



A L.O.V.E. LETTER

FROM LOCAL OUTREACH VOLUNTEER EDUCATORS

SPRING 2008

SPONSORS:

Asbury United Methodist
The Junior League of Savannah
Messiah Lutheran
The Rotary Club of Skidaway Island
St. Francis Episcopal
St. James Catholic
St. Peter's Episcopal
Savannah Christian Church
Skidaway Island Baptist
Skidaway Island Presbyterian
Skidaway Is. United Methodist
Speedwell United Methodist
Trinity United Methodist
Temple Mickve Israel
White Bluff United Methodist

LOVE BOARD:

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A Letter from the Chair

By Alice Wright, Chair

As we come to the end of this school year and reflect back, LOVE has been very busy. We grew into new schools, added sponsors, marched our first MLK Parade and held "The Gathering." This event was to celebrate our mentors and all that you do for the children of Savannah. Remember, the Mentor is LOVE. Without You there is no LOVE.

Looking to next school year, here are some of the things in the plan. White Bluff United Methodist Church has become a sponsor and will start with a new elementary school in the fall. The Notre Dame tutors have been trained and are using the LOVE program. Both Port Wentworth and Georgetown elementary schools need sponsors to adopt them. There is interest at Isle of Hope UMC to join LOVE and adopt Isle of Hope Elementary. Heard Elementary is asking for LOVE to come.

LOVE received memorial gifts in honor of David Ortner and Andy Horner. These generous gifts will send LOVE students who have shown academic promise to an educational summer program. A special thank you to the Ortner and Horner Families.

The LOVE Board thanks each of you for your dedication to the children of Savannah. You are making a difference! We need your help finding new mentors and sponsors. The best way for LOVE to grow is through new sponsors who in turn adopt new schools. So share your wonderful stories and help LOVE grow. Please call me with any thoughts.



"Do or do not; there is no try."

40 Happy People + 1 Jolly Trolley =? A Great Time at the MLK Parade!

By Michael Hofstein



As dawn rose over the brisk and windy Savannah morning of January 21, 15 LOVE Mentors gathered with 25 of their students to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Excitedly they joined organizers Marian & Michael Hofstein at Asbury Methodist Church and assisted in decorating the orange and green Old Town Trolley. After it was covered with decorative banners and balloons fluttered above everyone hopped on board for this long-anticipated day. Children and mentors spent time reading, singing and happily devoured a huge lunch while riding in the trolley.

The parade journey continued through downtown Savannah and the kids reveled in waving from the Trolley windows. As they grew tired of riding, most got off and walked out in front carrying the LOVE Banner, announcing to Savannah who we are. Mentors and kids alike vigorously waved to all the onlookers who cheered them.

This is one of those days that LOVE Mentors can truly be proud. It brought a unique perspective to both the Mentors and the kids. Kids and mentors will no doubt always remember this day. Our thanks to all who participated in LOVE's first MLK Parade.



Lockamy: Assigning blame is no answer for problems facing schools

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

This was my greeting to the school district as we began our journey to World Class in August 2005. Together we have taken some very positive steps. Many in our community have joined our journey, believing all students can learn and learn at high levels.

To those who are now contributing to our students' upward academic progress, I want to say a heartfelt, "Thank you." To still others who are only now beginning to believe we are serious about improving our schools, I say, "The school board and superintendent are very serious."

To those who have yet to fathom that [Savannah](#) is capable of producing world class scholars, no matter the school they attend, I ask, "What is the alternative?"

Recently, I was asked some very well-intentioned questions which started me thinking about the correct frame of mind we must engender to further our mission of improving schools and increasing our students' academic performance.

The question was simple: "Who's to blame?" That question often sounds like this, "Who is to blame for the condition of our schools? Who is to blame for some of our students' lack of performance? Who is to blame for the inadequate number of students graduating from high school?"

Those sound like reasonable questions, but I contend that while they are honest questions, they will not lead to a positive outcome. In light of a book I have asked my staff to read, I would contend they are fruitless questions and indicate a far more serious issue, a lack of personal responsibility.

"Who's to blame?" is an inherently negative question. In reality, the answer is staring back at each of us from the mirror. A better question is, "What can I do to help?"

Just like there is no single remedy for resurrecting our academic stature, there is also no single scapegoat. Rather than chasing scapegoats, the better remedy is to accept our condition frankly and honestly, asking ourselves, "How can I be part of the solution?"

The book I refer to is "QBQ, The Question Behind the Question" by [John G. Miller](#). Very succinctly and accurately, the author addresses this type of self-defeating mentality, underscoring the strong need for personal accountability and responsibility leading to success, no matter your walk of life.

[Miller](#) directly addresses the futility of only recognizing problems. Certainly, an accurate diagnosis is important. But what good is a diagnosis without a remedy or cure? More times than not, cures are multifaceted requiring multiple disciplines to correct a disorder.

Working with our school board, we have worked to build a staff that not only identifies issues or problems, but also works to identify solutions. This school system cannot afford to address issues only halfway. Subsequently, our community cannot afford to view the issues facing our school system as problems only the school system can resolve.

A longer version of this article is available on the web at: <http://savannahnow.com/node/461001>

[Thomas B. Lockamy Jr.](#) is superintendent of Savannah-[Chatham County](#) public schools.

INSPIRATION AT SPENCER

By Joe McGowan



Alice and I had the pleasure of escorting Jenna Browning to Spencer Elementary School. Ms. Browning was the featured speaker, educator and entertainer for selected fourth graders who are among the best and brightest with an interest in Spencer's Engineering Program.

Ms. Browning is completing her Mechanical Engineering studies at Georgia Tech with highest honors and has a job with The Clorox Company in product research. She said to the children that she is living proof that anyone with desire and an education can attend a great university like Georgia Tech, become an engineer and have a good job.

She taught the students about making quality tortilla chips and how you look for bubbles and uniformity of color on the chips. The students learned what engineers do to solve those problems. She also brought a class-built robot that washes windows.

We were all impressed with the students. They were so well mannered, paid attention and asked very good questions.



A MESSAGE FROM A SPONSOR By Jim Giddens, Pastor SIUMC

Earlier this month I attended an appreciation gathering for L.O.V.E. Mentors. What made this day so special for me is that this tutorial program was started here in our church by Fred Loe. Fred formed a committee to determine how we could impact our community in mission. The decision was made that one of the most effective ministries our church could perform was tutoring "at-risk kids" in the public school system. Thus S.M.O.F.K (Skidaway Methodist Outreach for Kids) was born.

The rest is history. Over the years, in Fred's desire to spread the good work by adding additional mentors, S.M.O.F.K. became L.O.V.E. and last year mentors completed 5000 hours of tutoring more than 500 children!

It is wonderful to see what can happen with one idea. We are so grateful to all the men and women who have contributed, both past and now. I believe that this is the one realistic way that children's lives can be changed. And to think that it started right here.

Savannah Morning News - Volunteers impact young lives

I know everyone has heard the old saying, "Put your money where your mouth is." The L.O.V.E. - Local Outreach Volunteer Educators, put their "time where their mouths are."

I have been honored to work with this dedicated group of individuals for the past two years. The group of mostly retired professionals visits Haven Elementary once a week to meet with one or two students to serve the students in academics and motherly and fatherly bonding.

The students at Haven Elementary wait eagerly each week to visit with buddies. For some of my children their LOVE mentor is the most dependable adult (besides their awesome teacher!) in their lives. My appreciation for this wonderful group is endless.

I sometimes walk by a student and their LOVE mentor and see the smiling faces, laughter and meaningful insight that their bond creates. I would never interrupt that moment, so today I wanted to publicly acknowledge this group in the hope that others will join in their giving spirit.

MEGAN KICKLIGHTER, Principal, Haven Elementary (4/13/2008)



L.O.V.E. Is In The Air



“You may be the only ‘love’ they get – keep up the good work you’re doing.” This encouragement came from Dr. Thomas Lockamy, Superintendent of SCCPSS, as he spoke to the APPRECIATION GATHERING of LOVE Mentors held on February 11.

He also told the LOVE group: “Last year we had one Merit Scholar; this year we have eight. I want 20 Merit Scholars; and with your help, we’ll do it.”

A special thank you to Catherine Ruhl and Maureen Kouvel for treating us to such a special event.

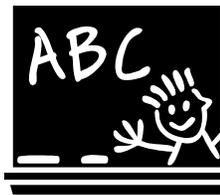


Important Dates to Remember! Put these on your calendar now!

April 28-May 9 - CRCT Testing

May 26 - Holiday

June 13 - Last day of school



In Memory

Andy Horner

Mentor at Haven Elementary

Training Corner

By Catherine Ruhl

I LOVE visiting and meeting with you at your schools, so please email me for special training or assistance with a student -- ccruhl@bellsouth.net

KIDS NEED LOVE, LOVE NEEDS YOU!