



Children are Gifts

How one Faith-Based Community is Taking Children and Parents to Task

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NEW CAROLINA™
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RISING AS ONE



I was so excited to be part of [New Carolina's](#) Summit last November on getting parents involved in education. As chair of New Carolina's task force on addressing issues facing distressed areas, I have been involved with the Council on Competitiveness' work for two years. It was a great pleasure to be part of a summit also addressing education, a vital component to the successful future of our state. There were over 280 people at the parent involvement summit. They came together to discuss leadership actions for getting parents involved in their child's education. People I addressed represented all sectors including government, educators, business and faith communities. As one part of a panel full of people working on engaging parents, students, schools and community for

the improvement of our state's children's lives, I was thrilled to talk about what my church is doing to involve the parents in the educational process of their children.

I pastor [Brookland Baptist Church](#) in West Columbia, South Carolina. We place a great deal of emphasis on excellence in education, and it begins with the parents. We begin our focus on children with a definition and understanding of the mission of the Brookland Church. Our church mission is three-fold: Evangelism, Education and Economic Empowerment.

The Education component defines our children from a spiritual and scriptural perspective: Our children are

likened unto the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18:3). They are "gifts" from the "Giver," our Creator God. Our care and treatment of the "gift" is a reflection of how we feel about the "Giver."

At Brookland, we emphasize a close relationship between parent and child in the following ways:

#1 Youth Emphasis during Worship Services

Our students take an active part in the Worship Service. The Children's Choir (over 100 children between six and 12 years old) and the Teens In Praise (over 40 teens between the ages of 13 and 19) render all the music.

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The parents have to bring them to choir rehearsals. Over 75 Junior Ushers actively serve the two Worship Services.

#2 “Spotlight on Youth” segment on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Here, we call the name of each student who has received an honor or accomplished an objective in school. There were over 200 names called on the 3rd Sunday in November. The parents are responsible for submitting their child’s name.

At the end of each semester, parents submit the names of their children who have maintained a “B” or above academic

average. These children’s names are called and each one is presented a Certificate of Excellence, a monetary gift of \$5.00 for a “B” average and \$10.00 for an “A” average. There were 176 students on the honor roll at our last recognition.

#3 Scholarships

Each student who attends college upon graduating from high school receives a scholarship (Gold, Silver or Bronze) or an Educational Assistance Award. Last year we awarded financial assistance to 26 of our graduating seniors.

#4 Tutorial Program

The Brookland Foundation sponsors a tutorial program where students are referred from a few of the schools in Lexington District 2. Parents are encouraged to bring their children for tutoring if they recognize a deficiency in a certain subject area. Our tutors are volunteer educators and professionals. They serve between 40-50 students each week.

#5 After School Program

This program targets middle school students. We assist them with everything ranging from homework, to effective

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use of computers, from managing money to using a check book. Each student is paid \$10.00 a week to participate. They are to tithe \$1.00 and save \$1.00 at the Brookland Federal Credit Union.

#6 Parents and our PTO

The Brookland Academy Child Development Center requires that parents actively participate in our PTO. Homework assignments are to be signed by parents and returned the following morning. Parents are asked to read a book to their child each night before bedtime.



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#7 Brookland and Claflin University in Orangeburg

We are beginning a collaborative initiative with [Claflin University](http://ClaflinUniversity.com), where adults 22 years or older who have finished at least two years of higher education can earn a college degree at Brookland.

I think the faith-based communities do and can continue to make great strides with our state's children. This is a call to action to all leaders in our communities to think about what they can contribute or add to what others are doing to improve parent and community involvement in a child's education.

Thanks. Blessings,

Dr. Charles B. Jackson, Sr.