

Laney museum donates art to career magnet school

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Almost one month after the new Richmond County Technical Career Magnet School opened its doors, The Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History became the first organization to donate a piece of artwork for the school Thursday.

Museum executive director Christine Miller-Betts presented a print of a Romare Bearden piece dating to the Harlem Renaissance to Principal Renee Kelly.

“You never know how seeing art will inspire people who go by it,” Miller-Betts said. “This school will provide that kind of stimulation to our students, so that’s why I’m so excited about it.”

The trip doubled as a way to present the gift and also provide a tour of the school for John Franklin, the director of partnership and international programs for the Smithsonian Institution. Franklin is in Augusta to serve as the guest speaker for the 7th annual Lucy C. Laney Heritage Gala on Saturday.

Franklin is a part of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Smithsonian’s \$500 million project set to open in 2015. Considered to be 150 years in the making, since the effort was first pushed by the black veterans of the Civil War, Franklin said part of the process of opening the museum is talking to young people across the country and spreading the word about a much needed historical structure.

“There’s always different ways of looking at this side of history,” Franklin said. “The African-American side has not always been told.”

Kelly said the visit and the gift is a much needed start to filling the school with art and decorations that will inspire students.

The campus is the district’s first technical magnet school and offers a variety of pathways from culinary arts to broadcasting.

“This is our first piece of art,” Kelly said. “We needed this.”