



Adopter Honors Toney Students

Sheila Scott, center, a representative of the AKA sorority, adopters of Toney Elementary School, participated in Awards Day activities at the DeKalb County school. Among those students being honored for academic achievement were, (left-right) Sharmane Thomas, Toneshia Walker and Mariano Drake.



Delkath News/Sun
Toney Shows Appreciation 6/29/88

Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority celebrated its partnership with Toney School during an appreciation Adopt-A-School ceremony before schools end. Some of the activities Alpha Kappa Alpha has carried out this year include funding two students on the Washington Patrol Trip; providing refreshments for the Tuesday-Thursday, after-school tutorial program; honoring seventh graders who have been top students grade by grade with \$50 Savings Bonds; sponsoring students to the NASA Space Center in February; sponsoring the Spelling Bee and Math Facts tournaments and providing first, second and third place trophies; funding flowers and plants for beautification of the Toney Campus; providing Toney student with red and white shoestrings imprinted with the school name and Toney teachers with special tokens on Teacher's Appreciation Day. Everyone at Toney joined in expressing appreciation. Each class presented AKA members with hand-made gifts at the celebration ceremony. Shown, (l to r) Sandra Rice, Sheila Scott, Deborah Brown; (seated) Durand Latimore, Durante Reid, Boyd Richardson and Niketa Swain.

Toney Kids Get Saturday School

By HELEN ORDNER

Toney Elementary School kids are now coming to school on Saturday — apparently voluntarily.

The school's five-year-old, award-winning tutorial program has been switched to Saturdays, beginning last week.

The program has been in an after-school position before, but this year, extra time was added.

The three-hour Saturday morning program is strictly volunteer time for teachers, the principal, parents, and members of the sorority which adopted the school, Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Principal George Moss will return to the classroom to teach mathematics. Lead teachers Dr. Joyce Johnson and Ann Thomas

will coordinate the program with parents assisting in many ways.

Parents will furnish refreshments for the 50 to 60 kids expected to attend the Saturday school.

Sorority members are furnishing study materials, all different from that used in week-day classes.

The kids, according to Ms. Thomas, are eager and "they would just stay at school."

Adults are hoping to determine the weaknesses of students in English and math and to work with them to raise test scores.

The Time-on-Task program, winner of the Georgia Bell Award, will continue for seven Saturdays at Toney, which is near Candler Road in south DeKalb County.

TONEY
SCHOOL

DeKalb News/Star
4/18/90



Breakfast Honors Toney Volunteers

Toney Elementary School honored workers in its Saturday tutorial program with a breakfast at the end of the seven weeks. Among these were members of the school's adopter, Alpha Kappa Alpha. Shown are lead teachers Ann Thomas and Dr. Joyce Johnson, Karen Maulsby and George Moss, principal.

DeKalb News/Sun

9/26/90

Toney School Sends Packages To Troops

Students at Toney Elementary School and members of the community there are preparing packages to send to members of the U.S. Armed Forces in Saudi Arabia.

Each classroom is responsible for a "care" package. Kindergarten students are sending non-perishable items, such as snacks in cans or boxes.

First graders are packing canned foods such as oysters, sardines, pop-top canned items, and soups.

Second and third grade students are concentrating on reading materials and current magazines which do not contain anything of a sexual nature.

Games, crossword puzzles and word puzzles are being sent by fourth and fifth graders. Comics books, box drinks and juices will be gifts from sixth and seventh graders.

The school's support staff and administration will send books, novels, newspapers and cigarettes to be used for bartering.

Leola Orr: "These Children Are Survivors"

Child or adult, everyone gets a hug from Principal Leola Orr — "Miss Doctor Orr" to students at DeKalb's Toney Elementary, off Candler Road near I-20. "I come straight from the heart," she says. "I have a passion for children."

A 29-year veteran, Orr has come up through the ranks. "This is by far the best place that I could have ever landed," she says. "This school is located in a very high-risk area. Right across the street is a drug rehabilitation center. Within the neighborhood, there are some drug houses, and people are doing whatever they can to survive.

"We have a lot of single-parent homes. The parents are young. We have some parents who have been incarcerated, some who have been on house arrest. We have a lot of children who are responsible for getting themselves to school . . . children who are living with grandparents or great-grandparents." Kids move regularly in and out of the school population as their family situations change.

"We have decided that we can't go into the homes and change the children's environment. We *can* help the children cope with what's going on in their lives when they get to school. We have to be very creative.

"We work every day very hard to help the children focus on school, because we know that when they come here they are not focused on reading or math, they are focused on survival. We are aware that it is hard for them to try to balance the night before with what they need to do at school. So, with those factors in mind, we try to come up with as many motivational activities as we can to have the children stay focused on why they are in school."

Motivational activities include drawing on the talents of a neighborhood artist to paint bright murals on the school walls, inviting the children in on a Saturday to help paint the school's media center, to reinforce the idea of school as a refuge and a haven of optimism. Teachers work with individual children to help them establish goals, and once a year the school honors goal-setters and goal-reachers with an MVP Day. "We make a really big deal over that," Orr says.

Reading is at the top of her "must" list for practical and motivational reasons. She reads regularly to the students

over the intercom and sponsors the Principal's Reading Club, which rewards young readers with trips to a real treasure chest filled with pencils and paper and other supplies. The club celebrates their achievement and helps them earn things they need for school. "We don't want them to have that welfare mentality," Orr says, "the idea that you can just sit and wait for other folks to give you stuff. We tell them you are going to be productive when you go out there in that world."

Because Toney's most recent test scores did not meet the state minimum, the school was named an America's Choice School, a designation that will provide some extra resources to staff and faculty.

"We were disappointed that our test scores did not go as high as they could have gone," Orr says, "but the reality is that we are asking these children to balance what's going on . . . factors that no one can control. As long as our kids are learning, we are happy with that. They are just wonderful kids. Test scores do not tell the whole story."

— Susan Percy

(Editor's note: Orr has instituted a "Bricks for Books" program to enhance classroom libraries and aid in school beautification. A \$25 donation will purchase a brick to help build a wall around a beloved campus oak tree and will help buy books. Donations may be sent to Toney Elementary School, 2701 Oakland Terrace, Decatur, GA 30032.)

