



their nutrition when little sustenance was available.

Students read *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni and *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margo Lee Shetterly. Students also read articles and watched videos that highlighted the many successes of African Americans throughout history and those making an impact in our world today. Through generous donations, students were able to read and received a personal copy of *Black Panther: The Battle for Wakanda* by Brandon T. Snider.

When asked what they enjoyed about learning Black History, one student stated, “I enjoyed hearing different stories because I don’t hear stories like that very much.” Another student stated, “I like hearing about different changes that have been made and happened in the world.” All of them eagerly replied, “We loved the food and the history!”



PROJECT AWARE

Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) is a federally funded grant to increase awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth. This program provides behavioral health resources and support to families as well as training to school personnel and other adults who interact with school aged children. In partnership with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and The Georgia Department of Education, Project AWARE will offer school-based individual and group therapy as well as district-wide training specific to the wellness of school aged youth.



Tangela Brice is the new Project AWARE Coordinator. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, who earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Albany State University and went on to complete her Master's Degree in Social Work from Valdosta State University. Tangela worked for many years in both inpatient and outpatient social service settings. She brings an array of experience from the areas of child protective services, crisis response/management, grant writing/program development, as well as a provider of individual therapy to children, adults, and families.

Serra Boone will be serving as the Mental Health Clinical. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, who earned her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Albany State University. She continued her education at Thomas University by receiving her Master's in Community Counseling. As a professional counselor, Serra has provided individual, family, and group therapy as well as crisis management in outpatient and school settings. Serra has worked with school-aged children for approximately 12 years to include youth in at-risk situations and those diagnosed with persistent mental illness and behavioral concerns. Most recently in her career, she managed a school-based mental health program.



HOUSTON COUNTY SHARKS



The Houston County Sharks finished their regular season play on Saturday, February 20, 2020. The Junior Varsity finished their regular season in 3rd place. They competed in the state tournament on Saturday, February 27, 2020. During the semifinal round game, the JV Sharks defeated the Muscogee Lions to advance to the championship game. They fell to the West GA Wolverines in the championship game and finished their post season play as the 2021 State Runners-Up.

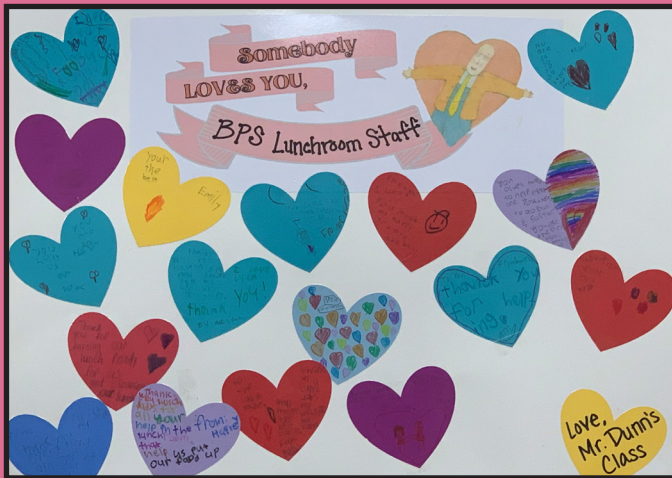
The Varsity team played a doubleheader against Henry County to finish the regular season in second place. The Sharks hosted and defeated the Dekalb County Silverstreaks on February 27th for the semifinal round. They will advance to the championship game which will be played on March 13th at the Macon Centreplex. Tip-off for that game is scheduled for 3:00 pm against the Gwinnett Heat.

Parent Workshop

Marina Jones, our Parent Mentor held a virtual parent workshop on February 18th for parents of students with disabilities. Many parents attended the workshop to hear Ms. Kristy Harris, attorney at law with Moody and Associates, present information about guardianship for students once they reach the age of 18. She shared with families how guardianship is obtained and answered questions from the parents. The next parent workshop will be held virtually on March 18th, where information about transition from high school to adulthood will be shared.

Valentine's Day Celebration in the Lunchrooms

Valentine's Day was celebrated in lunchrooms across the district with decorations, dessert and even festive shirts. The sweetest moment of the day was not an edible treat. Instead, it came from the students in Mr. Dunn's class at Bonaire Primary. Notes from the students were written on hearts and arranged on a large poster board. The messages ranged from "thank you for helping me" and "you are the best" to "you are so so so so so sweet to me". The valentines validated that our purpose is so much more than just serving meals. Love is the secret ingredient that makes every meal taste better and every child feel valued. We are thankful for this reminder from our students of just how important it is to serve love and kindness with every meal!



Georgia Peanut Commission Award



Houston County School District's School Nutrition Program (SNP) was recently honored by the Georgia Peanut Commission. The district was given the "Peanut Butter Usage Award" for its 2020 pandemic feeding program. The Georgia Peanut Commission worked with the Georgia School Nutrition Association to highlight the efforts of school districts in the areas of innovation, volume and community engagement. Each winning district received a trophy, 720 jars of

16 oz. peanut butter for the feeding program, and a Georgia Peanuts dish towel and spatula for each team member. Houston County was one of four districts to win top honors.

Pictured in the warehouse with the prizes are: (from left) Lauren Koff, HCSD Dietician; Leslie Wagner, Southern Peanut Growers; Jessie Bland, Georgia Peanut Commission; and Meredith Potter, HCSD Director of School Nutrition.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Our teacher in the spotlight this month is April Hardee. She joined our Houston County team this school year as a special education teacher at Eagle Springs Elementary School. Mrs. Hardee grew up in neighboring Jones County, but now calls Warner Robins home. A Mercer University graduate, Mrs. Hardee completed her master's degree at Georgia Southern University. She and her husband, Scott, welcomed a baby boy, Slayden, to their family this past summer. In her free time, she relishes getting to spend time with her close-knit family. She has played the piano since age 5 and aspires to play the cello. This is her 8th year teaching. She knew she wanted to become a teacher from an early age. Mrs. Hardee loves teaching and seeing the progress her students have made with their behavior. She also shared that no matter what has been thrown their way (including COVID) they have risen to the challenge and continued to grow. She appreciates the amazing support that she gets from her administration at ESES. "They are amazing and definitely make my job easier knowing they have my back!!" Mrs. Hardee is a great addition to Eagle Springs. She works hard to ensure all her students feel loved, supported and challenged while making academic, emotional and social behavioral gains.

