

New Tech Gives Back

New Tech High @ Coppell kicks off community service initiative

Learners at New Tech High @ Coppell were recently introduced to the "New Tech Gives Back" program, which will be an integral part of their educational experience during their high school years. In addition to the academic requirements, job shadowing, and dual credit courses - New Tech learners must participate in a minimum of ten hours of community service each year. The PTSO Community Service Committee provided an orientation program for learners and faculty so they could learn ways to "give back" to the community.

During the "New Tech Gives Back" kick-off, learners heard from organizations that are helping others in our community and around the world. Representatives from Christian Community Action, an organization that brings relief to the poor, and Hope for Africa, an organization that raises money to bring clean water to Africa, gave presentations at the orientation. This gave the learners an understanding of the local and global needs in the world and how they can make a difference.

Learners can obtain service hour opportunities through most non-profit organizations and events. To date, they have served at events such as Oktoberfest, Special Olympics, and Halloween carnivals. They have also volunteered at churches, elementary schools, and nursing homes. As community organizations have realized that the New Tech Gives Back program is in place, requests for volunteers have been increasing. New Tech Director Tabitha Branum fields these calls and then sends email blasts to the learners. Branum considers volunteering to be a vital part of the education process and was pleased with the response to the New Tech Gives Back orientation.

"The kids were going on and on about their ideas for where they would like to serve. I really believe that these learners have the power to change the world," Branum said. "They just need someone to make them aware of the needs, show them how to get started, and empower them to do it - I think we helped do that today."

Part of the focus in implementing this program was to establish a set of guidelines for the program. The committee enlisted the learner's networking groups at NTH@C for suggestions on community service guidelines. These suggestions were

reviewed, and most of the learner's suggestions were incorporated into 'rules to live by' that were ultimately put in place.

During the kick-off program, New Tech learners and staff were given t-shirts that have "New Tech Gives Back" printed on the front. As the volunteers go out into the community doing service projects while wearing their t-shirts, they hope that other people will be inspired to do the same. As one learner said, "It isn't just about accumulating service hours for graduation; it's about starting a movement of kindness around the world."