

The Hawk



Holly Springs, Mississippi

Summer 2024

District Newsletter



Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent; Shirley Byers, Foundation board member; and Susie Brown, Career Tech director; are pictured with award winners.

CC Taylor Foundation Awards



CC Taylor Foundation Board Member Shirley Byers (right) presents a \$10,000 check to superintendent of education Dr. Irene Turnage, who accepts on behalf of the school district.

‘An investment in future innovators’

On May 20, 2024, the CC Taylor Foundation stood united in a shared vision with the Holly Springs School District - to uplift the next generation and empower them to reach for the stars.

“Tonight, we celebrate not just academic achievement, but the indomitable spirit of those who dare to dream, persevere, and create lasting change,” said presenter Attorney Shirley Byers, CC Taylor Foundation board member. “These scholarships, awarded based on academic excellence and financial need, are an investment in the future innovators and trailblazers who will shape our world.”

During the ceremony, the CC Taylor Foundation donated \$30,000 towards STEM undergraduate scholarships for the remarkable Class of 2024.

See FOUNDATION AWARDS on page 2

It still takes a village; thank you to our partners

Our students are living in a rapidly changing world. Despite the many changes due to technology and other things, it still takes all of us in the community, or village, to ensure our students are ready for careers and life.

As it has been mentioned, all of our students will have careers. Some will go to college and work while they complete their degrees; others will go straight into the workforce and take college or work related courses as they gain work experience.

For the school district, the village includes four parts: students; parents and families; schools and staff; and community organizations like businesses, educational entities, and community organizations including service organizations, sororities, and fraternities. The schools and district cannot do it alone; it will take all four parts working together. When we all work together, our students see us as a caring village working together to ensure their success.

We are extremely grateful for our village of community partners who embrace us year after year and work with us to ensure we fulfill our mission of educating students who will Excel in the global community. This newsletter is dedicated to our many community partners that embrace and support us every day.



A message from Dr. Irene Turnage, Superintendent of Education



Holly Springs High School valedictorian and salutatorian honored by NMCRTD

North Mississippi Community Research Training and Development Inc. continues to be a big supporter of the Holly Springs School District. The non-profit's fourth annual Youth Education Explosion Celebrating Academic Excellence was held Saturday, May 11, at the David L. Beckley Conference Center on the campus of Rust College. NMCRTD honored valedictorians and salutatorians from all schools in Marshall County, including Holly Springs. Pictured above are superintendent of education Dr. Irene Turnage, NMCRTD founder George Zinn and NMCRTD president Delia Reid with Holly Springs High School valedictorian Leela Hubbard (left photo) and salutatorian Alicia Moore (right photo). Each was presented a certificate and scholarship.

Foundation Awards continued from page 1

- John L. 'Coach' Taylor Achievement Award, a \$1,000 scholarship honoring exceptional leadership and resilience.
- Reverend Marjean Taylor-Myatt, Judith Woolley-McKevitt, Sunshine Shehee Payne, and All Veterans Care, awards of up to \$2,000 per recipient.

In addition to the individual scholarships, superintendent Dr. Irene Walton-Turnage was presented with a \$10,000 contribution in a resounding testament to the CC Taylor's commitment to educational excellence. These funds will underwrite the cost of National Board Certification for outstanding educators in each of the HSSD schools, enabling them to hone their skills and nurture the minds of Holly Springs' children without the burden of student loan debt.

"We cannot thank the CC Taylor Foundation enough, and we are blessed to be a part of such an innovative and visionary partnership that is making a difference in the lives of students, staff and the community," Turnage said. "We echo the sentiments shared by the Attorney Byers and the foundation leaders. Let this be a catalyst, igniting a fire within us all to champion education, uplift our communities, and build a brighter future for generations to come."

Graduation – Class of 2024

Guest speaker Jeffrey Bohanna told members of the Holly Springs High School Class of 2024 they are now entering the classroom of life.

“Commencement is the beginning of your journey,” he said during the ceremony Friday night, May 24.

He encouraged the 65 graduates to “focus on your now, your necessary and your next.”

Now – “All of you can shout, ‘Look at me now.’ You made it. Celebrate yourself,” Bohanna said.

Necessary – “Don’t let graduation be your only moment of elevation.”

Next – “Whether it’s college, trade school or the workforce, achieve the highest form of yourself. Be careful who you will allow in your life. Develop an appetite to achieve over an appetite to be average. Don’t confuse busy with beneficial. Every struggle will provide strength for the next road. Rough days do not mean wrong direction.”

Irene Turnage, superintendent of education for the Holly Springs School District, used the word inquisitive to characterize the Class of 2024.

“You asked questions and you got to work,” she said. “You are one of our most prepared classes ever for careers.”

Turnage emphasized the mission of the Holly Springs School District, which is to “educate students who will Excel in the global community.”

“You are ready to Excel,” she said. “Work hard and be committed. We are proud of you, and we love you.”

Superintendent Turnage recognized members of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees. She also thanked parents and grandparents of the graduates for their support.

Graduation was held in the Rust College McMillan Multi-Purpose Center. It began with the processional, the National Anthem led by senior choir members, the welcome by class president Janya Bohanna, and the invocation by historian Demetria Parks. Alicia Moore delivered the salutatory address and Leela Hubbard the valedictory address. Choir members John Barksdale and Jatavis Walker performed two songs.

Principal Cravin Turnage recognized honor students, and assistant principal Dr. Tamara Onwuemenyi announced scholarship and laptop recipients. Awarding diplomas to members of the Class of 2024 were Cravin Turnage, Dr. Tamara Onwuemenyi and Dr. Jorgell Jones, Lead Teacher and GED/TST interventionist.

The ceremony closed with the Holly Springs High School alma mater and the benediction by Arian Shelton, a distinguished honor student.



From left are salutatorian Alicia Moore, valedictorian Leela Hubbard and historian Demetria Parks.



Guest speaker Jeffrey Bohanna inspires graduates.



Members of the Class of 2024 receive their diplomas.



Colain Brown, top scorer, Business, Marketing & Finance



Highest scorers: Leela Hubbard, Carlos Isom and Jarquala Moore.



Holly Springs Career and Technical Center

100 percent of students in business and welding – National Certification!

Business, Marketing & Finance National Certification (not pictured): Braya Crane, Arriel Denton, Erica McNeal, LeDerion Glover, Jatori Jefferson, Malicia Selman, Synayah Glover, Jayden Visor, Jaylen Buford. The instructor for the Business, Marketing and Finance course is Jansen Pegues.

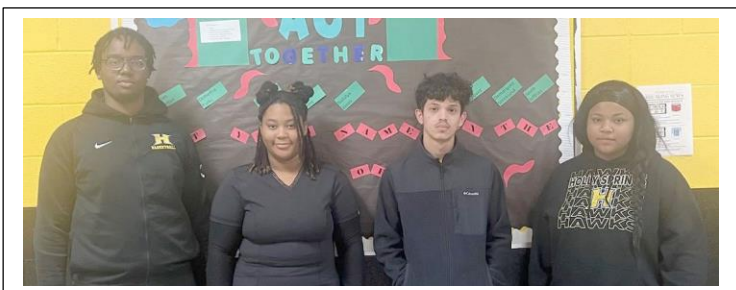
Core Welding National Certification (not pictured): Joshua Beard, Jaylen Cassidy, Brandin Davis, Christian Griggs, Chakarion Gulledge, Jayden Johnson, Jessica LeSure, Persia Malone, Kevin Martin, Cadarius Nunnally, Latravious Beaugard, Jimenez Espino, Kamdon Glover, Sakr Hazam, Joseph Hezam, Davon Johnson, Derek Johnson, Nathan Lester, Tyler Mayfield, Eric Nugent, Anthony Reaves, Montavais Robinson, Jaylen Sims. Director Susie Brown assisted with instruction in the Core Welding course.

Advanced Welding National Certification (not pictured): Jim Garcia, Najeh Glover, Elijah Gatewood, Demarquez Strickland, Jonathan Shipp, Keonte Jefferson, Deonte Jefferson, Ilse Espino Jimenez, Kylan Cooley, Kameron Cooley, Kentravian Kinkle, Devin Hunter. Assisting with instruction in the Advanced Welding course was director Susie Brown.



More than 80 percent of seniors obtain silver Workkeys certification or higher

From left are Breanna Hampton, Jim Garcia, Elijah Gatewood, Synayah Glover, Najeh Glover, Oriah Hampton, principal Cravin Turnage, Ilse Espino Jimenez, Lederion Glover, Alicia Moore, Arian Shelton, Angel Jenkins, Devin Hunter, Demetria Parks. Not pictured are Geoyl Ambrose, Joshua Beard, Emiya Brown, Khylah Brown, Nikiya Burgess, Kylan Cooley, Zykeria Cowan, Brandi Davis, Brandin Davis, Ar’riel Dent, Mickala Elliott, Aliyha Folsom, Breanna Galloway, Kamdon Glover, Christian Griggs, Leela Hubbard, Jamiyah Hurt, Carlos Isom, Jatori Jefferson, Keonte Jefferson, Deonte Jefferson, Alyssa Jones, Jada McClinton, Erica McNeal, Diana Sandoval, Jonathan Shipp, Maniyalee Simmons, Camerian Thomas, Gabrielle Tucker, Sherinna Turner, Jayden Visor, Jatavis Walker, Chamilya Watson, Travis Williamson. The following instructors provided support for Workkeys areas for seniors – CTC, Laverne Sanders; high school, Ciente Barber, Sandu Mandeep, Harvinder Singh and Tejinder Thind.



Platinum Workkeys certification

From left are Arian Shelton, Alicia Moore, Jim Garcia and Leela Hubbard.



Support system

Laverne Sanders, Workkeys test coordinator and interventionist



100 percent completion rate

These Health Care and Clinical Service students in Career Tech received a 100 percent completion rate in embedded work-based learning. In front is instructor nurse Kimberly Fox. Front row, from left, are Alicia Moore, Alyssa Jones, Saimira McAuley, Zykeria Cowan, Gabrielle Tucker, Asia Jackson, Jada McClinton; back row, from left, are Demetria Parks, Amya Jones, Jatavis Walker, Kennedi Terry, Jamiya Mosley, Aliyha Folsom, Mickala Elliott, Lorencia Pegues, Khylah Brown, Jermaine Henderson, Angel Jenkins.



NAFEPA State Leadership Award

Eileen Dowsing (left), assistant superintendent/federal programs director in the Holly Springs School District, received the National Association of Federal Education Association's (NAFEPA) State Leadership Award for Mississippi at NAFEPA's annual conference in Washington, D.C. in March 2024. This award recognizes deserving individuals for their dedication and commitment to serving NAFEPA, their state, education programs, and most importantly, our children. This is the second time that Ms. Dowsing has received this award.



City of Holly Springs is a dedicated partner

The City of Holly Springs is a dedicated and committed partner to the Holly Springs School District and always available for support. Pictured, from left, are Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent of education; Sharon Gipson, mayor; Eileen Dowsing, assistant superintendent of education; and Kim Mayfield, school board secretary.



Longtime supporter

Anderson Chapel C.M.E. Church is a longtime supporter of Holly Springs School District through activities including, but not limited to, school supply drives and annual laptop donations. Pictured at left are school, church and community leaders during the Back to School Prayer Service in August.



Members of the Holly Springs School Board and the Marshall County School Board, along with the two superintendents

City, county school boards come together for retreat

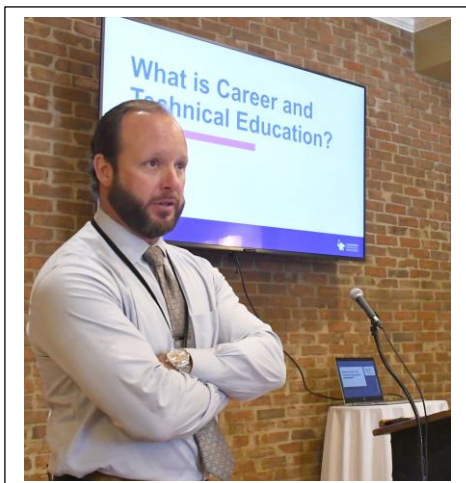


Lemon Phelps

The Holly Springs School District and the Marshall County School District held their first-ever joint board of trustees' retreat on Tuesday, June 25, at The Apothecary downtown.

Both Lemon Phelps, president of the Holly Springs board, and Leslie King, president of the Marshall County board, said the two groups coming together for the retreat was something they had been working toward for a while, and it was great seeing it come to fruition. Both also praised the united effort in learning how the boards can better serve the students of the two districts.

Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, superintendent of the Holly Springs School District, and Dr. Carrie Skelton, superintendent of the Marshall County School District, opened the retreat by giving overviews of their respective districts. Presenters on the agenda included Brett Robinson, state director of Career and Technical Education for the Mississippi Department of Education; Dr. Tommye Henderson, superintendent search manager/trainer for the Mississippi School Boards Association; Dr. Denotris Jackson, MSBA executive director; and John Faulkner, state representative. Each had question-and-answer sessions following their comments.



Brett Robinson

The retreat was coordinated by Melissa Hunt, board clerk for the Holly Springs School District, with support from board members and district staff. Breakfast was sponsored by Smith Whaley Attorneys at Law, and lunch was sponsored by Adams and Reese Law Firm. The meals were catered by Faith Bass (Da Style of Jaith Catering) and snacks were provided by Fredrick Prowell, food services manager for the Holly Springs School District. Both districts thanked Lisa Liddy, owner of The Apothecary, for her hospitality and assistance.

The mission of the Holly Springs School District is to educate students who will excel in the global community. The mission of the Marshall County School District is to challenge every student to reach his or her maximum potential, thereby developing highly educated college and career ready citizens.

Members of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees are Lemon Phelps, president; Charisse Harris, vice president; Kim Mayfield, secretary; Dr. Gemma Beckley; and Ejeera Dukes. Members of the Marshall County School District Board of Trustees are Leslie King, president; Lender Luse, vice president; Kerry Hale, secretary; Mark Turner; and Elizabeth Jones.



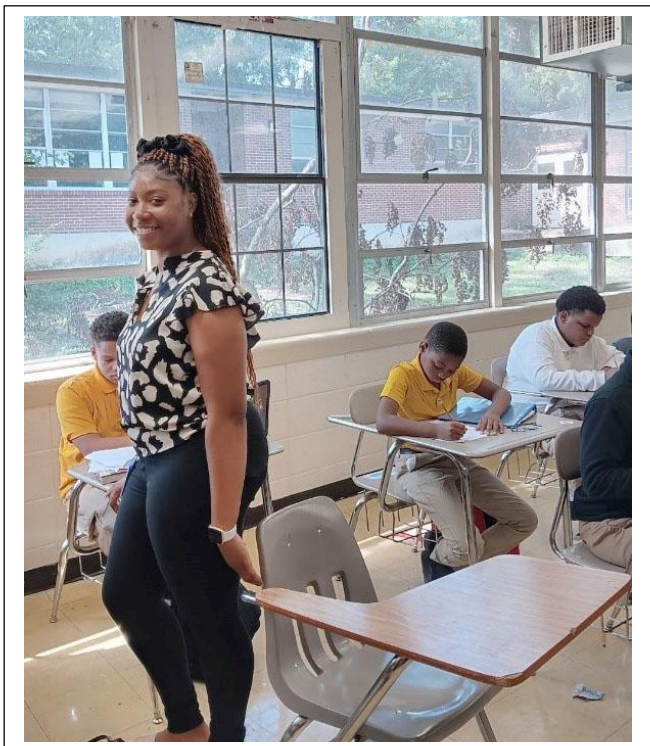
Uniform donation

Holly Springs Primary School would like to thank Hopewell #1 Mother Ministry and Pastor Leroy James for their uniform donation. "Thank you for this thoughtful donation," said Casshaunda Davis, HSPS principal. "It is greatly appreciated." Pictured are Cynthia Cole; Retha Kimbrough, HSPS parent liaison; and Marie Byers.



Planting spring garden

The Mississippi Roses (MS) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated planted spring gardens with second grade students at Holly Springs Primary School. The spring garden planting is part of the third Ambassadors for Health program completed by the organization. Two five-year programs were completed in the past where the organization worked with the same group of students monthly from second through sixth grade. To leverage community resources, the Mississippi Roses partnered with Mississippi State University Extension Office in Marshall County and Chulahoma's Garden. Donating plants, their time, and expertise were the owners of Chulahoma's Garden, Tony and Delorise Jones. The Ambassadors of Health is a Childhood Obesity Prevention Program that promotes healthy activities and empowers students to become ambassadors for living healthy lifestyles.



Too Good for Drugs program

Tykeria Vance, prevention specialist with Communicare, presents a 10-week Too Good for Drugs program at Holly Springs Junior High School.

Care Now Pantry partners with school district



Care Now Pantry, a non-profit organization under the direction of Rolanda and Antjuan Lester, supports all schools in the Holly Springs School District throughout the school year. At the Holly Springs Intermediate School, Care Now provides students with weekend snack bags, donates boxes of socks to help support the uniform policy, and helps and supports during back to school night, trunk a treat, and some parent trainings.



Delivering 'sunshine'

The Sunshine Ladies is a non-profit organization that services the community. Services by the organization include educational use in schools and support for senior citizens. The Sunshine Ladies have completed services in all the schools in the Holly Springs School District. Pictured above, from left, are alderwoman Patricia Merriweather, junior high counselor Shelia Fiddis and CEO Sandra Hodges.



Firing up the grill

Members of Powell Chapel Lodge volunteer and serve at all schools in the Holly Springs School District. They are pictured recently firing up the grill for the Back to School Night Bash at Holly Springs Intermediate School. Pictured, from left, are Melvin King, Tracy Reynolds, Zachary Cornelius, Samuel Mason, Dexter Shipp, Royce Luellen, Willie Folsom and Calvin Jeffries.



Exposing students to the arts

The Mississippi Roses Classics through the Ages Program is a program designed to expose students to the arts, especially the classics, increase art appreciation and utilize the power of mentorship. The program is a multi-level program including exposure to the classics like opera, music lessons, and expression through writing and quilting. One component of the program supports artistically talented students from three counties in the chapter's service area by providing individualized music lessons, instruments, supplies and mentoring from seasoned community and school artists. Pictured above are students participating in the program from Holly Springs School District. From left are Glenn Faulkner, instructor; students Monique Brown, Xyairre Harvey, Raynoter Jackson, Cherish Stephens and Mariah Douglas; and Mississippi Roses (MD) Chapter of The Links Incorporated members Karen Bryant and Cynthia Cole.



Workforce development session

Representatives of the Holly Springs School District and the Marshall County School District participated in a meeting Wednesday, April 3, with Marshall County Industrial Development Authority personnel to discuss workforce development and the excellent job opportunities available right here at home. Pictured at the table (from left) are Christy Owens, project manager with the IDA; Justin Hall, executive director of the IDA; Susie Brown, director of the Career and Technical Center in the Holly Springs School District; Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent of education for the Holly Springs School District; and Dr. Carrie Skelton, superintendent of education for the Marshall County School District. The IDA and the school districts are long-standing partners, and they want to build on that teamwork and strive to better prepare students for the workplace so young people can advance into well-paying positions in the county. The latest major economic development announcement came in January. A battery cell production facility is coming to Marshall County, and it will create 2,000 new jobs. Together, the IDA and the school districts want to raise awareness of these and other excellent job opportunities locally.

Barksdale and Walker participate in Work Experience Program

Two Holly Springs High School seniors received valuable hands-on experience in a career field they are considering.

John Barksdale worked at the Holly Springs Police Department and Jatavis Walker at J.F. Brittenum and Son Funeral Home.

The EPIC Work Experience Program is offered through the AccelerateMS Career Coach Program and is funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. In partnership with Three Rivers Planning and Development District and local high schools, the Three Rivers career coaches are implementing the internship program. Career coach at Holly Springs High School is Tanya Smith.

Barksdale assisted dispatch at the police department and helped out in other areas as assigned by chief Darryl Bowens. He plans to start his studies at Northwest Community College and then move on to the University of Mississippi in the criminal justice program.

“This experience is helping me learn the basics of law enforcement,” Barksdale said. “I want to give back to my community. I thank Chief Bowens and Ms. Smith for this opportunity.”

Walker assisted owner Cleotris Brittenum in various aspects of the funeral business. He plans to enroll in the funeral service technology program at Northwest Community College’s DeSoto campus.



From left, pictured with Tanya Smith, career coach at Holly Springs High School, are John Barksdale and Jatavis Walker, members of the Class of 2024.

“I really appreciate Mr. Brittenum and Ms. Smith for giving me this opportunity,” Walker said. “This is definitely experience that I need as I start looking toward a career.”

Each student, through the EPIC Work Experience program, receives approximately 100 hours of paid work experience. They will receive an evaluation from their employer and also complete a student evaluation of the program.



The Holly Springs High School journalism class enjoyed a pizza party in celebration of their efforts.



Arriyel Williams and Leah Odum

Journalism class contributes to success of Ida B. Wells forum

The Holly Springs High School journalism class participated in the Ida B. Wells forum Tuesday, April 16, on the Rust College campus.

Students prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the program, entitled “Humble Beginnings: Educational, Political and Religious Influences on Ida B. Wells in Holly Springs.” Three of the journalism students (Jason Jeffries, Leah Odum and Arriyel Williams) served on a question-and-answer panel. Students also took notes and photos during the event for follow-up work in the class.

Wells was born in Holly Springs in 1862 and remained in the city until age 18. She was a courageous civil rights activist who led an anti-lynching campaign in the United States. Wells was a journalist who dedicated her career to combating prejudice and violence and advocating for African-American equality—especially that of women. She was one of the founders of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

The Ida B. Wells Commemorative Statue Committee coordinated the forum. The committee is raising funds for a statue of Wells in her hometown of Holly Springs. Dr. Gemma Beckley, a member of the committee and also member of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees, extended the invitation for the journalism students to participate in the forum.



Seniors bring joy to Head Start students

Teacher Ciente Barber and the Holly Springs High School Class of 2024 brought joy to the lives of Early Head Start students for Christmas. Barber and the seniors participated in their annual Adopt-A-Classroom. They were able to adopt three classrooms (2, 1, and 5) during the 2023-2024 academic year. “We look forward to continuously blessing the younger students and being a blessing each year,” Barber said.

Fill the bus with supplies

The Holly Springs School District gives special thanks to the Holly Springs/Marshall County Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity for the many years of support through donated school supplies, monetary donations and support programs. On Saturday, Aug. 3, the fraternity hosted a school supply drive at Walmart and filled a school bus with supplies. The donated items were shared between Holly Springs Primary School and Holly Springs Intermediate School students. The supplies were given to students during the Back to School Bash on both campuses. Principals Casshaunda Davis (Primary) and Vikki Marion (Intermediate) said they greatly appreciate this donation from Omega Psi Phi for students at the two schools.





Proclamation honors Dress for Success program

The Holly Springs School District's Dress for Success program recently received recognition at the state level. Rep. John Faulkner (right photo) was the guest speaker for a recent meeting of the Holly Springs Rotary Club, and after his legislative update, he presented a proclamation from the House of Representatives recognizing Dress for Success. Thursday, May 9, was declared Dress for Success Day in Mississippi. High school seniors completing the program receive a tailored suit for job interviews and other important future endeavors, but the program also encompasses so much more. Its main purpose is to train young men to become leaders and good examples, and it is designed to motivate and encourage them to succeed at the highest level. The young men are mentored by community members, and sessions focus on things like responsibility, accountability, attitude and appearance. Students who completed the program this year are pictured at an end-of-the-year banquet (above). Rev. R.J. Wilson is the program director. *Note: The top photo is courtesy of The South Reporter.*

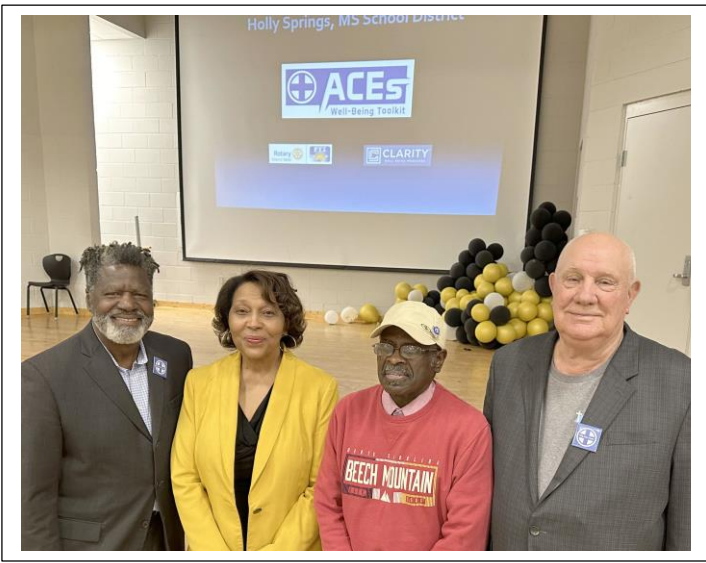


Sorority project assists high school girls



The women of the Omicron Alpha Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. donated dresses to students in need at Holly Springs High School. The young ladies were allowed to choose a dress, heels and jewelry. Also, two young ladies were given the opportunity to have their hair done by a hair stylist in Oxford. Additionally, the chapter donated a tote filled with feminine hygiene products to the junior/senior girls at the high school. This was the first year that Holly Springs High School was given the opportunity to participate in the service project "We would like to thank the Omicron Alpha Omega chapter for their support in ensuring that our young ladies are eligible to attend prom," said Ciente Barber, senior sponsor.

Keys to Community



Pictured from left are Carl Hill, Dr. Irene Turnage, R.J. Wilson and Roy Ray.

Staff members learn about ACEs

All Holly Springs School District staff members heard a presentation on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Wednesday, April 3, during professional development training at the Intermediate School. The presentation is a project of Rotary Club District 6800 and the Rotary Family Youth Initiative.

Adverse Childhood Experiences are potentially traumatic events that occur between the ages of 1 and 17. ACEs can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, household violence, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance abuse problems. ACEs can result in health issues for children and poor academic performance. The experiences can also have a lasting effect into adulthood.

Carl Hill, a member of the Rotary Family Youth Initiative Board of Directors, made the presentation. He was joined by R.J. Wilson, a member of the Holly Springs Rotary Club, and Roy Ray, a member of the Collierville (Tenn.) Rotary Club.

Ray said the presentation to school personnel is about not only alerting teachers to possible ACEs students are facing on a daily basis, but also to help teachers deal with stresses in their jobs.

“Teachers have a tough assignment,” he said. “We appreciate all that they do.”

Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent of education, said ACEs are real.

“Most of us have at least one, and many of our children have several,” she said to teachers and other staff members in attendance. “A caring adult has power; you all have power. I hope you realize you can change the trajectory of a child’s life. You can make a difference. Thank you for caring.”

Ray said the Rotary group is also working with the Head Start Center in Holly Springs.

“This is not a presentation that stops,” he said. “We will continue working with the public schools in Holly Springs.”

Some Holly Springs High School students learned more about Marshall County government. Jansen Pegues, business, marketing and finance instructor at the Career and Technical Center, hosted the “Keys to Community” sessions. The sessions were coordinated by Lemon Phelps and Kelsey Martin with the Marshall County office of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Sessions focused on the roles of Marshall County officials and the various county services offered through each office.



Circuit clerk Monet Autry presents.



From left are Kelsey Martin and Lemon Phelps with the Extension Service, tax collector Rosalyn DeBerry, superintendent Dr. Irene Turnage, county administrator Tim Powell and tax assessor Barbara Belfoure.



Chancery clerk Nicole Phelps talks about the responsibilities of her office.



Man Up supports school district

(Left photo) Dr. Patrick Washington delivered some checks on Friday, Aug. 2, to a few members of the Holly Springs High School Class of 2024. The \$1,000 scholarships were awarded through Washington's Man Up Teacher Fellowship, a non-profit organization. He said the recipients "demonstrated academic excellence and the ability to move through challenges to be the best version of themselves." Seniors chosen were also male students who were honor students and in the top 10 percent of the class. Pictured, from left, are Griselda Espino, accepting on behalf of her son, Jim Garcia; Geoyl Ambrose; Arian Shelton; Washington; LeDerion Glover; Richaud Kirklin; and Robbie Davis, accepting on behalf of her son, Brandin Davis. Not pictured is scholarship recipient Sakr Hazam. Washington said the scholarship recipients have different career aspirations, and he looks forward to following their paths to continued success. "Our support with these students is to simply let them know that we believe in them and also that we see their potential for greatness," he said. (Right photo) The Man Up Fellowship program partners with school district, colleges and universities to train and certify male teachers of color. It is a tuition-free opportunity for men of color to become certified and earn a Masters of Arts in teaching while receiving support from nationally-recognized educators. Dr. Patrick Washington, former superintendent of the Benton County School District, is the founder and CEO of Man Up Teacher Fellowship. He is pictured with Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent of education for the Holly Springs School District, and Kevin Shipp (right), a new teacher at Holly Springs Junior High, who utilized the Man Up Teacher Fellowship program to begin his teaching career in the Holly Springs School District.



Rotary Club honors seniors

The Holly Springs Rotary Club honors a Holly Springs High School senior each month through its Student of the Month program. Seniors are recognized for their academic achievement, leadership and extracurricular activities. Shirley Byers, president of the Rotary Club for the 2023-24 year, is pictured making the presentation to Oriah Hampton, who was selected as the Student of the Month for March 2024.



Class of 1972 supports alma mater

The Class of 1972 is a dedicated and long-term supporter of the Holly Springs School District and Holly Springs High School. Each year, the class provides scholarships and recognizes seniors who have excelled in various areas in their high school career. The annual scholarships are given in honor of their principal, Joseph Ford. Pictured, from left, are Class of 1972 member Rebecca Dowdy; students Kennedi Norfleet; Mickala Elliot; Jaylen Sims; and Lederion Glover; and Class of 1972 member Isaac Shelton.

Partnership presents \$15,000 to high school

Holly Springs High School athletics recently received a financial boost, thanks to alumni charity basketball games between Olive Branch and Holly Springs on July 6 at Olive Branch High School. The men's and women's games were organized, promoted and hosted by the Wright Way Foundation, led by NFL legend K.J. Wright, and the TPC Foundation, headed up by Holly Springs High School alumnus Darrel Thomas. On Monday, July 29, Jacqueline Wright and Thomas presented a \$15,000 check to Holly Springs High School Principal Cravin Turnage to be used for Hawks basketball. Turnage said he is very thankful for the tremendous community support of the schools. "We thank Mr. K.J. Wright for hosting the recent basketball event in neighboring DeSoto County and asking Holly Springs High School alumni to be a part of it this year," Turnage said. "And words cannot express how appreciative we are for the continuing, tireless efforts of one of our own, Mr. Darrel Thomas. He is a special person, dedicated to improving the educational and extra-curricular opportunities for our youth. The contribution from the partnership (the Wright Way Foundation and TPC Foundation) will be utilized to support our Hawks as they continue to strive for excellence in athletic competition. The Wright Way Foundation and Mr. Thomas' TPC Foundation are the perfect examples of giving back to our communities. We applaud their efforts, and again, we are so very thankful."



From left are Cravin Turnage, Jacqueline Wright and Darrel Thomas.



Ole Miss law students emphasize study skills

Four law students from the University of Mississippi visited Holly Springs High School on Wednesday, April 24, to share some of their experiences, talk about why they chose law school and motivate students to stay focused and strive for success. Brooks Payne, Taylor Davis, Jacoby Gilmore and Joe Curry visited the school at the invitation of English teacher Colton Williams. His wife, Meredith Williams, is also a student in the University of Mississippi School of Law, and she was instrumental in the planning and coordination of the session. The law students said there are many ways to use a Juris Doctor degree, not just in the courtroom. They said lawyers are needed in almost every aspect of life. The law students also emphasized the importance of reading and writing, study skills, time management and a good ACT score. They urged the high school students "to lock down on their studies in their junior and senior years" and stay motivated to excel at all they do in life.



State Representative John Faulkner, a graduate, always gives back to his alma mater by speaking to students, presenting at board retreats and keeping the district informed.

Dedicated supporters

Fire chief Rodney Crane, a graduate, supports the district by completing training, supporting staff and always ensuring safety measures are in place.



Motivational speaker urges students to make wise choices

Ray Ray walked onto the gym floor at Holly Springs High School on Thursday, April 25, dressed like a drop-out bully and then delivered powerful words to students in seventh through 12th grades.

“Repeat after me,” he said. “I will never make a permanent decision based on a temporary problem. Whatever you are dealing with now is not forever.”

The character, Ray Ray, is portrayed by Mansfield “Pete” Key, an international motivational speaker from Florence, Ala. He dealt with various issues growing up, like a broken family, alcohol and drugs.

“My life took a turn for the worse,” he said. “I made decisions that I wish I could go back and change.”

He emphasized five points to the junior high and high school students. Calm down; think before you act; treat others the way you want to be treated; separate your emotions from your actions; and sunshine on a cloudy day.

“CDC – choices, decisions, consequences,” said Key, who was accompanied by his wife Sharlene. “We have choices, we make decisions, and we have to live with the consequences. That’s every single day – like go to class or not go to class, study or not study. You have the power to choose.”

A teacher inspired him and changed his life. He said he could never repay her.

“You will face difficulties,” Key said, “but you have people who care about you. You have people who love you. Then you, in turn, can show the love to others.”

He also incorporated music into his well-received presentation. He invited teachers to join him on the floor for some dance moves to “My Girl,” and he asked everyone to substitute “My School” into the lyrics. The students joined in with the singing of this song and others.



Ray Ray (Mansfield “Pete” Key) delivers his inspirational message to students

“I’ve got sunshine on a cloudy day.

“When it’s cold outside, I’ve got the month of May.

“I guess you say,

What can make me feel this way?

“My school,

“Talkin’ bout my school.”

To close his presentation, Key again emphasized CDC – choices, decisions, consequences.

“If you are going to be successful, it will be based on you,” he said. “If you are going to be a failure, it will be based on you. You control your own destiny by the decisions you make.”



From left are Laketia Petty, assistant principal at Holly Springs Junior High School; Tannya Sanders, principal at Holly Springs Junior High School; Mansfield “Pete” Key; Sharlene Key; Eileen Dowsing, assistant superintendent of the Holly Springs School District; and Dr. Irene Turnage, superintendent of the Holly Springs School District.

Mississippi School Boards Leadership Conference

Four Holly Springs School Board members and two district administrators attended the Mississippi School Boards Association's Southern Region Leadership Conference July 21-23 in Biloxi. Participating in the educational sessions were president Lemon Phelps, vice president Charisse Harris, Ejeera Dukes and Dr. Gemma Beckley, along with superintendent of education Dr. Irene Turnage and assistant superintendent Eileen Dowsing. A few of the many sessions during the two-day conference included Expanding Horizons: Innovative Opportunities for Student Success; Future-Ready Education: Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the Classroom; Building Bridges: Enhancing Board and Superintendent Collaboration; Data-Driven Decisions: Leveraging Data for School Improvement; and Unity in Leadership: Shaping Team Culture and Climate. Attendees also heard a Vision for the Future presentation by Dr. Lance Evans, new state superintendent of education.



Accomplishing the Mission

Serving as a member of your local school board is one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs you will ever undertake. It also is an enormous responsibility. As a school board member, the decisions you make will affect children and their parents, the livelihood of school system employees and the economic well-being of your community. Service to a board requires time, energy, a willingness to learn about issues affecting your schools, and a passion for a public education system committed to providing the best and most appropriate education for all children entrusted to its care. Members of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees are (from left) Kim Mayfield, Dr. Gemma Beckley, Lemon Phelps, Charisse Harris and Ejeera Dukes.

School Board Specific Duties

<i>Dos</i>	<i>Don'ts</i>
<p>School Board Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and evaluate the superintendent • Approve and monitor the budget • Approve purchases • Establish district policies • Adopt the school calendar • Adopt local policies to comply with all state and federal laws and regulations • Building schools and closing schools • Establish district vision • Establish district goals and monitoring progress • Assess board effectiveness • Approve personnel actions based on superintendent's recommendations 	<p>School Board Member Do Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policy. School boards adopt policy. Superintendents carry out policies and manage the day-to-day operations of the school district • Evaluate staff, teachers, or any employee except the superintendent. Boards should not become involved in employment interviews or employee evaluations • Direct activities of any employee except the superintendent. The superintendent manages the daily activities of all district employees

The mission of the Holly Springs School District is to educate students who will EXCEL in the global community. The school board works together with the superintendent to accomplish the mission of the school district. We thank our school board members for all they do for students and staff to ensure our students are prepared and ready for whatever career they choose!

