

THE ROTARY CLUB OF ATLANTA WEST END

Friday, March 8, 2019 @ 12:15 PM

March is Literacy Month

Call to Order	Tony Kimbrough
Invocation	Ed Henderson
Pledge	Pearlie Perryman
Introduction of Guests	Don Schewe
Tasse Trivia	Don Schewe
Program	Tony Kimbrough
Announcements	Tony Kimbrough
Adjournment	Tony Kimbrough



This Week's Speaker: Jakita Thomas, PhD. **Founder, We PLAY League**

Jakita O. Thomas is a Philpott WestPoint Stevens Associate Professor of Computer Science and Software Engineering at Auburn University and Director of the CULtuRally & SOcially Relevent (CURSOR) Computing Lab. Her research interests include exploring the development of computational algorithmic thinking, intersectional computing, promoting access to healthcare information and services for under-served populations, improving reasoning using expert cases, scientific reasoning, and complex cognitive skills learning. Dr. Thomas is a recipient of the National Science Foundation's Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award (2012 - 2018) as well as the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) (2016). More info on Dr. Thomas's work to bring eSports to people of color can be found at <http://www.pharaohsconclave.com/> or <http://www.weplayeleague.com>

Last Week's Speaker: Jason Martin, STE(A)M Truck

Tony Kimbrough, AWER program leader for March, presented **Jason Martin**, close friend and Founder and Executive Director of STE(A)M TRUCK. STE(A)M [Science Technology (Arts) Engineering Math] Truck (ST) focuses teachers and students on new ways to learn, question and understand, and to gain confidence and skills in areas previously foreign or scary to them. Jason explained that STEM jobs are continuing to grow at almost twice the rate of non-STEM, as pay in STEM careers is more lucrative. ST exposes students to the world of STEM. Because wealthier schools sometimes enjoy better access to advancing knowledge, Jason invented ST so that this moveable classroom could be 'everywhere' with affordability. Jason and his team want to close the inequality-learning gap by transforming teaching. Jason showed slides of students inside the ST, building applications outside

ST, and taking ST work into classrooms. These experiences capture students on the fringes of learning and those struggling but who through ST shed their fears and want to go for more. ST gives kids who feel overwhelmed hands-on experiences with real scientists doing real work, in person and online. Third party assessments of ST by Learn4Life show it helping to generate strong academic gains. ST was born when Jason gazed upon a 1980 Chevy P130 panel truck – the answer to a dream of a mobile physical property destined to level the learning playing field so less-resourced children could advance to their potential, overcoming limiting self-fulfilling prophecies of both teachers and sometimes parents, too. Ultimately, ST seeks the transformation of learning in our mainstream schools by emphasizing activities that link back to learning principles in ways that both excite students and also build confidence, helping them to understand how to master STEM rather than see it as too hard and too mysterious. Accomplishing this represents a major breakthrough because, as **Dennis Boyden** said, feeling unequal to today's demands in learning the sciences hinders kids at all income levels ... which underscores the importance of Jason's vision, work and accomplishments. - *Neil Shorthouse*

Rotary AWE Micropreneur Profile: Devotis Lee

Devotis "D" Lee is the owner of D's Café, a café/catering company in the West End. D is an Atlanta native who grew up in Oakland City and in the Fairburn Road area. She worked for UPS for 18 years and in 2009 retired, taking her retirement savings and starting a catering company focused on servicing local churches out of her home. Her husband and son also work in the business. Her mom, a long-time resident of the West End, sadly passed away recently, but this connection set D's roots in the West End. D also was selected by the Obama campaign to work in their Tampa office for four months on his reelection campaign. In 2013, D and her family opened their first brick and mortar location and subsequently moved into their current space at 1550 Ralph David Abernathy in 2016. The building was in miserable shape under the ownership of a slumlord but the new owners, Westview Realty Partners, had a different vision for the area. They live in the area and are active in the community. D spent a year renovating the space and opened to the public as a café in 2017. Westview Partners required that she have a storefront rather than just a warehousing operation so that the community would interact with D's Café. She hires many young folks in the area and currently catering makes up approximately 80% of revenues.

D scored a recent coup when, after meeting stern NFL guidelines, the company was selected as one of 20 authorized caterers for Super Bowl week. D's also provides catering to the nearby Blank Foundation. During the week, the café is slow but come Friday night and for the rest of the weekend business is brisk, due in large part to its proximity to the Beltline and the new energy in the neighborhood with new home owners. During my recent visit, the first gentleman that came in for lunch was a film maker doing a documentary on someone whose mother lives in the West End. *Continued on back →*