



PRESS RELEASE

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The Surry County Schools Educational Foundation honored donors and teachers Tuesday evening, October 29, 2018, at the Surry Community College Viticulture Center during the Teacher Showcase and Donor Appreciation Dinner. The Foundation hosts this event annually to showcase the innovative projects funded by the Foundation's Enhanced Learning Mini-Grant program. Tuesday night's event also served as a springboard for the opening of the Enhanced Learning Mini-Grant program for the 2018-2019 school year. Teachers are encouraged to apply for grants to complete innovative projects in their classrooms to impact student instruction.

Ten educators demonstrated the innovative projects they are utilizing in the classroom thanks to the funds received from the Foundation's Enhanced Learning Mini-Grant program during last year's mini-grant cycle. Students were also on-hand to talk about what they enjoy about the projects and how it impacts their learning. Additionally, the Teacher Showcase was a great way for other teachers to observe something they would like to implement in their classrooms so innovative practices are shared and replicated across the district.

Mr. John Priddy, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Educational Foundation, opened the evening with a welcome to all attending, including Surry County Board of Education members, Foundation Board members, donors, and supporters of the Foundation. Subsequently, Dr. Travis L. Reeves, Superintendent of Surry County Schools, provided background on the Next Generation Career Academy (NGCA), an innovative and highly successful program Surry County Schools embarked on last year through a partnership with Surry Community College. The NGCA, funded by a generation donation from the Golden Leaf Foundation, gives high school students opportunities to work in local business doing paid internships. Likewise, businesses gain prospective employees to fill job vacancies.

Mr. Brian Johnson, President of Johnson Granite, is one business partner who expressed his gratitude for NGCA at Tuesday night's event. Mr. Johnson also communicated that his company's experience with the unique program has been very positive. "Zeke Bengé [a former NGCA intern with Johnson Granite] has been a great addition to our company. He worked hard and was willing to learn more about our business. Because of that, we hired Zeke to work full-time." Mr. Johnson further explained, "The program is helping my company find talent from the high schools. When Crystal [Folger-Hawks] asked me to create a job description for a position that a high school student could do, I came up with 10. I was surprised by that number." Mr. Johnson went on to say, "Hard work pays off. I am a third generation stone cutter. The hard work that goes into this business is not easy. Zeke has shown that he is a hard worker who does not shy away from a challenge. That's why we are happy to have him on our team."

Mr. Zeke Bengé is a graduate of the Surry Early College and has a dream of becoming a professional bull rider. As he competes and trains towards his dream, he understands the need for working hard towards a goal. "Having an opportunity to work at Johnson Granite is one that I did not want to pass up. I have learned a lot about working with deadlines, different people, and different machines. I really appreciate Johnson Granite making me a part of their family business," Bengé remarked.

The Next Generation Career Academy is seeking businesses interested in hosting students as interns. For more information, contact Career Coach, Mrs. Crystal Folger-Hawks, at (336) 401-7820 or hawksc@surry.k12.nc.us. Mrs. Folger-Hawks serves as the liaison between businesses and students as a matchmaker to ensure business needs are best matched with the skill sets of student interns.

At the conclusion of the program, Chairman Priddy ended the night with a special thank you to donors, supporters of the Foundation, and Mrs. Ashley Mills who serves as the Surry County Schools Educational Foundation Liaison. The Surry County Schools Educational Foundation is committed to investing in education, and impacting the lives of students through educational experiences inside and outside the classroom as well as investing in our teaching professionals. For more information about the Surry County Schools Educational Foundation, please contact Mrs. Ashley Mills at (336) 386-8211 or visit scsfoundation.org.



Gracie Beasley works with an Osmo kit displayed by Rachel King of White Plains Elementary.



Brian Johnson addresses the guests at the Surry County Schools Educational Foundation annual dinner on Oct 30. (Photo courtesy Jennifer Slate.)



Zeke Benge, third from left, and Brian Johnson, fourth from right, were the guest speakers at the Surry County Schools Educational Foundation annual dinner on Oct 30. Pictured with the speakers are (from left) Zeke's parents Ralph and Deanna Benge, Zeke, Ingram Johnson, Brian, Dr. Travis L. Reeves, Leslie Reeves, County Commissioner Larry Johnson. (Photo courtesy Jennifer Slate.)