



# Adopt-A-School Newsletter

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

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November 20, 2008

## Inside this issue

### "Creating Career Awareness" COORDINATOR MEETING

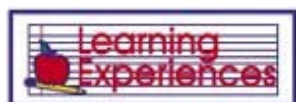
December 9, 2008  
Hilton Garden Inn  
11:30 - 1:00

- [Ponds for Kids Day: Construction and Dedication of the Outdoor Classroom Pond](#)
- [Alabama Credit Union Hosts Rock Quarry Middle School Art Night](#)
- [Vance Elementary Students have a BLAST at the 2008 Fall Festival](#)
- [Brookwood Middle School Partner Awards Honor Roll Students](#)
- [Phifer Helps Support "Recycling Program" at Westlawn Middle School](#)
- [Coordinator Meetings Focus on Specific Topics](#)
- [Seven Partnership Pitfalls to Avoid](#)
- [Showcase Your Partnership](#)
- [SUSTAINER SPOTLIGHT...](#)
- [Third Annual "Doing What Matters for Tuscaloosa's Children"](#)
- [PLEASE REMEMBER...](#)

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## Ponds for Kids Day: Construction and Dedication of the Outdoor Classroom Pond

In just one day, the students, parents, faculty and community volunteers of Oakdale Primary School built and installed a water garden in their school's outdoor classroom as part of the Ponds for Kids program! Over 50 parents along with volunteers including Dr. Joyce Levey, Superintendent of Tuscaloosa City Schools, Councilman Bobby Howard, Mr. Willie Allen of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and members of Fire Station 8 joined with Oakdale's students to complete the job on Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup>.



The event began at 8:00 a.m. with shifts of students and volunteers working together to build the pond throughout the day until it was completed. Each class from PreK thru 2<sup>nd</sup> grade rotated in shifts to help move dirt, mulch and gravel; often students and their parents were able to work together. At approximately 2:00 p.m. the water garden installation was completed and the water pump was plugged in, bringing the water garden to life. The new water garden area contains a waterfall, 6 to 10 foot stream, and approximately a 180 square-foot pond. The water garden will provide an aquatic studies area in their outdoor classroom site for hands-on learning opportunities about aquatic ecosystems and wildlife. It is now home to beautiful fan-tail goldfish thanks to Mr. Maurice Jackson of the Alabama State Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

Through a partnership with the North American Water Gardening Society's (NAWGS) PFK program, Oakdale Primary received technical assistance from



Lee Vought of Vought Water Gardens from Decatur, Alabama to help them develop and install their aquatic studies areas. Funding and support for the school's PFK project came from the **Goody's Good Deeds Grant Program**. The program provided the school with funds to construct the third phase of the outdoor classroom. In addition, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System,



Alabama Wildlife Federation, Vought Water Gardens, and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources provided support for the project.

Oakdale Primary School was officially certified as an Alabama Outdoor Classroom School during the spring of 2008 through the leadership of Lucile Prewitt, principal and Melissa Kent, media specialist and project leader for the school's outdoor classroom. A goal of the Alabama Outdoor Classroom Program is to provide hands-on, outdoor learning opportunities that allow students of all ages to utilize multiple-disciplinary skills in a fun and exciting environment. The construction of the water garden at Oakdale Primary completed the third phase of their outdoor classroom. For more information about the outdoor classroom at Oakdale and to see videos about outdoor classroom, visit [www.oakdale.tusc.k12.al.us](http://www.oakdale.tusc.k12.al.us).

[Top](#)

## Alabama Credit Union Hosts Rock Quarry Middle School Art Night

The staff of Alabama Credit Union was pleased to host Art Night for their Adopt-A-School partner, Rock Quarry Middle School. Students, parents, friends and faculty visited the North River Branch of Alabama Credit Union to view the still life drawings and paintings on display. The art night celebration was held in the evening and the branch office was transformed into an art gallery featuring the art work of ten Rock Quarry Middle School students. The art work remained on display at the branch office for one week. Alabama Credit Union looks forward to hosting Art Night again in the spring and is proud to promote and acknowledge the outstanding artistic talents of the students.



[Top](#)

## Vance Elementary Students have a BLAST at the 2008 Fall Festival



The 2008 Fall Festival at Vance Elementary was a huge success and a lot of fun thanks to the generosity of the Adopt-A-School Partners. Southland International Trucks donated funds to cover the complete cost of the fun jumps, which

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included a moon walk and jousting competition arena. The students were lined up all night to enjoy these fun jumps. Mercedes-Benz and Vulcan Materials also donated funds to cover the cost of prizes and delicious food that was served. Thanks to their wonderful and generous support, Vance Elementary students had a BLAST and the event raised over \$5,000.00 for Vance Elementary School.

[Top](#)

### **Brookwood Middle School Partner Awards Honor Roll Students**

Brookwood Middle School adopter Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI) provided a celebratory ice cream party for the six weeks honor roll students. Students who achieved all A's or all A's and B's for the 1<sup>st</sup> six weeks were invited to attend a party in the courtyard with a variety of ice cream treats. Students enjoyed Milky Way ice cream bars, Snickers ice cream bars, and other frozen treats while celebrating their academic achievement. The ice cream party is just one example of the many incentives offered by the MBUSI to encourage academic success among the students.



[Top](#)

### **Phifer Helps Support "Recycling Program" at Westlawn Middle School**

Westlawn is going "green" by starting a recycling program. This program is sponsored by the SGA – Student Government Association on campus. Currently, Westlawn is recycling plastic bottles, aluminum cans, office/notebook paper, and newspaper. The SGA students go to each classroom to collect the recycled materials. The recycle bins in the classrooms were supplied by Adopt-A-School partner Phifer Inc.



Larger 90 gallon bins are located in the main office. Once the recycled goods are collected, SGA students sort and empty items into the appropriate larger bins. Students also help with the recycling of plastic bottles, by placing their plastic bottles into the large 90 gallon bin located

in the lunch room.

This project is off to a great start with the Westlawn SGA leading the way and students joining in.

[Top](#)

### **Coordinator Meetings Focus on Specific Topics**

"Best Practices" and "Curriculum, Character and Cultural Enrichment" were the topics for our first two Adopt-A-School Coordinator Meetings. During the 2007-08 school year the coordinator meetings were restructured to meet the needs of the coordinators. The meetings were so successful, that the format for 2008-09 will be the same. Each of our Coordinator meetings will have a different focus topic.

On September 30<sup>th</sup> business and school coordinators met at The Tuscaloosa City School Central Office to learn about successful "Best Practices" from other partnerships. The participants learned first hand from coordinators that "make it work" and were encouraged to use their ideas and handouts to adapt and develop their own program! Featured partnership activities included SpectraFest at Westwood Elementary School; Leadership Tuscaloosa Alumni book buddy program at Flatwoods Elementary School; art and student incentive programs sponsored by Morgan Keegan at Faucett-Vestavia Elementary; making the connection through art with Pritchett-Moore and Huntington Place Elementary; spotlight ideas from Spiller Associated Furniture and Crestmont Elementary; and JA in a Day at Davis Emerson Middle School.

On November 13<sup>th</sup> coordinators gathered at The University School of Medicine to learn how several partnerships incorporated "Curriculum, Character and Cultural" activities in their partnership. Featured activities included information about the Junior Achievement Program and innovative ways to include JA in the school curriculum; the NEFE Financial Literacy Program; programs available for students and partnerships through the Tuscaloosa Public Libraries; the Character First program; and information about cultural and arts programs available through the Arts and Humanities Council.



Coordinators are encouraged to attend any or all of the scheduled coordinator meetings. "[Creating Career Awareness](#)" is the focus of the December 9<sup>th</sup> working lunch meeting. In January, the coordinator meeting will focus on ideas for Adopt-A-School Week. The last meeting is scheduled in March and the meeting will follow a round table discussion format and the groups will be divided according to school level. The dates, times and places for additional meetings are:

Tuesday, December 9, 2008: 11:30AM-1:00PM - "Creating Career Awareness" – Hilton Garden Inn

Thursday, January 29, 2009: 11:30AM -1:00PM – "Ideas for AAS Week" - TBD

Tuesday, March 24, 2009: 3:30-5:00PM - "Roundtable Discussions" -

TBD

Look for registration forms via email and contact the Adopt-A-School for additional information. Contact Carolyn, 391-0556

[carolyn@tuscaloosachamber.com](mailto:carolyn@tuscaloosachamber.com) or Loo, 391-0563

[loo@tuscaloosachamber.com](mailto:loo@tuscaloosachamber.com).

[Top](#)

## **Seven Partnership Pitfalls to Avoid**

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*The following article was taken from the San Diego City Schools Community Relations Department Toolkit for Partnerships in Education. The toolkit was prepared by Janet D. Delaney, Director, San Diego Unified School District, 4100 Normal Street, San Diego, CA*

In conversations with business and school coordinators, it is obvious that Adopt-A-School partnerships have a positive impact on the school. Partnerships are so positive that many partnership participants are hesitant to talk about the inevitable mistakes, missteps and misunderstandings. It is often a good idea to learn from the experiences of others. Based on feedback from principals and coordinators, there are seven pitfalls schools and partners should keep in mind as they manage their partnerships.

1. **Starting off too fast.** Planning a major event before partners are used to working together is an invitation to disaster. It is much wiser to begin with a small, simple event with guaranteed success and to work toward more ambitious activities.
2. **Neglecting to evaluate an event after it has occurred.** It is important to share both positive impressions and ideas for improving an activity, so that the next event can run more smoothly. Evaluation – even a phone call or email – lets individuals who organize events know that what they did was noticed.
3. **Having one coordinator with all the responsibility for the partnership.** This is a quick road to burnout! Reach out and involve others....work to maintain an involved group of staff on both sides of the partnership.
4. **Working in your partnership without using outside resources.** The Adopt-A-School staff is always ready to help – to share a successful activity from another partnership, to put you in touch with a resource, to troubleshoot a rough spot or just to listen.
5. **Trying to take on multiple partnership activities without having time.** Each partnership activity takes time and energy, and it is easy to spread yourself too thin.
6. **Letting a partnership languish during a busy time.** Don't let your partner feel neglected. Schedule regular partnership meetings in advance.
7. **Holding hidden agendas and unshared expectations.** Make sure that you and your partner are on the same wavelength. If one partner thinks that things are going well and the other is still expecting the "school playground to be paved," it will be difficult to plan to conduct successful activities.

**Celebrate! Congratulate yourselves on a job well done!**

[Top](#)

## **Showcase Your Partnership**

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**ADOPT-A-SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS** are still available!!!! Contact

Carolyn Tubbs today for more information on showcasing your partnership on the radio program WTBC 1230 AM/Catfish Country 102.9 FM, TV programs Great Day Tuscaloosa, and/or WVUA 7 News at Four. Email [carolyn@tuscaloosachamber.com](mailto:carolyn@tuscaloosachamber.com), fax 205.391.0565 or call 205.391.0556 to submit your request.



*Pictured is a Crestmont Elementary student at WTBC 1230 recording an AAS Partnership Spotlight. Spiller Furniture is Crestmont's Adopt-a-School Partner.*

[Top](#)

## **SUSTAINER SPOTLIGHT...**

Learning Experiences Provides Educational Materials for Teachers and Parents

Long time supporters of the Adopt-A-School Program and members of the Chamber of Commerce, Learning Experiences owners Sam and Teresa Davis have provided educators and parents with quality educational materials since August of 1994. Sam's retail management experience, Teresa's teaching background and their knowledgeable staff have made Learning Experiences a great place for educators and parents alike to shop. Everything from basic school supplies to science project materials can be found at Learning Experiences. In addition to school supplies, educational toys and gift certificates are also available. An in-store laminator and die-cut machine make producing teaching aids simple and school purchase orders and school debit cards are accepted.



In addition to supporting the Chamber and the Adopt-A-School Programs, Sam and Teresa are members of the National School Supply and Equipment Association. They participate in the American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life; sponsor the annual CHOM Duck Race; the annual golf tournaments for RISE and CAPS, and the Success By Six calendar "Getting Ready For Kindergarten."

Visit Sam and Teresa Davis at Learning Experiences, conveniently located at 923 McFarland Boulevard in Northport. Store hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. For more information, call (205) 333-6922, fax (205) 333-6924, or visit their website [www.learningexperiences123.com](http://www.learningexperiences123.com).

[Top](#)

## **Third Annual "Doing What Matters for Tuscaloosa's Children"**

Save the date for the Third Annual "Doing What Matters for Tuscaloosa's

Children” Conference. The conference focusing on current trends and issues that affect young people is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2009. The event will be held from 8:00AM until 3:30PM and will take place at the Bryant Conference Center. According to Kristy Brown, conference organizer, participants will address pertinent children’s issues in Tuscaloosa County and what the community can do to ensure that children live in a healthy and viable community.

Guest speakers for the event include Linda Tilly, Executive Director VOICES for Alabama’s Children and Dr. Marquitta Davis, Commissioner for the Department of Children’s Affairs. Additionally concurrent breakout sessions will include discussions on dropout prevention; literacy issues; coping with educational financial issues; depression and youth; and current trends in drug use among young people. Sponsorships for the event are available and for additional information, contact Kristy Brown, Tuscaloosa’s One Place, [kbrown@etfrc.org](mailto:kbrown@etfrc.org)

[Top](#)

### **PLEASE REMEMBER...**

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#### **We Have the Best Community Calendar Around**

Please do check out our online calendar at [www.tuscaloosachamber.com](http://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!

[Top](#)