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DVD encourages kids to make healthy choices

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Steve Trash and his crew work on the production of his latest DVD, "Kids Making Better Choices," a nutrition and exercise lesson for students around Alabama.

Steve Richerson, better known as Steve Trash, will make his way to schools across the state beginning next school year with a new theme for his unique brand of magic: good nutrition and exercise for children.

This time his program is all digital, through his company's newly produced DVD, "Kids Making Better (Eating and Exercise) Choices."

Last June, with the launch of his company, Concrete Dream Inc., came the idea to digitally produce an educational program to teach Alabama children in the elementary grades how to make decisions at an early age that will affect them for the rest of their lives.

The project was done in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Resource Conservation and Development Program, which funded the DVD project. The program aligns with the Alabama course of study and will be distributed to physical education programs across the state.

Charlie Meek, coordinator for Resource Conservation and Development, said such an educational program fits a niche perfectly.

"When this statewide initiative came up, we wrote a grant to fund this program and it really fit the bill," he said. "I was familiar with Steve and his interest in educating children and I knew he would be perfect for this."

Richerson has worked for 25 years as an entertainer, using magic and comedy to educate the public about recycling.

The partnership resulted in a DVD that can be used all year in schools and is designed to help curb the

childhood obesity problem in Alabama. The state is fifth highest in the nation for childhood obesity.

"Our state faces such a huge challenge with obesity, and we're extremely proud of this DVD because we were able to translate this very important message through magic and slapstick humor," Richerson said.

Richerson wrote, starred in and produced the project with a crew of 14. The project was unveiled last week at Kilby School in Florence.

"They reacted with great enthusiasm," Richerson said. "When kids get into what they're watching and are genuinely interested, you know you've done something worthwhile. My dream is to take this to the level of a national television show. It's educational in a fun way."

As for his digital production company, Richerson said he'd like to see his "moving image magic" follow in the same path that the Muscle Shoals Music Industry has taken.

"Some really great people have made some fine content from here and the music from this area is known worldwide," he said. "That's our model. We can do the same with our digital productions. The talent is here, and it's evident with this DVD."

Meek said he's glad to be a part of the project, adding that his goal for it is to help people.

"It was a great experience, and judging from the reaction at Kilby, it will be well received everywhere," he said. "It can have a major impact on kids everywhere."

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