



The Buzz

MAY
2015



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent *Endless possibilities for 2015-2016*

I enjoyed the opportunity to visit each school during the month of May. I was able to meet with most of the teachers and administrators in small groups to spend a few minutes reflecting upon the year that we are finishing up and looking ahead to the promises of the new school year.

I am excited about the 2015-2016 school year that lies ahead of us. For the first time in several years, we will have no furlough days. We are reducing class sizes in several areas across the district, and we are adding a ground-breaking new computer science program in grades 8-12 while continuing to build

ENDLESS Possibilities

THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

- ▶ Academic Excellence
- ▶ Career Preparation
- ▶ Unmatched Opportunity



our technology infrastructure. While we will always have challenges, our opportunities far outweigh our limitations.

A few months ago, our high school's mass media department produced a video highlighting the possibilities that are available to students in our school district. If you have not had a chance to view it, I encourage you to take a few minutes to watch it. You will find the YouTube link to it on our school system's homepage. It is easy to lose sight of all that our school system has to offer until you sit back and consider the wide variety of options that

are available to students in our system. Feel free to share the link to the video with your friends. I hope that you share my pride in all that our school system has to offer.

Spend some time dreaming about the endless possibilities in your classroom, school, or department this summer, and let me know how I can help you make your dreams become reality for our students in 2015-2016. We have a great school system, and together, next year can be the year that we take it to new heights!

The Thomas County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- May 22 - Last Day of School
- May 23 - Graduation, TCCHS Gym, 10:00 a.m.
- May 25 - Memorial Day Holiday
- May 26 & 27 - Teacher Post-Planning
- July 2 & 3 - Independence Day Holidays
- July 28 - July 31 - Teacher Pre-Planning
- August 3 - First Day for Students



Please visit the school websites for a complete calendar of events.

Barberitos Recognized as BEE Partner of the Year



Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay presented a plaque to Barberitos owner Jessica Jones for being chosen as BEE Partner of the Year.

Barberitos of Thomasville has been named Thomas County School System's BEE Partner of the Year for 2014 - 2015. The Business and Education Exchange (BEE) Partner of the Year is chosen from the outstanding BEE Partners who work with Thomas County Schools to strengthen the link among schools, businesses/industries, and the community.

The announcement was made at the annual Superintendent's Breakfast where the BEE Partner of the

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The Buzz is a monthly publication of Thomas County Schools. Send suggestions or comments to Melanie Hester, 200 North Pinetree Blvd., Thomasville, GA 31792; 229.225-4380, ext. 115; mhester@thomas.k12.ga.us. The Buzz is available online at www.thomas.k12.ga.us, Departments/Public Relations tab.

TCCHS Names Honor Graduates, Valedictorian, Salutatorian



Salutatorian Noah Harris and Valedictorian Emily Kornegay will both attend Georgia Tech in the fall.

Thomas County Central High School has announced top honors for the Class of 2015: its valedictorian, salutatorian, and honor graduates.

Emily Kornegay, 16, is valedictorian and Noah Harris, 17, is salutatorian. Also, 32 seniors are honor graduates.

"Being class valedictorian means that I've been given an opportunity to share a message with my classmates on one of the most important days of their lives," Kornegay said. "That's a big responsibility."

Kornegay, the daughter of Dr. Dusty and Laura Kornegay, said she's always been a "very competitive person," and always strives "to learn as much as I can and work as efficiently as I can."

"My parents have always encouraged me and motivated me as long as I can remember," she said. "I've always wanted to be the best I can be so I've worked very hard. That being said, I was still surprised and excited just as anyone else would be!"

Kornegay and Harris have dated for more than year, and she admits there was friendly competition for the top spot.

"Of course there was competition," she said. "It's like

jogging with your best friend; you want to stick together so you can share the same experiences, but you always want to be one inch ahead. We have definitely pushed each other to succeed in that fashion."

Kornegay didn't want to give away her speech topic, but said her message "applies to everyone, whether they are attending a college or university next fall or are starting work right away."

"It's important to me that everyone can get something from my speech so I will work to make it that way," she said.

She will attend the Georgia Institute of Technology, majoring in Industrial Engineering. Kornegay intends to participate in internships to learn more about her career field's opportunities.

"This honor will continue to motivate me to keep working to the best of my ability while at Tech," she said.

Harris, 17, is the son of Shane and Sandra Harris.

"I have worked very hard the last couple of years to be in the top of my class, so I was hopeful that I would be named salutatorian," he said.

He doesn't feel any

one thing got him to the salutatorian spot; he worked hard but also tried to enjoy his education experience.

"I am very intrinsically motivated, but I do not allow grades to be the sole focus of my education," Harris said. "I try to truly learn and be engaged while I am in class."

Receiving the recognition makes Harris proud of his dedication throughout high school and motivates him for future endeavors.

"Going forward, this recognition encourages me to continue to strive for success both academically and personally," he said.

Harris is "a little nervous" but also excited to give a speech to his peers during graduation.

"I am excited because I have been given the opportunity to provide a message to my peers during a transition between two important life stages," he said.

Harris will also attend the Georgia Institute of Technology, and plans to earn at least a master's degree in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering.

Honor graduates are: Amber Atkinson, Logan Beaver, Margaret Bowden, Daezha Brooks, Rhonda Brown, Austin Bryant, Mikayla Fillyaw, Addison Frasch, Gerald Hallowell, Noah Harris, Anne-Marie Holland, Laura Hopper, Katie Johnson, Justin Knapp, Emily Kornegay, Charles Maggitas, Tessa McCorkle, Shelby Mitchell, Claude Owens, Logan Potter, Kelci Register, Amber Scott, Bryana Scott, Megan Shepherd, Elizabeth Smith, Lindsay Thompson, Angel Tran, Ryan Trull, Ashton Whaley, Lacey Williams, Tessa Winbigler and Kayla Winbigler.

Amber Atkinson, 17, said being an honor graduate has

been "a huge goal" since she entered high school.

"It shows how hard I've worked throughout my high school career, and it means a great deal to me that my hard work is being recognized," she said.

Atkinson plans to attend Georgia Southern University and earn a Bachelor of Science in Biology/Pre-Veterinary Medicine. Then, she plans to attend graduate school and become a veterinarian.

Ryan Trull, 17, said the recognition "feels great."

"This is such a great honor," he said. "I would have to say that my family is what drove me to work hard in school. They have always supported me and pushed me forward."

He also encouraged other students to make an effort.

"The harder you work now affects how your life will be in the future," Trull said. "Working hard equals success."

Trull plans to attend Valdosta State University for its engineering studies program and wants to work in the computer engineering field.

Ashton Whaley, 18, said being named an honor graduate was worth the effort it took to get there.

"I feel like going through all that hard work was worth it," she said. "I worked very hard for it, especially during senior year."

She plans to attend Georgia College & State University and wants to pursue a career as a medical lab researcher.

Whaley also has some words of wisdom for her fellow graduates and high school students.

"Believe in yourself and never let anyone define your intelligence or worth," she said.

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Year nominees were honored. The Superintendent's Breakfast is sponsored by the Thomasville Chamber of Commerce, one of the active connections between Thomas County Schools and the business community of Thomasville and Thomas County.

Prior to the announcement, Dr. Bob Dechman, Director of Federal Programs, Accountability, and Assessment, commented, "Each BEE Partner makes a lasting impact on the lives of Thomas County students and staff, and we are all better as a result of these relationships."

Barberitos, a small family restaurant with approximately 20 employees, directly impacts more than 725 students and

145 faculty and staff members at Hand-In-Hand Primary School, as well as other schools in the Thomas County School System and in the community.

Hand-In-Hand nominated Barbertios for the distinguished BEE Partner of the Year Award.

"The financial support given by Barberitos and Jessica Jones is over and beyond what we ever expected," said Jeanna Mayhall, Hand-In-Hand Principal. "During this school year alone, Barberitos has donated \$5,000. The money was used to help purchase academic supplies, equipment for the physical education program, materials for the science room, and books for the book fair for students that could not afford books. Barberitos also contributed financially by providing lunch

for various events, as well as certificates for attendance incentives."

In addition to providing funds to students in need, Jessica Jones has given more than 200 volunteer hours to Hand-In-Hand. Jones donates her time by being a reading buddy, assisting with school events, and being available for various class activities.

Dr. Dechman highlighted

Barberitos' benefits to the schools.

"Barberitos gives time and energy to help Hand-In-Hand with their action plan in seven different areas," Dr. Dechman said. "By working with students and staff, the partnership between the school and community really made a difference in the educational experience of our students."

Students to Attend National NHD Contest in June



Pictured on the front row (L-R) are high school winners Kelly Quintiana, Gabby Schminky, Kennedy Ward, and Marion Rose Young. Middle school students, pictured on the second row, are Ethan Mims (L-R), Brooklyn Reese, Emma Goff, Clay Goff, and Zach Goff.

Students from TCCHS, TCMS, and TCUE attended the National History Day (NHD) State Competition April 26 at Mercer University.

This is the third year Thomas County students have entered the state contest at the Junior Division and the second year students have

entered the Senior Division. Students were led by Deann Garcia, Christine Patton, Heather Ward and Amanda West.

Students listed below qualified for the NHD National Contest and will attend the competition in June at the University of Maryland.

- ◆ **Clay Goff, Emma Goff, and Seth Goff (7th)** – "William Wilborforce" (Junior Division, Group Website, 2nd Place Overall/National Qualifiers)
- ◆ **Ethan Mims (8th)** - "Franklin D. Roosevelt" (Junior Division, Individual Exhibit, 2nd Place Overall & National Qualifier)
- ◆ **Brooklyn Reese (8th)** – "Hazel Raines" (Junior Division, Individual 1st Place Overall & National Qualifier)
- ◆ **Marion Rose Young & Kennedy Ward (9th)** – "Virginia Hall" (Senior Division, 1st Place Overall & National Qualifier)
- ◆ **Kelly Quintiana & Gabby Schminky** – "Adolf Hitler" (Senior Division, 2nd Place & National Qualifier)



TCMS STUDENTS VISIT WASHINGTON D.C. - The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) at Thomas County Middle School recently made its annual pilgrimage to Washington, D.C. During the visit, U.S. Senator David Perdue (pictured with group) met with the students and discussed the role of a senator. Students also visited national treasures such as the U.S. Capitol Building, Arlington Cemetery, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, and Mount Vernon. Robin Cartright and Deann Garcia sponsor the National Junior Honor society at TCMS.

The sponsors and members of the NJHS would like to thank this year's chaperones for their help and time commitment: Mr. Morgan Garcia, Dr. Kathy Keown, Dr. Mike Keown, Mrs. Michele Norton, and Mrs. Tammy Sharpe. The NJHS would also like to thank all who made the trip a success including Cindy Weier, Flowers Foods, Commercial Bank, Thomas County Federal, Senator David Perdue's office, Congressman Austin Scott's office, Annett Bus Line, and the administrators at TCMS.



TCCHS junior Zsant Arrington with TCCHS art teacher Jocelyn Rivard, Congressman Austin Scott, and Superintendent of Thomas County Schools Dr. Dusty Kornegay.

TCCHS Arrington Wins Congressional Art Competition

One Thomas County Central High School art student has won the honor of having her art displayed in Washington, D.C. and another art student has been recognized in the local leg of a national competition.

Zsant Arrington received first place and Sophie Anderson received an honorable mention in the Eighth Congressional District (of which Thomas County is part) branch of the Congressional Art Competition, held each spring and sponsored by the United States House of Representatives.

"I'm overwhelmed that I've been picked for first place," Zsant Arrington said. "I'm extremely proud of myself. I was highly emotional when I found out."

The district had 62 pieces of artwork from 15 high schools in the competition.

"I was impressed by the artistic talent coming from Georgia's Eighth Congressional District this year, with nearly 65 pieces from 15 high schools across our district," Congressman Austin Scott said. "I applaud our students for their hard work and dedication."

Arrington painted a violet

woman in front of a colorful garden of oranges, reds, and violets. She used a tempera paint color scheme to give the work an expressive quality.

Arrington had no idea she would win, but she did know she'd done a great job with the piece and that the painting "really represents her talent" and "expresses and shows all that I am capable of."

There are 435 winners across the nation representing all of the congressional districts, according to Alice Johnson, director of outreach in Scott's office. His office will provide a free, three-day trip for Arrington and a parent to travel to Washington, D.C. in order to attend the national competition ceremony and ribbon cutting of the art exhibit this June.

The winning entry from Georgia's Eighth Congressional District will be displayed in the U. S. Capitol for approximately a year alongside artwork from every congressional district across the country.

Arrington also is eligible to receive a \$3,000 per-year admission scholarship to the Savannah College of Art and Design, should she apply and be accepted.

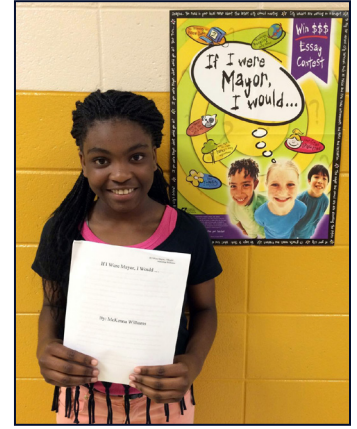
Sixth-Grader McKenna Williams Honored for Contest Win

Members of the Thomasville City Council recently recognized a bright, young citizen during a meeting for being selected as the Georgia Municipal Association District 10 winner for the "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." essay contest.

McKenna Williams' essay was chosen as a winner among 444 entries. She is a sixth-grade student in Mandy West's class at Thomas County Middle School.

Williams joined the council at the meeting as an honorary city council member for the night. After the meeting, Mayor Max Beverly presented her with an engraved plaque in honor of her achievement and service.

Williams and the winners



Sixth-grader McKenna Williams holds her winning essay.

from Georgia's other 11 districts were recognized at an awards luncheon in Atlanta on May 18 where she was awarded a \$250 check along with other prizes. This was the 15th annual contest sponsored by GMA.



CROSS CREEK CLASSES RAISE MONEY FOR RED CROSS - In light of the recent tragedy in Nepal, the students in Angela Hutchings' and Kelli Dorminey's classes felt compelled to learn more about the events and also find a way to help the families in Nepal. They began organizing a bake sale with the help of family members and local businesses. Terri Jenkins, Executive Director of the South Georgia Chapter of The American Red Cross, came to Cross Creek recently to show her appreciation for the compassion the students felt for the families in Nepal. The students presented a check to Ms. Jenkins in the amount of \$985.00. This money will be used to help aid the relief efforts in Nepal. The Red Cross has committed an initial \$1 million to the relief operation and is working closely with the Nepal Red Cross and the global Red Cross network to coordinate additional support.

DAR National Winners “Focus on the Future”



DONNA TAYLOR'S CLASS WINS FIRST PLACE IN NATION - Donna Taylor's second grade class, nicknamed "Taylor's Patriots," worked together to complete a banner using the "Focus on the Future" theme of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Taylor's class won first place in the local DAR Competition, first place in the state of Georgia, first place in the southeastern United States region, and first place in the nation. Pictured with the banner are Joey Jones, from left, Gatlyn Majors, Arianna Predelus, Madison Dickerson, Siaris Anderson, Monica Domingo, Saria Mango, and Kaylin Burkes.



CROSS CREEK STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR DAR WINS - Students from Cross Creek Elementary were recently recognized for winning in Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Junior American Citizens contest. Cross Creek had thirteen students who placed in the national division. This year's theme for the DAR contest is "Focus on the Future." Pictured above are third graders Cameron Jones (L-R), Kallie Reeves, Megan Barnes, Abby Billingsley, Alyssa Bradshaw, Charity Fulghum, Makayla Johnson, Ryan Swearingen, Harrison Johnson, and Grayson Jones. Pictured below are fourth graders Kiersten Jackson (L-R), Jack Emmett, Aubrey Eaton, Haley Anderson, Wesleyan Hart, Campbell Smith, and Charlize Scudder.



FAIR BEAR WRITING CONTEST WINNER HONORED - Students in the fourth grade at Cross Creek Elementary School recently participated in the annual Fair Bear Writing Competition sponsored by the Georgia National Fair. Cayla Martin, a student in Lynnette Fykes' homeroom, was the state fourth-grade winner. Pictured with Cayla is Cross Creek Principal Clay Stanaland and Lynnette Fykes. For her winning entry, she will receive \$100 and tickets to the Georgia National Fair.



TCMS AND HAND-IN-HAND WORK TOGETHER - Eighth grade students on Zulu Team at Thomas County Middle School went to Hand-In-Hand Primary School to do STEM activities with eight classes. The students participated in hands-on activities that used science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills. They enjoyed learning while building 3-D figures out of spaghetti noodles and marshmallows and airplanes out of foam paper plates. Matthew Lamons (left), kindergarten student at Hand-In-Hand, builds 3-D figures with eighth grade student Ryan Hollingsworth.

TCCHS Forensics Team Wins at State SkillsUSA Conference



TCCHS Forensics Team members (left to right) Jennifer Shoup, Angie Gutierrez, Jiquis "JJ" Ward (alternate) and Emily Corbitt celebrate their milestone third place win at SkillsUSA competition.

The Thomas County Central High School Forensics Team worked its way past the yellow tape and earned a place on the podium in a recent skills competition.

The team placed third in Crime Scene Investigation during the SkillsUSA conference held in Atlanta. This is the first time in TCCHS Forensics program history a team has made it to the podium in this event.

"I am pretty sure I was more excited than my team," advisor and TCCHS Forensics teacher Dr. Scott Sweeting said of the win. "This has been four years in the making, which has been preceded by disappointment and frustration while watching the North Georgia academies and schools take all three places on the podium. To have our South Georgia school grab a spot up on the stage and receive a medal was an extremely proud moment for me."

TCCHS team members are juniors Jennifer Shoup and Angie Gutierrez, and senior

Emily Corbitt. Team alternate is Jiquis "JJ" Ward. Each active member is either enrolled in the Forensics course or has recently taken it.

The competition consisted of a written test and a mock crime scene where students got 15 minutes "to properly approach, document, and collect physical evidence," Sweeting explained.

The team prepared for competition through classroom instruction and mock crime scenes conducted after school. Sellers helped the team prepare by guiding them through the different steps to working a real crime scene, such as collecting evidence and lifting fingerprints, just like a real crime scene technician would do.

The team allows students to learn how to properly process a crime scene, and see what a career path as a crime scene technician could be like, while also expanding and developing critical thinking, presentation, research,



BARRETT WINS STATE POSTER CONTEST - Savannah Barrett, a freshman art student at TCCHS, has won several awards and recognitions for her creations this year. Barrett recently won top high school honors for Thomas County, the district and the state for the Georgia School Nutrition Association (GSNA) Nutrition Advisory Council's annual poster contest. This year's theme was "Get in the Game with School Nutrition." Pictured above is Barrett (holding her artwork) with art teacher Jocelyn Rivard.



MOBILE AQUARIUM VISITS HAND-IN-HAND - All Hand-In-Hand's kindergartners loved exploring the touch tank in the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab Sea Mobile marine life educational traveling exhibit. The five touch tanks included starfish, sea urchins, conchs, crabs, sponges and a variety of other interesting and colorful sea life. A scientist taught everyone about common animals in the Gulf of Mexico, and about the fragile ecosystem there.

interpretation, leadership and social skills.

"Forensic science is a rapidly growing field that law enforcement officials increasingly rely upon to help in bringing resolution to an

investigation," Sweeting said.

"Allowing students who show real interest in the field to obtain real world experience while they are still in high school is of great benefit to the student and the community."