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'A heartwarming experience'



Halls High cheerleader Abbey Hopkins paints the face of a youngster at the Fantasy of Trees.

Halls cheerleaders, Bearden basketball players are among holiday helpers

By Steve Williams

Halls' cheerleaders and the Bearden boys' basketball team have been among local high school student-athletes helping during the holidays.

The Halls girls worked at the annual Fantasy of Trees, which benefits the East Tennessee Children's Hospital in Knoxville and also was scheduled to volunteer at The Angel Tree at West Town Mall this past Saturday, gift wrapping for donations.

"Volunteering at community service events during the Christmas season is a heartwarming experience," said Halls senior Harper Kirby. "Seeing children smile when you paint their faces at Fantasy of Trees or wrapping a gift for those in need at the Angel Tree brings a feeling of joy like no other."

Senior classmate Maddie Conner added: "It warms my heart to know we can put smiles on people's faces this time of year."

Halls Coach Cheri Duncan noted that community service activities are an integral part of the cheer program at Halls High.

"The girls put in hundreds of hours each year," she said. "I think it is very important for them to give back to the community that always supports our program and school."

The Bearden basketball team worked at the Weigel's Family Christmas Event on Dec. 1.

"The boys' program, including players and the coaching staff, has been doing this for many years and it is a great tradition and a great event!" stated Bearden Head Coach Jeremy Parrott.



Bearden basketball player Tyler Nordin with one of the youngsters at Target in Weigel's annual Family Christmas event. The Focus will look at more holiday helpers next week.

Janice Cook named 2018 Simon Youth Foundation Administrator of the Year

By Anne Primm

School board Chairwoman Terry Hill called the December 12, 2018 Knox County Board of Education meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. sharp. All nine school board members were present as were Representative Roger Kane and City Councilman Randy Smith.

Hill began with a few announcements: The Policy Review Committee Meeting originally scheduled for December 19, 2018 will be re-scheduled to a January date due to scheduling difficulties this time of year. The Joint Education Committee will meet December 19, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. in the Andrew Johnson Building boardroom. Knox County Schools will be closed from December 24, 2018 until January 4, 2019. Central office will be closed December 24-26, 2018.

At this time Hill turned the meeting over to the superintendent, Bob Thomas, for special recognition of one of Knox County's principals. Superintendent Thomas announced that Janice Cook has been chosen as the 2018 Simon Youth Foundation Administrator of the Year. Cook is the Executive Principal of the Dr. Paul L. Kelley Volunteer Academy at Lincoln Park. Cook was nominated by her peers for her vision of excellence, compassion as an educator, and her instructional expertise. When she became executive principal two years ago, Janice took immediate and creative action to improve and grow the alternative education program at the school. She implemented several new and different strategies to encourage students and ensure that they felt supported as they pursued graduation. Each student was assigned an adult advocate to help keep him or her on track until graduation day. Cook also initiated a policy for students to produce an exit portfolio as

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Magnolia Ave., Chilhowee Park, Riverwalk funding on city agenda

By Mike Steely
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When the city council meets Tuesday evening several continuing city projects may be discussed including the second part of the Magnolia Avenue Streetscape Project, extending the Riverwalk on the Southside, and hiring a consultant to look at the

future of Chilhowee Park's Exhibition Center.

The city administration is asking the council to hire Convention Sports and Leisure International to develop a plan for the future use of Chilhowee Park. The contract would be for \$200,000.

Phase II of the Magnolia Avenue project may get

\$2,877,276 if the council approves a contract with McKinnon Construction. The Office of Redevelopment is requesting the approval and also requesting \$437,053 be approved in an agreement with Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers for another part of the Phase II project. The extension of the

Riverwalk along the Tennessee River from Suttree Landing to Island Home may be approved in an agreement with the state transportation department using funds from the surface transportation block grant. Eighty percent of the \$460,000 project would see \$92,000 paid by the city. A signal upgrade

project is also on the agenda for the Chapman Highway/Henley Street intersection with Blount Avenue. The \$315,500 agreement is with Davis H. Eliot Construction Company.

A third amendment to the purchase sale agreement with developer Rick Dover for the purchase

and redevelopment of the former Knoxville Supreme Court building is on the agenda, allowing more time finalize site development before closing the agreement.

An agreement with UT's College of Social Work to support a coordinated effort for use by local

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