



Muscofee County School District

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For Immediate Release

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Release Date: December 11, 2014

MEDIA RELEASE

Students Unite to Build a Helping Hand for a Classmate

(Columbus, GA)-Third grade students at Wynnton Arts Academy do more than offer a helping hand to their classmate. They helped build a mechanical hand especially for their classmate, Parris Ortiz, and handed it off to her today!

Parris was born with a disability. She was missing her left hand. A classmate's father, Mr. Lance Tankersley, who works for the Columbus State University's Coca Cola Space and Science Center, volunteers with enablingourfuture.org, an organization that matches students with a need for a financial donor or skill donor for assistance to help create and design 3D printed assistive hand devices.

Tankersley was working on a project at the science center that entailed designing a mechanical hand for a child for the organization. During the work in progress, thoughts of his son's classmate Parris kept coming to mind. His son, Cliff Tankersley, is one of Parris' classmates and he wanted to help build a mechanical hand for his classmate too. With help and support from his father, the Columbus State University's Coca-Cola Space and Science Center, and enablingourfuture.org they set out to build a new hand for Parris! In fact, the Ortiz family and the third grade class of Mrs. Cynthia Swafford used the project as a teachable moment and learning experience about 21st century products, tools used for 3D modeling, measuring and fitting processes in the hands-on project.

"It's an exciting, high-tech project that students have been engaged in for a week," said Tankersley.

"This is learning at its best," said assistant principal, Janet LaFortune. "It's an important project that is rigorous, relevant, and highly connected to science, math, technology, student and community support, but most of all it's a project that was embraced by all of the students who were excited and proud to be able to offer a true helping hand."

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Parris was also able to participate in the development of her new mechanical hand. She also customized her new high-tech fitted piece with her favorite colors.

“It’s Awesome,” said Parris Ortiz.

For more information, email communications@uscogee.k12.ga.us, or call (706) 748-2034.

***Courtesy Photos:** Valerie Fuller, MCSD Director of Communications

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