

Area schools receive grants toward programs

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The Clarksdale-Coahoma County Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, Inc. presented \$2500 grants to the administrative leaders of area school districts to assist in the development of initiative programs for students.

The purpose of the Foundation is to enhance the quality of education in the Clarksdale-Coahoma County public school systems and to assist in initiating programs that demonstrate innovative and effective ways to meet students' needs and increase motivation to learn.

The grants will go toward three incentive programs for each district; Coahoma County Schools for its "It Pays to Make A's" program; Clarksdale Municipal School District for its new "Peace Program"; and Coahoma Agricultural High School for its "Character Development Program".

Josephine Rhymes, Vice President of the Foundation, said that the Foundation firmly believed in supporting education for the development of the community and their mission has been to help schools reach their academic goals through funding and support.

"In order for our society to survive we must be as educated as possible," said Rhymes. "We believe that the schools are doing a wonderful job of educating our children, and we want to help in any way that we can to enhance what they are already doing, or to support new and innovative ideas."

Coahoma County School District Superintendent Pauline Rhodes said that with the money they received from the Foundation, they would use it to continue their "It Pays to Make A's" program where they will award students and teachers for making strides in three A categories: academics, attendance, and attitude, and schools for their overall performance on state tests.

Rhodes, who served before as a board member for the Foundation said that she was really happy to receive the grant and to see that the Foundation has worked hard in trying to help the schools.

"We were just seeking out funds and people who would be willing to adopt our schools to help us fund our "It Pays to Make A's" program. So when Ms. Rhymes called me and said that they wanted to give to the school, it was just right on point," said Rhodes.

Clarksdale Municipal School District Superintendent Dennis Dupree, said that with the grant, schools would use the money to purchase Peace Flags and other incentives to go along with the Peace Program in helping students manage bullying, teasing, and solve conflicts in a productive way which will help reduce the possibility of incidents of violent behavior.

“We feel good about it,” Dupree said about the district receiving the grant. “They’re helping kids the best they can by funding this program which deals with bullying, conflict resolution and other areas pertaining to that. The foundation saw a need to support that effort and we are most gracious.”

Coahoma Agricultural High School Principal I.D. Thompson said that they would be using the money for student development workshop training and literature to empower students to use the best practices in terms of building good character in society through service and other efforts.

“At the heart of the social development piece is the character of the individual which includes society, but it starts with the individual. Our focus is on developing good character in every student at AHS and in turn we believe that by impacting our social development we will have impacted our academic development as well,” said Thompson.

Aside from funding programs, Rhymes said that the Foundation has a writing camp for sixth grade students each summer that’s been successful, and the Foundation also pays for teachers to do training in writing concepts.

She added that their future plans are to increase the amount of money that they have in the foundation and to continue to support the schools in their efforts to educate children.

“I think that the schools are very appreciative and we challenge other entities in the community to do the same by putting forth their hand or any other resources that they have to help our schools continue the great work that they are doing,” said Rhymes.

Jessica Bays is a reporter for the Press Register and can be reached at 662-627-2201 or at news@pressregister.com.