

More than 50 people lined the sidewalks of Ashley to inspire

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

While Monday, Aug. 29 marked the start of a new school year for thousands of students in the local district, not many received a welcome back like the students at Ashley Academy for Cultural and Global Studies.

As they walked into the school located in East Winston, students were greeted by community members, faith leaders, police officers, firefighters and other professionals in the community looking to inspire and encourage students to put their best foot forward throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

After receiving countless handshakes and words of motivation from those who formed the tunnel, third grader Fa'Tru Washington said he enjoyed the passionate welcome.

"I liked it a lot," said Washington. "I'm ready to start the school year off right."

Washington's grandmother, Nannie Wright, said she was amazed by what she saw. She noted she believes the added stimulation from the community will help her grandson and other students do the right thing while they are in the classroom.

"This is truly amazing. I have never seen anything

like this before," she said. "I think this is going to inspire students to have a good year because they know there are people in this community who really care about them."

The welcoming ceremony was the brainchild of Rev. Lamont Williams, a teacher at Ashley and director of the local branch of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. MBK was launched by President Barack Obama to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by young men of color. The program also ensures that all young people reach their full potential.

Although it was a lot of work to make the event

come to life, Williams said, after seeing the look on students' faces, it was all worth it.

"Struggle is the catalyst to success. Any time you want to do something that is successful, you have to struggle," he said.

"There were some struggles trying to raise awareness that there is a need at this school, but once we struggled through that and everyone saw the expression on the kids' faces as they walked into the building, I believe it was worth the struggle."

Ashley, which is one of 11 struggling schools in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School district, has been flagged for turn-



Photo by Tevin Stinson

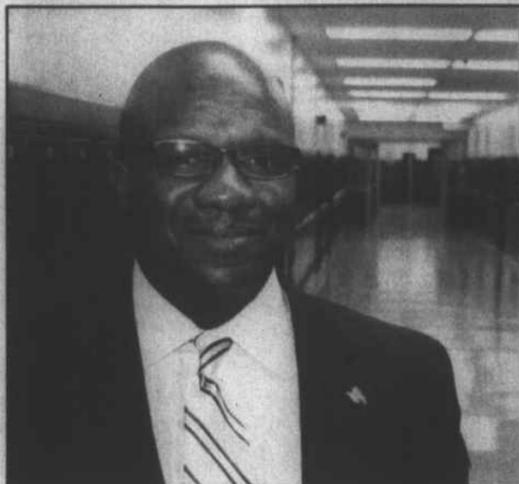
Rev. Lamont Williams greets a student on the first day of school at Ashley Academy for Cultural and Global Studies on Monday, Aug. 29.

around due to low turnaround rates by the federal government last school year.

According to Williams, the goal is to create a pilot program of male mentors at Ashley that will use evidence-based data to improve turnaround rates through community out-

reach and various collaborations.

"In the end it's all about action," said Williams. "We're trying to raise awareness across the city so we can do what needs to be done to turn things around here at Ashley and other struggling schools in the district."



Photos by Todd Luck

Carver High Principal Travis Taylor is hoping to see academic improvement at his school this year.



Daniel Piggott, Jr., a Carver High math teacher, wants to see more community involvement in his school this school year.

Comeback

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supportive of the school. He hopes to see that support grow, since Carver needs volunteers, not just for academics, but also in other areas like marketing the school and beautifying the campus.

Kanjah Edwards started her senior year at Carver this week. She said she was looking forward to it. She stayed at Carver even after she moved out of its district. She said she's received support from Carver staff, who have gotten her involved with the athletics department, which she volunteers with. She said she's learned a lot that will help her as she pursues athletics as a career field.

Edwards, who works part-time at Cook Out, said she is looking forward to improving her grades this year. She credits tutoring last school year with turning her D in Biology into a B. She said she thought the tutoring and increased one-on-one attention for students will help improve the school's proficiency if the students are willing to do their part.

"I hope that the freshmen help improve (Carver's) reputation, and not just the freshmen, every grade," she said.

Daniel Piggott, Jr., a math teacher at Carver, said he was hopeful that the school will begin heading in the right direction academically this school year. A Carver alumnus who's taught at the school for 13 years, he's seen Carver bounce back before, like when it was one of the low performing schools Superior Court Judge Howard Manning, Jr. threatened to shut down. He said he believed Carver would rise to the occasion again.

Piggott recently wrote an editorial that was published in The Chronicle asking the community to help Carver. He said there's been a good response with people coming forward to volunteer. He said he felt it'll take "the entire village" rallying around Carver to make a difference.

"I know what this community is capable of because I'm a product of it, so I just think we just need to reenergize ourselves as a community and make Carver a focus, a priority, again," said Piggott.

Correction

The Chronicle apologizes for an error made in The Chronicle on Aug. 18. The article, on page A7 has the headline "Caring hearts work in the school system."

Because of incorrect information given to The Chronicle, the byline on the op-ed is incorrect. Kelly A Solesbee, BSN, RN, CPN, school nurse at The Special Children's School, wrote the article.

The Chronicle regrets any misunderstanding that may have resulted from this error. The Editor

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