

Think Smart Outreach Center, Inc.
"Reaching for Success one star at a Time"

November 2010 Volume X Issue XIII

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21st Century Community Learning Center



Teaching Children The Meaning of
Thanksgiving

by Stacey Schifferdecker

"Thanksgiving was never meant to be
shut up in a single day"

Robert Caspar Lintner

When people ask me what my favorite holiday is, I always say Thanksgiving. I don't know that deep down Thanksgiving is really my favorite holiday, but I feel sorry for it. There it is, sandwiched between the candy, costumes, and trick-or-treat of Halloween and the gifts, glitz, and glamour of Christmas. How is a simple, mostly non-commercialized holiday like Thanksgiving supposed to compete?

Sure, there have been a few attempts to make Thanksgiving more exciting. You can buy a few Thanksgiving decorations and there is a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving special. There are even a few hymns in church we seem to reserve for Thanksgiving. But all told, sometimes it seems like the only purpose of Thanksgiving is to eat turkey, watch football, and, oh yeah, kick off the Christmas shopping season. Sometimes people even call Thanksgiving "Turkey Day."

Thanksgiving is so much more than this, though! Thanksgiving is all about God and thanking him for the gifts of life, love, joy, and more. Yes, we get to see family and friends and we get to eat a great meal. But our central purpose should be to give thanks to God. Hmmm, maybe Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday after all.

Thanksgiving remains a hard sell for children, though. No candy, no gifts, no surprises. Sure, you get pumpkin pie and few days off school, but other than that... How can we show our children the importance of both Thanksgiving and giving thanks?

We need to begin by making sure our children know the story of the first Thanksgiving. Children don't always hear the Thanksgiving story in school anymore, so it is important that you share it with them at home. Find a book or video that tells the story of the Pilgrims, the hard life they suffered in America, their friendships with the Wampanoag people, and how they set aside a day to thank God for his blessings. These people were truly survivors!

Another good way is to establish traditions for thinking about what we are thankful for and sharing it with others. Maybe you have a thankful tree, journal, shoebox, tablecloth, calendar, or space on the refrigerator. This Thanksgiving, have everyone in the family start recording what they are thankful for and by next Thanksgiving, you will have a wonderful record of your year. (If you asked your children what they are thankful for, what do you think they might answer? You might be surprised. In a 2000 survey when children were asked what they were thankful for, the most common answers were family, basic needs, friends, and teachers/school. Maybe we're already doing a pretty good job teaching our children about thankfulness!)

By establishing this tradition, your goal should be to move the spirit of Thanksgiving from a one-day event to a basic life attitude. As part of this, we need to model thankfulness for our children. This means being thankful no matter what our situation in life. Thankfulness means that we are aware of both our blessings and disappointments but that we focus on the blessings. Are

you thankful for your children even when they are squabbling and tattling on each other? Are you thankful for your job even when you feel overworked and underpaid? Are you thankful for your friends even when you don't get to see them as much as you want? And you can't just be quietly thankful. Your children need to know you are thankful for them, for your home, and for the other good things in your life. Share with them and give them the chance to share with you all year round.

Also encourage your children to express their thankfulness to God. Set aside time each day to pray and give thanks to God. Don't just focus on the big things to be thankful for – health, wealth, and happiness. Express thankfulness for the smell of flowers, for ripe bananas, and for warm pajamas.

By the way, did you know that academic studies show that thankful people have higher vitality, more optimism, and less stress and depression than the population as a whole? How great is it that something we should do anyway actually makes us healthier and happier people. What a wonderful legacy we can leave our children by teaching them to be thankful each and every day of their lives

What Going on at Think Smart???

(You can also check out our website at www.thinksmartoutreach.org) and check Upcoming Events for additional information



Youth After School Program Meets Monday-Thursday from 3:00 pm-7:00 pm. We also have 2nd shift available until 11:45 pm.

Pre-Collegiate Workshops (High School Students) meet the 1st Saturday of each month from 12:00 pm-2:00 pm and then attend trips as they become available.

High School After School Programs meet Monday-Thursday at our facility.

Think Smart's Radio Station airs every Wednesday from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm at 646-381-4846 or www.blogtalkradio.com/thnk-smrt-undrgrnd.

Kids Café- A hot dinner is prepared nightly at our facility.

Family Reading Night meets Bi-monthly (see monthly calendar)

Male/Female Mentor Night meets Bi-Monthly (See monthly calendar)

Martial Arts are on Mondays from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

Art Classes are on Tuesdays from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

French Classes are on Wednesdays from 5:00 pm-5:45 pm

Culinary Art Classes are on Wednesdays from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

From the After school Corner at Think Smart Primary Class



The students are working extremely hard and are excited to come to the after school program on a daily basis. We are focusing on academics, life skills, social skills, recreation and character education. The students have enjoyed a lot of fun academic games which consist of but not limited to: Human Tic Tac Toe Spelling, Math Bingo, ABC Relay, and Alphabet Bingo.

The students have also completed their pre-assessments. The assessments are given to each student in order to give the tutors insight in reference to what the students need assistance in during academic time. The students are provided progress reports on a weekly basis to communicate with the parents in

reference to what they are mastering and focus areas.

Elementary Class

The Elementary Class is also working hard during the month of November. They have completed their pre-assessments and staff have met with the parents as well to start the year off right. The students have been doing academic games which consist of but not limited to Health Vocabulary, Math Baseball, Spelling Jeopardy, and Spelling Golf.

The tutors are working with them on double digit multiplications and math games with fact fluency.

The students also did some food preparation which has consisted of smoothies, baking a cake, and layered fruit.

In the month of November, they did a Mock Election in which the students had to vote on “famous” people that were running for offices in the government. After the students placed their ballots, they were given an “I voted Sticker” and given a treat for voting.

Middle School Class

The middle school class is busy as bees. They have completed their pre-assessments and are focusing on their academic activities as well as preparing for the End of Grade Test (EOG). We are striving to make their classroom a “middle school lounge area” so they do not feel as though they are in a child care setting or in a daycare. We have also implemented various weekly clubs that during the “middle school hours”. The clubs consist of a Middle School Radio

Station, Team Sport Classes, Foods 101, and Academic Games.

Every Tuesday at 5:00 pm Johari’s Family Services implements a Character Education Program at our site which focuses on Conflict Resolution. They split the groups up into classes which consist of Group A (K-5th) and Group B (6th-8th).

On November 18, 2010, the students in all three classes did a Re-enactment of the First Thanksgiving Skit in which family and friends were invited to attend. After the skit, parents and families enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner.

From the After School Corner at Harnett Central Middle



Our HCMS site is kicking it into high gear. They have completed their pre-assessments as well. Students are working on fractions, multiplication, division etc. The after school tutors have a strong collaboration with the day time teachers which is a big help to the students and the tutors

The students are also taking part in dance and art classes at this site and they are really enjoying these special sessions.

**Promoting Excellence through
Sisterhood**

**Think Smart Mentoring Program
Ms. Je Toya-Mentor Coordinator**



Excellence through Sisterhood, Think Smart's Mentor Program, has had another successful month during the month of November. They have participated and conducted different activities that promote physical, intellectual and emotional growth. The activities that were hosted included: Girl Talk, Lazar Tag competition, cooking lessons, and a DVD discussion and viewing on Sexual Harassment. We have had many individuals to come on board as mentors this month and we are grateful for them all. A major success for Excellence through Sisterhood that took place during this month was recruiting Erwin's Mayor Patsy Carson to stand as a Mentor with our mentor program.

The month of November is recognized as our "make it like mama month" so our ladies will be taking lessons from the kitchen. On Wednesday, November 17, 2010, our ladies went through their first session of cooking classes where they learned the proper way of table setting and proper ingredients for different dishes.

Shop with a Cop



On Saturday, December 11, 2010 from 11am-1pm, Think Smart's Police Athletic/Activities League (PAL) program will sponsor its 3rd Annual Shop with a Cop Holiday Event.

Most people do not know what it would be like to not have warm winter clothing or at least one toy under the tree at Christmastime. Local families experiencing economic hardships can't always provide their children with their own celebration of Christmas.

Youth, who participate in our program, are encouraged to give back to their communities by implementing service projects. As a part of this effort, our youth have established a joint venture with Harnett County's local law enforcement agencies to make this holiday season brighter for less fortunate families.

Each child (accompanied by his/her parents or guardian & Harnett County's Local Enforcement Officers) that participates in this project will be provided a Walmart gift card to shop for their desired holiday gifts. Prior to the shopping spree, the participants will have the opportunity to have breakfast with their officer at our center. It is also

possible that Santa may make a surprise visit.

We are seeking to provide assistance for a minimum of 5 participants. To qualify, the child must be between the ages of 5-12, reside in Harnett County, will not receive any additional “outside” holiday assistance from other agencies, organizations, churches, etc. and must have good cause as to why assistance is needed (i.e. parent died this year, parent lost his/her job this year, living with grandparent on a fixed income, etc.).

If you would like to refer a child to participate in this project please submit any names (and their ages) along with a brief overview of the child’s situation to us by email no later than 5pm on Tuesday, November 30, 2010. Our Board of Directors will make the final decision and we will notify you if your child has been selected. We are expecting to receive numerous referrals and wish we could help everyone. However, our board will review each situation thoroughly and make the determination as to which five (5) children they feel needs the most assistance.

We are also asking if anyone would like assist in this project by volunteering to help in preparing the breakfast, portraying Santa Claus, making a monetary donation, or by donating a \$1 gift for this cause, to please contact the Directors, Pamela or Nell Williams, no later than Friday, December 3, 2010.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. Have a wonderful holiday

From the Pre-Collegiate Corner

Pre-Collegiate Director- Ms. Pam
Pre-Collegiate Assistant Director- Ms. Nell



On October 23, 2010, our Pre-Collegiate Program had a College Experience at Fayetteville State University during FSU’s Homecoming. The purpose of the trip was to allow the students to get a “real” feel of college life.

On Saturday, November 2, 2010, our Pre-Collegiate Workshop was held at our site. The topic was “How to Choose a College”. The students received information about various colleges, the difference between public and private colleges, SAT/ACT and GPA requirements for various colleges, small vs. big colleges, and location of various colleges. At the end of the first part of the workshop, the students played a game entitled “College 101”.

After the game, we had a guest speaker. Mrs. Millicent Massey-Jones from The Sista Project which works in collaboration with Harnett County Health Department. She spoke with the students about HIV/AIDS on the College Campus. This was an eye opener for some of the students in the program.

As of today, every student that has come into our office for an one-on-one advisement as of November 1, 2010, has been accepted into one or more colleges.
Congrats!

From the HCPAL Corner

Ms. Nell-PAL Director

Mr. Walter-Athletic Director



It's about that time again....Basketball Season. Our basketball season is getting underway and this year we will have teams for girls and boys from ages 5-18.

Basketball practice will begin in December 2010 and the season will begin January 2011.

We are so thankful to have some great Volunteer Coaches that will be assisting us this season.

We are currently seeking a Volunteer Cheerleading Coach. We are also looking for girls ages 11-13 for the basketball team and cheerleaders ages 13-18 years old. If you are interested please contact our office.

We would like to give a special thanks to Dafford Funeral Home, Inc. of Dunn and Annie's Nursing Services of Lillington for serving as a 2010-2011 sponsors for the Harnett County PAL Program.

The PAL program had a very successful fundraiser on November 5th and 6th which was sponsored by the Athletic Booster Club. We would like to personally thank everyone who came out to support the event and the hard work of the Athletic Booster Club Members.

The Harnett County Booster Club has elected officers for the 2010-2011 program year. Our new officers are Deoward McLean, President; Lamont Massey, Vice President; Yolanda Walker, Secretary; Elijah Williams and Shawn Spears, Co- Treasurers. Anyone who is interested in being a Booster Club Member to assist with the growth of our athletic department should contact Walter Williams, Athletic Director at 910-984-6887.

The National PAL will be hosting a mandatory Mentoring training in Las Vegas, Nevada November 30-December 2, 2010.

Jamaica Here We Come!!



Our program will be hosting our 2nd Annual Fundraiser Cruise in December 2010. We will be heading to Ochos Rios and Grand Caymans, Jamaica. We have 40+ individuals that will be joining us on the cruise. We have some of our students, family, friends, church members, community leaders, sorority members, etc. that will be boarding the ship. We will be cruising while raising money for the students of 21st CCLC-Think Smart. It's a win/win situation. Our first Annual Fundraiser Cruise to the Bahamas was a HUGE success and we know this trip is going to be even better. If you missed out this time, we look forward to seeing you next year!

Welcome to the Think Smart Family



We would like to take this time to Welcome Ms. Shelia and Ms. Ashley to the Think Smart Family.

Ms. Shelia is a Middle School Tutor at our facility. She is currently a college student at a local university majoring in Biology/Pre-Med.

Ms. Ashley is also a Middle School Tutor at our facility. She is currently a college student at a local university majoring in Trust and Wealth Management. She has five years of experience working with youth at a YMCA.

When you see them, please give them a BIG smile and welcome them to the Think Smart Family!



To everyone that assisted up this month and a special thank you to our “secret” donor that keeps leaving donations on our door!

Where our aim is “Reaching for Success one star at a Time”



Newsletter Prepared by Ms. Pamela Williams

Chief Executive Director
Ms. Pamela Williams

Chief Financial Director
Ms. Nell Williams

Office Manager
Mrs. Anitra Hart

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We were established on April 24, 2001. Nine Years and Still Growing Strong!! We would like to say a Special Thank You to our Wonderful Staff and our Volunteers. You complete the puzzle at Think Smart Outreach Center, Inc. 21st Century Community Learning Center!!