CCCC GIVE Club Dedicated to Helping Others

SANFORD – On April 16, 2011, a large and intense tornado struck Sanford, destroying a Lowes Home Improvement Warehouse and inflicting millions of dollars in damages.

That same week, tornadoes cut a path through Cumberland, Harnett, Wake and Bertie counties. These storms proved devastating to many Central Carolina Community College students.

The college's GIVE Club, whose name is an acronym for "Get Involved, Value Everyone," was determined to help.

Over a period of a few months, the college exhausted all emergency student relief funding for students affected by the storm. The GIVE Club has an on-going goal of replacing those funds by raising money through a series of service-learning projects, such as the sale of flowers at graduation, and chili, soup and sandwich lunches on campus.

"I think it's really cool," said CCCC Student Activities Director Mike Neal. "The club really hit the ground running and has already had a huge impact, raising approximately $2,000 this year through service-earning events."

In addition to helping the victims of the 2011 tornados, the GIVE Club has staged several activities that raise money for local charitable organizations, such as the Breadbasket of Lee County.

The Breadbasket serves an average of 180-200 free, hot meals a day to people who cannot afford one. It also furnishes some food to the Christian United Outreach Center, the Salvation Army, the Enrichment Center, women's and men's shelters and several shut-ins in Lee County.

"We definitely want to keep our commitment to the Breadbasket because it is such an asset to the community," said Neal. "I would also like to see the club continue its flower sale activities at graduation because it is a way to be there for both former and future students."

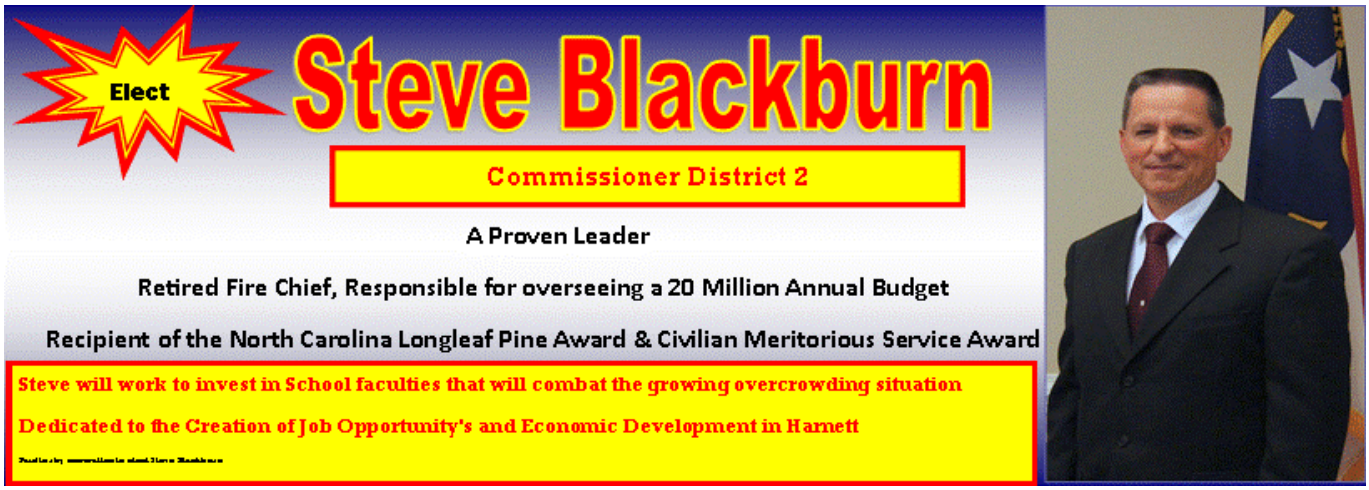
Kimberly Brzozowski, advisor to the GIVE Club and administrative assistant to TRIO programs at CCCC, explained that the club conducts either a fundraising or service event each month. There are no membership fees for students who participate and each student is required to sign a Commitment Participation Pledge which states that they will participate in six club events during the year.

"The initiation of this student organization is a direct result of the first goal in Central Carolina's strategic plan," Brzozowski said, "which is to maximize student learning, access and success."

To Tobechi Opara, a 2013-14 shooting guard for the CCCC basketball team, becoming a member of GIVE was not only a means of helping others, but also a great way to meet new people.

"It is a good way to socialize and put myself out there," he said. "As a whole, the club is really school-oriented and it's nice to be around people who want to give back."

Opara said he first encountered the GIVE Club at CCCC when members were selling chili outside on a cold day.

"I like volunteering," he said. "It gives me a chance to serve. I want to start my career as a nurse in the Emergency Room so the mission of the club really ties in with what I want to do as a career."

For information on the GIVE Club and other student activities programs at CCCC, contact Mike Neal @ 919-718-7337 or e-mail him at mneal@cccc.edu.