

The Learning Curve

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Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

Alexander II Elementary Receives Grant for Technology

"We're trying to get a jump on it and get our teachers trained," explains Alexander II Elementary Assistant Principal Chad Thompson.

"We feel technology is such an integral part of science and math that you can't separate them" adds Principal Penny Smith.

Thanks to a recent grant from the Elam Alexander Foundation, Alexander II will be converting their old computer classroom into a fully modernized classroom, featuring top of the line computers, projection machines, interactive software, updated printers, desks built specifically for computers, and much more.

According to Smith, they have not made the final decision on exactly what to buy because they want to buy the same equipment the System will be purchasing through the Education Special Local Option Sales Tax money.

"We're trying to make our technology classroom the top in the country," says Thompson. "It will really get the students involved in the lessons."

Already, the students are excited about the new technology. The students, on their own, worked to form a Technology Club, and due to availability of computers, there is a waiting list of students wanting to join. By incorporating more computers and more advance technology, more students will be able to participate.

By going ahead and setting up the classroom, the teachers and students will have the opportunity to begin training how to fully make use of everything available. That way, when the ESPLOST equipment begins to arrive, they will already know how to take advantage of it.

According to Thompson and Media Specialist Becky Greene, they will have the classroom up and running this semester.

"We want our kids to always feel they received the best education possible, and we want the parents to feel proud this is the school they chose for their children," says Smith.

Burdell-Hunt Elementary hosts second Junior Achievement Week

For the second year, it's Junior Achievement Week at Burdell-Hunt Elementary School, and according to Senior Vice President of Education Dr. Barbara Hill, they've already seen amazing growth in support of the program. "It's volunteer driven," she says, crediting GEICO with bringing in 25 volunteers. With 40 total people coming in, every classroom gets their own, and "some even have two."

"I want to experience working with kids," says GEICO volunteer Kim Renfroe. GEICO partnered with Junior Achievement this year to help provide the kids with lessons that can connected to real life as well as expose their employees to a school environment. All volunteers were trained by Junior Achievement on hands-on learning activities that helped explain the economics of life. "[The kids] really seem to enjoy the activities," says Renfroe with a smile.

"The experience of having the GEICO volunteers in for the week...it tops the normal day-to-day lessons," explains Principal Dr. Linda Bivins. "It brings [the lessons] to life."

"It's not the typical learning day," agrees Dr. Hill. The volunteers



Volunteers from GEICO and the community spent a week working with students at Burdell-Hunt Elementary.

to leave when their time is up.

"I've fallen in love with this school and the students," says Renfroe. "They've given back to me."

"We have to understand what our rolls are today to help make each child successful," says Dr. Hill.

come in everyday of the week for an hour to talk to the kids about the different levels of government, practicing job interviews, different types of production, advertising, and the importance of saving money. "You should've seen the kids faces light up this morning when the volunteers show up."

"This program is the best: I love it, the teachers love it, and the students love it.," praises Dr. Bivins. "This is time well-spent"

Not only are the students learning lessons, the volunteers are exposed to a current school environment. They get to see how education has changed since they were in school, how a school is run, and get a taste of what it's like to be a teacher. According to Hill, some of these volunteers are the same ones that gave their time last year, and in some classrooms, the volunteers don't want

Heard Elementary second graders plant trees to celebrate Arbor Day



Students plant trees on the front lawn in celebration of Arbor Day.

Complete with a visit from Smokey Bear, Heard Elementary 2nd graders alongside volunteers from the Georgia Forestry Commission, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, and the Macon Water Authority planted more than 80 trees on their school's campus to celebrate Arbor Day.

"Isn't it wonderful so many people cared enough to do this?" Principal Sandra Stanley asked rhetorically as she watched her students.

"We're beautifying the grounds and letting the kids get their hands dirty," said Stephen Scarborough, Chair for the Trees Macon Committee, part of the Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission.

The tree planting is the committee's big annual project, he explains. Each year they pick a school to beautify and come to the principal for permission. Last year trees were planted at Williams Elementary, and two years ago, the even was held at Skyview Elementary.

Here, Stanley explains she was hesitant at first because, thanks to the recently

passed Education Special Local Option Sales Tax, Heard will be rebuilt within the next few years on another site. "I made them promise to come back then and help replant them," she says with a laugh.

Planted around the playground, the edge of the fields, and even in the front yard, wax myrtles, white oaks, and dogwoods are marked with brightly colored ribbons to make them noticeable to the groundskeepers.

Earlier in the week, the 2nd graders were treated to lessons concerning "the importance of trees, the importance of planting them, what they're used for, and the importance of replacing them," says Scarborough.

The tree planting also connects to another Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful project: the Christmas Tree Recycling Program. According to Scarborough, the mulch used at Heard came from the trees donated in January at Central City Park.

"It's been great," he said as the kids began to finish up and start rushing over to a table where seedlings are being

brapped in newspaper and placed in a plastic bag. Each student participant received a dogwood seedling to plant in their own yard. "This is our way to get them out and celebrate Arbor Day."

"They've had a ball," said Stanley as

they line up to go back inside and wash their hands.

To cap off the day's activities, a ceremony was held on the front steps featuring student artwork and performances and featured speakers. Each class held a poster contest, picking a winner to display at the ceremony. They also performed two songs and a skit.

Featured speakers included Mayor C. Jack Ellis, County Commissioner Charles Bishop, Superintendent Sharon Patterson Scarborough, Cherry Blossom Festival and Executive Director Wright Tilley. Bishop read the proclamation declaring that day as Bibb County's official Arbor Day.

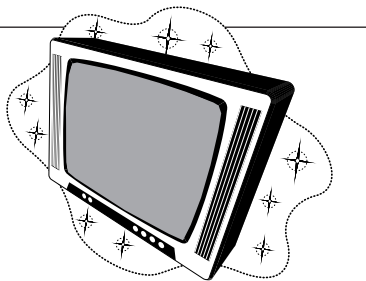
"It's a great day to be here; what a great day to celebrate planting trees," Patterson said, reveling in the sunshine and mid-70's temperature. "It's a pleasure to see the students' and teachers' involvement."

As she pointed out the older trees already well-established on the school's front lawn, she confessed to the crowd, "as a child, I was a tree climber." Trees are such a central spot for kids, either climbing them, reading under them, or planting them. "The stories they could tell."

"One of the ways we preserve the future is by planting trees," she said.



Each student received their own dogwood seedling to take home and plant in their yard.



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