

Angel Tree project needs assistance

Special to The Clinton Courier

The Junior Auxiliary of Clinton has begun their annual Angel Tree project, which benefits children within the Clinton Public School District. The service organization partners with the Clinton Community Christian Corporation (4C's) to identify families in need

who are currently facing challenges and may need assistance in making Christmas memories for their children.

Each child has an angel for cloth-

ing needs and one for wishes. This way, each child receives clothing items (which help meet a need), as well as something fun. Organizers ask that two shirts and two pairs of pants be purchased for each clothing angel. The wishes include items such as games, educational items and bicycles. The fulfillment cost for an angel typically ranges between

forty and sixty dollars.

Angels are available for pick-up at Funtime Preschool, Holy Ghost Baptist Church, Parkway Pharmacy, Northside Baptist Church, the

YMCA, and the Baptist Healthplex. Items collected for each angel should be returned to the location from which the angel was originally placed, with the exception of bicycles, which may be taken to the 4C's the week of November 27 – December 1. All items should be returned by December 1.

For more information, contact Laurie Lawson at the 4C's at 601-924-9436.

Angels are available at the following locations:

Funtime Preschool
Holy Ghost Baptist Church
Parkway Pharmacy
Northside Baptist Church
Baptist Healthplex
Clinton YMCA



Understanding elementary school ratings

By The Parents' Campaign
Executive Director Nancy Loomer

If your lower elementary school's rating is not what you think it should be, I might have an explanation for you: its rating is based on test scores from another school.

The feds require that all schools be rated. Mississippi's state accountability testing begins in grade three. That creates a challenge when it comes to rating lower elementary schools that have no tested grades (i.e., K-1 or K-2 schools).

Mississippi's accountability model assigns ratings for lower elementary schools without a tested grade using the test scores of the students in the next highest tested grade who attended the lower elementary school and are still in the district. Put more simply, they get their scores from the performance of their students after those students go on to the next school and are tested in grades three and four.

Elementary schools are graded on two primary factors: 1. Proficiency (how much students know, or how well they score on the test), and 2. Academic growth (how much students have learned from one year to the next as measured by state tests).

Proficiency scores for K-1 and K-2 schools come from third-graders in the next school, and academic growth scores come from fourth graders - two or three years after those students have left the lower elementary school. This causes serious heartburn for lower elementary educators who find their schools rated based on teaching over which they have no control.

It's worth noting that the teacher incentive bonuses that were passed by the Legislature are based on school ratings.

Of particular concern is the fact

that academic growth from grade three to grade four in English Language Arts is especially low statewide this year. Academic growth counts for 400 of the total possible 700 points for elementary schools, putting K-2 schools at a serious disadvantage.

Certainly, the quality of the teaching in kindergarten, first, and second grades has an impact on proficiency in grade three.

It's harder to make the argument that the quality of teaching that occurred several years back affects academic growth from grade three to grade four.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Parents' Campaign was founded by public school parents in 2006 to provide parents information about legislative initiatives concerning their children's education and to give parents, educators, community and business leaders and other public school supporters a way to participate in decisions that affect public schools.

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