



Gaining financial savvy

Graduates, instructors and partners of Out-of-the-Box Financial Literacy program attend ceremonies Jan. 28 at Casablanca Restaurant in Fairburn. Pictured are (first row, from left) Anshley York, Jocelyn Malone, Braxton Lane, Willis Graham, Jr. and Francis Villaron; second row includes Carl Lane, India Knight, Darlene Golson, India Brown, Brandie Horne, Brittany Corporal, Angela Gray, Ryenesha Smoke and Marc Ellis; and at top are Pastor Gary K. Taylor, Sr. Pastor Maya Taylor, Marc Ellis II, Leonard Taylor, Rodrigouse Baker, Brian Thomas, Kristopher Hardrick, Braxton Lane and Christopher Liebe. See story on A6. Photo/Special.

Area students reap financial literacy rewards

Over 20 high school students from Creekside, East Coweta, McIntosh, Tri-Cities, Sandy Creek and Clarkston high schools graduated with enthusiasm and life-changing knowledge from the six-month "Out Of the Box" (OOTB) youth financial literacy program developed and managed by the South Fulton Business and Empowerment Center in Union City.

Like many entering the program, India Knight, a McIntosh High School student, joined the program knowing it would introduce her to money management, but did not know that the program would teach her how to manage a \$5,000 Edward Jones investment portfolio, understand corporate success strategies, receive character building skills, understand the basics of managing her check book and finances, while building up her self esteem and broadening her horizons to believe she can achieve success if she seeks to apply herself and obtain the proper knowledge. Knight was attracted to the program, in part, because students' are challenged to consistently participate and complete real-life homework assignments, get to open a Washington Mutual savings account with a complimentary \$50 deposit, courtesy of the sponsoring bank and the OOTB Program.

Marc Ellis II, a football player and student at Sandy Creek High School, stated the program taught him the fundamental financial skills he otherwise would not have been taught in an educational environment. "After my first week in the program, I had a different perspective on my life and my future after graduation and my family noticed a difference in me," he said.

Carol Massey, investment advisor for Edward Jones in Union City, and corporate OOTB partner, facilitated a workshop entitled "My Money's Got A Job," a seminar focused on financial investment principles. The 3-hour interactive workshop provided a forum for the students to learn how the stock and bond markets work, and help the students understand the Income potential and economic risk associated with financial investing. The ultimate objective is to foster a culture of, and to develop a passion for financial empowerment and becoming an enthusiastic investor.

The character development segment of the workshop was facilitated by Tony Thompson, the store manager of the Union City Wal-Mart. The character Development topic was integrity, and specifically touched on how Wal-Mart as a corporation and Tony as a store manager value organizational and personal Integrity.

Out Of The Box, a nonprofit program, is designed to empower at-risk youth who are between the ages of 14-17 years old and provide them with the education to be good financial stewards.

This program is possible due to the partnership between local business leaders and the South Fulton Business and Empowerment Center and is committed to developing young leaders by teaching business and character principles that will last a lifetime.

The next OOTB session will commence in August 2006 at the South Fulton Business and Empowerment Center, Union City. For student pre-enrollment, volunteer and sponsorship information, please contact the Center at 770-964-5744.