

News Release



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Project L.I.F.T. Announces Launch of New Evening Program, with AT&T as Primary Underwriter

New L.I.F.T. Intervention that Prevents Drop Outs & Help Students Graduate

CHARLOTTE, NC – Feb. 4, 2014 – Project L.I.F.T. unveiled its' newest program today, providing alternative learning opportunities for students for whom a traditional day program has not been a good fit.

AT&T will be the major underwriter of the L.I.F.T. Academy Evening Program, through a contribution of \$300,000 from AT&T.

"The Evening Program enables us to provide a personalized learning environment that responds to the unique needs of individual students," said Denise Watts, community learning zone superintendent for Project L.I.F.T. "It is a creative approach that removes obstacles which have hindered these students, who want to learn and can succeed academically."

There are many circumstances that might inhibit a student from being successful in a traditional high school program. Bullying, the need to work, family obligations are some examples. This program provides an option to these students so they are able to obtain their high school diplomas and move on to college or career, Watts said.

The program, which launched last month, currently enrolls more than two dozen students in grades 10th through 12th.

"Project LIFT is testimony to the fact that Charlotte believes in education and in working together to respond to the needs of its children and give them the educational opportunities they need," said Charlotte Mayor Patrick Cannon. "When a compelling vision is harnessed to determined energy, good things happen for the community and especially for the children."

Supporting education has been a priority for AT&T in North Carolina and nationally more than a century. The company's signature philanthropic initiative, AT&T Aspire, is one of the nation's largest corporate initiatives committed to helping more students graduate from high school ready for college and careers. More than 1 million students in all 50 states have been impacted since Aspire launched in 2008. AT&T has committed \$350 million to Aspire through 2016.

"At AT&T, we believe that education has a greater impact on a person's future success than any other factor," said Venessa Harrison, president of AT&T North Carolina. "The students enrolled in the Evening Program embody that same commitment to education and determination to succeed. We appreciate the opportunity to support their efforts and the work of Project L.I.F.T."

Launched in 2012, Project L.I.F.T. serves nine schools: West Charlotte High School, Allenbrook Elementary, Ashley Park School, Bruns Academy, Druid Hills Academy, Ranson IB Middle School,

Statesville Road Elementary, Thomasboro Academy and Walter G. Byers School. Currently, 7,500 students are being served. West Charlotte High School saw a 15 point percent increase in the graduation rate from 2012 to 2013.

Other voices

- “In just one year, Project LIFT has made an incredible difference in the lives of so many students and families,” said Trevor Fuller, Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Commission. “I’m excited about what the next year will bring for these motivated students.”
- “Every child deserves the opportunity for a good education through the support of their families and their communities,” said Mary T. McCray, Chair of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education. “The Project LIFT initiative is opening doors to opportunities for these students now and in years to come. I hope it will serve as a model providing insight as to how we can meet the needs of more students each year.”
- “I am confident that these Evening Program students will not only inspire their peers through their determination for academic success, but they will also be key employees and engaged citizens, helping our state and community to grow and prosper,” said state Senator Joel Ford.
- “Throughout my legislative career, I have consistently believed that education of all of our children is one of the most important obligations we have as we build for the future,” said State Representative Becky Carney. “Project Lift has been extremely successful thus far and it is exciting to see it moving on to a new level of serving students with this evening program. I am so proud of the organizers and supporters of Project Lift, but even more proud of the students, who are working so hard to prepare themselves for future success.”
- “The Foundation for the Carolinas exists to serve as a catalyst, connecting individuals, companies and organizations to needs and philanthropic opportunities across the region,” said Michael Marsicano, President and CEO. “It is exciting, and somewhat humbling, to help facilitate Project Lift and to see first-hand the tremendous benefits that have come so quickly as the community has come together for a tremendous purpose.”

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About Project L.I.F.T.

Project L.I.F.T. is an innovative, community initiative working to improve outcomes and eliminate education disparities for minority and low-income students.

About Philanthropy at AT&T

AT&T Inc. is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its philanthropic initiatives, AT&T has a long history of supporting projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; and address community needs. In 2012, more than \$131 million was contributed through corporate-, employee- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs.

About AT&T

AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) is a premier communications holding company and one of the most honored companies in the world. Its subsidiaries and affiliates – AT&T operating companies – are the providers of AT&T services in the United

States and internationally. With a powerful array of network resources that includes the nation's fastest and most reliable 4G LTE network, AT&T is a leading provider of wireless, Wi-Fi, high speed Internet, voice and cloud-based services. A leader in mobile Internet, AT&T also offers the best wireless coverage worldwide of any U.S. carrier, offering the most wireless phones that work in the most countries. It also offers advanced TV service with the AT&T U-verse® brand. The company's suite of IP-based business communications services is one of the most advanced in the world.

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Coverage Before the Check Unveiling:

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Denada's Notes: I worked directly with AT&T to develop a check presentation during L.I.F.T. Academy's Open House program. AT&T wanted an exclusive from Charlotte Observer to run the morning of the check presentation to entice broadcast media to join the event that evening. The communications company also wanted local, county and state government representatives to be present. I was able to arrange the exclusive, the embargo as well as have over 30 representatives there including the mayor. The clip below showcases the Observer story.



Evening program at Project LIFT aims to help students succeed

By Joe Marusak
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When he dropped out of West Charlotte High School at age 17 last year, Rahmel Sloan tried to land a job wherever he could, but no one called him back, he said.

Then someone came looking for him – his former social studies teacher, Tyrone Miller.

“It hurt me when I found out he had dropped out,” Miller said. “It really hurt me. It hurt me to the core.”

Miller helps run the new evening program at Project LIFT, a five-year, \$55 million effort to dramatically boost achievement at West Charlotte High and its feeder schools.

Sloan joined the new program on its first night, Jan. 23. He needs to pass only an English class to graduate from West Charlotte High, and he now expects to do so in June.

At an open house from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesday at Project LIFT, AT&T will announce a \$300,000 donation as the evening program’s primary underwriter. Through its nationwide AT&T Aspire initiative, the company has committed \$350 million to boost graduation rates and prepare more students for college and careers.

Read more here: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/02/04/4661302/evening-program-at-project-lift.html#.UvZbtPISaQA#storylink=cpy>