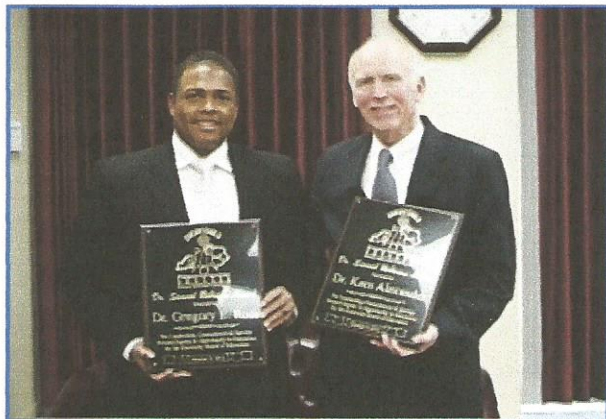


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## Ross and Alexander share Robinson Award

Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 10:00:51 PM | Nancy Rodriguez



Gregory Ross and Kern Alexander received the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award during the Kentucky Board of Education meeting. Photo by Susan Riddell, Oct. 9, 2012

At its meeting in Frankfort Monday, the Kentucky Board of Education presented the annual Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to Gregory Ross, Ed.D., principal of McNabb Elementary in the Paducah Independent school district, and Kern Alexander, Ed.D., excellence professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and former president of Murray State University and Western Kentucky University.

Since 2004, the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award has been conferred on an individual or groups in Kentucky for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students. Robinson was a member of the Kentucky Board of Education for many years in the 1990s and 2000s.

Ross was nominated by Julie Gargus, a teacher at McNabb Elementary, who said he embodied the best qualities of teaching.

"He is a teacher in every aspect of the word," Gargus said. "Although he has done many things, ranging from international athletics to directing group homes, the portion of his career he has found most rewarding is being an educator."

Alexander was nominated by Michael J. Buckman, director of development for Nazareth Home, Inc. Buckman praised Alexander for his long involvement in public education.

"Today, Kentucky is at the top in improving higher education thanks to Dr. Alexander's efforts in the classroom, the boardroom and in the halls of Frankfort," Buckman said.

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## Grades improve at McNabb

BY JODY NORWOOD [jnorwood@paducahsun.com](mailto:jnorwood@paducahsun.com)

Nov 17, 2012 | 49 views | 0 [e](#) | 4 [g](#) | [i](#) | [t](#)



**ALLIE DOUGLASS** | *The Sun* Fifth-grader Madison Robinson plucks the strings of her violin Wednesday during an orchestra class offered as part of the new enrichment program at McNabb Elementary. The program offers academically and behaviorally eligible third- through fifth-graders a class of their choice for one hour each day. There are 15 activities to choose from, ranging from ballet to archery.



**ALLIE DOUGLASS** | *The Sun* Tyler Barnes prepares to release his arrow Wednesday during an archery class offered as part of the new enrichment program at McNabb Elementary.

Educators at McNabb Elementary School have found a way to incorporate nontraditional learning experiences such as candle-making and archery with standards like math and reading.

Principal Gregory Ross said the school started an enrichment program this year as an incentive for third- through fifth-graders struggling academically. In the first three weeks, Ross said, assessed test scores improved for 15 students needing academic intervention. Since beginning this school year, academically eligible participation grew from less than 100 to 212.

Ross said grades and behavior have improved at the school with a student composition of 90 percent minority and 90 percent on free or reduced lunch, students typically identified as at-risk.

"Kids are really working to get into a program," Ross said. "These are assessed test scores, so it's not like you can one day not have it and then the next day have it; they had to have had it all along and just not applied themselves."

Enrichment classes are offered one hour each day in addition to core content subjects like math, science and reading. Ross said a schedule change to allow for increased physical fitness education freed time for enrichments instead of doing them after school.

"A lot of our kids don't get cultural activities," Ross said. "The hope is that this will spur some potential talents and gifts in kids, even career goals. That's our big push by providing them with ballet, the orchestra and art."

McNabb offers 15 enrichment classes, varying from fitness-focused yoga and advanced physical education to news programs put together on iPads. Storytelling, ballet, choir, drama and poetry classes are offered. Students create candles and other items in home economics.

Almost all enrichments are taught by McNabb staff, using skills and interests of faculty members to develop the curriculum. One exception is Doug Van Fleet of the Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Van Fleet volunteers time to lead orchestra students, teaching them how to read music and play instruments.

"We want to open doors for them," Van Fleet said. "The whole world is open to you if you learn to play music. Some people look at it and say they're very limited in what they can do because of their socio-economic structure. That's not true. That might have to do with how much they can afford, but not with their skills."

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## Hundreds of community members gather for Thanksgiving feasts

By Mallory Panuska [mpanuska@paducahsun.com](mailto:mpanuska@paducahsun.com)

Nov 23, 2012 | 53 views | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0



ALLIE DOUGLASS | The Sun Sisters Bianca (left) and Autumn Sloan laugh while enjoying pumpkin pie at a Thanksgiving meal on Thursday at McNabb Elementary. It was the first time the school has hosted a Thanksgiving meal for the community, and about 200 people attended.



ALLIE DOUGLASS | The Sun Pilar Fondaw (right) of Kevil graciously hands out Thanksgiving meals on Thursday at Martha's Vineyard. Martha's offered free meals to the community by dine-in, carry-out or delivery.



ALLIE DOUGLASS | The Sun Bella Rose Brown, 6, hands out cranberry sauce for a Thanksgiving meal on Thursday at Community Kitchen. Community Kitchen only had to recruit five more volunteers than it usually has on the five days it serves meals.

The smell of turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings permeated the unseasonably warm air outside of several McCracken County locations that offered free Thanksgiving meals on Thursday.

Hundreds of community members flooded in to enjoy food, fun and a family atmosphere.

Paducah's McNabb Elementary School was just one of the locations where citizens were able to enjoy a free meal on Thursday, with longtime Thanksgiving Day servers, such as Martha's Vineyard ministry and the Community Kitchen, also welcoming diners.

With more than 90 percent of McNabb Elementary students receiving free or reduced lunches, and many taking food home with them on a regular basis, Principal Greg Ross said offering a free Thanksgiving meal made sense. He said he and his wife put their heads together this year, tapped members of the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations, and managed to wrangle enough donations and volunteers to serve a great meal.

"I'm just thankful," Ross said. "I'm thankful for the amount of support from the community."

Donations flooded in from places such as Texas Roadhouse, which provided the majority of the side dishes, along with many other community businesses. Ross said Starnes Barbecue cooked donated turkeys for free and more than 100 volunteers, including members of the Chamber, Paducah Mayor-Elect Gayle Kaler and members of the Paducah Tilghman football team, donated time throughout the day.

Ross said more than 200 people came through the doors to get a hot meal on Thursday, many of whom were not students at the school. He said that the sense of community and togetherness that the event created was just as important as feeding those who were hungry.

"It's not only just feeding people who need food, but having a meal as a family," he said.

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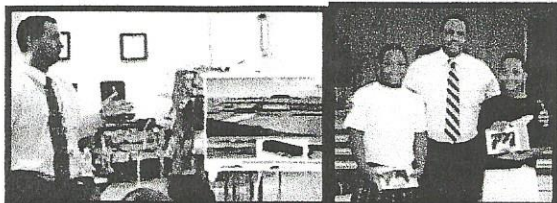
## Huddleston and Ross Selected for Leadership Institute



Friday, 25 May 2012 12:19

Paducah Middle principal Tim Huddleston and McNabb Elementary principal Greg Ross are members of a group of 56 Kentucky principals who have been selected to receive year-long executive level leadership training through the [Leadership Institute for School Principals](#), an institute created and funded by the state's business community through the Kentucky Chamber Foundation.

Training for the class of 2013 will begin this summer at the nationally recognized Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, N.C. It will continue with two follow-up sessions in the fall and early next year at the Kentucky Chamber's headquarters in Frankfort. CCL is a top-ranked global provider of executive education founded in 1970 that established an education and nonprofit section in 1988.



"We are excited about being able to offer this opportunity to educators in Kentucky," noted Dave Adkisson, secretary of the Chamber Foundation and president and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. "Employers understand the positive impact of strong leadership in the workplace, and the same is true of schools. That's why we think it is important Kentucky principals be given executive-level training similar to that provided for corporate leaders."

The participating principals will attend at no cost to themselves. Tuition and hotel costs will be paid by the Kentucky Chamber Foundation, and each participant will receive a stipend to cover travel and meals.



## Ross Receives Curlee Brown Freedom Award



Wednesday, 18 January 2012 07:54

McNabb Elementary principal Greg Ross was awarded the Curlee Brown Freedom Award at the Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Celebration luncheon hosted by the Paducah-McCracken County NAACP on January 16. The award is named after Curlee Brown, Sr. , who served as the local NAACP branch for more than 30 years. (Photo credit: Bo Cole)



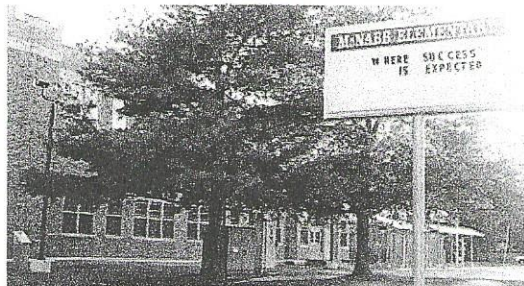
Last Updated on Wednesday, 18 January 2012 08:08

[print](#)

## McNabb tops city's test scores

by By Rebecca Feldhaus [rfeldhaus@paducahsun.com](mailto:rfeldhaus@paducahsun.com)

10.06.11 - 01:00 am



Greg Ross lauds the success of his school in last year's core content testing. The McNabb Elementary School principal said the environment of high expectations and teacher preparation has made the difference at the elementary school over the past few years.

McNabb's scores for math and reading on core content testing hover just above 75 and 79 percent, respectively. That's higher than both of the other elementary schools in the Paducah Public School District. The math score surpasses both Morgan and Clark elementary schools by almost 10 percentage points.

What impresses Ross most about the results is that most schools like McNabb, with high minority enrollments, are viewed as failing schools. McNabb Elementary School has a free and reduced lunch rate of close to 100 percent, Ross said. Many schools that have high minority rates, as well as high free and reduced lunch rates, are not scoring well on standardized testing, he said. McNabb is doing just the opposite.

Lisa Gross, spokeswoman for the Kentucky Department of Education, said McNabb Elementary School did well compared to similar schools in the state on the No Child Left Behind goals.

"Of the 612 schools that had the same number of goals as McNabb, only four other schools in the state also had large enough populations of African Americans to be held accountable for those students' performance," Gross said in a statement.

Of those four schools, Gross said, only one other than McNabb made all 10 NCLB goals.

Ross said he believes equal expectation across socioeconomic and racial lines is one reason for the strong test results.

"It's not allowing yourself to pity a child," Ross said. "Pushing them that much harder so that they don't look at this in the future as a reason to fail."

In his research, Ross said he continually sees teacher instruction as the deciding factor in successful schools. He said his faculty is what's allowing the school to succeed.

"We have teachers that look across their desks and have the same expectations that they would have for their own children," Ross said. "That sets us apart."



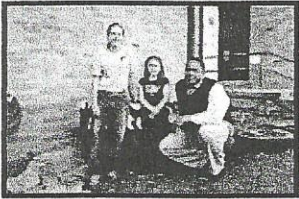


## "The Giving Garden" Partnership Turns One Packet of Seeds into Community Food

Monday, 16 May 2011 14:14

[Turner Landscapes](#) volunteers and Morgan Elementary students constructed a vegetable garden at Morgan Elementary School as a part of the PLANET (Professional Landcare Network) [Day of Service](#) on May 6. Staff and students spent the day working together to renovate a courtyard in the center of the school with raised vegetable beds, five trellises for peas and berries, and a rain barrel for water conservation. Students plan to donate produce from the garden to community help organizations and those in need. (You can see pictures from the project [here](#).)

The idea for the project began with Morgan second grader Kirsten Jones and a leftover packet of seeds.



"Mom brought three packets of seeds home from work," said Jones. "We had two pots, so there was one packet of seeds left. I thought we could bring one packet for school to make food for people who don't have food. I just thought it would be a good idea to let other people in the school help so we could help people in the community."

Assistant Principal Greg Ross said that when Turner Landscapes asked for grant proposals for a project, Kirsten's idea immediately came to mind.

"Kirsten brought a packet of seeds to me in February and asked 'Mr. Ross, can we make a garden to feed poor people?'" Ross said. "I talked to (staff member) Amanda Ford about the idea because I knew she had experience gardening. I asked her if we could make this happen, and she said we could. After that things got busy and the idea kind of fell by the wayside. When I saw the grant being offered by Turner Landscapes, I told them Kirsten's story. I told them if we could get the grant we had a good idea and good support."

Turner Landscapes owner Morgan Turner said her company liked the "The Giving Garden" proposal because it offered the students an opportunity to be involved in helping the community.

"You don't often find a project where kids can truly give back to the community. I have high hopes for the project," said Turner. "This came from a student, too, so we liked that. We've certainly never had 30 kids at once trying to help us. Today was fun."

Head Start preschool, Kindergarten and First Grade classrooms at Morgan started seeds in mini greenhouses for the garden. Morgan's K.I.N.G. club members painted tires that were used for raised garden beds. Ross said that STAR students (students who are recognized each quarter for hard work in the classroom and positive behavior) will be allowed to work in the garden and will be the ones to do maintenance.

Ross said the school hopes to donate produce from the garden to Paducah Cooperative Ministries and Martha's Vineyard.

The PLANET Day of Service is an annual event that allows lawn and landscape professionals to organize volunteer projects in their communities to beautify local greenspaces.

In the past two years of the event, PLANET members completed more than 480 projects in 43 states and in Canada, with nearly 5,000 volunteers donating more than \$1,000,000 in time, material, and services.

Individuals and organizations that provided goods and services for the Morgan Elementary Giving Garden included Ann Meredith McNeill, Michael Orenduff, Crop Production Services, Edwards Nursery, Erb Equipment, Etcetera Coffeehouse, Ferguson Enterprises, Green's Silo House Farms, Grover Tire Company, Hank Brothers True Value Hardware, Home Depot, Hope Photography, Horizon Media Group, Lone Oak Trophy and Signs, Lowe's, Massac Nursery, Midwest Block and Brick, Morris Fencing, Paducah Printing Corp., Phelps Farm and Home Service, Rayco Services, Sherwin-Williams Paint, and Smithland Tires.

Last Updated on Monday, 16 May 2011 14:30



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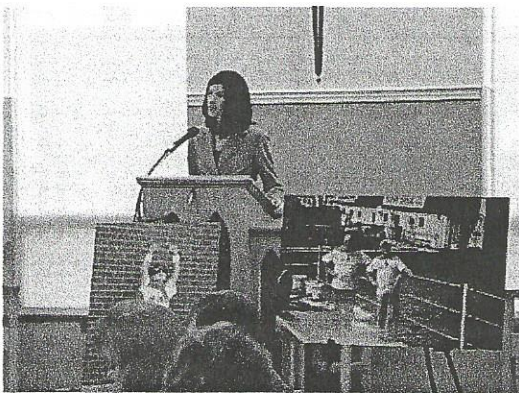
## United Way campaign hits \$975,000

by BY WILL PINKSTON [wpinkston@paducahsun.com](mailto:wpinkston@paducahsun.com)  
03.23.12 - 01:00 am



For local business leaders, the unveiling of the United Way's yearly fundraising campaign had even more of an impact as the very children benefiting from its programs made the announcement.

With a song from students of McNabb Elementary School — participating in the Reading PALS elementary school mentoring reading program — students unrolled this year's grand total of \$975,000 at the annual Victory Celebration on Thursday. The amount is an increase of \$35,000 from last year.



Ashley Wright, executive director for the United Way of Paducah-McCracken County, said the resurgence in donations proves an uplifting note for businesses and the 14 partner agencies of the United Way.

"We're very excited to see that we have an increase in this year's campaign, and a lot of that is the fact that businesses can support the work that we're doing again," Wright said.

"We have an enormous amount of business men and women who are committed to this community and

committed to making this a better place."

Officials also presented local businesses with awards for their part in the campaign: Largest Campaign Increase, Computer Services, Inc.; Employee Campaign Coordinator of the Year, Claudia Meeks; Combine Federal Campaign of the Year, Tennessee Valley Authority; Volunteer of the Year, Donette VanCleve; Overall Campaign of the Year, Ingram Barge.

Vicki Morgan, human resources manager for Ingram Barge, said it's an honor to be recognized by the United Way.

"To me, we should always give back," she said. "As individuals of the



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## Program combines arts, black history

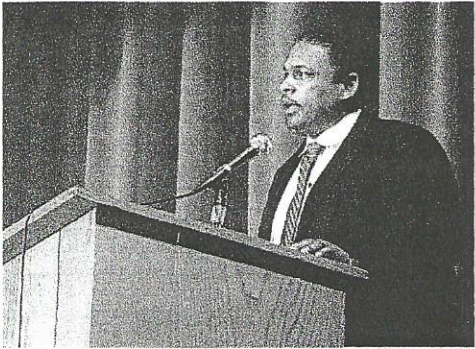
by BY REBECCA FELDHAUS [rfeldhaus@paducahsun.com](mailto:rfeldhaus@paducahsun.com)

03.01.12 - 01:00 am



On a day that comes once every four years, McNabb Elementary School staff and students launched an event they hope will continue every year.

Among the performers at the Black History Month Extravaganza Wednesday evening were the Nia Dancers, McNabb's Knock on Wood drumming group, Murray State University music professor Sonya Baker and local poet Samuel Hawkins. Students, families and other community members filled most of Paducah Tilghman High School's auditorium to listen to local leaders discuss the connections of music, dance, education and poetry to black history.



Though the extravaganza was meant to be entertaining, a main goal was to

involve the community in childhood education, teacher Rebekah Duncan said. Duncan said students performed in a schoolwide black history month event last week and were excited to expand their audience.

Duncan said it's important to include the cultural and historical lessons of influential black men and women.

"We want to be sure what we're reading, what we're teaching (students) about their leaders is part of their culture, part of their life," she said. "Showing that those (leaders) are just as important to our country's history."

They're not teaching common core standards alone, she said. McNabb Elementary School teachers aspire to teach students citizenship. Duncan said support from parents and friends is beneficial.

"It's a good thing for the community to feel a responsibility to be a stakeholder in their education, because they're going to become our future community," she said.

Professional football player George Wilson served as host. He said he takes any available opportunity to come back to Paducah to work with students. He said he hoped the week's school visits and Wednesday night's event would inspire students and families not to be complacent with negative life situations.

Learning from the past is the first step in changing the future, Wilson said.

Call Rebecca Feldhaus, a Sun staff writer, at 270-575-8651.

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