

Hunger and homelessness panel addresses poverty

By Caleb Welborn
Staff Writer

Three community members active in fighting poverty spoke and answered questions at BC during a hunger and homelessness panel discussion.

The discussion took place on Monday, Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Reserve Room of Myers Dining Hall. It was sponsored by T-Move and the Center of Multicultural Service Initiatives as a part of hunger and homelessness awareness week.

The guests were Michael Collins from Bread of Life, Sonya Flynn from Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA) and Jessica Blanford from Sharing House. All three see poverty as a major local problem.

"We give them a \$75 ticket. They can't pay it, so fail to appear in court and are arrested or stuck in the court system," Collins said. "This is how we take care of mentally ill homeless people in Western North Carolina."

Collins owns Bread of Life, a local soup kitchen whose policy is "No questions asked." Collins sees hunger as a social problem that is a symptom of poverty. He opened Bread of Life, which serves between 175 and 185 meals per day, to address that problem. The Free Medical Clinic is also affiliated with Bread of Life.

"Participation is the way to change the world," Collins said. Many people volunteer at Bread of Life such as members of Boy Scout troops, youth groups, group homes, church groups, local sports teams and more.

However, winter is a tough time for the kitchen. More homeless people move into town in order to keep warm, but the kitchen receives less food and fewer volunteers.

Flynn has worked for WCCA for the past 18 years. The WCCA, whose motto is "a helping hand, not a handout," has programs for rental assistance, self-sufficiency, and weatherization. It also has a thrift store that helps to fund the programs.

Blanford represented Sharing House, a part

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of Transylvania Christian Ministries, at the discussion. Sharing House provides help for approximately local 4,000 clients who each visit about 12 times per year. Their programs include a clothing store, food pantry, rental assistance, winter firewood, and help with medical bills. They provide 7,000 pounds of food per month.

Volunteer opportunities are available with all three nonprofits.

National American Indian Heritage Month celebrated nationally and locally

By Chantel Azevedo
Staff Writer

November is the month dedicated to Native Americans. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November to be "National American Indian Heritage Month."

According to the Library of Congress for Native American Heritage, what started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S. has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose.

One proponent of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans" and for three years they adopted the tradition.

The first American Indian Day in the state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted a day of observance in 1919.

Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a national legal holiday.

Similar proclamations, under variations on the name (including "Native American Heritage Month" and "National American Indian" and "Alaska Native Heritage Month") have been issued each year since 1994.

Several colleges around the country are hosting events to contribute to this month's celebrations.

At Brevard College, "just last week The Center for Multicultural and Service Initiatives sponsored a performance by Cherokee recording artist, Michael Jacobs," said Jessica Blanford, Director of Services and Initiatives at Brevard College.

Blanford continued, saying "Jacobs performed Thursday, Nov. 11 in Myers Dining Hall from 5 - 7 p.m. in order to give the Tornado community a feel for the Native Heritage culture we are recognizing this month."

This month is one to be remembered and celebrated in order to promote the heritage of the Native Americans and their history in the United States. Through song, poetry, illustrations, and memories, all the work, passion, and dedication that the Native Americans gave to this country are celebrated and praised.

November is the one month that these Native Americans deserve, and it is their month to remind the world that what they did for their country was patriotic and selfless.

Where the white squirrels go in winter

By Caleb Welborn
Staff Writer

Soon it will be very hard to spot a white squirrel on the BC campus. Why? There won't be any to spot.

You may have already noticed an increased number of brown squirrels on campus. In fact, these are not brown squirrels, but white squirrels in their winter coats.

The white squirrel is a unique species. While other photoperiodic animals (animals which change fur color by season) change color to match their environment, the white squirrel defies the norm by sporting white fur in the summer months and brown fur in the winter months.

Dr. Ardilla Scoiattolo of the White Squirrel Research Institute, based in Brevard, is of the opinion that, "Because the squirrels live in a protected environment where it is illegal to kill them and the threat of predators is nearly nonexistent, natural selection has not been able to 'naturally' take place. They have no need to blend in with the environment."

In order to prevent accidental killings of white squirrels while in their brown winter coats, it is against the law to kill either white or brown squirrels in Brevard.

When the days become shorter, the brain does not receive stimulation from these cells, and melanin production is able to function, resulting in all new growth of fur with brown pigment.