

2014 HC*EXCELL ENews

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 the plant dedication on April 20, 1990. \$50,000 was given to endow higher education scholarships in math and/or science 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 culminated in establishing the Hamblen County Foundation for Educational Excellence and Achievement, as a 501 (c) (3) Foundation.

HC*EXCELL was founded as a 501 (c) (3) foundation in 1991 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 stakeholders and citizens participation in strengthening our local education process.

Currently, HC*EXCELL is conducting an “**Education Matters: Cradle through Career**” a 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; and provide options for post-secondary access and completion and workforce development.**

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.

2014 Program of Work

Preschool Readiness:

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library (IML) provides free, high quality, age appropriate books on a monthly basis to 1,900 Hamblen County children, birth to five years of age.

HC*EXCELL contributors and the Books to Birth Foundation each pay 50% of the yearly book cost of \$50,000. The Dollywood Foundation manages selection, pricing and distribution of 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 County Library and the U.S. Postal Services. Since 2004, Hamblen County birth to five year old children have received 189,000 books through local contributions of \$200,000.

Ready by Six a series of 23 newspaper articles was created 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. The series was compiled and bound into a publication and distributed through community organizations to over 5,000 residents. Partners included: *Citizen Tribune*, HC*EXCELL, Rotary Club of Morristown A.M., Alcoa Foundation and knowledgeable authors from across the state.

Pregnancy Crisis Center/Morristown Hamblen Child Care Center:

The “Core Skill Development” partnership monies provided books and training for staff and clients of the Pregnancy Crisis Center, Early Head Start, Head Start and the Morristown Hamblen Child Care Center.

Additionally, HC*EXCELL Literacy Coordinator trained Child Care Staff on *Common Core State Standards* for preschool and kindergarten.

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 bubble students. Students attend ten sessions in Math Art and Readers Theater. The pilot program began at West Elementary and is now being transitioned to Hillcrest Elementary for the 2014-2015 school year.

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 for four Hamblen County Elementary schools. The program's objective was to serve as an introduction to workforce development by strengthening student academic

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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 applied skills daylong experience at the Junior Achievement of East Tennessee BizTown Center in Clinton, TN.

5th 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; running businesses, receiving paychecks, paying taxes and much more. Approximately 800 fifth graders will participate in the 2014 program.

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. This year approximately eighty East and West High School students will participate in the 2014 - 2015 HSL programs. The partnership includes the Hamblen County School System, Morristown Hamblen East and West High Schools and HC*EXCELL contributors.

Morristown Housing Authority Initiative (MHA) included programming to improve access and options for improving student engagement and academic performance through:

- Scholastic Book Fair
- Art Camp with Sammy Nicely
- Teen Book Club
- Computer classes and Book Room
- Lincoln Elementary Support Program

Other Core Skill Development Programming included:

- Girls’ Inc. Reading Program
- Back in School Bashes
- Parent Engagement

Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Development:

tnAchieves – In 2011 HC*EXCELL convened education stakeholders to support post-secondary access and success through becoming a **tnAchieves** partner. **tnAchieves** is a college access, last dollar scholarship program designed to provide mentoring and financial support to assist public high school students in accessing and completing community or technical college.

In 2015 tnAchieves will become part of Tennessee Promise. Tennessee Promise will provide last dollar 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.

ACT 2nd Chance Grant was created in 2013 as a pilot program to explore the benefit of providing high school juniors and seniors with an opportunity 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 improve by taking the test a second time. Morristown Hamblen East and West were each provided with \$2,500 grants.

One hundred and fifty students received the ACT 2nd Chance Grant. 82% of the students who participated either maintained their previous score or increased their score by 1 to 6 points. HC*EXCELL will increase the grant to \$3000 per school for the 2014-2015 school year.

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. 2014 efforts included:

- Partnered with the *Citizen Tribune* to publish the *Common Core State Standards Tab* (CCSS) to inform the public of why, how, when, and by whom CCSS were developed. 4,000 tabs were distributed throughout Hamblen County and the State.
- Partnered with the *Citizen Tribune* and Community and state leaders to publish 23 **Ready by Six** articles in the *Citizen Tribune* on preschool readiness.
- Compiled the 23 *Ready by Six* articles into a publication for distribution to community organizations and individuals. 5,000 copies are being distributed to underserved parents and government entities.
- Partnered with Hamblen County Government, City of Morristown, Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Alcoa Foundation, Hamblen County School System and Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce to fund and develop the workforce initiative to maintain and improve workforce skills.
- a Hamblen County meeting to provide business and industry leaders an opportunity to present their views on rigorous academic standards, Common Core State Standards and

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- Hosted Accountability to State Representative Tilman Goins and developed a report of the meeting results to be distributed to HC*EXCELL Board Members and business and industry leaders.

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. 2014 Hamblen County Teachers of the Year are: Alison Helton, Union Heights, K-4; Dawn Rogers, East Ridge, 5-8; and Emily Gwinn, East High 9-12.

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. 2014 Hamblen County NBPTC teachers are: Matthew Drinnon, John Hay Elementary; and Rebecca Drinnon, Morristown Hamblen West High School.

HC*EXCELL provides grant funding for National Board Certification and 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.

Volunteer, Mentorship and Donation Opportunities

JA BizTown Program, tnAchieves and Arts Build Skills offer volunteer and mentoring opportunities. If you are interested in being a volunteer or mentor please contact Linda Ketner at (423) 581-5334 lketner.hcexcell@gmail.com or Tish Jones at (423) 587-9278 or tjrom@usit.net.

If you would like to support the work of HC*EXCELL and its “Education Matters: CRADLE *through* CAREER” initiative, please send your donation to HC*EXCELL, P.O. Box 2156, Morristown, TN 37816-2156

WE APPRECIATE OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS



Hamblen County Students JA BizTown Experience

HC*EXCELL ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLE **Stage I**

1991-1996 Birth – Challenging time when new ideas or approaches are used to start an organization.

- Focus was scholarships and teacher grants.

Stage II

1996-2004 Growth – Stage in which the organization establishes its position in the community.

- Focus was on growing organization’s competence and financial resources for sustainability and support of teacher grants
- Expanded Board and its diversity, hired a part-time office administrator, established fundraising plan – developed plan to increase endowment funding - increased grant funding

2004-2008 Focus became systemic change and community collaboration.

- Became facilitator of Hamblen County Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library
- Building a Knowledge Community engagement and report,
- Facilitated launching of Hamblen County P-16 Council
- Expanded capacity by coordinating second fundraising effort and hiring an executive director
- Redesigned grant giving process
- Increased organization’s reputation as an education advocate

Stage III

2008-2011 Structure – Period of consolidation, integration and systemization, when roles and responsibilities are clarified.

- Clarified Board member roles and responsibilities
- Strengthened partnerships and advocacies roles
- Review and evaluation of past programming and performance
- Discussion on how to assist with Tennessee Diploma Project to increase curriculum rigor and graduation standards

Stage IV Current

2012-2014 Prime – Stage of fine tuning existing systems and programs to maximize effectiveness, productivity and financial security.