

Don McGehee proves he is 'somebody' with Nashville Alliance for Public Education

By Tom Adden

Titans Online

NASHVILLE, TN, Jan. 24, 2007 — Don McGehee, 84, who volunteers for the Nashville Alliance for Public Education, was honored as the runner-up for the 2006 Tennessee Titans Community Quarterback Award program.

McGehee and hundreds of volunteers from across the state were nominated by their non-profit organizations for outstanding volunteer work in their communities.



Titans EVP of Administration Don MacLachlan (left) is pictured honoree Don McGehee (right) and Stacy Mosley (center) from the Nashville Alliance for Public Education.

The Nashville Alliance for Public Education (NAPE) teamed up with the Metro Nashville Public School Board and the Director of Schools to enhance areas in the school systems with programs that amplify their progress. During his 13 years of volunteer service, McGehee has developed his own programs, raised funds for the programs and has spoken to students weekly about maintaining a positive attitude by attaining self-discipline while building character to become role models for others.

McGehee's program ideas were developed based on his own difficult experiences that he faced as a child. Like many, McGehee dealt with poor living conditions and felt he was not accepted at school which led to self-esteem issues. These were situations that McGehee felt could be corrected, so he developed a program entitled "I am Somebody." The program reaches out to kids to let them know that they are somebody and that they have a purpose in life.

Kay Simmons, Executive Director of Nashville Alliance for Public Education, describes the programs designed for grades K-6 and a Leadership Program, 'Recipe for Success' for grades 7-12.

"The philosophy of the program is that everybody is born a 'Somebody' and we remain a 'Somebody' by being honest, truthful and trying to be the best that we can be," said Simmons. "By learning to live up to responsibility, every child can say, 'I am Somebody'."

The "I am Somebody Program" has become a huge success and continues to influence the lives of these children. They have been able to maintain the program because of the fund-raising efforts of McGehee, raising over \$250,000. In addition, he supports the program by speaking to kids and teaching the component of the program. The various schools he speaks at include East High School, East Middle School, Fall-Hamilton Enhanced Option School, Jones Padeai Elementary and Ross Elementary.

"He selflessly volunteers at least 12 hours a week in the schools while also volunteering as a counselor for the Salvation Army," said Simmons. "He works tirelessly to help others and build them up. Mr. McGehee uses his own experiences to show how resilience and perseverance can be hallmarks of success."

Don McGehee is a prime example of the wonderful work that volunteers do for their communities and demonstrates why he is one of Tennessee's top volunteers. The Tennessee Titans Foundation will donate \$4,000 to NAPE and his "I am Somebody" program in recognition of his efforts. This year's grants will bring the grand total of grants awarded since the program started in 2000 to \$140,000.

"I heard about the nomination and it was a wonderful feeling," said McGehee. "I am honored to be recognized and hope to continue to enjoy life and help others." His philosophy of enjoying life and helping others demonstrates his unselfish commitment to the community.