

Education Update



NC DJJDP A Newsletter for Parents and Guardians of Students at Swannanoa Valley Youth Development Center

Students Celebrate Black History Month

“Obama, you really got me thinking, about my f-u-t-u-r-e!” The students and staff of the SVYDC kicked off our Black History Month assembly on February 25, with DeWayne Barton, a local poet, performance artist, and youth advocate, leading us in a chant. Barton’s poem “Why Vote?” which surrounded the repetition of the chant reminded all of us present about the long history of the struggle to gain the right to vote which has led us to the historic moment we find ourselves in today: the nation’s first African American President.

Barton asked the students whether the election’s results had started them thinking, and many students responded that they had indeed begun to see themselves in a new light. They said they felt more hopeful and some said they now believed that if they worked hard, anything was possible for them. Barton followed his performance of several inspiring poems with an introduction of the nonprofit he has started, GO Green! The program teaches young men who have had trouble with the law to work in the kind of green businesses that President Obama advocates. Barton encouraged the students to consider learning the skills necessary to be successful in solar energy and other green fields.

After Barton’s talk, several students took the stage to read poetry they had written, to discuss research they had done about important figures in history, and to show artwork they had made on the subject of Black History. In all, eleven students participated in the assembly. The students were nervous about getting on stage, but the polite attention of the entire audience made the task easier.



Spelling Bee Winners

Swannanoa Valley Youth Development Center recently held its second school-wide vocabulary bee. Stu-

dents at the school receive daily vocabulary words and character goals in their daily morning homerooms and the list of words for the spelling bee was generated from these daily words. Eight students competed in the contest which involved students giving the definition of a word pronounced to them. Students were also able to ask to have the word used in a sentence to see if they could understand the context the word was being used in. The competition was fierce and boiled down to three students who continued to correctly answer word after word. In the final results, the winners were:

1st Place- Jacob G.

2nd place Brandon T.

3rd place Jimmy K.

Congratulations to these students and all who participated.

WELCOME

Barbara Anderson
Math/Science Teacher

Edna Whiteside
Math/Science Teacher

Swannanoa Valley Staff

Linda Wheeler Hayes
Secretary

Martin Pharr, Ph.D.
*Deputy Secretary for Treatment
& Education Services*

Jim Pronko
Director of Swannanoa Valley YDC

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Positive Behavior Support

The Positive Behavior Support program has a new focus in 2009, following directions. The first week we had eight students to achieve this goal. While following directions may sound easy, students realized they had to be responsible for their own behavior. The staff continued to promote this goal and guided our students by redirecting and role modeling. We even started a buddy system where students would redirect each other.

After much hard work by students and staff, the number of students receiving incentives increased from eight to 31 over a three month period. We are very proud of our students and will encourage them to meet the high expectations that have been set for them.



Visit Us on the Web!

Be sure to check out www.ncdjdp.org to find the following:

- New Facilities Contact Information
- Information on Secretary Linda W. Hayes and new leadership team
- School calendars
- Upcoming departmental events
- Services in your area



7 Habits of Effective Teens

What are habits? Habits are things we do repeatedly. Most of the time, we are hardly aware of them. Habits can be good and bad. To be effective and productive in our lives, we must develop habits that will help us be better people. Life for teenagers has tough choices, peer pressure, personal insecurities, and anxiety about what others think. Teaching them to develop good habits will enable them to be smart, productive and successful. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens are essentially seven characteristics that happy and successful teens have in common. Those habits are:

Habit 1: Be Proactive, which means...
Take responsibility for your life.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind, which means...
Define your mission and goals in life.

Habit 3: Put First Things First, which means...
Prioritize and do the most important things first.

Habit 4: Think Win-Win, which means...
Have an “everyone-can-win” attitude.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood, which means...
Listen to people sincerely.

Habit 6: Synergize, which means...
Work together to achieve more.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw, which means...
Renew yourself regularly.

—Source: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*
by Sean Covey (1998)