Food insecurity proves to be hot topic at event

TOPIC
FROM THE FRONT PAGE

UGA-Griffin professor Jeff Jordan moderated the panel that was made up of local school principals Aveory Allen (Atkinson Elementary), Gloria Brown (Moore Elementary), Evelyn Jones (Anne Street Elementary) and Laura Jordan (Jackson Road Elementary).

Jordan and Joseph Walker, executive director of the Spalding County Collaborative, shared statistics about those in the community who face food insecurity. Food insecurity, they pointed out, is the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

According to the Spalding Collaborative, 20.3 percent of Spalding County residents live with this uncertainty, including 38.6 percent of the community’s children.

The school system served almost 1.5 million lunches and nearly three quarters of a million breakfasts last year,” Jordan said. “But it is not enough.”

The panel agreed, stating that often children come to school on Monday mornings lethargic and acting out due to lack of nutrition over the weekend. The principals were unanimous in their opinion that this affects students’ ability to learn.

A similar problem was occurring in 1948, when the film was made. The Backpack Food for Kids program provides selected students with enough food in a backpack for three meals and two snacks over the weekend.

said Walker. Discretion is used in distributing the packs to avoid any potential embarrassment for the students.

“The kids may be embarrassed at first,” said Allen, “but most of them just want the food.”

Walker opened his heart to community members at the Impact Speaker Series, which is sponsored by Griffin’s Impact Office Interiors. He said that donations make food possible, which is delivered to the local food bank. Community volunteers come in and sort the food one day, then others come and pack it up in the backpacks for distribution at the four schools.

Walker added that the program needs to expand so that more children can be fed, but that in order to do so, more donations are needed.

“Two hundred dollars feeds a child each weekend for the entire school year,” he said, encouraging local churches, businesses and individuals to get involved and give.

Anyone interested in supporting the Backpack Food for Kids program may send tax-deductible donations payable to Spalding Collaborative, P.O. Box 701, Griffin, GA 30224.

For more information about the initiative, contact Joseph Walker at spaldingcollaborative@gmail.com.