

New program teaches young men facts of life

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

"Say no to drugs. Don't let friends drink and drive. Say no to sex." Sound familiar? The first two slogans are plastered on bumper stickers, posters and brochures in drug and alcohol prevention programs around the country. But, the latter motto, well, that is not quite the route most people take when it comes to sex education.

According to Jeff Jones, program manager for The Code, an abstinence-based pregnancy prevention program for boys, the only 100 percent way to guarantee you will be free of sexually transmitted diseases or not become pregnant before you are married is to abstain from premarital sex altogether. Jones and The Code participants are spreading this message and taking it all the way to the basketball hoop.

"With drinking and drugs we tell our kids no. What's the difference between that and having sex? We're trying to get the message out of wait until you get married," Jones said.

The Code has been operating for more than six months now and began as an outreach of Catholic Social Services in Winston-Salem thanks to a five-year grant from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

Upon entering The Code, boys are given a pretest to determine what they have been taught so far about sex. Jones and other program facilitators meet with parents regularly to inform them on the information being relayed to their sons with the intention of making the exchange of dialogue about sex easier in the home. In Jones' opinion the reason

so many youngsters are misinformed or uneducated about sex is because they are not having the discussion to begin with parents.

Much of the program is formulated around sports and recreational activities for the boys. At the end of the 24-week session, Code participants graduate from the program.

"Boys constantly need things to keep them involved. As far as athletes and sports and people they look up to, boys love things like that. That's why we're trying to develop the program to be sports-based," Jones said.

When Coders step up to the free-throw line on the basketball court, they must first correctly answer a question in order for their shot to count on the scoreboard. Jones sees this dual learning system as a way to keep the boys interested in learning about pregnancy prevention and developing their skills on the court.

While the mainstream discussion primarily focuses on sex education vs. sex prevention, that entails extensive instruction on ways that people can protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases. Oftentimes little attention is paid to the sure-shot way to avoid the consequences of premarital sex: chastity.

Constance McVey, program director for Youth Empowerment Social Services (YESS), came up with the concept to encourage boys ages 10 to 13 to



Jones

remain abstinent before they get married.

Girls receive much of the attention and information about pregnancy prevention in programs such as Sisters, which promotes character education, communication and skill-building with preteens before they become sexually active, and McVey thought it was just as critical to teach their male counterparts the same message.

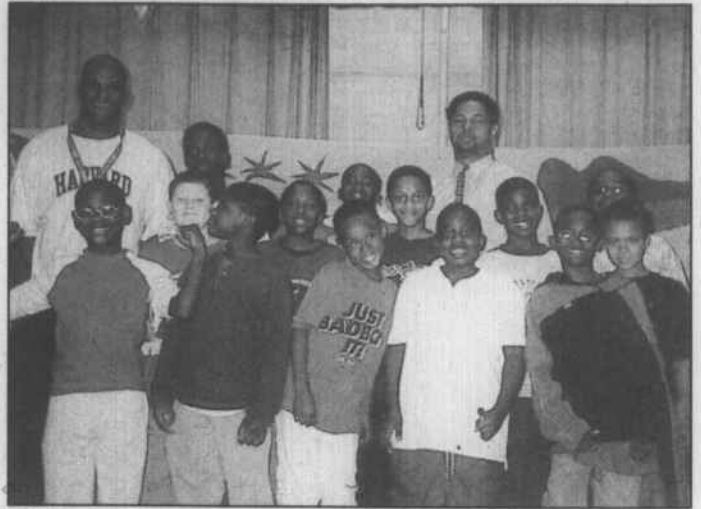
"It's so simple and we're so excited. We just need more men to serve as role models for all of our boys," McVey said.

Jones was hired to spearhead the program that functions out of schools and community centers throughout the area. After working in law enforcement as a juvenile probation officer, Jones is happy to offer services to young males who are not in trouble with the law, explaining that "we don't want you when you get in trouble. We want you before you get in trouble so you won't get in trouble."

The Code operates out of Latham Elementary School, Philo Middle School and Sims Recreation Center. The grant allows the program to add a new site every year so that over the next five years a total of five locations will be home to The Code and its participants.

Abstinence is not the only component of The Code. The curriculum for The Code tackles puberty, family values, dating violence, goal-setting and decision-making geared toward males. Jones sees all of these life issues as going hand in hand for young men on the brink of sexual activity, and his priority is to work on the boys to become better young men in all areas of their lives.

"(Boys) are hearing. 'Get as many



Students involved in The Code learn a variety of lessons.

girls as you can.' Now they hear these three men saying, 'Wait until you're married' because you've got goals you want to reach. If you get a girl pregnant, what's going to happen to those goals? If you get AIDS, what's going to happen to those goals? Take care of yourself first and make sure you get your priorities straight," Jones said.

Jones and other Code facilitators are already making a great impact on these young lives. Just two weeks into the program, participants were asked to name people who influenced them at this point in their lives. One of the boys named a facilitator as his biggest influence.

"At the age that we're trying to teach

them, it's important because they get either that negative influence or positive influence, and we want to be that positive influence," Jones said.

The Code's motto, "It's easier to build strong boys than to repair broken men," is a quote from Frederick Douglass that Jones hopes will reflect what the program is trying to do. The majority of Code participants are black and come from single-parent homes. Jones is optimistic that their interaction with strong, successful black males will plant the seed early to motivate these young men to live by The Code.

For more information on The Code, call Jeff Jones at 714-3212.

Frye

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the organizer and president of Greensboro National Bank.

He is a distinguished visiting professor of political science and justice at N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro.

His outstanding service to North Carolina has brought him commendations and awards from organizations across the state. He was named Lawyer of the Year by the N.C. Association of Black Lawyers and later received the N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers' Appellate Judges Award. He is past chair of the board of the directors of the American Judicature Society.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews (now the National Conference for Community and Justice) presented its Brotherhood Award to Frye and his wife, Angela, and the N.C. NAACP chose him to receive its Kelly M. Alexander Jr. Humanitarian Award.

The Ellerbe, N.C., native graduated summa cum laude from N.C. A&T. He also graduated with honors from the University of North Carolina School of Law.

Berry

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Berry was assistant secretary for education in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) during the Carter administration. As assistant secretary, she coordinated and gave general supervision to nearly \$13 billion of federal education programs.

Before her service at HEW, Berry was a provost at the University of Maryland at College Park and chancellor at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Berry was educated at Howard University, the University of Michigan (Ph.D. in history) and the University of Michigan Law School. Berry has received 30 honorary doctoral degrees and numerous awards for her public service and scholarly activities, including the NAACP's Image Award, the Rosa Parks Award of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Hubert Humphrey Award of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. She is a past president of the Organization of American Historians.

Berry's seven books include "The Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of Law and Justice"; "Race and Sex in the Courts 1865 to the Present"; "Long Memory: The Black Experience in America" (with co-author John W. Blassingame); "The Politics of Parenthood: Child Care, Women's Rights and the Myth of the Good Mother"; and "Black Resistance/White Law: A History of Constitutional Racism in America."

Berry's topic for the event is "Race, Gender and the American Courts." Tickets are \$40, and paid reservations must be received before April 24. For reservation information, call the YWCA at 273-3461.

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