwood and Hampton Inn Partnership

Hampton Inn provided many activities for their Adopt-A-School partner, Eastwood Middle School, during the first half of this school year. Everyone-students, parents, and faculty members-were able to share in all the fun Hampton Inns of Tuscaloosa sponsored. Football season was very competitive for Eastwood parents, as Hampton Inn sponsored a kick-off competition. During half time at Eastwood's home football games, parents had the opportunity to kick the football from the five yard line. The names of those who scored a goal went into a drawing that was held at Eastwood's homecoming game. The winner received a one-night stay at the Hampton Inn location of his or her choice.

This was not the only competition that Hampton Inn sponsored during Eastwood's homecoming; they also sponsored the door decoration contest. All homeroom classes decorated their doors according to the homecoming theme. Hampton Inn representatives judged the doors and announced the winners at the homecoming pep rally. The first place homeroom was awarded with a pizza party.

During the fall the first of two job shadowing events was held at Hampton Inn. Students who wanted to participate filled out a mock job application and responded to an essay topic dealing with conflict resolutions. Eighteen winners were chosen to participate in the job shadowing event where students experienced the world of work in

the hospitality industry. Students rotated through the various departments at one of the Tuscaloosa Hampton Inn locations. The second Job Shadowing event will take place in March.

Hampton Inn also helped celebrate American Education Week. They provided a breakfast buffet for teachers and participated in Eastwood's Positive Behavior Support Program. When teachers catch students "doing something good", they placed the student's name in a box. Names were then drawn from the box and Hampton Inn rewarded selected students with a variety of prizes.

Finally, Hampton Inn has also been very active in promoting strong character in the student body at Eastwood. At the end of every six-weeks grading period, teachers from each team choose the name of one boy and one girl who have exhibited excellent character. Hampton Inn awards these students with a "Shout Out" on afternoon announcements and a goody bag.

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Save The Date



Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa Adopt A School Golf Tournament

Thursday, September 25, 2008
Tuscaloosa Country Club
Four Man Scramble
AM & PM Flights

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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 Adopt-A-School News

Please simply hit your forward button and share this issue with all staff and team members in your school, business and organization. Thanks a lot!

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