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In Their Own Words: Program Causes Positive Change For Youth

The successful coaching of a youth to make wise decision and to value the significance of life is an investment, which is worthy of any community or institution. This Religious Education Released Time Program is an excellent vehicle for the Faith Community to embrace as one of the means of transforming our youth, improving student grades and preventing students from dropping out of school.

In their own words, these are the comments of some of the students who are participating in the program located at the Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, on 630 North Patterson Avenue, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. "Before I came here I was making bad grades, now I am the star student." Another responded, "I was lost, now I am following my wishes and achieving my goals." Change is inevitable as one student stated; "I was not attending church, now I look forward every Friday to coming to church. I have a better attitude, and a different outlook at things."

This program was made legal over fifty years ago by the Supreme Court of the United States of America. The Law states that, with the permission of parents, a Local Church, Mosque or Temple may transport students from the school campus to the church for religious training. At present, there are two churches (Goler Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church and Union Ridge United Methodist Church) that are working with two schools (Kennedy Learning Center and Konnoak Elementary School).

Through this program, one of the most important links in the educational chain can be significantly reconnected. Once the Faith Community takes advantage of the Legal opportunity that it has, there will be a tremendous benefit for the students, the family, the school system and the future quality of all young people who are coming out of our school system.

The Goler Institute for Development and Education, Inc., is the organization, which has been in dialogue with the school system and other churches to expand this program throughout the Forsyth County Community.

Churches desiring to initiate a partnership with a school may call 336-767-0882 for Rev. Donna Maree, Program Director or 336-724-9411, for Rev. Dr. Seth O. Lartey, President/CEO, G.I.D.E., Inc., 630 N. Patterson Avenue, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101.

