R2L Featured in Chamber Link

The Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce recently released the March 2013 edition of their local magazine Chamber Link. An article about the Readers to Leaders local literacy initiative was featured this month. The title of the article was “The Power of Partnerships” written by Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership Professional Melissa Lu. The article describes the great dedication of local partners and volunteers that came together and overcame challenging circumstances to make a difference in the Dalton-Whitfield community. To read this article, please go to the following link: http://bit.ly/R2LChamberLink

DEM Camp TV Taping

Thursday, March 14, 2013 was an exciting day! We had the opportunity to visit with two outstanding young students from last year’s DEM (Design, Engineering and Manufacturing) Camp on our local TV program, Dalton Today, hosted by Brian Anderson, President of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce. During the month of March, Dalton Today will focus on initiatives created through the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership.

In an effort to share a realistic picture of the camp and camp activities, we invited two of last year’s campers. Henry Stevenson, a 7th grader at Dalton Middle School, and Sylvia Earley, a 5th grader at Eastside Elementary, participated in the taping. Both students were confident and poised as they spoke, and were very positive about the camp and all of the activities. Henry showed viewers the circuit board that he had made at the camp as well as the car he had designed. His car design was printed on the three-D printer and Henry shared information on the use of these printers to make prototypes in industry. Sylvia brought her rug that she designed and was printed by Shaw Industries. Sylvia’s design was selected as the winning rug design from the camp.

The students related activities going on in their school classrooms, expressing how their teachers relate math, social studies and other topics to the real world so they can better understand the concepts. Both students shared their enthusiastic approach to learning.
Both Henry and Sylvia hope to attend the camp again this summer. Camp organizers look forward to sharing different experiences with them and many other young learners.

**Improvements for Literacy and Early Brain Development Database**

In July 2012, Jordan Manis, an Archway Partnership employee and Dalton State College student, initiated a project to create a community database that included a list of programs and services supporting literacy and early brain development in the Dalton-Whitfield community. The need for this database was first articulated by the Archway Partnership Executive Committee and the Investing in Public Education Issue Work Group, noting that there is no comprehensive list of these programs in the area. In November 2012, Jordan completed the first phase of data collection and program research. With the help of University of Georgia Masters in Nonprofit Administration student Leize Marie Davis, a searchable database was created. On December 5, 2012, Jordan and Leize Marie discussed the newly created database with the Archway Partnership Executive Committee and sought guidance on how to move forward with the information. This meeting led to the creation of the Literacy and Early Brain Development Database Workforce Development Team. This team brings together local partners with the knowledge and insights of child and adult literacy programs and early brain development programs and services in the community. The team will advise Jordan and Leize Marie on improvements to the database and make it more useful to the community.

The Literacy and Early Brain Development Database Workforce Development Team met in February to discuss the programs in the database and identify any missing entities or additional information to be added. The group worked together, using their connections in the community to enhance the database. The team met again on March 13, to suggest potential reports from the database information that will be helpful to the community. For example, a report could show a map of locations across Dalton-Whitfield that provide nutrition programs. This information will be useful not only to clients in need of a nutrition program, but also for service providers to identify nutrition program gaps that need to be filled in certain areas. The team will meet again in April to determine the next steps of this project.

**Readers to Leaders Update: March**

On Wednesday, March 6, the Readers to Leaders Workforce Development Team met at the Northwest Georgia Regional Library in Dalton. The group was excited to hear that the Readers to Leaders billboards have been placed around the community. Other exciting news is that Readers to
Leaders will receive the “Four for the Future” award from the University of Georgia’s Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach and Georgia Trend. A feature article on Readers to Leaders will be included in the April edition of Georgia Trend magazine.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included:

– Pam Partain will present Readers to Leaders at the Dalton Rotary Club on March 19th.

– The group discussed the importance of communicating about the literacy collaborative in our community and suggested ideas of how to promote the collaborative between the school systems.

– Pre-School Registration updates were given:
  o Location of pre-k registration has been changed to the Mack Gaston Community Center.
  o A shuttle will be provided for parents who need transportation to the Health Department.
  o Rock Bridge Community Church will be providing one book for each child during registration.

– Plans for the Week of the Young Child event hosted by Rock Bridge Community Church on April 21st were discussed. More details will follow.

– The 2nd Annual Literacy Celebration is scheduled for July 18, 2013 at the Mack Gaston Community Center. More details will follow.

– The library board voted to endorse the Reach Out and Read Program.

– A calendar of literacy events for 2013 was provided to attendees to serve as a guide for event planning. To review this calendar please go to the following link: http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Events-by-month.pdf

Check out the minutes for full details from this meeting at the following link:
Hawkins Speaks Out About Support For Local Schools

On Thursday, February 14, an article was published in the Dalton Daily Citizen by the Kiwanis Club of Dalton. Archway Executive Committee member and Dalton Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Jim Hawkins, spoke openly to the group about the much needed support for the school systems. Dr. Hawkins spoke about the increasing population within the schools and the higher levels of diversity in each classroom. He spoke about the growing needs of the students and that the funds to meet these needs are low. Dr. Hawkins discussed budget cuts and the plans for ESPLOST funding.

To read this article please got to the following link:  

Georgia Tech Completes Business Incubator Assessment for Dalton-Whitfield County

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Georgia Tech completes business incubator assessment for Dalton-Whitfield County
Chamber of Commerce and local public entities cited as possible funding sources

March 5, 2013 - Dalton, Ga --- Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute recently concluded a business incubator readiness assessment for Dalton and revealed the results to community leaders and interested citizens. A recommendation of the Archway Partnership Diverse, Forward-Thinking Economy Issue Work Group, the idea of a business start-up center has been discussed over the past few years as a way to assist aspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses. Researchers from the Enterprise Innovation Institute spent part of last year studying Dalton’s economic trends and meeting with entrepreneurs, small businesses, community leaders and other citizens. Their research has concluded that the Dalton-Whitfield area would benefit from the introduction of a business incubation program, and that the community should move forward on its creation.

“Georgia Tech was commissioned to study our community’s readiness for an incubator after a recommendation of an Archway Partnership work group,” said Melissa Lu, Archway Professional for Whitfield County. “I’m pleased with the results of the study, and I am hopeful a strong community effort will result in the realization of this goal.”
The Georgia Tech researchers propose that the entity tasked with achieving this goal of an incubator move with patience and caution, as there are key factors that must be addressed before an incubation program can be up and running.

“Most importantly, an incubator requires local funding and a long-term commitment,” Lu added.

A consideration listed in Georgia Tech’s study was a “low desire for public (financial) support of private enterprises.” A follow up survey to the study results indicated otherwise, according to the Archway Partnership.

In the survey results, The Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, Whitfield County, City of Dalton, Dalton State College and private industry (such as banks) were cited most often as possible funding partners to an incubator effort.

“Most incubation programs are private-public partnerships,” said Brian Anderson, president of Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce. “I think an incubator would be valuable for Greater Dalton, but we need to determine the appropriate financial partners to make this a long-term success.”

If the community elects to move forward with the incubator idea, Georgia Tech will provide additional research and recommendations about what type of incubator, services to offer and businesses to target for Dalton.