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**500-plus children see banner unrolled for positive impact**



**A James M. Anderson Elementary School student thanks Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition Executive Director Katrina VanAernam with a handshake on Friday afternoon (Sept. 7) after a banner was opened along a 264-foot section of the playground fence near the kickball field.**

*Photo by AES Principal Kristen McCaskill*

**Story, Photos (other than the top photo) and Video**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 7, 2018 at 11:38 p.m.**

**CROSS CITY --** About 525 students at James M. Anderson Elementary School in

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Cross City saw a 264-foot long banner unrolled Friday afternoon (Sept. 7) during a ceremony to herald the positive thoughts shown on that long piece of artwork.

<https://youtu.be/WLLGBcK1bUk>

In this video, the children of the elementary school countdown before the unfurling. Among the people present for the opening of the banner are Dixie County Superintendent of Schools Mike Thomas, Anderson Elementary School Principal Kristen McCaskill, Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal Chasity Lord, Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition (DCADC) Executive Director Katrina VanAernam and DCADC Event Coordinator Rebecca Fusco.



Making snow-cones in the heat are (from left) Rebecca Fusco, Cale McCall, Katrina VanAernam and Debby Sweem.



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## snow-cones

**Anderson Elementary School Assistant Principal Chasity Lord (left) and Anderson Elementary School Principal Kristen McCaskill are among the active adults who brought the whole event to fruition on Friday. Faculty and staff at AES and volunteers added to made this event an extraordinary success.**



**Rebecca Fusco and Cale McCall crush ice and make snow-cones.**

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**(from left) Rebecca Fusco, Katrina VanAernam and Principal Kristen McCaskill each delivered short messages to the children before the big banner was unrolled.**



**The 264-foot long banner goes beyond the view here. This is before it was unrolled.**

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**A similar view of the unrolled banner is seen here, only after it was opened for viewing.**



**Rebecca Fusco pulls on one of the many strings to unfold the banner.**

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Principal Kristen McCaskill is seen next to the banner she helped unfurl.

Dixie County Superintendent of Schools Mike Thomas (left) and Dixie County School Resource Officer Casey Chesser stand on



either side of a bear on the banner. Superintendent Thomas has a long professional career in education in Dixie County. Among his duties before being elected as superintendent of schools, Thomas served six years as assistant principal at James M. Anderson Elementary School and then he put in another six years as principal. During Thomas' six years as principal, current Anderson Elementary School Principal Kristen McCaskill served as

the assistant principal.



Designed by Dixie County Anti-Drug Coalition (DCADC) Event Coordinator Rebecca Fusco, this banner provides positive

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messages and beautifies the playground, DCADC Executive Director Katrina VanAernam said.

“It’s awesome,” Anderson Elementary School Principal Kristen McCaskill said. “It’s beautiful. I love it.”

Some of the children were able to pose next to the banner immediately after it was unfurled.

Before the unveiling or unrolling. DCADC Administration Coordinator Cale McCall, DCAC Program Coordinator Debby Sweem, Director VanAernam and Fusco worked with several volunteers to make and deliver many flavored snow-cones (flavored crushed ice in a paper cone cup).

VanAernam said Principal McCaskill had asked the DCADC to place the banner along the chain-link fence that has Dixie County garbage dumpsters on the other side opposite the kickball field. There is also a set of agricultural lab building on the other side of the fence.

This banner is similar to one added to the Dixie County High School Baseball Field in 2016, when the DCADC partnered with DCHS Head Varsity Baseball Coach Chad Brock, VanAernam said.

The event was fun and positive for the children and adults in attendance.

The goal of the DCADC is to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug use among Dixie County residents, with a focus on young people. To accomplish this goal, the coalition works on prevention strategies, including projects like Friday Night Done Right, the No One's House parent-to-parent campaign, the Know the Law course to teach students about alcohol and other drug laws, and working with law enforcement to implement compliance checks.

*(Jeff M. Hardison is a member of the DCADC Board of Directors.)*