



MAYOR'S MONTHLY EDITORIAL

224 E. Bryan Street - Douglas, Georgia 31533
(912) 383-0277 Telephone / (912) 384-0130 Facsimile

www.CityofDouglas.com

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CONTACTS:

Blondale Thomas, Public Information Manager
(912) 383-0277, Bthomas@cityofdouglas.com

Georgia Henderson, Community Dev. Director
(912) 389-3433, Ghenderson@cityofdouglas.com

MAYOR'S MONTHLY MINUTES – NOVEMBER 2018 **"TIME SPENT WITH A CHILD IS NEVER WASTED TIME"**

Hello, citizens of Douglas and Coffee County!!! It is officially time to start preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas!!!! I especially love this time of year because everyone is just a little bit nicer and the true essence of humanity is on full display. With that being stated, I want everyone to be thinking about Thanksgiving and the Christmas Parade.

As we approach Thanksgiving, I am grateful that God continues to bless the City of Douglas and Coffee County. I am just ready for family and friends to gather for Thanksgiving. (Side Bar: I love German Chocolate Cake) Thanksgiving starts the journey towards Christmas. Churches, the American Legion, and many civic organizations will begin preparations to prepare meals and food boxes for families throughout the community. Matthew 25:40 says, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." When we pause as a community to care for the "least" of our community, it is pleasing to God. Please support our local churches, the American Legion, and community civic organizations as they get ready to embark on a mission to please God by taking care of the "least" of our community.

It's beginning to look like Christmas. Okay, not yet, but, I just love Christmas! So, members of Douglas Christian Fellowship (Pastor Leroy Spivey), it is time to start planning the Christmas display "Lighting the Way." This display always excites me! It serves as a humbling reminder that I am a servant in a leadership role. Churches, please start preparing to celebrate Christmas in a BIG WAY!! Please join the Christmas Parade. The theme is "Celebrate the Music and Melodies of Christmas." Now, Praise Teams, this theme is calling for you! Churches, if you decide to enter a float in the parade, start small! Put the pastor in a car or put the youth department in a pick-up truck. Preparation for the Christmas Parade is exciting, but it is a lot of work.

During the month of October, I was delighted to be invited to several agencies in our community to speak to the youth of our community. From preschool age to High School, our kids in this community are extraordinary! I began the visits in October with First Academy 2nd graders visiting me! They came to see me at City Hall. I tell you, those kids have a lot of energy and a lot of questions. We conducted a mock City Commission meeting so these future leaders could experience a leadership role at a young age. The students were seated in the council's chairs. The children voted to have a teacher walk and quack like a duck. That was funny. I proposed this question to them: Should only boys be

allowed to eat ice cream at school? Immediately, the students stated that's not fair. Of course, we had a discussion and a vote. The girls were allowed to have ice cream. Even our children quickly recognize unfairness. Thanks for stopping by Mrs. Alissa Evans' class and come back anytime. On that same day, I went to visit the preschool children at Precious Possessions Learning Center. In theory, I was there to discuss my role as Mayor, however, that did not happen. We talked Halloween costumes and candy. Shout out to Mrs. Julie Mathews and her staff! Within the next few days, I spent time at Coffee County Headstart reading to the preschool children. What I liked best about these visits was the enthusiasm of these kids. We had a blast. I was blessed to read to my cousin, Christopher Paulk's, class. Melody Pace and Samone Patrick-Fletcher- thank you, and all teachers, for making a difference! Just imagine what we could do if we looked at life with the same enthusiasm as children.

I had the opportunity to go to the high school to visit with the NJROTC during their Pass and Review. Each year, the NJROTC has to pass an Annual Military Inspection performed by a Naval Officer. The inspection has two parts - cadets are inspected in their uniform and cadets perform a military ceremony called Pass and Review. Bravo Zulu Awards were presented to the cadets who were best dressed during uniform inspection and the Honor Platoon was recognized. If you see Aleigh Brown, Edder Martinez, Aaron Reed, Yeltiza Tovar, Ashley Garcia, Issac Fraide, Yoselin Ramirez, Paola Vega, Colt Taylor, Noah Bagley, Jayla Rivers, Ismael Roldan, Kimbryanna Johnson, Kameron Pennell, or Zy'keriaona Smith. Be sure to congratulate these students for their awards. The 2nd Platoon was the Honor Platoon for the 2018-2019 School Year. What an outstanding group of young men and women. These students know what it takes to achieve their goals by being disciplined and working hard. I am not easily impressed, but the NJROTC impresses me every time. We are fortunate to have Ms. Woods. She provides "tough love," but the love in her voice for her students is refreshing. Dr. Cummings and Superintendent Leis are extra special to our community. Dr. Cummings truly believes in our children. Superintendent Leis said, "I am going to do everything I can for every child to succeed." I believe in Ms. Woods, Dr. Cummings, and Superintendent.

I stopped by the Alternative School to schedule an appointment to talk with students. I was surprised when Principal LeSure said, "Today is fine and what time?" The Alternative School was encouraging - our school system is not, and will not, give up on our children. Principal LeSure said numerous times, "I am your school mom. I love you. I care about you and I believe in you. We are here for you," to these youth. I believe in Principal LaSure. Hi, Maggie!!!

Finally, I went to the Boys and Girls club for "Lights On." First, I think the teachers we are having more fun than the students. We are blessed to have the Boys and Girls Club in our community. The building is in need of some repairs and we need to encompass the play area into the assessment of our community parks.

Now, let's talk about our community parks. We have several small park projects in the works, and I hope everyone will be able to see a difference soon. We are asking for civic organizations, businesses, and individuals to "Adopt A Park". I challenge civic organizations to take on the responsibility of the upkeep of one of our 12 parks in the city. We need citizens to help keep our parks clean and to report needed repairs to our Parks and Recreation Office. If you want to help "Team Up to Clean Up" our parks, give Stevie, Willis, or Landy a call at 912-384-5978.

Our Mayor's Youth Council is having a great year! Each month, a member of the Council will be recognized for their exemplary leadership skills. The month of October highlighted

Teairra Thrower and community members, Timothy Tucker. Teairra is scheduled to graduation in June 2019. She is the daughter of Tokaye Dukes and Marcus Thrower. She has been a member of the NJROTC for four (4) years and has served on the Mayor's Youth Council for 2 years. She plans to become a Psychiatrist since she enjoys helping other so much. This is what this program is all about! Encouraging and mentoring these youth to achieve their dreams by continuing their education and giving back to our community. Timothy is the son of Timothy and Cynthia Tucker. He is a potential honor graduate for the class of 2020. He is serving as the Southeast Area Vice President for Georgia FBLA. He is on his way to a bright future and plans to become an Orthodontist. This is what this program is all about! Encouraging, mentoring, and guiding these youth to achieve their dreams by continuing their education and giving back to our community.

Our Douglas-Coffee County Teen Court is gearing up for their first trial. So far, they have attended training, held a mock trial, and had a meeting with Judge Ross. The first trial date is set for December 1 at 9:00am. We will have a total of 24 participants. We have some outstanding adults who are helping mentor these youth. I want to say "Thank you for volunteering your time with our youth" to Darlene Paulk, Jack Myers, Ernestine Thomas-Clark, Jessica Williams, DA Lindsay Hudgins, Kearson Mobley and Mike Bazell, who are volunteering with the program. We have a total of 24 participants in the first Douglas-Coffee County Teen Court which is a great start.

Did any of you attend the Anti-Bullying March that was held on Wednesday, October 24th? Bullying is something that I cannot tolerate. Why would any young person want to belittle another young person? They should be building each other up, not tearing a person down. Unfortunately, we live in a society that sometimes does not show empathy towards each other. We need to practice more empathy and compassion for one another. We need to instill in our children the need for compassion and doing as the good book says, "Do unto others as you would have done unto you." I want to see a Douglas where no child is a victim of bullying. We need to find resources to help our youth who are victims, but, to also help our youth who are bullies. There is a reason why those children feel the need to put down another child. We need to find out why and find a way to alter that aggression in our youth. Remember, the first time I heard the term "Cyber-bullying" was from a student. Our youth continue to impress me with finding ways to build other students up by focusing on anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying missions!

By now, most of you have heard the great news - Douglas is going to have a championship eight (8) lane swimming pool! We almost hit a tough patch with our improvements at Davis Wade swimming pool, but, luckily through the Commission working together, we realized the importance of a quality pool for our community and our state championship swim team. Now, that is something to be proud of! Okay, I am just a little excited about the pool.

If you are going to be the "Children's Mayor" you have to spend time with the children, listen, and act. I work full time. Currently, I have taken more vacation time to be with our children than to do official Mayoral duties. Hanging out with the children is more fun.

I have enjoyed each and every one of these visits and programs that highlight and showcase our youth! Spending time with our youth shows that their accomplishments and opinions are important - their voice matters to me! I am investing in Douglas' future each time I visit a school or youth organization. I see our youth as the future of Douglas and I will do all that I can to help youth achieve their goals and better themselves because I hope that in return, these youth will become leaders of in our community and keep Douglas Shining Brightly!