

# 'Stars' ... from Page 1A

department," Surles said. "I have taught in much different places than here, and I am glad I am here, and I love the students that I get to teach. It is just an honor to be Teacher of the Year."

The last awards of the evening went to STAR Student Kenzie Livingston, who earned the highest SAT score in a single sitting of all her classmates, and STAR Teacher Christa Houser.

"I came to Towns County my eighth-grade year, and I have never felt more at home," Livingston said. "That in itself is such a blessing, and to be honored by something that I have worked very hard for means a lot."

"I chose Miss Houser because she was the first teacher

to ever believe in me, and she pushed me to do my best. She really helped me know how valuable I was outside of the classroom and outside of the grades."

For her part, Houser was honored to have been chosen as Livingston's STAR Teacher, sharing kind words for Livingston and her parents, Clay and Sherri, both of whom work as educators in the school system.

"You have an incredible family," Houser said. "They value you individually, intellectually, athletically, artistically, and that is so rare, unfortunately. Thank you to the Livingstons for bringing that to our community and for showing young parents how possible it is."

# Day of Prayer ...from Page 1A

in as they desire.

"We have Cliff Bradshaw speaking," Eyrich said of the sole commissioner. "We have Steve Soulen with Sharp Memorial, Harry Gilbert, our personal Hiwassee Park chaplain, St. Francis of Assisi in Blairsville. We have one of the (assistant) principals of the schools, Latisha Usher, who will be praying for education."

The prayers will cover many different categories, including community focus, education, businesses, churches, military, families and the country.

Musical performances take place during various sets of prayer, giving various a fulfilling experience as they join in on the observance.

The program was filmed on-site at Hiwassee Park, and Eyrich and her team are grateful to have had the opportunity to work on the event and provide such a positive message for the community.

"I guess most importantly, I am so thankful for prayer," Eyrich said. "At Hiwassee Park, we are a ministry, and I am so thankful for that. Our mission is to love God and to love people, and to serve people."

"When they offered this to us, I just could not have been more honored. That is what we are about here at Hiwassee Park, and this is a great way to do that. Alicia Rogers has been my right-hand man to get this together, and I couldn't have done it without her."

Eyrich urges those who choose to tune into the event, as

well as others in the community, to keep the positivity of prayer going beyond the National Day of Prayer.

"This is a wonderful time to start in unity as a community," Eyrich said. "It doesn't stop there, though."

"I encourage each and every person from this moment on to continue to agree that we will continue to pray for our nation, our community, and all the different topics that are going to be prayed for. Don't let it stop there."



Camren Owenby has earned the CTAE Star Award for his exemplary performance in the school's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education areas of study. Photo by Jarrett Whitener



Principal Perren was happy to award Hailey Bechtol with the Community Service Award highlighting the student's commitment to serving others. Photo by Jarrett Whitener



Senior Kenzie Livingston is the 2021 STAR Student, and she selected Christa Houser to serve as her STAR Teacher. Here they are being recognized by Principal Perren on April 28 at the Civic Center. Photo by Jarrett Whitener



TCHS Freshman Connor Chastain was awarded the Rising Star Award during the April 28 "Evening with the Stars" event. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

# Fine Arts...from Page 1A



Proceeds from last Thursday's student art sale will go toward resupplying the schools' art classes. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

so I have to tell them every sort of thing they have to do. Other than that, it has been a relatively decent year despite the hardships that we had to go under."

The concert included pieces performed by varying groups of students within the band and featured a special appearance by Four Ways

Home, a student-formed group with a passion for music.

In looking back over his musical career, Four Ways Home member and senior Mason Ledford said band has played a significant role in his high school journey.

"I feel very grateful to get to end my year because of the world around us," Ledford

said. "I feel terrible because last year's senior class didn't get the opportunity like this. This is actually our first and last concert of the year, and I am glad that we even got to do it."

Ledford plans to attend Kennesaw State University to study computer science after graduating this month. He will likely continue to be part of the band he has formed with his friends here and will always cherish his time in Towns County Schools.

Senior Madison Hickey is grateful to have found a place in the Towns County Band, which over time has become more of a family to her than a class.

"It is very accomplishing, for sure," Hickey said. "Seeing how I have improved and all the progress I have made is crazy to consider. I am proud to say that I am part of this

band. The family you get has been my favorite part."

Hickey plans on attending Young Harris College in the fall in pursuit of becoming a music director.

In addition to the Band Concert that evening, all three of the Towns County Schools ran an art sale featuring the incredible artistic talents of the local youth.

On organizing the event, High/Middle School Art Teacher Sarah Ewing said she wanted students to be recognized and feel accomplished as they brought friends and family to the sale, which acts as a fundraiser to help the art program resupply for the next year.

"We always do it together with the elementary, middle, and high school," Ewing said. "We just try to show what kind of artists we have in Towns County. All the money we get

goes back into the program and helps us with supplies."

"If people do not buy the art, I don't keep it. I take it out of the frame and the students get to decide what to do with it. I think it is awesome that the kids get to see their art like this and enjoy it with the family."

High School Junior Bazya Smith has been involved in the art program since its inception and hopes to continue pursuing her artistic passions for years to come.

"We didn't get an art program until the eighth grade, so that is when I started doing a lot more art," Smith said. "It takes a lot of practice, and I am really proud of what I have gotten done so far, and I hope to keep improving."

"I don't know if art is something that I want to do for my career, but it is definitely something that I love doing."