

Bass fund launches new initiatives

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Marshall B. Bass Children's Fund, an agency that awards grants to fundamentally build and improve the management behavior of organizations that serve children, has announced two new initiatives geared toward those children's service organizations in Forsyth County.

The Bass Fund will host a new series of seminars designed to strengthen the management capability of children's service organizations. The first seminar held on June 18 at Winston-Salem State University, featured guest speaker Jan Kendall, the President of the North Carolina Center for Non-Profits. Kendall spoke on the importance of organizational effectiveness in the non-profit sector.

Future seminars will cover a



Bass

range of topics such as fundraising and strategic planning. The next seminar, to be held on October 3 will feature the "Techniques and Practices for Successful Fundraising." All seminars will be held on the campus of Winston-Salem State.

In addition to the Seminar Series, the Bass Fund has also

announced a new Small Grant program. Grants are limited to a maximum of \$1,000 and are available to 501(c)(3) organizations in Forsyth County, North Carolina that provide services to children. Small grants will be given to provide funding in limited amounts for activities that support the mission of The Marshall B. Bass Children's Fund.

"While our large grant multi-year program has served us well, we believe that these two new initiatives will significantly strengthen our capability to serve children," Bass said.

The Children's Fund, established in 1997 by Marshall Bass, a retired senior vice president of RJR Nabisco, is founded on the premise that the best way to influence the largest number of children is by strengthening the agencies that serve them.



Leslie Branch, left, and Emily Kelker look over instructions before painting a column.

Photo by Bruce Chapman

Smiley

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Black Entertainment Television talk show in a dispute over an interview he sold to ABC ("a godsend" is how Smiley describes his departure).

Smiley has quickly become a valuable part of NPR, said the network's president and chief executive officer Kevin Klose.

"This man's presence, his charm, his humor about life and his thoughtfulness about the human condition, in a universal sense, is immediately affecting to listeners," Klose said.

But while he refuses to dilute his show's black perspective, Smiley says he wants to appeal to non-black listeners. Trying to include a variety of voices, he featured Microsoft magnate Bill Gates and former President Bill Clinton among his early guests.

His newsmagazine is gaining ground beyond its black-station core, with NPR outlets in Seattle,

Philadelphia and New York among those who have added it.

(The show stumbled in Los Angeles. A station that was interrupting the popular "Morning Edition" to air Smiley dropped him because of viewer complaints. He is heard on KPCC, another NPR station in the area.)

Smiley's goal at NPR is to make news by breaking news, he said. His goal with his separate radio commentary is to stir things up.

"What is it of all the issues I have in front of me that I could discuss? What are these black folk most likely not to hear if they don't hear it from me?" he said he asks himself each day.

His boldness has given him star status among black audiences: An uproar greeted his firing from BET.

While Smiley reaches out to a new audience he can't be accused of losing touch with his fan base. He lives and works in a largely black section of Los Angeles and

not just, he says, because Beverly Hills was beyond his financial reach.

To create headquarters for his various enterprises, he took a dilapidated, graffiti-smeared building and transformed it into an elegant space filled with modern art and African artifacts (a design buff, Smiley picked the look himself).

The office is a way to illustrate a point. "I wanted people in the community to see we could take what was old and ugly and fix it up," he said.

A valuable picture. But can it be worth more than a thousand words to Smiley?

"One day when I was about 3 or 4, I was running my mouth at a family gathering," he recounted. "My aunt said to me, 'Boy, do you ever shut up? Why do you talk so much?'"

"I shot right back, 'Because I've got a lot to say.' All these years later, I've still got a lot to say."

enced."

Hayes gained much from the project.

"I got a whole lot of mommas out of this project. We went in to hear them tell their story. . . . We met for hours to hear these stories. There was no such thing as going in and coming right out. And they were not always open to letting us in. When some of them discovered that the photographer was a white man, it took a lot of cajoling," Hayes said.

nurses, ushers, choir members who wore beautiful clothes from exclusive shops in the city."

Smith noted that some young people today are offended if somebody gives them clothes.

"Nobody gave them anything. They earned those hats, and coats, and dresses. They earned the right to wear them with dignity," Smith said.

Maid

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for the president of Coca Cola, the vice president of Macy's and for a family of lawyers. Wilson eventually went to cooking school and opened her own catering service because she grew weary of participating in the family vacation at the beach even though she got



Photo by Felicia McMillan

Verdell Hayes, oral historian, and photographer Marshall Marvelli serve on the project team for *Maid in America*.

along well with the family.

"I got tired of going to the beach in the summer. I didn't like it. . . . I decided to start my own business," Wilson said.

She catered for several affairs in the homes of wealthy families. With her earnings, she helped to send her grandchildren to college. Her grandson was a fire chief in Detroit, her three granddaughters became a registered nurse, a special education teacher, and a theater/arts instructor.

"These women put a lot of kids through college. Many professional blacks of the middle class fared well because of the way their mothers and grandmothers paved the way," Smith said. "I am exceptionally proud of my grandmother. I am beyond proud. She even started her own business. She still cooks, and everything is still good."

Piggott enjoyed her work with various families, and the last family she worked for even contacted her when they read about the death of her son in the newspaper.

"I worked for an exceptional family. I felt elevated because of my position. The housekeepers normally wanted to work for wealthy people, but sometimes the poorer families would give us more," Piggott said.

"These were some of the best dressed women in the church because they even gave me some of the things that they received. As they got newer clothes, they would pass the older items on. These women had hats and mink stoles," said Hayes. "When they went to church, you never really knew what they did for a living. At church, they were deaconesses,

One memory that Piggott recalled, caused her to change jobs. Before she had children, she helped to care for the child of the family she served. However, when her son was born, Piggott was told that she could bring her son to the home, and he could play around in the basement. That was my jewel that I had waited and prayed for. It just wasn't going to happen," she said. She moved on to a better job.

Turner introduced all of the members of the project team and the women on the panel.

"The energy of this project is embodied in these people before you. It is through them that we are channeling this vision and this message. . . . We are grateful for Marshall Marvelli who by an accident of birth is white, but who knows the South. He saw some things in these women that you can clearly see in his photographs," said Turner. "Verdell Hayes, Mrs. Spillman's daughter, knew all of these women."

Marvelli has taken photographs nationally and internationally, but he ranks this project second only to his two-week shoot in South Africa.

"The women would invite me into their homes, and the presence of Mrs. Spillman and Ms. Hayes made it much easier for them to accept a white man into their homes," Marvelli said. "I met more Italian grandmothers who believe if you love me, eat. Each home I entered, we were given food in the American tradition. I tried to capture the spirit and the personality of the women. These ladies carried pain that they will not soon forget. . . . but they also carried joy in what they experi-

Art/history

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Barnes believes the pictorial history will preserve the lore of the company for some time to come.

"Winston-Salem has a very unique history in respect to transportation. Not only for African Americans but for the community as a whole," said Barnes.

More than 10,000 people pass through the transportation center each day on their way to Hanes Mall, Baptist Hospital and every other corner of Winston-Salem. On Barnes' watch, the center has taken on a definite artistic feel, from a unique memory wall on the outside of the building to hanging sculptures in the lobby of the center. WSTA has also recently entered into a project that will result in poems by local writers being featured on the inside of buses.

"Culture is always important," Barnes said. "When we have so many people coming through everyday, it is important that they be exposed to this."

Rucker and the teens have given travelers much to talk about and look at since starting their project. This is 15-year-old Monique Smart's first year working with Artiva. She says working outside amid travelers and noisy buses is actually not as bad as it may seem.

"It is good to work with people and to work in front of people," she said. "They always ask questions and usually the same ques-

tion about what we are doing."

Dustin Friend, also 15, has also answered questions from curious onlookers.

"What are you doing? Are you going to paint all of the columns? Do you go to the school of the arts?" Friend said,

reeling off some of the questions he and the other teens get everyday.

Bus rider Billy Deen admits that he

has questioned the young artists over the past few weeks. He has also quietly admired their work as the columns went from cold steel beams to colorful works of art.

"The columns really needed to be painted," he said last week as he waited for his bus. "The kids are doing a great job because it looks a lot better."

Before one drop of paint hit the columns, Rucker spent six months producing a miniature rendering of the finished project. He said he tried to incorporate every aspect of Safe Bus, from the companies secretaries and drivers to the early jitney days.

The history will also include more recent aspects of WSTA's history, such as when the buses were equipped to handle handicapped passengers.



Barnes

A Business and Personal Success Series

SPOTLIGHT ON Success

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SPIN DOESN'T WIN AT CSA

Call them spin doctors — creative people who spin ideas to get people to believe their point of view.

They are the public relations, marketing and advertising professionals who influence buying decisions: everything from beverages to clothing and vacation spots.

Candy Sims & Associates, Inc. (CSA) has something to do with influencing buying behaviors. A 10-year-old Fort Lauderdale-based public relations, marketing and advertising support agency, CSA specializes in publicity and media relations, community relations, and ethnic advertising and marketing.

"We concentrate on emerging markets, which are the African-American, Caribbean and Hispanic markets," says Candy Sims, owner, CSA, Inc. "Those markets are the fastest-growing income markets, and that is basically what our clients are looking for."

According to Chicago-based Target Market News, an African-American research company, Black spending power alone in 2000 reached \$543 billion. This was mostly spent on apparel, entertainment, food, beverages, toys, computers, cosmetics, automobiles and travel.

And Florida has the perfect mix of beaches and minorities — a marketing dream, says Dr. Reginald Beal, associate professor of strategic management at the School of Business & Industry, Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL.

Sims, a Florida native who has more than 25 years experience in public relations and marketing, says she will continue to build on this growing segment of the population.

Sims established her company after working 18 years in radio. The station was sold, brought in new management, and eliminated her position. During her tenure at the station as public affairs and public relations director, Sims developed good contacts and a client list she says, "anyone would love to have." And, when she left, so did the list.

It was from that list she landed her first client, Alamo Rent A Car, who hired Sims to get the African-American community involved in a community Heart Run. After 10 years and more than 30 clients, she attributes her success to F&F — faith and focus.

The 47-year-old entrepreneur, whose company is a certified minority business enterprise with governmental agencies like the Florida Regional Minority Purchasing Council, says she focuses on positive contracts and refuses to settle for anything less than right.

"I first think strong and hard about the services and products I present to my target markets," stresses Sims.

Specifically, Sims has built a niche in the multicultural tourism industry, even publishing "The Black Business Directory (South Florida)," a 96-page annual publication designed to stimulate the area's Black economic development; and the "Greater Fort Lauderdale Multicultural Visitors Guide," a 24-page annual publication highlighting activities, attractions and services of interests to the Caribbean, Hispanic and African-American markets.

"We have seen great successes through the help of Candy Sims who is bringing new business into Greater Ft. Lauderdale, which includes multicultural conventions, family reunions, plus lots of positive publicity about diversity," says Francine Mason, vice president of communications, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, and major client of CSA.

In a joint venture project with M. Silver Associates, a majority-owned public relations company that works on a global basis, Sims expanded her company's reach in the multicultural genre.

"We selected Ms. Sims' company four years ago to work with our agency because she was recommended to us as being very professional and had good ties to the multicultural industry in South Florida," says Virginia Sheridan, president, M. Silver Associates.

For those interested in breaking into the market, Sims has this advice.

"PR professionals need to decide what it is they do best. If it's the medical or financial industries, then that's your niche," she says. "Beyond focusing, just love what you do and don't rely only on the spin."

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