The Golden Apple Project

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Imagine a county where public schools feel the love and support of faith-based communities in their neighborhood. Consider the difference that could be made when every teacher feels the appreciation of the community. What would happen if the students of a school knew that the neighborhood churches and religious organizations were on their side? Our project seeks to make that vision a reality.

Our team began by finding facts on how to approach schools, determine the proper channels and identify true needs. Through a previous connection with the school corporation, we decided to have Indian Creek Schools be our focus area. We met with the superintendent, Dr. Edsell, as well as other principals from the school corporation and our project vision could not have been more welcomed. They even gave us ideas of what school systems desire in a partnership. The leaders noted that although most schools have PTO boards, they cannot do some of the things that religious organizations can do and religious organizations cannot do some of the things that PTA boards can do, so it's important to recognize the strengths of each organization's partnership.

After we met with this group, we decided to meet with the local ministers. Dr. Edsell mentioned that he has a meeting once a quarter with the local clergy and we would be welcomed to pitch our project vision to them. We graciously accepted the invitation and went to the meeting to encourage partnerships between the churches and local schools. The ministers asked great logistical questions, such as what type of partnerships we recommended. We suggested focusing first on the teachers and creating gift baskets, writing cards, hosting a "Pie Day" on March 14 (Pi Day), and simply being there as mentors or counselors in case tragedy strikes. They said they would work on creating those partnerships.

We view our job as the facilitators to change by encouraging partnerships in sustainable ways that will allow us to graduate from Leadership Johnson County and have an ongoing impact on the community. We have already heard about the impact of at least three Golden Apple Partnerships and we believe that the seed has been planted and will grow from there. Through the Golden Apple Project, we believe that Johnson County will be enhanced through the relationships that are built between faith based organizations and local school systems.