Readers to Leaders Receives the “Four for the Future” Award

Dalton-Whitfield’s Readers to Leaders wins the “Four for the Future” Award. Check out the article from the April issue of GA Trend on the following link:
http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Four_for_the_future-4-1-20131.pdf

R2L Shines on Local TV Show

On Thursday, March 28, 2013, Readers to Leaders (R2L) was the focus of the Greater Dalton Today television show with host Brian Anderson, President of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce. The featured guest was Marlen Rodriguez, United Way AmeriCorps Vista, who now coordinates R2L for the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership. Barbara Ward, Chamber Workforce Development Director, joined Marlen on the set and shared the origination of the Archway Partnership’s 3E’s (Economy, Education, and Environment) work plan and the proclamation by local government officials and board of education members for a focus on literacy. This emphasis on literacy resulted in the formation of R2L. Marlen discussed her role with R2L and accomplishments thus far.

During the second segment, Karol Radovich, Children’s Librarian at Northwest Georgia Regional Library, joined Marlen and Brian to share literacy activities and events at the library.

For the final segment, Lisa Hackney, Coordinator of Gifted Programs at Dalton Public Schools, joined Marlen in promoting activities for The Week of the Young Child, highlighting the celebration at The Wink on Sunday, April 21.

Brian Anderson commended all of the participants for the activities focused around literacy as a means to improve the quality of life for individuals and to strengthen the future workforce for Greater Dalton. The show will be airing in early April.

Archway Acknowledged By GGD 2.0

On Thursday, March 28, 2013 Archway Partnership Director Mel Garber and Coordinator of Operations Sue Chapman attended the Grow Greater Dalton 2.0 kick-off celebration. At this event the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership was acknowledged for the hard work and accomplishments that Archway and local partners have achieved since 2009. The community vision that was established by local stakeholders during the first year of Archway was described to the event participants. This vision includes the 3E’s which are Economy, Education, and Environment (quality of life). Archway will continue to focus on local initiatives to support this vision.
Arts and Economics Advancements in Dalton

On Monday, March 25, UGA Masters in Public Administration student Megan Miller met with the Archway Arts and Economic Development Work Group to discuss her research on arts as an economic development tool. The group is studying best practices from other communities and hopes to create web-based messaging that promotes Greater Dalton as a vibrant arts community.
Archway Projects Presented to Rotary Club of Dalton

On Tuesday, March 19, 2013 members of the Readers to Leaders (R2L) Workforce Development Team presented to the Rotary Club of Dalton. The team gave an overview of the Archway Partnership and its activities in Dalton-Whitfield since 2009. A major step for Archway in the community was creating a community vision that addresses local needs. In this vision education was listed as one of the top three concerns in the area. Over the years, Archway has worked with community leaders and volunteers to help develop several projects to address educational issues, including the work of the R2L group.

The first initiative that was described by Whitfield County Schools representative Caroline Woodason was the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) that was recently brought to Dalton-Whitfield through a partnership between the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension (Whitfield County) and the local WIC (Women, Infants, Children) program. EFNEP works by teaching families with young children how to prepare easy and nutritious meals on a low budget.
United Way AmeriCorps Vista representative Marlen Rodriguez described another initiative that helps Whitfield County residents understand the importance of Pre-K and provides Pre-K opportunities to every family that desires that their child participate. Marlen relayed to Rotary several facts concerning the importance of Pre-K which include:

- 11% of students in Dalton-Whitfield County receive no formal Pre-K learning.
- Pre-K students continuously outperform children without any Pre-K experience in first grade reading and math, and are likely to continuously outperform peers in reading and language arts.
- Pre-K students are more committed to school at age 14.
- Pre-K students have a lower truancy rate in later years.
- Pre-K students are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers.
- Pre-K students are more likely to be employed at age 40, own their own home, and have a savings account.
- Pre-K students are less likely to be arrested for violent and drug crimes.
- Pre-K students are more likely to be on grade level in Reading & Math.
- Pre-K students are less likely to be retained or placed in Special Education during their K-12 years.
- Pre-K students are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

Archway is currently in the process of hiring a Prenatal to Pre-K Archway Professional for Dalton-Whitfield.

A third initiative is to further education by making technology more accessible to students. Providing Internet accessibility and technology to students outside of the classroom allows for equality for each child. It is also more affordable to provide the students with electronic devices than it is to provide them with textbooks.

Lisa Hackney of Dalton Public Schools shared the need to provide literacy awareness in our community. Readers to Leaders is a growing initiative in our community. Information about the initiative will be appearing around town on billboards and buttons. There will also be celebrations for this initiative which include:

- Pre-K registration on April 14 – 20
- Early Childhood Educators Celebration on April 21
- Celebration of Literacy community event in July
- Dalton Public Schools’ Big Red Reads
- Whitfield County Schools’ Summer “Lunch n Learn,”
- Reach Out & Read by the Healthcare Partnership
- Various faith-based community volunteer activities
Archway and the community have partnered to make these initiatives successful in meeting community education needs. A special thanks is extended to the Rotary Club of Dalton for presenting a Rotary district grant of $2,000 to “Readers to Leaders”.