

Pictured is the Elbert County Vocational Rehabilitation Team celebrating NDEAM after attending the FHF Students vs. Coaches Basketball Game on October 13, 2015 at ECCHS. (Front row) EC Schools Assistant Superintendent/Friends Helping Friends Club, Inc. Board Member Angela Moton, EC Schools & Mountain Education Social Worker/VR Liaison/High School High Tech (HSHT) Supervisor Vernessa Hollis, GVRA Rehabilitation Unit Manager Dixie Morris, Bowman Mountain Education Charter High School Counselor Susan Fricks, ECCHS Graduation Coach Rhonda Driver, GVRA VR Counselor for Elbert County Rebecca Weisenbach, Elbert Education Center Teacher Jane McCall, State Representative Tom McCall, and Friends Helping Friends Club, Inc. President Sandy Adams. (Middle row) GVRA VR Coordinator for Transition Services Jeff Allen, GVRA VR Director of Operations Ken Hise, GVRA HSHT Director Karen Royston. (Back row) GVRA VR Director of Field Services Dale Arnold, EC Middle School Principal & Friends Helping Friends Club, Inc. Board Member Jon Jarvis, GVR Services Board Chairman Jimmy Defoor. EC VR Team members not pictured are GVRA VR Program Director Ed James, EC Special Education Director Deborah Moore, ECCHS CTAE Director Kim Fuller, ECCHS Special Ed Chair Lisa Haynes, EC Schools Superintendent Chuck Bell, ECCHS Principal Jason Kouns.

Elbert County Schools collaborate with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) VR Division to provide services to help eligible persons with disabilities prepare for, start and maintain competitive employment, thus becoming productive and independent citizens in our community. The Elbert County High School (ECCHS) VR Counselor assists students and young adults in creating individually tailored short and long term employment goals. Assistance encompasses meeting the full realm of job training and workplace requirements and is provided as long as needed after students transition from high school until they reach and maintain gainful employment. The VR team provides a variety of individual services to persons with disabilities in preparation for their employment in the competitive labor market and to employers seeking to retain valuable employees with disabilities or hire qualified individuals for their workforce. Services provided to jobseekers include: Counseling & guidance, assistive technology, job placements, vocational assessments, work adjustments, medical evaluations, certain physical restoration services. Services provided to employers include: Identifying a qualified pool of candidates for positions being filled, jobsite coaching, helping an employer identify the right solutions/accommodations for employee to be effective on the job through onsite job assessments, providing technical support & training on those accommodations to ensure longterm success. Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment and celebrates the many and varied contributions of

America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2015 is "My Disability is One Part of Who I Am." Each year, schools, cities and counties across the state of Georgia and the nation recognize the efforts and value of citizens with disabilities during the month of October. "Elbert County is proud to be a part of this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month," said EC Schools Superintendent Chuck Bell. "We want to spread the important message that a strong workforce is one inclusive of the skills and talents of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities." Coordinating and hosting the annual celebration locally, retired Elbert County teacher Sandy Adams serves as President of Friends Helping Friends Club, Inc., (FHF) FriendsHelpingFriendsClub.com, a 501(c)3 charitable organization with 300 Elbert County middle and high school students and alumni members providing exceptional educational opportunities including school trips, special events, camps, lessons, crafts and school supplies for Elbert County's students who face special challenges at no cost to the school system or to the students served. FHF also provides its members the opportunity to develop crucial leadership skills and sincere appreciation for the unique value and talents evident in each student served. Formed in 2010, FHF is dedicated to the memory of Bud McCall, son of State Representative Tom and Jane McCall. Adams was recommended by Representative McCall and appointed by Governor Deal to serve on the GVR Services Board when it was formed in 2012 to team with GVRA in helping Georgians with disabilities become competitively employed and participate fully in their communities. Adams was reappointed by Governor Deal to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board on July 24, the eve of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The GVRA branch of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA), which educates and aids individuals on SSI or SSDI who want to work and gain self sufficiency, has a toll-free customer care number. All questions related to working while on SSI or SSDI can be directed to 844-For-WIPA (367-9472). For more information on services provided through GVRA go to GVRA.georgia.gov or call the Toll-Free Customer Care Number at 844-For-GVRA (844-367-4872).