

The AERA Voice!

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CONECUH COUNTY ERA WINS NATIONAL AWARD!

After being nominated earlier this year, Conecuh County Education Retirees Association (CCERA) has been awarded an NRTA *With Our Youth!* Excellence Award by NRTA: AARP's Educator Community. This national honor recognizes volunteers' work to provide financial literacy training to middle and high school students in a rural low-income setting.

CCERA members were invited to attend the October, 2009 AERA Board of Director's Meeting where **AERA President Charles Smith** presented the award and recognized the work done by this local unit (see photo at right).

CCERA retirees teamed up with JA Worldwide (formerly Junior Achievement) of Mobile, Alabama to bring much needed financial planning information to middle and high school students in two schools in Conecuh County, a rural economically deprived area in South Alabama. Between the two schools, 80 percent of the students received training, and approximately 60 percent of the students involved in the project were from single parent families.

The students performed hands-on activities they would need for life outside of school including: how to manage money effectively, make bank deposits, and prevent identity theft. CCERA members reported that the program taught students how to be effective consumers. In just six weeks students were ready to face real life decisions! Students thought they only needed to earn money to survive, but soon

learned they also needed to know how to manage their money. In addition, the 282 students were taught to recognize the advantages of having a good credit score, making and keeping a budget, and saving and investing in the future. Retired educators and school administrators in Conecuh County believe this program has truly changed the lives of these students and their families. Many students reported helping their parents with financial matters such as why they need car insurance and

the benefits of having a checking account.

Megan Hookey, Vice President of NRTA: AARP's Educator Community said, "The winners of the NRTA *With Our Youth!* award fill me with gratitude for their dedication and service to the youth in their community. With the commitment these retired educators demonstrate, it is an honor to recognize such extraordinarily, deserving volunteers like the members of Conecuh County Education Retirees Association."



Attending the October Board Meeting recognizing Conecuh County retirees for winning a national award are l-r: (front row) AERA District Director John Paul Jones; AARP Alabama Director Joan Carter; CCERA members Frances Floyd, Lillie Kyser, Geraldine Booker; AERA Executive Secretary Janice Charlesworth; and CCERA member Cleopatra Williams; (back row) CCERA President Robert Floyd; CCERA member Geraldine Mims; AERA Past President Robert Davis (whose brother, the late Johnny Davis, was instrumental in the development of the project); AERA Area Coordinator Otis Brunson; and AERA President Charles Smith.