

## 230 kids get a Jump Start on the school year

Written by George Browning

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New backpacks, haircuts, shoes and more were handed out at Bradie Shrum Elementary School's third annual Jump Start last Saturday.

Approximately 230 students benefited from the event, with 95 percent of the kids who registered showing up to benefit from the program. This was up 80 students over last year.

Jump Start was started to help parents get their kids off on the right foot with a new school year. Along with the items mentioned, students also receive folders, paper, pencils, free eye and teeth exams and a breakfast.

The event was started by Tracey Cornwell and Linda Ralston.

Cornwell said the turnout for this year's event is a sign of the economy and the tough times people are going through.

"I was very pleased," she said, about the event, "and extremely pleased that so many people showed up. That just means that many kids were ready for school to start."

Cornwell was very happy with the support from the community as well. She said businesses donated over \$23,000 in services and supplies and 75 volunteers from the community donated 287 hours to help make the event possible.

Some of the businesses that participated in this year's event were Designer Cutz, Linck's Clothing, the office of Doctors Tricia Wheeler and Gene Hedrick and the office of doctors Mindy Gunn and Brad Black.

Also present were St. Vincent-Salem Hospital, Youth First, Big Brothers Big Sisters, YMCA, Salem Parks and Recreation and Dare to Care.

There were also several National Honor Society students from Salem High School who helped throughout the school year, volunteering at games and events to help raise money for Jump Start. Students in Lisa Gardners' class at SHS have to do a certain number of community service hours and many of the students chose to help Jump Start.

"They are such a positive influence for the younger kids," said Cornwell.

On Saturday, many of the kids helped hand out items to the kids and even did some face painting.

Cornwell said more than \$10,000 was raised throughout the year from businesses, organizations, churches, families and individuals.

"This year's Jump Start went very well," said Superintendent Dr. Lynn Reed. "Mrs. Ralston and Mrs. Cornwell increased both the services and the number of students served. These ladies are true examples of servant leaders."

To qualify, students have to meet requirements for free and reduced lunch and fill out an application.

Cornwell said donations are taken year round and they've already started purchasing supplies for next year's event. For more information, call the school at 883-3700.

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