

## Talley Street Elementary Hosts First Amazing Shake

This year at Talley Street Upper Elementary School, teachers, staff, and students kicked off their new “house” system modeled after the program at the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta. The house program helps to make Talley, a school of 700 students, seem smaller as students participate in activities throughout the year in their house groups including house meetings, community service projects, and social events.

At the beginning of the school year, students were sorted into one of six houses: Altruismo (the house of givers), Amistad (the house of friendship), Isibindi (the house of courage), Rêveur (the house of dreamers), Onarka (the house of unity), and Nukumori (the house of kindness). Each house is led by students chosen by the students in each house.

This year, the students interested in becoming house leaders participated in the Amazing Shake, a program aimed at teaching students manners, discipline, respect, and how to conduct themselves in a professional environment. Students were selected to participate after completing a written application and giving a speech to their house members.

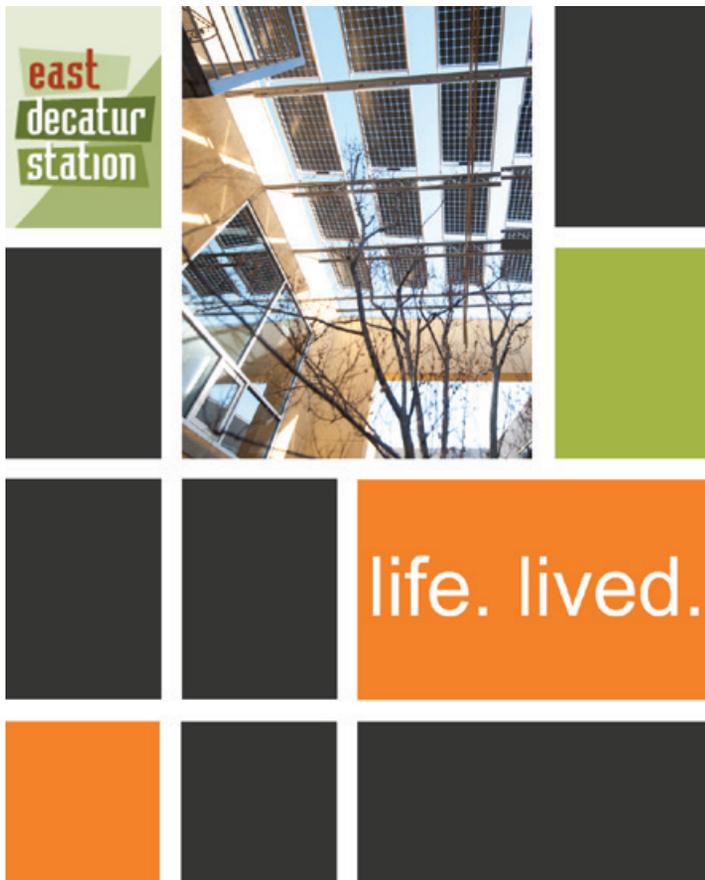
During the school year, students learned the mechanics of a proper handshake and working the room so that they are able to present themselves exceptionally well for opportunities today and in the future. Participating students rotated through an obstacle course of



From left, back row: Ethel Johnson, Michelle Block, Mayor Patti Garrett, Commissioner Lesa Mayer, Mayor Pro Tem Tony Powers, Laura Spriggs, Green Francis, Claire Miller, Dan Whisenhunt. Front row: Alicia Reno, Kelly Nichols, Jessica Young, Dr. Maggie Fehrman

community members and answered questions and completed tasks to test their skills. Students were asked to lead an interview, give a press conference on current events, create a house cheer, reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, come up with ideas for community involvement, as well as other tasks. Community members, including Decatur’s mayor, journalists, city commissioners, school district officials, city employees, and Talley staff interviewed the students and scored them on their answers.

At the end of the event, six students were chosen to lead their houses in the 2023-2024 school year: Uma Raman-Baski, Connie Bhasin, Madelyn Edney, Zinn Olson-Masick, Cleo Saliers, and Suria Pillay. Assistant house leaders include: Elanor Coblentz, Chloe Bell, Lillian Gutman, Taylor Hall, Anna Schoeman, and Malachi Stauffer. Throughout the year, the house leaders will participate in leadership workshops and attend a conference for students at the Ron Clark Academy to hone their leadership skills. Talley looks forward to extending the program next year.



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