

May 21, 2009

Editorial: Go Beyond

Help incoming Nims class make transition

Give, give, give.

We asked you to do it in Sunday's "Newborns in Need" editorial. We ask you to do it every winter with our annual blanket drive. We ask for your help with volunteer efforts and community coming-togethers every so often, and today, we're back at it again.

On Aug. 24, 240 sixth-grade students will walk through the doors of Nims Middle School and take up their share of the mantle in helping principal Kay Collins and faculty earn an A rating.

To do it, they need help. Your help.

Supporters of the Digital Harmony project aim to raise nearly \$168,000 by July in order to supply incoming students with computers in the second year of the project's existence.

Last year, in order to help bridge the digital divide that many of the children attending the south-side school face, Tallahassee City Commissioner Andrew Gillum spearheaded the project, which provided Nims students with free computers, Internet access and educational software. It's not a stretch to say that this outreach effort, along with community support in the form of mentors, volunteers and tutors, helped Nims go from an F to a C ranking last year. In good faith, we believe that continued community support could help this neighborhood school reach its full potential — an A ranking according to state standards.

Ms. Collins and her team have made measurable strides in reaching their mission to help Nims students improve. So have the parents, grandparents and guardians of those students. What is key to keeping the school's vitality humming is increased, dedicated community support. That can come in the form of donations from individuals who understand the value of early investments in education. It may mean, as School Board member Dee Crumpler pointed out, that churches surrounding Nims (such as Tabernacle Baptist and Bethel AME) join forces to help kids get the computers delivered to their homes — a problem that the first phase of the program encountered last year.

Whether you have direct ties to the school or will never imagine how it or any of its students will play a role in your life, there are plenty of ways to make a difference at Nims Middle School — or at any school. The earnest, humanist appeal in Ms. Collins' words are an exhortation to giving in any way we can to support this effort.

"The greatest thing we can bestow upon one another is love," she said. "Love comes in different ways ... and you can help make a difference in their lives."

Chuck Hobbs

My View

Additional Facts

Here's how to help:

Checks can be made payable to Digital Harmony c/o Go Beyond Foundation, 1342 Timberlane Road, Suite 201-A, Tallahassee, FL 32312. Contributions can also be made through www.digitalharmonyleon.com or www.gobeyondfoundation.org.

The Go Beyond Foundation is geared toward promoting programs that improve technology and technical education.

