Students and staff at Braxton Craven School wrapped up a week of Red Ribbon activities designed to help students make good choices in their lives. The door of Phillip Ball’s classroom was declared the first-place winner in the door decorating contest for, “Don’t Follow the Pac. Be Drug Free.” Pictured here are volunteer door judges, from left, Assistant Chief Darren Pierce of Guil-Rand Fire Department, Archdale Police Chief Shannon Craddock and Todd Cutler of Randolph County School Board.

Red Ribbon week at Braxton Craven

Students answer #whysayno

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — Sixty boxes of sidewalk chalk, hundreds of square feet of asphalt and more than 116 man-hours of effort yielded a huge antidrug effect for 350 sixth-graders at Braxton Craven Middle School. Students participated in a variety of drug awareness and prevention activities during Red Ribbon Week late last month.

On a Monday, students wore red in honor of Red Ribbon week. Tuesday was crazy hat day. Participants wore neon on Wednesday because “My future is too bright to do drugs.” Students and staff showed up in ties and scarves on Thursday for “Tie up a drug-free future” and, on Friday, everyone wore team apparel for “Team up against drugs.”

According to school counselor Susan Neeves, all the activities were designed to help students make good choices so they can live above the influences of negatives in their lives such as drug abuse and peer pressure.

“They ask tough questions,” said Neeves. “One comment that was eye-opening for me was a student who answered the question ‘Why not do drugs?’ with ‘Because I don’t want to be like my mom.’”

Each classroom decorated doors with slogans that promoted the anti-drug message. The door of Phillip Ball’s classroom was declared the first-place winner in the door decorating contest for his decoration that read, “Don’t Follow the Pac. Be Drug Free.” When Neeves reached inside the door, sound effects from the
Red Ribbon door entries ranged from thoughtful to creative to amusing, as seen by Ashadale Police Chief Shannon Cockroft’s response. Although some of the doors were entertaining, all contributed a serious impact with their anti-drug messages.

Principal Brian Hardie’s remarks appeared on the door of Leslie Luckhart’s room to proclaim the message “Doing Drugs is not Groovy.”

Branton Craven Red Ribbon organizers were hoping to impact the decisions of as many Branton Craven students as possible. Kennedy Strickland knew that drugs were bad prior to Branton Craven’s Red Ribbon event, but after the work of activities the method clearly restored the detrimental effect drugs can have on anyone’s life.

Judges compared notes on their evaluations for creativity and also for impact of the Red Ribbon messages. Pictured here, Darren Pence, Shannon Cockroft and Todd Carter closely regard Mr. Hardie’s door inspired by Facebook’s social media which read “Face it, in our book, drugs stick.”

On Tuesday, physical education teachers Elliott Childress and Lynn Smidt let students utilize chalk during their physical education class for individual answers to the messages.

“A lot of students sat down on the pavement and put a lot of effort into it,” said Noreen. “We rotated the P.E. classes so it pretty much took the whole day.”

Kennedy Strickland used many colors for the chalk proclaimed because “I care about my life.”

“I know that drugs were bad before, but this made me think about it even more,” said Strickland. “You don’t want to do it. If you do it even once, you can become addicted.”

“I know we’re not going to impact all 300 of them, but if we can save just one, then all the worth is worth it,” said Noreen.

Picture here, door judge Darren Pence was drawn to the door of Mrs. Southland’s room which bore the message “When it comes to drugs — Mrs. Southland’s class has many Emojis.”

Prosecutor for the District Attorney’s office Jamie Davis said it was a great day to see how the students and teachers went above and beyond in their efforts. Davis said he and others on the panel have been impressed by the creativity displayed by the students.

“By including tag lines, the students are driving home the message of their efforts. I thought they did a great job,” said Davis. “I expect many students to think twice about drug use.”

Hundreds of square feet of Branton Cravenermann aged as a testimony to the impact of Red Ribbon activities.

On Monday, physical education teachers Elliott Childress and Lynn Smidt let students utilize chalk during their physical education class for individual answers to the messages.