

MID-IOWA NEWS

10/01/2008

Maid-Rite rewards Waukee students' good behavior

By: Corey Munson

Elementary students in the Waukee school district now have a tasty motivation to read and act rite - or is it right?

The Reading-Rite and Acting-Rite programs, sponsored by the Galleria Maid-Rite in West Des Moines and States Savings Bank, offers coupons to students for reaching certain benchmarks or goals.

Reading-Rite started last year as a way to encourage kids to get excited about literature and reading. Students set monthly reading goals. Each month a student reaches that goal, he or she will receive a certificate good for a free "Kid's Rite Meal" from the Galleria Maid-Rite with the purchase of a regular-priced basket.

"School is about academics, but just as important as that is making kids good citizens," Chris Colter, owner of the Galleria Maid-Rite, said.

Right now, the program is only in the Waukee schools, and Galleria Maid-Rite is the only restaurant participating. Colter said he would like to see it go statewide in the next few years.

"It brings people into the restaurant, but it comes down to doing the right thing," Colter said.

Acting-Rite is a new project that rewards students for doing the right thing while at school. The program is a collaboration between the Galleria Maid-Rite, States Savings and Character Counts in Iowa.

Each elementary school is given coupons good for a free milkshake with the purchase of a Maid-Rite basket.

"This is the way we need to be going, proactive rather than reactive," Colter said.

All students rewarded with a milkshake will also be entered to win a \$50 children's savings account at State Savings Bank, which will be given out monthly.

"Our economy is driven by incentives," Tim Wolf, President and CEO of State Savings Bank, said. "With the economy the way it is, maybe people need to save rather than charge."

The Acting-Rite program will be implemented in the schools in conjunction with the Positive Behavior Support model that the district has been working on the last few years.

"I think if [the students] can do good things and get rewarded, they'll be excited about learning," Colter said.

"One of the great things about this is that it builds the community," Scott Raecker, Executive Director of Character Counts in Iowa, said. "It is helping young people and recognizing young people for doing the right thing."

Brad Buck, assistant superintendent for school improvement for the Waukee school district, said the program is good for the schools because it gets local businesses involved.

"The framework around PBS encourages linkages between schools, businesses and the community," Buck said. "The more people you get involved in the same thinking, the more successful the program is likely to be."

Colter said he believes the Character Counts program and Maid-Rite go together well.

"Maid-Rite is distinctly Iowan, it reflects Iowa values," Colter said. "Sometimes we take for granted how genuinely kind people in the Midwest are."

Colter also said he hopes he can reflect the values of Character Counts in his business.

"I'm a business owner, but I'm also a father," Colter said. "As a father, I just want kids to be happy. Hopefully that character carries over to how the staff works."

