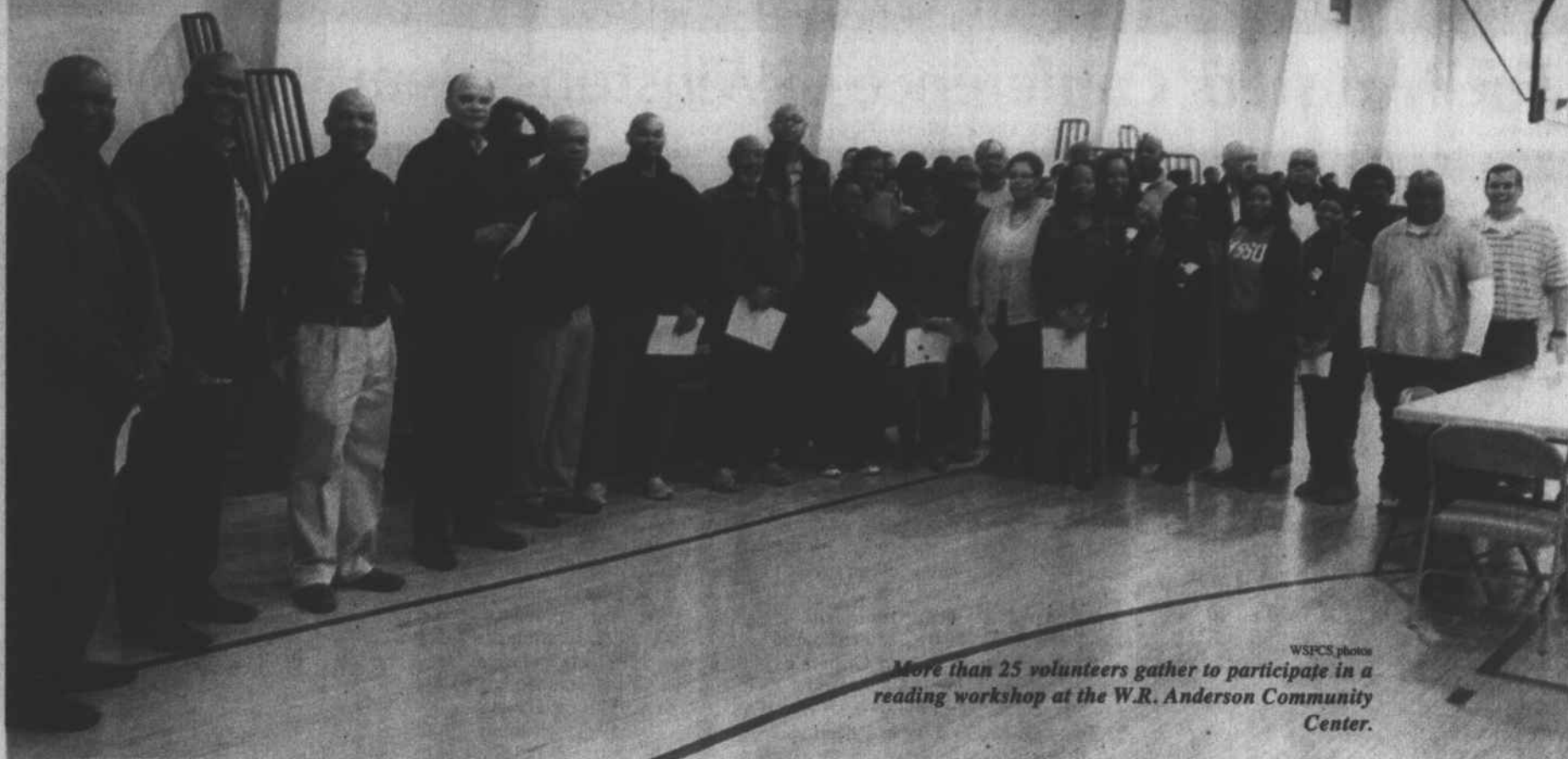


Students reading to adults



More than 25 volunteers gather to participate in a reading workshop at the W.R. Anderson Community Center.

BY KIM UNDERWOOD
WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

On Saturday morning, first-grader Maleah Brissett headed over to the recreation center on Reynolds Park Road to read a Junie B. Jones book to one of the adults participating in the reading workshop.

"It's funny," Maleah said when asked why she picked "Junie B. Jones Has a Monster Under Her Bed."

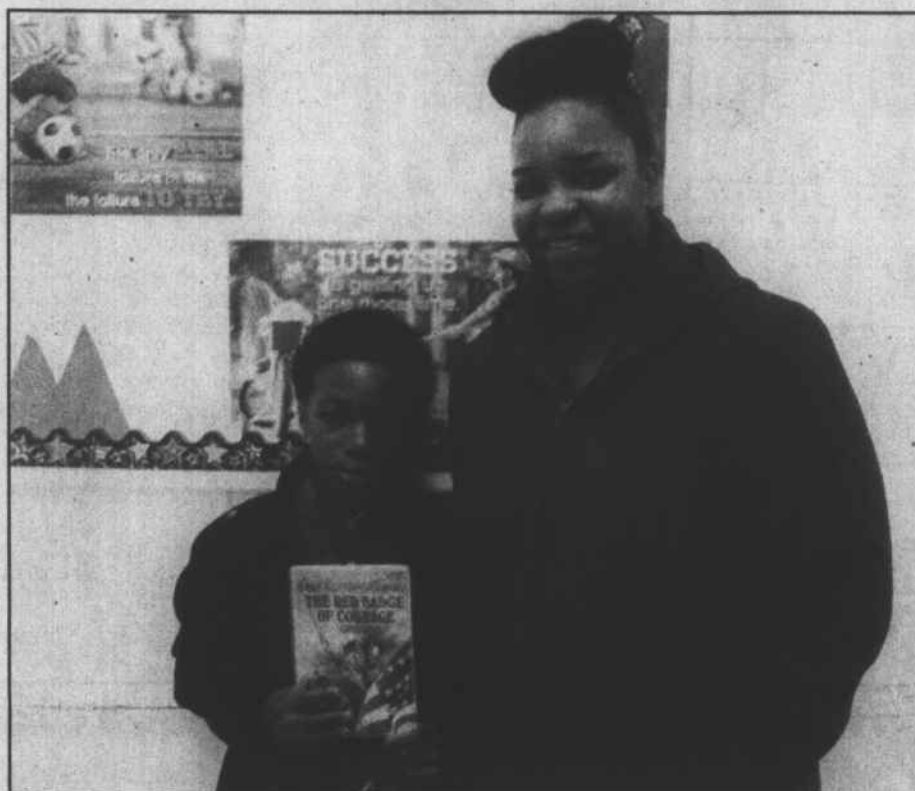
"I think it will be great for her," said her mother, Ashna Nelson. "She loves to read to me."

This was the first time that Maleah and her mother had participated in one of the reading workshops held at the W.R. Anderson Community Center. Other students signing in had also brought books they enjoy — including "Pieces of Why," "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School," and "Rise of the Balloon Goons" from "The Notebook of Doom" series — to read to the volunteers.

More than 25 volunteers — including Kenneth Simington, the school system's chief academic officer, and Donald Wyatt, the assistant principal at Sedge Garden Elementary School — were on hand to work with the more than 50 students in kindergarten through ninth grade.

Wyatt said he was there on a Saturday morning to support students and to support literacy. "Anything we can do to help children read is worth doing," he said. "I think it's important for them to see us out here on their turf."

While the students read to the volun-



Laron Gaddy, a fifth-grader at Union Cross Elementary, is with his mother, Tiffany Gaddy.

teers, the adult would write down any words that the student stumbled over so they could go back over them later.

The workshops grew out of discussions that Bryant McCorkle, who is the supervisor of the W.R. Anderson Community Center as well as the home/school coordinator at Sedge Garden, had with Dr. Vernon Ross, an associate professor of obstetrical and gynecological anesthesiology at Wake Forest Baptist Health.

"We are trying to increase their reading skills," Ross said. "My vision and my goal

is to help Dr. Emory with trying to get everybody to read on grade level in Forsyth County."

"It's a great partnership working with Dr. Ross," McCorkle said. "He is helping a lot of kids. Parents, they love it."

Tiffany Gaddy was there with her son, Laron, a fifth-grader at Union Cross who likes chapter books that focus on history or adventure. Gaddy thought the workshop was a great idea.

"It encourages reading," she said. "Reading is very important," said Jermelle Jeter, who was there with his son

Jamil, a fourth-grader at Union Cross. One thing he likes about reading, Jeter said, is "you can get into a book and go different places and still be in the same place."

Ross and McCorkle started holding Saturday reading workshops in the center in 2013. Since then, they have held three a year.

"It's getting bigger and bigger," McCorkle said.

Eventually, they would like to expand the workshops to once a month, and, if possible, to begin holding workshops in schools.

Other volunteers there also have ties to the school system. Baia Dawkins is a Crosby Scholar who goes to Atkins Academic & Technology High School. Cornelius Flood was an assistant principal at Wiley Magnet Middle School when he retired in 2011. In September, he was one of the members of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity who spent a morning at North Hills Elementary School.

Harold Martin, a former chancellor at Winston-Salem State University who is now chancellor at N.C. A&T State University, was there. Volunteers also came from United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem State University and Wake Forest University.

The workshop included students from: Brunson Elementary, Diggs-Latham Elementary, Easton Elementary, Hall-Woodward Elementary, Moore Elementary, Sedge Garden Elementary, Sherwood Forest Elementary, The Downtown School, Union Cross Elementary, East Forsyth Middle, and Paisley IB Magnet.

For more information about future reading workshops, call the W.R. Anderson Community Center at 650-7684.



"We know this area is probably the most poverty stricken area in the city. That's why we focus our efforts here."

—Dave Pollard WSPFFA president

Members of the WSPFFA help a young preschooler select her favorite color coat during the Coats For Kids Project on Saturday, Dec. 19.

Photo by Tevin Stinson

Local firefighters, Family Services give winter coats to preschoolers

BY TEVIN STINSON
FOR THE CHRONICLE

Members of the Winston-Salem Professional Fire Fighters Association (WSPFFA) got into the season of giving last Saturday when they arrived at the Sarah Y. Austin Head Start Center with brand new coats for 41 children.

In support of the national association's Coats For Kids Project, Firefighters from Station 12 located on New Walkertown Road coordinated fundraisers throughout the year to purchase the

new coats.

The WSPFFA has participated in the project since 2011, bringing coats to a different community each year. According to WSPFFA president Dave Pollard, every year they focus on a different neighborhood in the eastern portion of the city.

"We know this area is probably the most poverty stricken area in the city. That's why we focus our efforts here," Pollard said.

In years past, the event has served children in the LaDeara Crest neighborhood, The Salvation Army

Boys and Girls club, and a number of inner city schools. Pollard said he would like to continue the relationship with Head Start and their local provider Family Services because they are able to identify the children who need the coats the most.

"I think we will continue our partnership with Head Start and Family Services because they are with these kids every day and are able to identify the most neediest children in the area."

In years past the WSPFFA worked with

council members to identify the areas with the biggest need for the project.

Family Services president and CEO Bob Feikema said he is thrilled to be able to provide so many new coats for preschoolers in need. Feikema mentioned it is extremely important for children to have a warm coat during those cold winter mornings.

"We know from the past that we can have some pretty bitter mornings, especially when you have kids coming to school and

waiting on the schools bus," he said. "It's important that they stay warm and healthy."

Along with the coats, the firefighters also prepared a pancake breakfast for the children and families in attendance. While enjoying their meal, a number of parents said they were grateful for everything the WSPFFA and Family Services did to make the event possible.

"This is truly a blessing," said Ashley Manning. "These are very nice coats and they will last for a couple of winters as well. I am

grateful to everyone who made this event possible."

Before handing out the brand new American made coats, Pollard said although the WSPFFA sponsors a number of community events throughout the year, Coats For Kids is the event the firefighters enjoy the most.

"Every year we try to do more and more and more. This isn't our only event, but this is the one we enjoy the most," he said. "Seeing the kids' faces is just priceless, especially during the holidays. It's a huge deal for us."