

chool District. as well as the Clay County
braced us and School Board will be abol-
welcome. I just ished, and an entirely new
ould have hap- school board will be elected in
better superin- November of 2014 by the elec-

it it works don't try to fix
it," Johnson said.
West Clay Band Director

See 'School' page 10

Students at West Clay elementary are hard at work last year during a class session. West Clay is
labeled a top-performing school.

Classes offer citizens "bridges out of poverty"

By Bryan Davis
Daily Times Leader

There will be a very impor-
tant community training semi-
nar in Starkville one week from
today.

Attendance from West
Point's community leaders
could lead to a significant
impact on poverty and the
town's economy.

"Bridges out of Poverty" is
an organization that has taught
communities that benefits and
effectiveness of empowering

writing checks to different
charities.

Lynn Phillips-Gaines spoke
to the West Point Rotary Club
last week about the "Bridges"
program and the impact it has
had on Starkville.

West Point has an chance to
bring the program here, and
that is why a healthy number of
community leaders is needed at
next Friday's session.

"Once a community gets
beyond 41 percent generational
poverty, it's almost impossible

See 'Poverty' page 10



Bryan Davis

Erica Gillespie speaks to the West Point Rotary Club about her



'Poverty'

to bring that community
back," Phillips-Gaines said. "It
only takes two generations to
go from situational poverty to
generational poverty."

West Point and Clay County
have hit hard times in the last
few years, losing thousands of
jobs due to industry closure.
Phillips-Gaines says that many
of the participants in the pro-
gram in Starkville come from
Clay County.

Phillips-Gaines says that
there is about \$3 million in the
"compassion industry" another
name for charity giving.

There is nothing wrong with
giving to charity, but perpetual
charity becomes toxic.

"Bridges out of Poverty"
promotes one-way gift giving
to emergency situations only.

The organization says its
goal is to "strive to empower
the poor through employment,
lending and investing."

Erica Gillespie, a Clay
County native and now resident
of Starkville was a recipient of
such empowerment when she
went through the 17 class (two
to two and a half hours) pro-
gram.

"I learned more about life
and the management of
money," Gillespie said. "I
learned about paying debts off.
That class was very important
to me."

The program prides itself on
bridging the communication
gaps between the poor class,
middle class and even the
wealthy class.

"People in poverty have a

certain way they talk to people,
and people in the middle class
have a certain way they talk to
people," Gillespie said. "The
wealthy class has a different
way they speak."

The licensed social worker
completed the program and has
worked her way out of poverty.

"West Point could use this
program," she said. "I work in
Noxubee County, and I see first
hand what poverty does to fam-
ilies. It's sad."

The program encourages less
charity and more empower-
ment for those in poverty. It's
likened to the old truism, "give
a man a fish, feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish, feed him
for a lifetime."

West Point and Clay County
citizens who are struggling and

continued from page 1

need a better education on
money management and how
to get the job they are looking
for can have this program.

There has to be sufficient
support from the community to
justify bringing the program
here.

Registration is \$50 until
Sunday. The program will start
at 8:30 a.m on Friday and will
last to 3:30 p.m.

Those interested can register
at www.StarkvilleBridges.com
or mail a check for the registra-
tion to 104 West Lampkin
Street, Starkville, MS 39759.

For more information call
662-418-3100 or email soutofpoverty@gmail.com

Committee, on which Cochran
remains as a senior member,
also approved its subcommit-
tee roster this week.

"A start of a new Congress
brings with it the hope that our
work will improve our nation.
I will continue to use my com-
mittee assignments to work
toward that goal. I hope we
can reach consensus on a new
Farm Bill, while also moving
forward on measures to control
debt and spending, and to pro-
mote economic growth in
Mississippi and the nation,"
Cochran said.

As the ranking Republican
member position on the Senate
Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry, Cochran
will serve as an ex officio
member of all five subcommit-
tees:

Commodities, Markets
Trade and Risk Management

Livestock, D
Marketing and
Security

On the Senate A
Committee, Cocl
tinue to serve on
six subcommitte
retain his rank
position on t
Appropriations S

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Agric
Development and

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Development

Homeland

Interior and I

Labor,
Human Services an