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B.E.S.T. Program Teaches Local Students about Free Enterprise Principles

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Office of University Communications

August 10, 2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – High school students from all over Cleveland County, N.C., learned tricks of the free enterprise trade this week as they participated in the annual Bringing Executives and Students Together (B.E.S.T.) program at Gardner-Webb University Aug. 8-10.

Around 50 teens from six local high schools gleaned knowledge from some of the best leaders in the area as general principles of business and entrepreneurship were brought to life during the three-day workshop. Students from Burns, Crest, Kings Mountain and Shelby high schools, along with Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy and Cleveland Early College High School, attended the program.

Dr. Anthony Negbenebor, dean of the Godbold School of Business, said the annual event gives teens a chance to apply the knowledge they have already gained through business and marketing classes in high school. “It instills in them the knowledge that they are capable of coming up with an idea and selling it,” said Negbenebor. “They quickly realize they can actually own a business from their own idea and be self-sufficient.”

Several community leaders take time each year to speak to the students where they discuss the lessons they have learned the hard way. Gardner-Webb University Head Football Coach Ron Dickerson addressed the group on Thursday and said he wanted the students to know he was pulling for them to succeed.

“When you have young people that want to achieve and get better, it’s important and you have to embrace them,” Dickerson said. “There are so many different things they can get involved in that can lead them to negativity. I told the kids it doesn’t matter who doesn’t believe in you as long as you believe in yourself.”

One of the students in the program was Stephon Laborn, a sophomore at Burns High School. As an athlete, he related to Dickerson’s message and plans to establish some new priorities when school starts this fall. “The program definitely makes me think about where I need to make some changes,” Laborn shared. “Paying more attention to my grades, turning stuff in on time. Things like that.”

Each year, as part of a task in free enterprise, the program participants are split into teams and charged with selling iced tea, lemonade and potato chips. The teams have a budget and must organize, plan, and execute their strategy. The winner is determined as the team that

successfully makes the most profit. “Any profit made, everyone shares it,” Negbenebor explains. “It gives them pride and teaches them that nothing is impossible if they are persistent.”

Perhaps that is the most valuable business principle of all.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/CL3FsCibdAU>