



For Immediate Release

December 21, 2017

Contact:

Donnie Newton, 843-852-2516

Media Release

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition

West Ashley High School

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Cynthia Ambrose
Deputy Superintendent of Learning
Services

Kim Wilson
Executive Director, Secondary Learning
Community

William L. Runyon III
Principal

Charleston, SC – The holidays are shining a little brighter for students from the West Ashley High School (WAHS) Art Club and Wildcat International Club, along with a number of others who have an interest in the arts. They are celebrating an honorable mention honor in the annual James Island County Park Festival of the Lights Giant Greeting Card Competition. It is the first time ever the school has received an award in the high school division.

Students involved in the contest took two and a half weeks to complete their entry, with students staying after school for up to three hours each day.

This year's theme was "Let Your Heart Be Light," a line derived from the famous Christmas song *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*. After a number planning meetings, the group decided to give their board a winter look with snowmen and a snowflake background. The group designed the snowmen to look like carolers and included found items at the top of the card in order to tie their entry to this year's theme.

Found items are things that are not conventionally used in art, such as picture frames, used books, and sheet music (all of which they incorporated into this project). Students used their skills and talent to help with specific aspects of the project. For example, sophomore Kimberly McCurdy painted "Let Your Heart Be Light" in calligraphy at the top of the greeting card.

"My favorite part about [this project] was watching the collaboration of the students," explained Wildcat International Club sponsor and Spanish teacher Mollie Soto. "Collaboration of teachers between departments is very important to building our inter-disciplinary studies at West Ashley High School. Students were able to watch the project's day-to-day progress and feel a sense of pride once it was complete."

West Ashley Art teacher Shannon Hopkins felt the project went well too.

"I loved sharing the artistic process with the group," Hopkins said. "In the real world, this is how projects are done. One person alone couldn't have achieved such an outcome. I'm so proud of our project."

Hopkins add she is proud of the students as well; not just for their accomplishment, but also for their dedication.

"It is not measured in accolades but how it was perceived by others," said Hopkins.

There were 38 entries from Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester counties in this year's contest, which was divided into four different categories: an elementary school division, a middle school division, a high school division, and honorable mention. The top three schools in each division, and those who received honorable mention, received trophies, certificates, and cash prizes.

The following schools placed in the three divisions:

Elementary School Division

- 1st place - Charleston Collegiate
- 2nd place - Orange Grove Charter
- 3rd place - Malcolm C. Hursey

Middle School Division

- 1st place - Charleston Christian
- 2nd place - Camp Road
- 3rd place - Ridge Christian Academy

High School Division

- 1st place - Cathedral Academy
- 2nd place - Crown Leadership Academy
- 3rd place - St. John's

Along with West Ashley, GLOW Homeschool, Matilda F. Dunston Primary School, and St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School received honorable mention.

"I believe that the Giant Greeting Card project went very well and turned out so much better than I could have predicted," said Soto. "I am very proud of our students, especially those who took on leadership roles over the course of the two and a half weeks, [such as] Maryann Royster and Caitlyn Still."

The giant greeting cards will be on display in Santa's Village as part of the annual Holiday Festival of Lights, now in its 28th season, until January 1, 2018.

For more information about this accomplishment for WAHS, please contact Public Relations Coordinator Donnie Newton at (843) 852-2516.

Photo Captions

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition (01)

Junior Vincentia Lewis paints one of the snowmen's hats during an afterschool painting session for West Ashley High's board that they submitted in this year's Holiday Festival of Lights Giant Greeting Card Competition.

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition (02)

Sophomore Maryann Royster add little bits of dimension and shading to West Ashley High's giant greeting card. Royster quickly emerged as one of the leaders for this project. "She spent countless hours drawing the original sketch, re-drawing it on the 4ft x 8ft plywood board and even helped draw it again with our new, improved idea," said Soto. "She is very creative and detail-oriented and is willing to share her talents; she is a natural leader and artist."

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition (03)

Junior Caitlyn Still, another leader on the team, adjusts some of the found objects at the top of West Ashley High's giant greeting card. The students glued picture frames and sheet music for the classic Christmas song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" to the top of the board. They wrote this year's theme, "Let Your Heart Be Light", across the different pages.

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition (04)

West Ashley High students (L to R) Hanna Hughes, Caitlyn Still, Vincentia Lewis, Dean Rose, and Kimberly McCurdy pose with West Ashley High's giant greeting card before it was transported to James Island County Park for judging. Their greeting card will be on display in Santa's Village until January 1, 2018.

West Ashley High Participates in Giant Greeting Card Competition (05)

West Ashley High School teachers (left – middle) Mollie Soto and Shannon Hopkins stand proudly with junior (right) Caitlyn Still after receiving honorable mention in this year's Giant Greeting Card Competition through the Holiday Festival of Lights. This is the first year that the high school placed.

###

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 that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 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.