First Five Coalition Work Gets Publicity

On January 26, the Dalton Daily Citizen recognized the Dalton-Whitfield Archway First Five Coalition in an article and highlighted some of their work. A key goal of the First Five Coalition is to figure out a sustainable way to provide affordable prenatal care to underinsured or uninsurable mothers. As such, coalition member and pediatrician Dr. Louis Viamonte wrote an article highlighting the issue in the community. It was published alongside the article featuring the coalition and can be viewed here.

The Archway Partnership Presents at Local Pastor’s Meeting

On February 3, Archway Partnership professionals Melissa Lu and Katy Green were invited to speak to a group of local pastors representing 13 churches about ways the faith-based community can become involved with areas of need within the Dalton-Whitfield community. A photo highlighting the event is below.

The opportunities extend to anyone wanting to make an impact in the community. Click here to see the list of opportunities shared with the pastors.
Young Professional Park Restoration Project

In 2012, the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia awarded a $5,000 grant to the Archway Partnership for a Young Professional project. The Young Professionals of Northwest Georgia have decided to put some of this money to use on February 22 by restoring Varnell Park. Below are some pictures sent by YPONG Chair, Andrea Ownbey, illustrating the current condition of the park.
Plans for Saturday Academy Underway

Beginning on March 8, the Archway Partnership plans to kick off a 6 week pilot study of Saturday activities for our youngest citizens and their families. Faculty have lined up researchers from UGA, UTC, and the University of West Georgia to help study 36 families engaged in parent-child interactive classes, parent education, and a control group. Currently, Archway staff and committee members are working together to locate funding to pay a pre-K teacher, a community health worker, parent educators, purchase supplies and books, purchase research protocols, and incentivize families to participate for the duration of the study. Citizens plan to use the results of this process to develop an on-going Saturday program and to use as a basis for procuring long-term funding.

Archway Partnership Executive Committee Update

In 2009, the Archway Partnership Executive Committee gathered extensive community input to produce “Communit-E3: A Vision of the Future of Dalton-Whitfield County.” The vision encompasses three parts: education, economy, and the environment (quality of life). In recent years the committee has brainstormed various education initiatives, many of which are pertinent in fulfilling the three-part Communit-E3 vision. Some of the most promising ideas, however, have not yet come to fruition because there is not an existing organization in the community to implement them.

At the last Archway Partnership Executive Committee Meeting held on January 16, members discussed the possibility of creating of a local Community Education Alliance that would meet the existing need for hosting some of the initiatives. The discussion is outlined here.

The Committee is excited about the potential opportunities that such an alliance would create for the Dalton-Whitfield Community. Below are some photos highlighting the January 16 meeting.

YPONG has enlisted the help of the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and the City of Varnell for this park clean-up project. Information about the event is available at YPONG's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/YPONG11.
Committee members examine details surrounding the Community Education Alliance.

Lynn Laughter, chair of the Executive Committee, facilitates group discussion.

Committee member Kelly Jones shares her thoughts about the alliance.

Members Mike Maret (right) and Nancy Kennedy (left) discuss their ideas.

Committee members examine details surrounding the Community Education Alliance.
**Book Nooks Continue Gaining Community Support**

The Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership’s Book Nook initiative continues to gain community support. Thanks to the generosity of the Dalton State Athletics Program, the Dalton Rotary Club, and the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia, funding has been pledged for 18 Book Nooks. Two book nooks have been placed at White’s Pediatrics with the latest at City of Refuge, an outreach program that meets the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the homeless, low income, poverty level, and indigent families of the Dalton-Whitfield Community.

Pictures capturing the recent book nook implementation at City of Refuge can be viewed below.

From left to right: City of Refuge staff member; Elizabeth Chadwick, Reach Out and Read volunteer; Melissa Morrison, Archway Partnership Americorp VISTA

From left to right: Melissa Lu, Archway Partnership Professional; Elizabeth Chadwick, Reach Out and Read Volunteer; Melissa Morrison, Archway Partnership Americorp VISTA

**Reach Out and Read Update**

Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based nonprofit that assists medical providers to promote early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms. At well visits, practitioners give new books to children birth to five years old and advice to parents/caregivers about the importance of reading aloud. The Archway Partnership Executive Committee first discussed implementing the Reach Out and Read program at its December 2012 meeting. Thanks to the hard work of Elizabeth Chadwick, former chair of the Dalton-based Northwest Georgia Regional Library, the Readers to Leaders and First Five committees, and a grant from Rock Bridge Community Church, Reach Out and Read has been fully implemented at White’s Pediatrics. Additional pediatricians’ offices have expressed interest, and community members and Archway staff are working to locate funding.
The Archway Partnership Tours the Dalton Housing Authority

On January 31, the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership faculty, staff and some of its executive committee members attended a tour of the Dalton Housing Authority in an effort to better understand the issues local families and students are facing. Participants began the tour with a Q&A session led by the Dalton Housing Authority’s Chief Operating Officer. After discussion, the group was shown different housing styles, allowing participants to go inside and see first-hand common living arrangements for individuals with low income in the community. Archway faculty shared some of the needs these individuals face and presented them as collaborative volunteer opportunities to faith-based community organizations and citizens. In future weeks, the Archway Partnership plans to work with local partners to organize several similar tours.