

# **Awards for Excellence in Education Programs**

## *Third Quarter Summaries*

### **Shelby County**

#### ***“ESL Summer Program”***

This summer the Shelby County school system introduced an innovative program for English language learners in grades K-5. The free two-week program sharpened the students' language skills through the use of inventive left brain strategies and activities that enhanced overall English acquisition. The activities, designed around important American symbols, ran the gamut from creating clay sculptures of Mount Rushmore to making flag pinwheels. Each activity helped students grasp concepts such as liberty and freedom while strengthening their command of English.

The summer program provided students time and space to work on their language skills in a positive environment of learning and reinforcement. The wide variety of activities allowed each participant to achieve an individual level of success. The more than 100 students enrolled demonstrated increased proficiency in English and in content and academic areas.

*For more information contact:*

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### **Jackson-Madison County**

#### ***“IL-TV Club”***

Issac Lane Technology Magnet School developed a club to allow students in grades 2-4 to explore TV production and programming. The students create a daily morning show and a thirty-minute monthly broadcast.

The students both gather the information for their productions and also present it, with professionalism. Club members have interviewed local community members, NFL players, and political figures and have attended the State of the State in Nashville.

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## **Clarksville-Montgomery County** ***“Freshmen Orientation”***

In 2006, Clarksville-Montgomery developed an orientation program for all incoming freshmen. This program was designed to familiarize students and their parents with the daily routine and expectations of high school. The system held the program just prior to school's opening, and provided free bus transportation for the freshmen and their parents. However, first year participation figures, other than for one school, were mediocre.

To increase both parent involvement and student participation in the program for 2007, the system sought assistance from its minority issues committee for ideas to engage the churches and community civic organizations in the project. They developed a comprehensive communications plan that reached out to every church leader and congregation with personal letters and emails about the upcoming Orientation; created and distributed Orientation flyers across the broader community; and sent program flyers directly to each freshman's family. Volunteers assisted in translating the flyers into Spanish for the Hispanic churches and families. In addition, the high school principals used the Connect-Ed phone system to remind the freshmen's parents of Orientation.

As a result of the strategic approach to communication, all but one high school reported double to triple attendance by students and parents in 2007 as compared to those of 2006.

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## **Greeneville City** ***“The Get Real Program”***

Greeneville Middle School's The Get Real program utilizes horses as a vital part of a team approach to teaching life skills. Offered as an eighteen-week course, the program offers targeted students, identified as the most at risk in their class, a combination of classroom and equine-assisted learning activities that address topics critical to healthy physical and social development.

The Get Real team consists of counselors, equine professionals, a family resource counselor, volunteers and the important horses. Working directly with the horses aids the students with positive behavior and social development. The horses are a medium of healing for those students struggling with pain and negative issues in their lives, and help change to take place.

Since the program began, it has involved more than 100 middle school students. Participants have shown a decrease in lunch detentions, fights and suspensions. For

formerly truant students, their attendance has improved. The most visible gain may be in communication and social skills. The program also has enabled the schools to build better rapport with the class members and their families. Currently fifty-six currently are enrolled, and the system's goal is to serve more students with Get Real.

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