

Southeast Region of NWOA celebrates Founders Day

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Southeast Region of National Women of Achievement Inc. Founders Day Celebration was held on Feb. 23 at noon at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center in Winston-Salem. Annie R. Hairston was the Founders Day chairperson.

Before the program began, Betty Hannon played several musical selections on the piano. Hannon set the tone for the day. The Founders Day program opened with Hairston, mistress of ceremonies, giving the welcome and occasion. Vicki Miller gave the history of National Women of Achievement (NWOA). Ann Moye read Scriptures on love, including God's love and what our love should be.

Diane Piggott gave the prayer of blessing for a successful Founders Day. She ended her prayer with grace over the food. The menu was well planned. The Achievers enjoyed their food.

The Southeast Region is the only known region in NWOA that has a chorus.

For its first selection, the choir sang "Hold On." "It was the song (sung) during slavery when our folk worked in the fields," said Beulah Bunch, director of the chorus. Jean Williams was Bunch's accompanist.

The Achievers not in the chorus were asked to sing the words "Hold On."

The last selection of music by the chorus was "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." All Achievers sang "Sweet, Sweet, Spirit."

Youth Achievers participated in Founders Day too. National Youth Achiever (NYA) Brook Malloy gave the response to the speaker and presented Chandra Irvin a Shatter Doll as a gift. Brook gave the meaning behind



Chandra Irvin, guest speaker for the Founders Day of the Southeast Regional of National Women of Achievement Inc.

Shatter Dolls.

NYA Cherelle Phelps shared a poem about "The Importance of A Dream." The main point was to make dreams come true. In closing, Cherelle told the Achievers, "As we move forward with our dreams, remember to always look back and foster another sister in your dream. Our sisterhood in Women of Achievement gives us a unique opportunity to mentor to one another. Encourage the sisters in NWOA to reach their goals and then we will all be able to celebrate their lifetime of achievement."

Achiever Mosé Belton-Brown introduced the Founder's Day speaker, a first-class lady, Chandra Irvin, wife of Nat Irvin. The theme for Founders Day was

"Women Accepting the Challenge for Stewardship." Mrs. Irvin talked about model stewardship. She gave examples of stewardship: being responsible to handle money or something that is entrusted to us, such as a job or taking care of the body.

She said we often blame someone else for our bad choices. She cited the three servants in the Bible who used their talents in various ways. We should use well what we have. God gave us the ability to work. Our ancestors passed down to us their faith, courage, and work ethics. We as people struggle with the concept of stewardship. We have forgotten self-sacrifice, self-reliance. We have forgotten to help one another. We

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back and raised enough money to build seven of the 11 houses that we're building right here (in the 14th Street neighborhood). This used to be one of the worst streets in Winston - a bunch of drink houses, prostitution. Some of it still is here. If you will walk to the back half of the street, you'll get a sense of what this whole street was like. It was not only on this street but 13th Street, but slowly but surely (things) are changing."

The house raisings on 14th Street began last Thursday, March 4, and volunteers will be working five days a week until the middle of April. The houses are scheduled to be dedicated on Sunday, April 28, at about 4 p.m.

The houses are sold to low-income families who have successfully completed an extensive application and home buyer education process through a 20-year, no-interest mortgage. Each homeowner family is required to work a total of 300 hours on the family's home and the home(s) of a neighbor or neighbors. The homeowner also has to make a \$500 down payment. Each home has 1,144 square feet of space, including three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a washroom and a shed. Homeowner families make 25 percent to 50 percent of median family income (\$13,750 to \$26,500).

In addition to the volunteers working on the houses being built, professional builders are donating their labor.

More than 30 students from Providence (R.I.) College, Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., and Westchester (Pa.) University have been or will be working on the 14th Street houses during their spring break. A middle-aged couple from Massachusetts also came to help.

Monique Vance is one of the new homeowners. Last Thursday she was working on the house that she and her 18-year-old daughter, Timyia Vance, will live in. "I'm very excited. It means a lot," Monique Vance said. "I've always wanted to be a homeowner. I've finally been given a chance to be a homeowner of a brand new home instead of an existing (one), which is even more exciting - you know, being able to live in a nice neighborhood, somewhere where my daughter can play safely, ride her bike, you know, have neighbors..."

They now live in an apartment. "I'm looking forward to my yard work, lounging on my very

own porch," Monique Vance said. She said she'll have "like four times" more space in her new house than her apartment. "My apartment is very tiny."

"The neighborhood I live in now is kind of rough. (There's) some drug activity going on in the neighborhood. I'm kind of glad to be out of there for that reason. It's not quiet."

She said she thinks 14th Street "is going to be wonderful" once the new houses go up and other homes on the block are replaced.

Vance said her daughter "is very excited" about their move. "She's been telling everyone at school, like, 'Me and my mama have been looking for a home forever, and we've finally gotten a chance to own our own home,' not only just own it, but be able to build. That's even more exciting. That way I get to know what's going on, and watch my house as it's being put together piece by piece."

Vance is an administrative medical office specialist at Today's Woman Health and Wellness Center.

Karen Davis was also working on her new home last Thursday. She will live in the home with her 18-year-old daughter, Mikeya Davis, and 13-year-old son, Rasi Davis.

Karen Davis said that being able to own her own home "means so much to me. I am so overwhelmed...It's truly a blessing, it really is, for my family and also myself."

"Where I'm at now (on Nancy Lane), it's an OK environment, it's older people, but the houses are just not well equipped at all." She said she'll have much more space in her new home. She especially likes the closet space she'll have in her new home. Now, she said, "I really don't have closet space at all. I have clothes packed in bags. I don't have the closet space like I will here."

Davis is a housekeeping and laundry supervisor at Homestead Hills nursing home.

Another homeowner, Odella Conrad, said that she and her two children, Greg, 14, and Shyree, 7, will live in their new home. "Right now, I (live) about a two-minute drive away from here. I'm still basically in the same neighborhood. They (her children) will still go to the same schools...I know about this area from long back ago, but I'm willing to be top on the list to the neighborhood crime watch...This was a very bad drug area and has still got a little bit going down..."

The family currently lives in a duplex apartment in Drayton

Pines. Here's what Conrad said when asked how much more space will she have in her new home: "OOOOHWEEE! Closets...an extra room...My 7-year-old has never had her own room. She'll have her own bedroom. Oh man, the closet space is just massive to what I'm dealing with now. In an apartment, I didn't have my own yard, so to speak. Now I have my own yard. I can fence, put a gate or whatever. I'm excited about that."

She said, spacewise, she'll have "almost another half a house."

She said her children are "so ready" to move in. "They ready, they ready."

She works as a cashier at Reynolda Hall at Wake Forest University, employed by Aramark food service company.

Tom Hamilton of Mount Tabor United Methodist Church was one of the volunteers working on the houses last Thursday. "This is my 66th house," he said. He said seeing the reactions of the family members who will live in the homes "makes it all worthwhile." He recalled a child who was so excited to have a bedroom of her own, and a woman, not used to having much closet space, who thought the closet in her new home was a bedroom and asked how she was going to fit a bed in that space.

Rev. John Epps, pastor of Saints Home United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem and St. James United Methodist Church in Rural Hall, was also at the 14th Street work site. He said that churches need to look out not only for the spiritual needs of people, but their physical and economic needs as well. Some members of his churches were working at the site.

Sonja Murray said that for the first time, on this project Habitat has asked community churches to be involved with building new homes, and that several churches in the neighborhood will help build a home in the 14th Street neighborhood in the coming months.

Ivy Steward, who works with church and community relations for Habitat, has been going with Murray to community churches, worshipping there and seeking their help. Steward said she feels it's a blessing to be able to help people obtain decent housing.

Habitat for Humanity is a nondenominational Christian ministry.

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