

2015 HC*EXCELL E-NEWS

EDUCATION MATTERS: **CRADLE through CAREER**

“An Educated Citizenry = A Healthy Economy”

*The mission of the Hamblen County Foundation for Educational Excellence and Achievement (HC*EXCELL) is to promote educational excellence and achievement as a means of sustaining economic prosperity and improving the quality of life in Hamblen County.*

The formation of a Hamblen County education foundation was initiated by the announcement of a \$50,000 gift from Dr. Kojiro Yamaoka, chairman of the **Tuff Torq Corporation**, at their plant dedication on April 20, 1990. \$50,000 was given to endow an annual \$2,000 Higher Education Scholarship at Morristown High Schools, East and West. This endowment inspired three men, Dwight Nelson; Earnest Walker Ed.D., then superintendent of the Hamblen County School System; and Takao Ogishita, then president of Tuff Torq Corporation, to begin a process that resulted in establishing the Hamblen County Foundation for Educational Excellence and Achievement (HC*EXCELL).

In 1991 HC*EXCELL was founded as a 501(c)(3) foundation to support and represent the community's interest in education and workforce development. E-News was created as a vehicle to inform Hamblen County stakeholders of the Foundation's work and to encourage stakeholder and citizen participation in strengthening our local education process.

Currently, HC*EXCELL is in its final year of an **“Education Matters: Cradle through Career”** strategic fundraising campaign to broaden community commitment and investment in quality education. The campaign goals are to: ***prepare our children to be school ready; support successful K-12 transition; provide options for post-secondary access, completion and workforce development; broaden community commitment and investment in education.***

The foundation's work is made possible by generous and visionary community benefactors, area, state and national foundations, and local organizations and governments who support HC*EXCELL's efforts to ensure our high school graduates are ready for post-secondary education, work and life.

2015 Program of Work - “Cradle through Career”

Preschool Readiness:

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library: HC*EXCELL facilitates Hamblen County's (IML) program which provides free, high quality, age appropriate books on a monthly basis to over 2,100 children birth to five years of age. HC*EXCELL contributors and the Governor's Books from Birth Foundation each pay 50% of the yearly book cost of \$50,000. The Dollywood Foundation manages selection, pricing and distribution of the books.

HC*EXCELL facilitates and raises money for the Hamblen County IML Partnership consisting of Walters State Community College, Kiwanis Club of Morristown, Rotary Club of Morristown A.M., Morristown-Hamblen Healthcare System, Morristown Hamblen County Library and the U.S. Postal Service. Since 2004, Hamblen County birth to five year old children have received over 200,000 books.

Ready by Six began as a series of 23 published newspaper articles as a tool to assist parents and the community in understanding how to prepare their children to be school ready. The articles were published in the *Citizen Tribune* between January and June 2014, then compiled and bound into a publication and distributed through community organizations to over 5,000 residents in the fall of 2014. Partners included: *Citizen Tribune*, HC*EXCELL, Rotary Club of Morristown A.M., Alcoa Foundation and knowledgeable authors from across the state.

In 2015, HC*EXCELL applied for and received grants from the City of Morristown, Walters Foundation and the Alcoa Foundation for their current initiative to convene a partnership to build community capacity for increasing preschool readiness in the under-represented early childhood population. Being prepared to learn will facilitate targeted children in obtaining foundational skills needed to enter and transition K-12 successfully and, therefore, be better prepared for post-secondary education and the workforce. Currently, a steering committee has been formed to identify partners to assist in developing a strategic plan with funding and implementation recommendations for preparing Hamblen County children to enter school ready to learn.

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Pregnancy Crisis Center and Morristown Hamblen Child Care Center:

HC*EXCELL provides educational materials and books to the Pregnancy Crisis Center, Early Head Start, Head Start and the Morristown Hamblen Child Care Center to assist parents in teaching their children to read.

Additionally, the HC*EXCELL Literacy Coordinator trained Child Care Staff on *Common Core State Standards* for preschool and kindergarten during the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015.

K-12 Successful Transition:

Arts Build Skills (ABS) is an after-school pilot art program to improve elementary student academic achievement in math and reading for identified students. Students attend ten one and one half hour sessions in Math Art and Reader's Theater. The pilot program began at West Elementary in 2011 and was transitioned to Hillcrest Elementary for the 2014 and 2015 school years.

Benchmarks for the program include teacher identified math and reading components, development of a plan for merging Arts Build Skills techniques into classroom curricula, increased art programming and assemblies, and improvement in social interaction among students. Program results are measured and recorded for feedback to program sponsors and teachers. Partners include HC*EXCELL, Rotary Club of Morristown A.M., Alcoa Foundation, West Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Rose Center and the *Citizen Tribune*.

Junior Achievement BizTown (JA BizTown) – Entrepreneur Don Rogers, of Rogers Petroleum, Inc., and the Rotary Club of Morristown A.M. sponsored early HC*EXCELL facilitated Junior Achievement programs at four Hamblen County Elementary schools. The JA BizTown program was initiated in 2010 to serve as an introduction to workforce development by strengthening student academic performance through basic business skills and knowledge application.

Today the program has grown to provide a JA BizTown Experience to all Hamblen County fifth graders. The JA BizTown Experience includes approximately twelve classroom sessions taught by fifth grade teachers and an onsite day long experience at the Junior Achievement

of East Tennessee BizTown Center in Clinton, TN.

Fifth grade teachers use the JA curriculum which encompasses financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship – the “Economics of Life!” While at BizTown, students explore what they have learned through role play, run businesses, receive two pay checks, pay taxes, manage their checking accounts, vote, and much more! Approximately 850 Hamblen County fifth graders are participating in the 2015 program.

The JA BizTown elected “Mayors” and “Good Citizens” will be recognized by the Hamblen County Mayor and City Mayor during their December meetings.

Yasuyuki Yamaoka High School Leadership Fellowship (HSL) was established by the Tuff Torq Corporation in 2005 to support the transition of the Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce High School Leadership afterschool program into in-school accredited teen leadership classes at Morristown Hamblen East and West High Schools.

The HSL curriculum includes public speaking, project organization and implementation, team building, leadership skills and service learning. Approximately sixty East and West High School students will participate in the 2015 - 2016 HSL programs. The partnership includes the Hamblen County School System, Morristown Hamblen East and West High Schools and HC*EXCELL contributors.

Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Development:

TN Promise – In 2011 HC*EXCELL convened education stakeholders to support post-secondary access and success through becoming a **tnAchieves** partner. In 2014 **tnAchieves** became part of **TN Promise**, a statewide college access, last dollar scholarship program designed to provide community or technical college funding to every Tennessee high school student. Ultimately, Tennessee Promise eliminates the tuition and mandatory fee burden associated with post-secondary completion for students immediately following high school graduation. Tennessee Promise will be facilitated by County Mayor chaired Advisory Councils across the state. HC*EXCELL will participate as a member of the Hamblen County Advisory Council.

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ACT “Second Chance” Grant was created in 2013 as a pilot program to explore the benefit of providing high school juniors and seniors with an opportunity to take the ACT a second time with priority given to free and reduced lunch students. The program was founded on the premise that student ACT scores could be improved by taking the test a second time. Morristown Hamblen East and West High Schools were each provided with \$2,500 grants.

One hundred and fifty students received the ACT “Second Chance” Grant. 82% of the students who participated either maintained their previous score or increased their score by 1 to 6 points. HC*EXCELL increased the grant to \$3000 per school for both the 2014 and 2015 school years.

This year HC*EXCELL is working with ACT representatives and the Hamblen County School System to strengthen and improve the ACT 2nd Chance Grant Initiative.

Broadening Community Commitment and Investment in Education:

Hamblen County P-16 Council – Through the Hamblen County P-16 Council, HC*EXCELL continues to broaden the community’s commitment and investment in education. 2015 HC*EXCELL efforts will include:

- convening a community partnership to sponsor “The March Goes On” Initiative. This initiative will bring four original “Freedom Riders” to Hamblen County November 3-6 to tell their stories of participating in the 1961 Freedom Rides to end segregation on interstate transit, and to share their experiences in the Civil Rights movement. The Freedom Riders will make presentations to Walters State Community College students, Hamblen County High School and Middle School students, Rotarians, and at a community wide event on Thursday, November 5th, at the WSCC Lyceum (Student Services Building) at 7 P.M.
- convening a community stakeholders’ steering committee to research, explore and develop a strategic plan for preparing our most vulnerable children for entering school ready to learn.
- assembling a Hamblen County Dollywood partnership to explore how the community can strengthen the Imagination Library program in Hamblen County.

- partnering with the *Citizen Tribune* and stakeholders to develop a publication for increasing public investment and commitment in quality education.

HC*EXCELL Volunteer and Mentorship Opportunities

include the JA BizTown and TN Promise programs. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or mentor please contact Linda Ketner at (423) 581-5334 (hcexcell@musfiber.com) or Tish Jones at (423) 587-9278 (tjrom@usit.net).

Hamblen County District Teachers of the Year (TOY) are selected for their instructional excellence and achievement. HC*EXCELL awards each TOY \$500 in recognition of their teaching excellence and dedication to their students. 2015 Hamblen County District Teachers of the Year are:

- GRADES PRE-K - 4, Dr. Jonathan Richardson, Manley Elementary
- GRADES 5 - 8, Nick Darnell, East Ridge Middle School
- GRADES 9 - 12, Olivia Breeding, Morristown West High School

National Board Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTC)

HC*EXCELL supports professional teacher development by providing funding in partnership with the State of Tennessee and Hamblen County Board of Education for National Board Certification.

NBPTC is a rigorous assessment of high quality teaching. Teachers who obtain certification are among the most proficient in their field. 2015 Hamblen County NBPTC teachers are: Dr. Matthew Drinnon, John Hay Elementary; Dr. Rebecca Drinnon, Morristown Hamblen West High School; and Suzanne Romines Mills, West View Middle School.

HC*EXCELL provides grant funding for National Board Certification, a check for \$500 upon receipt of their certification and a yearly stipend of \$200 for being Board Certified. The Hamblen County Board of Education provides a yearly stipend of \$750 for Board Certification.

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