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Communities In Schools

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AT&T will partner with Communities In Schools to support Bruns Avenue Elementary

Charlotte, NC (August 18, 2008) – Nearly 50 employees from AT&T descended upon Bruns Avenue Elementary School on the morning of August 18 to welcome teachers back to school and help them get their classrooms ready for the students' arrival next week. The volunteers from AT&T spread out among the classrooms, helping teachers move desks and chairs into place, decorate bulletin boards, organize supplies and generally perform whatever tasks the teachers needed. Staff and teachers were also treated to breakfast and each received a briefcase filled with supplies, courtesy of AT&T.

The assistance provided by AT&T employees on August 18 was not just a one-time occurrence, however. This was the kick-off to a new partnership between the school, AT&T, and Communities In Schools (CIS), a nonprofit dropout prevention organization that provides resources and volunteers to some of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's neediest schools.

AT&T recently made a \$60,000 contribution to CIS to support a full-time "Site Coordinator" (CIS employee) at a school with high needs. CIS executive director Dr. Bill Anderson said Bruns Avenue was the "perfect and logical choice."

"Bruns Avenue certainly has the need -- one hundred percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch," said Anderson. "The school is located practically in AT&T's backyard, off of West Trade Street, which makes it convenient for their employees to volunteer. We're very excited about the partnership and predict it will have a huge impact on the school," he added.

According to Carlos E. Sanchez, AT&T-N.C.'s Regional Director of External Affairs, the company plans to be very involved at Bruns Avenue throughout the school year with both financial and volunteer support.

"At AT&T, we believe in giving back to our communities," said Sanchez. "Education, and especially dropout prevention, is the primary focus of our corporate citizenship. This partnership is a great opportunity for our company and our employees to help make a lasting difference in the lives of the students at Bruns Avenue Elementary and in the school itself."



AT&T volunteers Tom Audette and Robin Ratliff help first grade teacher April Durham arrange the desks in her class-room at Bruns Avenue Elementary.

Bruns Avenue principal Steve Hall is also grateful for the support from the partnership. Prior to Bruns Avenue, Hall was principal for three years at Sharon Elementary, a school that didn't lack for resources and volunteers.

"It's certainly a change and a challenge, coming from Sharon Elementary to Bruns Avenue," said Hall. "But Bruns Avenue is a great little school with a wonderful staff that just needs some additional 'TLC' and new energy. I'm excited about the possibilities and thrilled about the AT&T partnership through Communities In Schools. Today was fantastic and a great way to begin the year – now we just need to get the students in here and pass on the energy."

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Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CIS)

As part of the nation's largest and most effective dropout prevention network, the mission of Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc., (CIS) is to help disadvantaged young people stay in school, successfully learn, and prepare for life by connecting needed community resources with schools. Since 1985, CIS has mobilized locally existing resources and coordinated partnerships with health and human service agencies to help thousands of at-risk students overcome academic, social, and economic barriers. CIS currently provides services to more than 4,500 students in 36 Charlotte-Mecklenburg public schools. CIS is funded in part by the United Way of Central Carolinas, Mecklenburg County, and the Charlotte Merchants Foundation, as well as corporations, civic and faith organizations, and individuals.

www.cischarlotte.org

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