

## Students learn real life in Knightsville

May 11, 2009  
AMANDA HICKEY

When the Knightsville bank realized it was going into debt, it began charging a withdrawal fee on all ATM transactions.

The citizens revolted, wrote a petition, sent it to the mayor and, eventually, the fee was revoked.

That's how it works in a micro society, said Juachita Terry, the micro society site coordinator at Jacksonville Commons Middle School.

Micro society, a three-day a week after-school program, helps the 70 students taking it learn about three primary things: attitude, achievement and attendance, Terry said.

The students join ventures - such as a bakery, restaurant, bank, arts and crafts, spa and wellness center, government and peace keeping, or step dance and multicultural events. They maintain a business, create a product and make a profit selling their product to other students, Terry said.

Kentrell Baines, 12 and in seventh grade, began working as a filer at the bank and ended his first year with Micro society as the bank manager, he said.

"I learned how to actually operate a bank and manage my money like an adult would and budget very well," Kentrell said. "When I get a paycheck I'll know to put half of it up and spend the other half as I please so I have money to pay my bills."

At the end of the day, the students write in a journal about their experiences.

On Lakisha Sanders' first day of Micro society in sixth grade, she wrote about picking her jobs, she said. On her last day of Micro society in seventh grade, she wrote about how Micro society has made her a better person.

The 12-year-old served as the Knightsville bank's head teller until the program ended for the year last week.

"It taught me how to work with others and how to manage my money," she said. "You have to get along with other people to get the job done."

Lakisha joined the society when she heard from a teacher that it would teach her responsibility, she said.

"It's helped me become a better person. ... It taught me how to communicate with other people," Lakisha said.



Students who participated in the program during the 2007-08 school year saw an increase in their End of Course math scores, Career Development Coordinator Mary Davis said.

"It wasn't a huge increase, but it was an increase," she said.

While Microsociety was originally planned for at-risk students, a range of students takes part in the program.

"We have (academically gifted) students. We have (exceptional child) students. Micro is really for every child," Terry said.

Davis hopes the program will return in the fall.

"Budget restraints are the only reason we wouldn't," she said.

The Onslow County Board of Education will hold a special meeting to approve the budget at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at Hunters Creek Middle School.

