

Adult education center receives make over thanks to Publix

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The buzzing hum of Weedeaters and banging of hammers sounded up and down Albany Street in downtown Brunswick Friday, as volunteers worked away the morning to make renovations and repairs to the old Risley High School, now the headquarters of the Adult Education Center.

The workers weren't hired by a construction company. The crew was made up of team members from the regional district of Publix as part of a newly launched effort by the national grocery store chain to give back to communities.

Officials with the grocery chain set aside April 17 as the inaugural Publix Gives Back Day, to mark its 85th anniversary and service to the communities where the stores operate.

For the regional district, which stretches from Savannah to Jacksonville, the task was a beautification project — the landscape and exterior of the Risley Learning Center building, which is a main headquarter for the Coastal Pines Technical College adult education program.

The program helps high school dropouts and young adults obtain GEDs.

“When the store announced we would be taking on these community improvement endeavors, we looked up and down the coast to try to find the best use of our time and funds,” said Jay Wilcox, district manager for Publix.

Some 31 Publix crew members spent Friday morning on the project, installing a bike rack, pressure washing the siding, improving landscaping and taking on other beautification tasks.

Watching the team work, adult education center director Shawn Williams could only smile with appreciation and gratitude.

“With the school looking so much better, students feel better about coming here,” Williams said. “They will take more pride in their learning and education. This is a great day for us. We’re so excited to have this team here, supporting the work we do.”

Williams said the project may even attract more students to the school.

Several neighborhood residents checked on the campus throughout the morning, first asking about the work being done, then asking for more information about the school and possible routes to obtaining a GED.

“This work has put a new spark in the neighborhood and more people are now paying attention to us being here,” he said. “That is a great thing. We want to help as many people as possible get on the right track and get their diploma.”

The adult education center will host a new student orientation Tuesday. Registration for new students will begin at 8:45 a.m. at the Risley Learning Center, 1800 Albany St., Brunswick.

For more information about the GED program, call Williams at 280-4000 or visit www.coastalpines.edu.

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