



Math tutor Pamela Croston mentors a group of students at a YCC retreat April 19 at the HOLLA! Center.



Chief Magistrate Weaver Thomas mentors male students during a small group session at a YCC retreat April 19 at the HOLLA! Center.

HOLLA! Retreat Inspires AnsonYCC Students To Chase Their Dreams

This is a release from HOLLA!: "Martin Luther King, that man never had a dream, that dream had him. People don't choose dreams, dreams choose them ... Do you have the courage to have the dream that picked you, that befits you and grips you? Or will you let it get away and slip through?"

So began a highly charged day of motivation and inspiration at the Anson High School Youth Career Connect (YCC) mentoring retreat held Wednesday, April 19 at the HOLLA! Center in Morven. A YouTube video by spoken word artist Prince Ea kicked off the day, encouraging students to chase their dreams. Tommy Lee Nichols, director of Glorified Media LLC of Charlotte, played the video in advance of his remarks.

Passengers think planes are dangerous to fly in, but it is much more dangerous for a plane to stay on the ground, Prince Ea said. Because when it's on the ground, the plane starts to rust and malfunction more than it would in the air. "Planes were built to live in the sky, and every person was built to live out the dream inside," he said. Struggle and criticism are prerequisites for greatness. One either deals with the pain on the road to success or the pain of being haunted with regret, he continued. "You cannot go back and make a brand new beginning, but you can start now and make a brand new ending," he said in concluding the video.

Nichols then began his talk with the nearly 100 students who attended the retreat, along with high school staff, local and regional leaders, and members of the HOLLA! YCC mentoring team. Nichols, whose company produces the Charlotte Film Festival, discussed an exciting possible collaboration with HOLLA! and the YCC program to strengthen its information technology curriculum.

The Schaeffler Group USA Inc. of Cheraw presented another interesting concept in which an apprenticeship program is being offered to local students.

The retreat, made possible through a partnership with HOLLA! and the YCC program, featured presentations by representatives from local and regional businesses. Students also experienced small group mentoring sessions, one-on-one mentoring, breakfast, lunch and prizes.

Other mentoring team members present were Anson County Sheriff Landric Reid; Scott Collier of South Piedmont Community College; Chris Sanford of IGA; Jan Long and Chelson Perry of Walmart; Kimberly Harrington of the Pageland Progressive Journal; Chuck Horne of Hornwood; Anson County Chief Magistrate Weaver Thomas; Vionita LeGrande of the State Employees Credit Union; Roslynn Streater of the Anson County Wastewater Treatment Plant; deejay Kenwynn Gatewood; Donnell Lindsey of the Ladybug Restaurant; math tutor Pamela T. Croston; and motivational speakers Pamela Morrow-Blount and Zack Parson.

"I cannot imagine anyone leaving here today without feeling some sense of excitement and promise for the future. This type of atmosphere creates the perfect storm for success," said Leon Gatewood, HOLLA! CEO.

"We are inspired by the potential impact these young adults will have on society," said Long, who is personnel coordinator of the Wadesboro Walmart.

Program director Deborah Davis said the YCC program, in its third year, has been affiliated with HOLLA! since its inception, and that HOLLA! has been a valuable partner. She emphasized the importance that all community partners have with the success of the program.

The day ended with prizes and a traditional balloon release from the top deck of the HOLLA! Center. The students were charged to associate those things that were restricting their rise to the top of their potential - dream killers, so to speak - to the balloons, and to release them and let them fly away.

Youth Career Connect is a product of the Obama Administration. Anson County Schools is one of only 24 systems throughout the country to receive funding for the program. "HOLLA! is proud to be a part of this amazing project and we thank Anson High School for using the resources we have worked so diligently to provide. That, after all, is why we're here," Gatewood said.

Yolanda Lindsey Earns Business Management Degree

Grantham University is proud to announce that Yolanda Lindsey, of Wadesboro, recently graduated with an online AA Business Management.

"We are so proud to congratulate Yolanda Lindsey on trusting our team with the dream of education. What an accomplishment!" said Dr. Cheryl Hayek, Grantham's interim university president and chief academic officer. "It gives us such great pleasure to see students' hard work result in an education that will help set them up for success in the next exciting chapter of their lives."

Ladies Out at Grace Senior Center

Ladies Out is held every Monday at 1 p.m. at Grace Senior Center. To find out what that means, and to register, call 704-694-6616.

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