

Students fight threats of gangs

By Nicole Gabriel
Staff writer

When eighth graders at West Hoke Middle School saw an increase in gang-related violence on their campus, they took a stand.

Roosevelt McPherson, an eighth grade teacher at the middle school, said one day a student in his classroom threatened another student, saying he was going to have his "gang" take care of him after school.

Although he had heard rumors about gangs in the community and in the school, he said this threat made him realize the school had a real problem. The faculty started formally investigating and found some students were, in fact, involved with gangs. School officials realized the school needed to act quickly to deter gang-related violence at school.

After the incident, McPherson says group of his students approached him saying they wanted to start a program to help.

"We could see adults trying to help...but teenagers probably listen to other teens more than adults."

—Tamara Smith

Tamara Smith, 14, an eighth grader and president of Students Against Gangs, said she and her classmates started SAG to keep gang activity off campus and encourage students to stay out of gangs altogether.

"We could see adults trying to help...but teenagers probably listen to other teens more than adults," Smith said.

One of their goals is to act as a support group for fellow students who feel pressured to join a gang or are considering joining one.

McPherson said he asked Peggy Owens, Hoke County Schools health education coordinator, to provide resources and educational materials for the students.

Owens said she was very impressed the students initiated the project.

"When students recognize that they need to help themselves, they tend to be more successful," she said.

While the program is still in the beginning stages, McPherson sees a lot of potential for it to spread throughout the middle school and the other schools in the county. The group, about 80 members strong, meets every Friday during homeroom.

Smith said the group encourages their peers to communicate and ask questions before they make a decision to join a gang.

"If anyone feels pressured into a gang...or has any thoughts about (joining a gang), talk about it," she said.

School

(Continued from page 1A)

ern part of the county," said Hoke County Superintendent Don Steed, so they are looking for an appropriate plot of land on which to build the additional facility.

Boney Architects was given the contract for planning and constructing the renovations at East Hoke Middle and West Hoke Middle. The firm was originally responsible for building these facilities, so they have long been familiar with their upcoming project.

The remaining projects were awarded to LfV. They will be working on additions and renovations at the high school and elementary school. Prior to their upcoming jobs, this firm

was responsible for additions and renovations at Upchurch Elementary School.

Steed indicated that the board was satisfied with their decisions. The past jobs have shown that Boney Architects and LfV are more than capable to do the work at hand, he said, but they also wanted to choose Shuller, Ferris, Johnson & Lindstrom "because they gave an excellent presentation and they are next door (Cumberland County)," Steed said.

The firms have been chosen, however, "no work for each school has been determined at this point," said Steed.

The next step is for the architect firms to draw-up plans for their respective projects.

Each school has already submitted

what the board is calling a "wish list" to help the firms know what the needs are, but because of the limited funds, Steed said it is nearly impossible to do all the schools say they need.

Steed said the allotted money can be spent on construction and furniture, but not on the school system's maintenance shop, bus shop or central office. The plans are still up in the air, but as specific plans solidify, the other details such as cost, construction dates, fees and more will also fall into place.

More details will need to be determined soon because a state school bond expenditure plan is due to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction after the board's regular meeting in January.

Business of the Week



Pam and Wanda D'Annunzio show off some of the merchandise in their new shop on West Elwood Avenue.

New business opens in Raeford

By Kristin Guthrie
Staff writer

Recent news programs indicate that Americans believe the economy is strong and able to support small, family-owned businesses as well as larger corporations.

Pam and Wanda D'Annunzio must have had the same sense of security in the economy when they decided to invest in a small business journey of their own.

They began their business from scratch some two months ago at the Flea Mall on McPherson Church Road in Fayetteville, but they soon found that many of their customers were from Hoke County.

"We were doing a lot of business locally. We delivered to a lot of people so we just opened up a store right here so it's convenient to them,"

said Pam. Now their merchandise is available from their shop, The D'Aon Shop, at 111 W. Elwood Ave.

Pam and Wanda, a mother and daughter team, decided to carry a wide variety of items, including sportswear with team logos, silk flowers, porcelain collector dolls, candles and candle holders, a few select camouflage items and much more.

Right now, they carry just a few sports team jackets and pants, but they plan to expand their selection in sportswear as soon as they find out what the customers want. As their stock increases, they will also be able to offer sales to lower their prices even more.

They advertise that their business offers "below retail prices and a variety of items...nothing used—

high quality at reduced prices," Pam said.

With low prices on the sports team clothing, parents can afford to dress their children in the most up-to-date sporting outfits without spending a fortune or going to Fayetteville.

Pam and Wanda are glad to be doing business in Raeford. They are hopeful their business will help the county grow and make it a better place for them to live and their children to grow up.

"We expect to stay in Raeford. We do have dreams and plans to grow, but we do plan to stay in the area. We live in Raeford," Wanda said.

The D'Aon Shop is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday or call 904-546-7 to see if they have the merchandise you are shopping for.

Happy Holidays From The News-Journal & Dickson Press, Inc.

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The Hoke County Transfer Station will be closed on the 24th and 25th of December. The convenience dump sites will be open on the 24th until 3 o'clock pm and closed all day the 25th. The transfer station and convenience sites will be open on the 26th of December.

**Happy Holidays
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Healthy Holiday Waldorf
Here's a modern version of Mom's classic Waldorf salad for your Holiday table:
In a medium bowl, mix 1 cup unpeeled apple chunks, 1 cup chopped celery, 1 cup red seedless grapes, halved, 4 tsp. chopped walnuts, 1/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise, 1 tsp. orange juice and a pinch each of cinnamon, allspice and ground ginger. Cover and refrigerate till served. (This makes three 1-cup servings, each with 90 calories and 2 grams of fat.)
Have a HEALTHY, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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