

Design project opens eyes and opportunities

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students balked at the idea. "I asked every last one of them what their first impression was when they found out, and every last one of them said they hate it. I was gonna transfer, I was gonna this, I was gonna that," Mitchell said.



Mitchell said, "The bottom line is they asked me to come in and create their uniform, but I wanted to do more than that, so I created a program to get the whole school involved."

Students have been voting on the color scheme, logos and fonts that will be used in the design.

"I was asked to come up with a list of students from some art classes, that were advanced and would be good for the committee for the drawing section," said art teacher Lauren Altieri.

Students on the design committee aren't all from Altieri's classes, though. Art students are partnered with strong writers, and students who show leadership skills, but not necessarily strong artistic ability.

"I think it's going really well," said Altieri. "They've been coming up with some really neat ideas."

Eighth-grader Yariel Juarez was chosen based on his artistic creativity. Yariel wasn't excited about uniforms initially, but has changed his tune.

"It will be cool," he said, "because we're designing it." Though their classroom is at the front of the school, you'd hardly know there were any students inside with this afterschool group. The students are absolutely engrossed in what it is they are doing.

"It just creates a whole other atmosphere for them, when they walk through the door," Mitchell said. "The anticipation is different when they walk through the door now, because that's one of the positive things they can talk about, 'MLK is designing their own school uniforms.' The rest of the schools aren't doing it, we're doing it.' This is positive gossip."

On Monday, the students visited Atlanta to tour the Atlanta School of Fashion and the Martin Luther King Center. The trip was another part of Mitchell's mission: "to enhance school pride and involvement and to motivate individual student achievement, thereby facilitating an atmosphere for children to pursue their life's dreams and goals."

"I always wanted to have

something I can look back on that I did, and this could be that something," said SaKenya Vaughns, an eighth-grader on the design committee. Vaughns is interested in fashion and design, and hopes her designs are chosen, in order to kick start her career.

Yariel and SaKenya were excited about the Atlanta trip, which for many of the 16 students was their first visit

to the city. The experience gave them a first-hand look at a design school and a chance to ask questions as well as created an appreciation for a possible mentor.

"I think he's great designer," SaKenya said of Mitchell. "Just knowing that he's designed a lot of clothes for stars - that's amazing. He gets to design a lot of people's outfits. That's great, and that's a blessing for us."

Mitchell has partners that have also helped with the program. Former NFL player Michael Dean Perry owns a Subway that provides sandwiches for the students after school. The McDonald's on West Sugar Creek provided breakfast for the students for the trip to Atlanta. Microsoft will create an on-line blog capturing the entire program designing process. And Mitchell is working with a

corporate sponsor to have the final uniforms provided for the students.

"I'm trying to do something different," said Mitchell, "I'm trying to let them know someone is doing something special for them."

The final designs will be unveiled on Friday, October 27, for student and parent final approval.

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Drug to combat dementia in blacks

By Iorinda M. Bullock
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON — When Jonathan Lackland's grandmother, Cora, forgot to turn off the lights or stove, the family thought she was tired and missing her deceased husband Richard.

But when those types of things happened more often and the woman was now listless and easily agitated, the Lacklands knew it was more than grief.

"In the beginning you blow it off, oh she just made a mistake," said Jonathan Lackland.

"But we began to see changes in terms of how lethargic she had become... She'd get very frustrated if she couldn't make a point—meaning she would forget—and normally this was unlike her and that's when we began to realize something just isn't right," he said.

And it was more than fatigue and loneliness that was changing Cora Lackland. It was Alzheimer's disease.

The 87-year-old from Illinois represents a growing number of elderly African-Americans, who are statistically at the greatest risk to get the memory-erasing disease.

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