

Agency gives the gift of reading to young people

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Students enrolled in Communities in Schools (CIS) after school program in LaDeara Crest Estates were introduced to a special guest last week at the Naomi Jones Resource Center.

"This is Allen Joines; he's the mayor of Winston-Salem," CIS Site Director Terry Andrews told the children who ranged in age from elementary to middle school students.

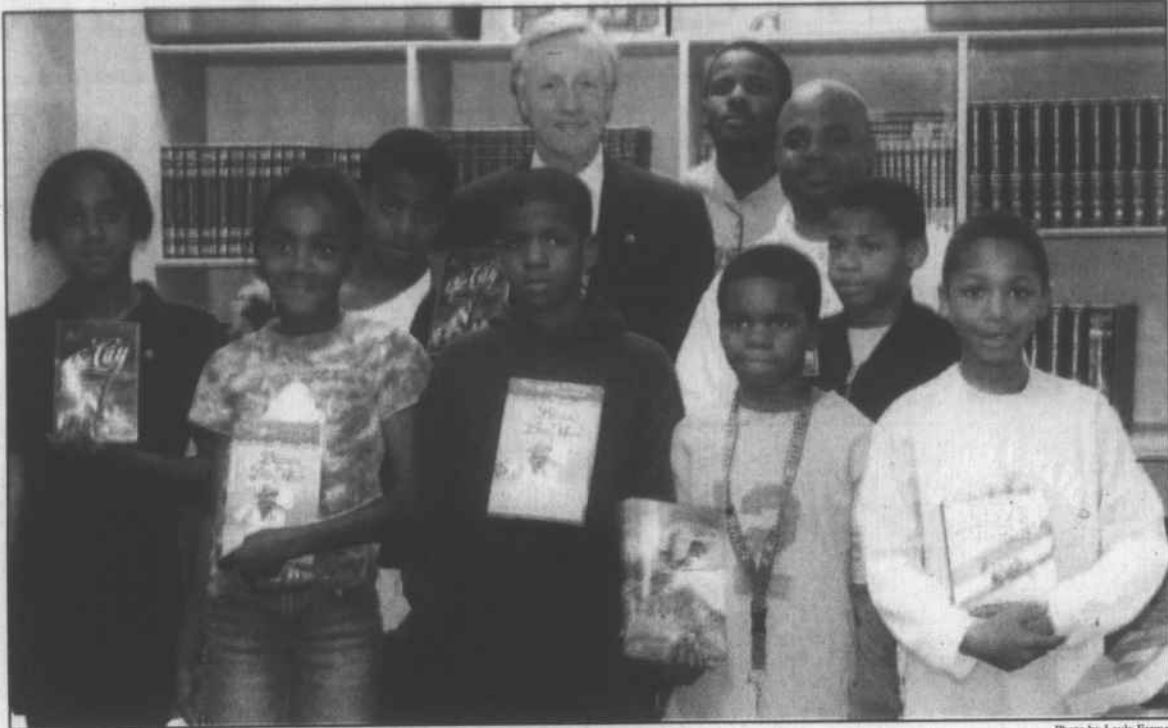
Joines visited the center to participate in the holiday Give a Kid a Book Day. He issued a proclamation naming Dec. 18 Holiday Give a Kid a Book Day, and stayed on to assist the children in loading plastic bags with their allotment of five age appropriate books.

"Today, I wanted to be here because we're giving out books," Joines commented. "Reading is one of my passions - I try to encourage our young people to read and keep their skills ready for the future."

Joines praised the CIS program for the work that it has done for the community over the past six years.

"The work of the Communities in Schools program is so important for Winston-Salem," he said. "It's really giving these young people an opportunity to hone their skills and their school habits and reading."

The books were provided by First Book, a national nonprofit that donates books to children in need. First Book donated 5000 titles to CIS programs across the



Mayor Allen Joines and Director Terry Andrews pose with young people.

Photo by Layla Farmer

state for the holiday giveaway, including a title from the famous Harry Potter series.

"The whole purpose was to give them a selection to start their own library," explained Andrews. "We never know what type of education they might go back to home to as far as the environment inside their homes."

They might have parents that's working with them on

reading, they might not, but if we can usher a book into that house, maybe the parent will take notice and ... assist that child with reading."

CIS is a statewide nonprofit that receives funding from federal and private sources to elevate the academic success rates of student in low income neighborhoods.

The CIS staff members found programs and recruit

help from the surrounding community to keep them running smoothly.

"The main thing for us to do is to get volunteers and make sure this program is sustained without us," explained Faith Bartlett, a CIS staff member. "A lot of them serve as tutors and mentors for our after school programs. We also have graduation coaches in Carver and Parkland that work with students that are

at risk for not graduating. That's the mission of Communities in Schools, to make sure that we work with kids to make sure that they stay in school."

Among the volunteers at LaDeara Crest are WSSU students Dawn Ellington, Jessica Basungila and Janelle Joyner. The students, all senior, Rehabilitation studies majors, volunteered with the children

for an entire semester as part of a class project, the culmination of which was celebrated recently as well, where the children were allowed to purchase donated prizes from a "store" with the "dollars" they earned for completing various tasks throughout the semester.

The students say they have gained a lot of valuable experience and feel better prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation.

"I think as a group, what we gained from this project was patience, learning to work with different people and different organizations and I guess involvement in helping kids," stated Joyner.

Currently, there are two CIS programs in Winston-Salem - in the LaDeara Crest and Willow Creek communities. Three more sites in the Lakeside, Rolling Hills and Green Street communities, are slated to open early next year. The after school program at LaDeara Crest - which is free for any community resident - has seen great success according to Renee Oglesby, executive director of the Forsyth County CIS.

"Having those ... resources available in the community after the school day - so that they have access to the computers and the books and the things that they need - usually helps them to be more successful in school," she commented. "As far as success rates, we're at about a 98 percent success rate - in the six years we've been here, we've only had two students ... that did not pass EOGs."

Smiles

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agent that strengthens tooth enamel, thus protecting it to some extent from decay. If you do not have fluoride, as your pediatrician if your child needs a supplement.

During Childhood:

The AAP emphasizes that taking care of baby teeth is fundamental. To prepare for the arrival of permanent teeth, par-

ents and children should follow these steps:

- Make a habit of brushing your teeth with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day.

- Offer children a balanced diet and avoid or limit the amount of sweets they are given; sticky sweet foods can stick to tooth enamel and hasten decay.

- If possible, teeth should be brushed after eating.

- Ask your doctor or dentist whether your child's teeth can be sealed; this special seal pro-

tections the enamel of the teeth in the areas where the brush does not reach.

- Take your child to the dentist for regular (at least yearly) cleanings and checkups.

Caring For our Teeth as Adults

We must protect our teeth to avoid losing them as we age. According to the ADA, adults should follow the following recommendations:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

- Floss your teeth at least once a day and when necessary; you can ask your dental hygienist to show you how to floss.

- Eat a balanced diet and rarely consume sweets and sticky foods.

- If you chew gum, use sugar-free gum.

- Visit the dentist for a cleaning and checkup at least once a year.

- Avoid chewing tobacco or using snuff, as these can cause decay, periodontal disease, and oral cancers.

Taking care of our dental health can guarantee a beautiful smile for life. Take care of yours and be an example for your children.

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For further information on this topic or resources in your area or questions or comments about this article, call toll-free 1-877-530-1824. Or, for more

information about the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health, visit <http://www.wfubmc.edu/minorityhealth>.

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