



For Immediate Release

February 27, 2020

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Media Release

St. James-Santee and Deer Park girls participate in girl's summit

**St. James-Santee Elementary
Middle School**

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Charleston, SC – Middle school girls from St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School and Deer Park Middle School participated in the Love Myself Girl's Summit Thursday, February 20, 2020. The summit is held annually as part of the Supporting Independent Sisters to Achieve Success (S.I.S.T.A.S) initiative.

Guest speakers at the summit included Sonya Stevens from ABC News Channel 4, local attorney Hope Watson, Chief Deputy Patricia Garrison with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, Octavia Mitchell from News 2, local entrepreneur Stacia Dawson, local non-profit professional and consultant Nyteisha Bookert, Dr. Jamie Singleton, and young entrepreneurs Mya and Mani Jefferson.

The Jefferson sisters began their business in 2018 at the age of 12 and 11. Mani and Maya's Fruity Treats is now a sought after business that has grown in scope and success. Also of note, the girls are former students of St. James-Santee.

An arts and crafts break out session was also featured to encourage the girls to express themselves through creativity.

Area business and community members donated to the effort so that brunch could be provided as well as raffle prizes to students and participants.

"The end result was absolutely amazing," said Elbertine Manigault a teacher assistant at St. James-Santee and organizer of the summit. "It gave the girls the opportunity to see things outside of what they see here at school and in the community."

Manigault explained that each presenter provided a hands on opportunity to not only learn about the various careers but experience it through role play.

"The girls were treated to not only the individual presentations but one-on-one opportunities to speak with presenters who work in careers of interest," said Manigault.

The opportunity left the girls knowing it was critical to feel confident in life.

Tei Summerville, a parent advocate at St. James-Santee said the event is designed to show the girls that empowerment is the stepping stone to the next level.

"Our desire is for the girls to actually be presented with knowledge and to be informed so they can make confident decisions regarding their future," said Summerville. "We're addressing the interest of our scholars so they can be enriched and learn about professional fields they may not be aware of."

Deer Park Middle School students were invited to attend and as a result, the scholars want to replicate the summit at Deer Park next year.

"This small gesture of an invitation to the Deer Park students turned into something bigger," said Manigault. "It was a chain reaction that will result in a summit being held at their school and perhaps in schools across the district."

Summerville said that this model of teaching is constant and goes beyond just the day of the summit.

"As these girls approach womanhood we want to teach them solid character traits, help them learn about their heritage, show them how to build relationships and all of the other things essential for growth."

For more information contact the Office of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.