

# News U Trust

## Bus Driver Appreciation Day Widely Celebrated

The Employee Appreciation Program is officially underway and this year participation in the program is proving to be the best ever.

Many schools across the state had a successful first appreciation day, beginning with Bus Driver Appreciation Day. Schools used the S.W.A.T. Team theme, provided by Utrust, to show appreciation to their bus drivers. Most schools, including *Mountain City Elementary* in Johnson City, *Bells City Elementary* in Bells City, and *Gainesboro Elementary* in Jackson County decorated posters and thank you notes for their bus drivers.

*Watertown High School* and *Watertown Elementary* in Wilson County offered a breakfast for their bus drivers at the Depot in Lebanon, TN.

*Russellville Primary School* in Hamblen County decorated survival kits and made biographical posters for



each of their bus drivers. They interviewed the bus drivers and created the posters with the information they collected, which helped students get to know the bus drivers.

Hamblen County's *Meadowview Middle School* singled out a bus drivers for special recognition. Students Hannah Morgan and Megan Gregg wrote an article (which can be found on page four) about Josh Winrotte, a bus

driver, 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher and basketball coach for Meadowview Middle School.

*Houston County* dedicated a page on their website to the Employee Appreciation Program and used the web art provided in the Utrust appreciation packet for Bus Driver Appreciation Day.

Participants in this year's first appreciation day were creative in celebrating their school's S.W.A.T. Teams! Thanks to all who participated in Bus Driver Appreciation Day for being a part of something great that is making a difference in many lives! Please remember to send in the photos, videos and reports from your student reporters for a chance to win monetary prizes.

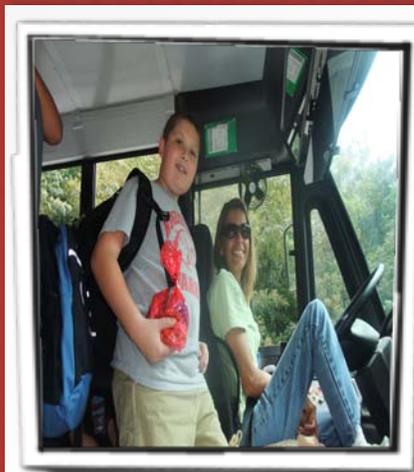
If you did not participate in this appreciation day, it's not too late to get involved. Please click [here](#) to see a list of all of the appreciation days for 2010-2011.



BELLS CITY ELEMENTARY GREETED BUS DRIVERS WITH A THANK YOU SIGN



HOUSTON COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL MADE GOODIE BAGS FOR BUS DRIVERS



ROGERSVILLE CITY PASSED OUT BAGS FULL OF TREATS TO BUS DRIVERS ON APPRECIATION DAY

## BEECH ELEMENTARY STARTS THE YEAR WITH A BANG!

Bus Driver Appreciation Day proved to be a success at Beech Elementary in Sumner County. Ten fifth grade members of the A-Team created survival kits for the bus drivers, read announcements over their PA system publicizing the day, and displayed marquee messages to raise community awareness. In addition to these activities, the A-Team had a S.W.A.T. Team Stop on the morning of appreciation day for the bus drivers to drive through and pick up Chick-fil-a biscuits, fruit and water bottles with special labels made by the A-Team.

Bus driver Martha Demonbreum was so moved by the students expression of appreciation that she made a cake in the shape of a yellow school bus for the A-Team. "This is the nicest thing anyone has done for us and I really appreciated it," Demonbreum said.

This is the first year Beech Elementary has participated in the Employee Appreciation Program and employees are already buzzing about the recognition they received. The A-Team and the bus drivers both enjoyed celebrating the day.

"It was fun just seeing them smile and knowing that I played a part," David Johnson, A-Team member said. "I didn't even mind getting up early because it was so great to get to honor them," he continued.



Front Row: Kaylor Elrod, Maci Coleman, Mattie Whittinghill, Glory Moffitt, Natalie Lankster  
Back Row: James Flynn, Wil Walker, Jonathan Seals, Joey Miller, David Johnson

Bus driver, Martha Demonbreum made the A-Team at Beech Elementary a cake to show appreciation for what they did.

## Warren County Honors S.W.A.T. Team

Warren County used local communication channels to say "thank you" in a highly visible way to their bus drivers. An article published in their local newspaper, the Southern Standard, featured local school bus drivers.

Multiple commercials ran in the media promoting the day, including a story on the Warren County Schools Television station featuring an interview with the Director of Transportation, Melissa Orrick. The local television station also broadcast a slide show honoring bus drivers in Warren County. A public service announcement was broadcast on the local radio station, announcing September 16<sup>th</sup> as Bus Driver Appreciation Day.

Dr. Jerry Hale, Director of Schools in Warren County, used the 2-way radios on every bus to tell the drivers they are appreciated for their hard work and dedication. Many of the school bus drivers commented on how much they appreciated being honored during their routes.

**For love of the job**

Bus driver Tonia Rader is flanked by two of her elementary school passengers James Poisson, left, and Shaire Davis. Rader says she loves her job and she loves her kids. They seem fond of her too.

**Bus drivers enjoy spending time with children**

By JAMES CLARK  
*Staff Writer for the Southern Standard (McMinnville, Tenn.)*

Leslie Moore didn't have to wait months to land a job as a Warren County bus driver. In fact it didn't even take him a day. "I was working as an aide on my wife's bus," said Moore, "and they talked me into getting my license. The day I got my license, I was driving a bus that afternoon."

Driving a bus most run in the blood of the Moore family as Leslie and his wife, Gail, both drive special education buses for the Warren County School System. Their daughter, Abigail Wood, also drives a bus along with their daughters-in-law Crystal Moore. In addition, the aide on Gail's bus is her sister-in-law, Helen Moore.

"If you need a ride, just call the Moores," said Gail. "We cover Warren County."

The school system has 56 regular bus drivers and four substitutes. According to transportation director Melissa Orrick, it takes more than reliability to handle the job when there are dozens of screaming kids aboard a bus.

"You have to have a lot of patience and you have to love kids," said Orrick.

Added Gail, "You also have to realize it's a big responsibility, but I love it. I got attached to the kids because I spend so much time with them."

Sandra Ricketts has been a bus driver for over five years and is responsible for transporting Bobby Ray, middle school, and high school students. Because her bus has some rowdy riders, she has been assigned Viola Alphin as an aide.

All special education buses are required to have an aide, while only certain regular buses with behavior problems have one.

"The kids are fun to work with," said Ricketts. "But with some of them you can't help but wonder what their parents are like."

**RICKETTS**

Continued on page 7-A

# Hawkins County Celebrates S.W.A.T Team

Bus Driver Appreciation Day was nothing short of a holiday in Hawkins County! Schools celebrated their S.W.A.T. Team members in their own special way and each went above and beyond to recognize and honor their bus drivers.

At Churchill Elementary, members of the A-Team stood outside in the rain (with a smile) to greet their bus drivers. They held "thank you" posters and passed out survival kits filled with goodies and thank you cards.

At St. Clair Elementary, art teacher Holly Hughes, had students decorate cards from the Utrust website for bus drivers. After each student donated one quarter to purchase the items, the A-Team put together survival kits including Clorox wipes, hand sanitizer, tissues, air freshener, chewing gum and tootsie rolls.

Surgoinsville held a special ceremony at the September Board meeting in honor of bus driver, Joe Melendez. A grandmother wrote a letter about Joe and how much he has impacted the life of her grandson, Ren. The letter was read at the meeting. It was also published, along with a photo of Melendez, in the local newspaper, The Rogersville Review. Other schools in Hawkins County also participated in Bus Driver Appreciation

Day through a variety of activities including decorating survival kits, posters and thank you cards to make Bus Driver Appreciation Day special for each S.W.A.T. Team member!

Hawkins County continues to be an important player in the Utrust Employee Appreciation Program. Last year, the school district won the Utrust Outstanding District Award for the best participation in the EAP district-wide.

Not only does each school in Hawkins County participate in the program, but they also participate heavily on a Board level. They send personalized thank you notes from the Director of Schools and Board Chairman, make use of the press releases Utrust provides, submit PSA's to the local radio stations and invite the employee group being honored attend the Board meeting for formal recognition.

"Thank you, Utrust!! You introduced us to an organized program of recognizing and showing appreciation to each group of our employees," said Nedra Jackson, Assistant Director of Schools and Utrust System Coordinator. "You made the implementation of each of the Employee Appreciation Days extremely simple by providing us with the creative packets of Board materials," she continued.



SURGOINSVILLE ELEMENTARY STUDENT AND BUS DRIVER



CARTER'S VALLEY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS HOLD UP THEIR PICTURES



CAKE FOR BUS DRIVERS- PATHWAYS ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL



STUDENTS AT BULLS GAP SCHOOL HOLDING THANK YOU NOTES



Keplar Elementary gave their bus drivers thank you booklets, bus shaped cookies and posters made by the students.

*"By appreciation, we make excellence in others our own property."*  
-Voltaire



# Student Reporter Page

VERY IMPORTANT!! Please send in stories written by the students about appreciation days.

Written by student reporters

Hannah Morgan and Megan Gregg

## UTRUST BUS DRIVER APPRECIATION Meadowview Middle School



Josh Winrotte

Being a bus driver at Meadowview is a thankless position that gets taken for granted many times. Bus drivers have many qualities that most ordinary drivers do not possess. They are caring, patience, and very capable drivers with safety for their passengers and other drivers as their first and most important priority. The Bus driver that we would like to recognize is Mr. Josh Winrotte. He is not just one of our bus drivers but he teaches 7th grade English and coaches our boys basketball team. This is his fourth year driving a bus for the county and our school. He is a safe and competent driver that s this driving very seriously.

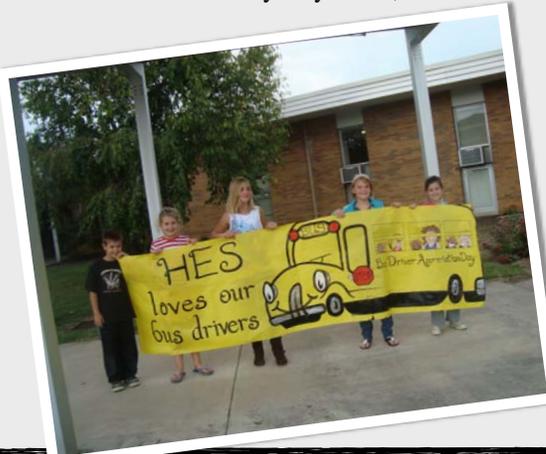
In the interview, Mr. Winrotte, told us a funny story that one of the many passengers said to him. One day a sixth grader boarded the bus at the end of the day and stopped at the top of the stairs, looked at him and ask him if he would marry his mom. He said that he did had to turn the offer down but felt like it was a compliment that he would be good enough for his mom. Mr. Winrotte also shared that by driving the school has impacted the way he teaches, relates and builds relationships with his students at school, in class and on the basketball team. He sees where and how the students live and sometimes its not the best circumstances for some of the students to be in and be a successful student.

Mr. Winrotte starts his weekdays at 6 am picking up students and safely driving them to school and finishing out his day at 4:30 after dropping off the last kid. He keeps his bus clean and treats the students fairly and with respect. His advice for other would be bus drivers is to be relax and keep the students in their seats in order to concentrate on driving without being distracted by misbehavior. We appreciate Mr. Winrotte and the job his does by being a safe bus driver for our students.

## Bus Drivers Appreciation Day

On September 17th, the kids at Hawkins Elementary School celebrated Bus Driver's Appreciation Day. They brought candy for treat bags that they made for the bus drivers. They gave bus shaped cards thanking the bus drivers. Finally, they got to show the banner that they made with the art teacher's help. Everyone had a great time.

Written by Lily Clark, 5th Grader



## BUS DRIVER APPRECIATION DAY

On Thursday, September 16, 2010 at Bulls Gap School the Appreciation Team members stood outside and as the buses came through we took the bus

drivers a cup of coffee and a muffin. The following are the members that stood outside: Samantha Marlow, Jedda Benward, Brittany Bell, Ellie Southern, Tanner Graves, Taylor Bowlin, and Samantha Brooks. We had a good time. The bus drivers really appreciated it. We also decorated a sign that was hung outside for the bus drivers to see as they pulled up thanking the bus drivers for all that they do. The following are the bus drivers: Bob, Gary, Anita, L. A., Hope, Edgar, and Tracy. They were very astonished by this event.

By: Brittany Bell, Reporter



## CREATING POSITIVE PUBLICITY PLUS



Imagine a free program that:

- Creates positive publicity for your school and school system
- Improves employee morale
- Develops student leadership
- Teaches students an attitude of gratitude

The Utrust Employee Appreciation Program (EAP), provided to you *free* of charge, will do just that. The program helps students develop leadership, communication and team-building skills through recognition and appreciation of the staff within your schools.

The publicity your system will receive from participating in this program is more than worth the effort! The EAP is designed to involve a student-led team to identify students with special talents or qualities and use them to show appreciation to school employees. Students are called upon to report and take photos/videos of events and are encouraged to send them to local media outlets. Utrust packets include news releases to send to local news media to inform the community about appreciation days. Having the media covering your schools participation in this program can only benefit the image of your system.

The EAP helps develop student leadership. Members of the A-Team plan and conduct the events on the appreciation day. A-Team members garner participation from the rest of the school by speaking to other classrooms and calling on students with special talents and skills. These responsibilities help the students develop decision-making and leadership skills.

The EAP helps students to develop an attitude of gratitude. The program teaches students to recognize and appreciate their dedication and hard work of school employees. It gives students a chance to experience the feeling of making others feel special and appreciated. This attitude of appreciation will carry over in to their home and community life and play a key role throughout the rest of the students' lives.

The Employee Appreciation Program provides endless opportunities for your system to gain positive publicity in your community and throughout the state. Utrust is committed to help you develop a strong and successful EAP. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the program, please contact us at (615) 452-7761 or e-mail Amy Kellogg at [akellogg@tnuct.com](mailto:akellogg@tnuct.com).

## SUPERINTENDENT PACKETS NOW AVAILABLE!

Superintendent Appreciation Day is November 18<sup>th</sup>. Packets for the Board, elementary, middle and high schools are now available on the Utrust website and can also be found by visiting Resource Central (on the Utrust website), the school coordinator headquarters.

The theme for Superintendent Appreciation Day is **T T T** - Thanks Through Technology. The celebration ideas and marquee messages are technology focused. Packets include ideas for expressing appreciation for your superintendent using various methods of technology. Many students in your school may be unaware of the duties and responsibilities of a superintendent. This day helps make students in all of your schools aware of some of the responsibilities of a director of schools.

Students can have fun showing appreciation for their superintendent using cutting edge technology! Click [here](#) to access the appreciation packets.





## The Germinator

### CUSTODIAN APPRECIATION DAY STORIES WANTED

We hope that your students enjoyed celebrating and appreciating their school Germinators! We are confident that the custodians were thrilled with being the center of attention and the targets of praise. We want to hear all about it. Send us the **stories, pictures** and **videos** from appreciation day celebrations.

Remember, the schools with the most outstanding Employee Appreciation Program who send in their stories are eligible to win prizes. Let us know how your school recognized your champion Germinators. We are especially interested in how your students used our Germinator theme in creative ways to show appreciation for your school custodians. Watch for the *News U Trust* newsletter to provide highlights and visit our Utrust website for photos, videos and stories.

If you aren't using our themes for appreciation days, we encourage you to do so. We believe that the use of themes will make each appreciation day different from others and themes provide a focus for creativity so come on and give your A-Team the encouragement to roll with the themes.

WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO SEEING YOU AT  
THE DINNER!

### 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL UTRUST MEMBER APPRECIATION DINNER

Check with your board secretary to be sure that you are registered for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Utrust Member Appreciation Dinner that will be held at the Pinnacle at Symphony Place at 7:00 p.m. CST on Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup> in downtown Nashville. It is free to Utrust members.

It will be a great night filled with entertainment, fun and great food! In addition to school board members and superintendents, any members of your staff who deal with the Employee Appreciation Program or unemployment claims are welcome to attend.

The Pinnacle at Symphony Place is located at 150 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South





CHARLOTTE BRITTON  
HAWKINS COUNTY  
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

## CHARLOTTE BRITTON FEATURED IN SUPERINTENDENT APPRECIATION VIDEO

Utrust creates a video for each appreciation day showcasing an individual school employee who goes above and beyond the call of duty. Hawkins County superintendent Charlotte Britton will be featured in this year's superintendent appreciation video.

“Charlotte Britton has demonstrated strong and effective leadership skills as Director of Schools in Hawkins County,” according to Dr. Dan Tollett, Utrust Administrator. “She is an excellent example of a superintendent who has made a difference in her school system. School leaders who watch this video will be inspired by her leadership style, values and personal qualities.”

Look for the video on the Utrust website. The video will showcase many Hawkins County school employees and students.

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