

STARS: Making A Difference In The Black Belt

STARS (Student Teams Advocating Realistic Solutions), the student program of the Higher Education Partnership, coordinated the Black Belt Project, with the help of the Higher Education Partnership. The project was a huge endeavor to collect school supplies and personally deliver all items to schools in Hale County. This past year's project was so successful, students voted at the STARS Retreat in August to continue the project. The 2007 project will include mentoring programs, an academic career day and the making of a DVD to make others aware of the needs in the Black Belt area of Alabama. The pictures below show the success of last year's project.



On January 27, 2006, 48 students from six university campuses met in Hale County for the climax of the Black Belt Project which they had been working on since Fall 2005. The project began when they heard from three individuals who discussed the challenges of the Black Belt communities. As a result, the students decided they could make a difference by collecting school supplies.

Students had the opportunity to hear from three Hale County high school students who were part of the Hale Bopp Comet program. They each shared the challenges of being a young person in Hale County.



They also shared the positives of what was happening in the school system. They also heard from the principals of each school in the school system. Principals shared the challenges they had of leading schools that were either predominately Afro-American or mixed White and Afro-American. Each school had different challenges.



During lunch, students were privileged to hear from Judge Sonny Ryan who informed them as to what is being done to improve education in Hale County.





STARS committees on each campus spent four months collecting school supplies. On January 27, 2006, they arrived in Greensboro, Alabama with trunk-loads of supplies for Hale County Schools.



Following lunch, Judge Ryan led the students on a tour of the HERO Family Guidance and Children's Center which is located in downtown Greensboro. The Children's Center was designed and built by the Auburn University Rural Studio.



The day ended with students hand-delivering their "goods" to the assigned schools. Pictured above: University of West Alabama and University of Montevallo students delivered supplies to the Sunshine High School in Newbern. Below: Students from Alabama State University and Troy University-Dothan Campus delivered supplies to Greensboro East High School.



Universities participating and delivering supplies to Hale County were Auburn University, Alabama State University, University of Alabama, University of Montevallo, Troy University-Dothan campus, University of West Alabama. Universities that furnished supplies were Jacksonville State University and University of North Alabama.

