

Wanted:

Businesses and professional organizations to share time, energy and expertise with local public schools.

The *Adopt-A-School Program* is seeking partners for schools that are currently without adopters for the 2003-04 school year. This includes:

1. Paul W. Bryant High (Eastern)
2. Davis Emerson Middle School (Holt)
3. Northside Middle School
4. Sprayberry Regional Education Center
5. Tuscaloosa Center for Technology (TCT)

Also, the following schools would benefit from additional co-adopters:

1. Central Elementary School
2. Eastwood Middle School
3. Echols Middle School
4. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary
5. Maxwell Elementary
6. Skyland Elementary
7. Taylorville Primary School



• Adopt-A-School Needs You! •

Want to know more?

Contact Deloris McMullen
deloris@tuscaloosachamber.com
391-0563



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United Blood Services Is Looking for “Hometown Heroes”

You know, we all have so much to be proud of with regard to the quality of life we enjoy here in the place we call “home”. Tuscaloosa and Northport have a long and remarkable history of blending people and languages, cultures, and religions ... into a progressive and cosmopolitan community with resources yet untapped.

Tuscaloosa “City Fest” each year gives us a wonderful chance to revel in all that is wonderful and unique to this community...a mélange of music and food and families being together. We’ve just celebrated the long traditions of Mardi Gras, and exhibited an unbridled joy for life. We are privileged to enjoy world-class medical facilities...where advancements in the treatment of cancer, heart disease, orthopedics...offer us a chance at defeating life-threatening illness... a chance to overcome the pain and limitations of arthritis or degenerative disease. We all have things for which we are grateful...including the compassion and generosity of the people with whom we share this incredible quality of life.

As community leaders, you all have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to achieve great things for your communities. The synergy you can create to resolve problems...your capacity to identify challenges and rally support to overcome them...just remarkable. You have led your communities so far...you have accomplished so much for so many.

Today, we are faced with another kind of challenge, one that threatens the lives of countless families in the cities we love. That challenge is a critical blood shortage. It is a very serious health threat, as the distinguished members of our medical community here today can tell you first-hand. It is a health concern that can be solved, with your help.



At the request of DCH Regional Medical Center, **United Blood Services** now serves the Greater Tuscaloosa County area as primary blood provider. It is our commitment to DCH...your local hospital... that guides us as we work each day to ensure an adequate and safe blood supply is available to meet the needs of patients counting on us here in your hometown.

Some of you may not be familiar with United Blood Services, and you might not be aware of the relationship we have with your hospitals...the commitment we have made to serve each of you as a partner in the medical miracles performed here in your back yard.

United Blood Services is the second largest, non-profit, blood service in the country. We have centers in 17 states, and provide over 100,000 units of blood and blood products to 76 hospitals in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama each year.

We are part of a national blood network, and recently were asked to make a commitment to the U. S. Department of Defense to act as one of the 6 national hubs for the civilian back-up blood supply to our men and women in the armed forces. We are a community blood service dedicated to serving community hospitals. We are part of

your community because we are a vital part of what goes on in your hospital every day.

So what does all this mean to you? Why is this relevant? These are frightening times we are living in. You have watched local news chronicle the build-up of troops, and watched our young men and women...our loved ones...bravely go off to defend their country.

As business people, you are keenly aware of the precarious nature of our economy. I wonder how many of us are facing the private agony of loved ones facing cancer treatments or who suffer from sickle cell anemia...how many of us are worried for those we know and love who might be in surgery.

We are all looking for answers...all looking for a way to make our lives matter and make a difference.

And in a day and time when most of us feel as individuals we can not really make a difference, I would say to you that you can make a difference...a powerful difference...by giving blood.

Your one donation of blood can save as many as three lives. Imagine that! Three people can be helped to have a second chance at life...with your one unit of blood! How powerful that is! What a difference you can make!

If this is true, then why are we facing a critical blood shortage, you might ask? People are generous...they donate blood. That is true. But understand that as medical technology advances and we are able to do more for more people, the demand for blood and blood products continues to grow. As the demand grows and the number of blood donors continues to decline, the struggle for life becomes more difficult.

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504-468-6777

("Hero" continued from page 28)

Simply put...there is not enough blood in this country to meet the growing demand. No single blood organization, no matter how large they are...can meet all the demands. And as a nation at war, we are facing yet another reason to be concerned about the need for blood...and the lack of an adequate supply.

If I were to ask you what the number one reason people do not give blood is...what would you tell me? The Number One reason people do not give...is because THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN ASKED!

I am asking your help...asking you to help us lift our voices to the public so that more people can be asked more often and more effectively. We are asking you to be heroes...by sponsoring blood drives within your company or organization and offering the chance for people in your communities to give blood. I am asking you to be "Hometown Heroes"...to lead by your example so that others will be inspired to do what you are being asked to do.

If you have never been touched by the experience of having a loved one in need of blood and not had the blood product available, you can't begin to imagine the devastation and heartache families feel who have had to endure this.

We face a struggle every day, trying to save lives. We are searching for safety...some degree of assurance that things are going to be okay. That sense of security...of being safe...must come from each of us.

Won't you take the time to make a difference? Please think with your heart... and act with your conscience. Please. Give blood today. Call **Beth Blalock of United Blood Services at (205) 750-8999** and schedule your blood drive or individual blood donation. Someone is counting on you.

Adopt-A-School Sustainers Provide Fiscal Support for Partnership

The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama believes that it is important to prepare our students to face the many challenges of an ever-changing work environment. One way of accomplishing this goal is through the Adopt-A-School program, a business-education partnership program now completing its eighteenth year of success in our community.

Obviously, this program does not happen without a great deal of support from the corporate community and a lot of coordination from the Adopt-A-School staff.

Adopters and Sustainers are the lifeblood of our program. Adopters give support through donated time, expertise, and financial commitments. Sustainers provide the financial support necessary for the coordination and administrative function of the program, allowing us to:

¥ Provide coordinator workshops teaching our partners how to get the most out of their partnerships;

¥ Maintain quality training manuals and other educational materials to support both corporate and educational partners;

¥ Provide Adopt-A-School quarterly newsletters -- a vital link between partnerships to share those great ideas!

¥ Provide administrative support to the Adopt-A-School program through recruitment and training of new business partners for schools.

The annual Sustainer Drive for the 2003-04 school year is currently underway. We thank those businesses that have provided the financial support in the past to help secure the growth and success of the Adopt-A-School Program.

If you have not become a part of Adopt-A-School in the past, consider adding your name to the list of 46 businesses in our community who were Sustainer contributors during the 2002-03 school year. Contact **Deloris McMullen** at 391-0563 or deloris@tuscaloosachamber.com.



YES, I want to be an Adopt-A-School Sustainer for 2003-04!

Company Name _____
(as you wish your contribution to be listed)

Representative s Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone # _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Please check level of commitment and appropriate box to the right:

- *Gold, \$1,000 or more * I have attached my contribution of \$ _____.
- * Silver, \$500 or more * I wish to be invoiced for my contribution of _____.
- * Bronze, \$250 or more \$ _____ in the month of _____ (June-January).

Please make checks payable to **The West Alabama Chamber Foundation**. The Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) approved corporation under the Internal Revenue Service Regulations. Contributions may be tax deductible as allowed by law. Please mail your contribution to: Adopt-A-School, P.O. Box 020410, Tuscaloosa, AL 35402 or fax your commitment to 391-0565. **THANKS!**

ViewPoint

by *Johnnie Aycock*
President



In the book **Tuscaloosa: Centennial Progress, Millennial Hopes**, Kellee Reinhart writes that in Tuscaloosa “the arts come packaged in a dazzling array of shapes and sizes – a kaleidoscope of activities and opportunities to learn, to teach and to experience arts at their finest. There’s just no other way to define the magic of West Alabama’s arts scene.” Think about that for just a moment - a kaleidoscope of artistic treasures.

As we go about our daily lives, how often do we begin to take the qualities of our community for granted – qualities that are such an integral part of

the fabric of our community, and that provide the essence of who we are as citizens and as a society. And the cultural tapestry of Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama is perhaps at the soul of who we are as a community.

What an impressive array of accessible, diverse and enriching cultural opportunities we have in our community. It seems there is not a week that goes by that in some way, we are celebrating the arts with a multitude of visual and performing offerings. Whether it’s the sounds of a symphony or young people playing the blues – whether it is the laughter, drama or music of theatre – the

beauty of life captured on a canvass, in a native craft or through dance – we are a blessed, culturally-rich community.

While we enjoy and experience the arts, do we often think about the impact on our community’s cultural and educational fabric, and on all aspects of the quality of life and economic well-being we enjoy in Tuscaloosa County? Do the arts make a difference? Here are a few things to think about.

The value of the arts has real world benefits. Practical skills and habits result from appreciation of and participation in the arts. The arts, in all

(Continued next page)

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(“Art” continued from previous page)

of the various forms, stimulate, help develop and refine cognitive and creative skills. Many business leaders tell us regularly that adaptable, flexible “knowledge” workers are needed in a 21st century economy, and the arts can and do contribute to these values and a person’s character.

For example, if you are a member of a symphony or of the cast of a play, one has an obligation to work together and perform as a unit. You have to work in concert with the goal of the group. You learn there is a time for originality and solo performance and a time for replication and a time to be a productive member of the group. The arts contribute to building a value system, self-discipline and responsibility as well as gaining the pure enjoyment and inspiration from participation.

The arts are fundamental to communicating and understanding, not only ourselves, but others. Through all forms of cultural arts, we learn to appreciate and create things of lasting beauty and meaning. As pointed out in a

recent article I read, we know about ancient civilizations and cultures through their architecture, poetry, paintings, sculptures, music, dance and other art forms left behind.

We, too, will be known someday to future generations by the cultural arts we produce and leave to posterity. How can anyone understand their culture and the essence of community without the arts?

There is also tangible economic value that results from investment in the arts. In a recent issue of *Arts & Business Quarterly*, it was pointed out that the nonprofit arts industry generated over \$36.8 billion of business annually in the United States and supported over 1.3 million full-time employment. Including full-time and part-time, the arts employ 2.7% of the American workforce, more than agriculture. And the arts account for 6% of the U. S. gross national product.

In a 2001 economic impact report, the arts in Tuscaloosa County generated over \$3.1 million in total contributed income with almost \$2.5 million

spent in the local economy. Total budgets of arts organizations in 2001 were over \$7.7 million with an economic impact of at least \$8.6 million. And for every \$1 spent on the arts, more than \$4 are generated through restaurant, hotel, retail, and transportation revenues.

Investment in the arts does stimulate and contribute to our community’s economic vitality as well as the quality of life and our personal enjoyment. The arts contribute to the educational development of our children and youth as well as to higher skilled, productive and motivated adults. The arts have a specific, quantifiable economic impact while directly contributing to the creation and sustainability of a civil, quality society.

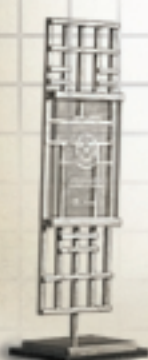
Indeed, the arts enrich our lives – enhance learning – expand our minds, creativity and abilities to work together in harmony – and excite the soul. The arts in Tuscaloosa County are a vital and significant ingredient in being a preferred 21st century, All America address.

Let’s celebrate the arts!



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The Alabama Associated General Contractors recently awarded the 2003 Architect of the Year Award to Tuscaloosa’s Ellis Architects. For more than 10 years, Ellis Architects has continued to build on its foundation of client satisfaction, design excellence and attention to detail from start to finish. “We thank our loyal clients for their continued trust and confidence they place in our firm.” – Michael A. Ellis, AIA

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