



Photos by Todd Luck

Dozens of bikes have been donated to the cause.

Bikes

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along with Walker and the volunteers. The massive amount of bikes involved may look daunting, but Allen said he has no doubt the bikes will be done in time for the toy giveaway in December.

"I know being in crunch time in the past that we'll make our objectives. There's no doubt in our mind," said Allen.

Walker said that over 80 students have worked on the bikes as of two weeks ago. Some of them sacrificed their Saturday mornings to go and work on the bikes. One volunteer who got up bright and early to start working on the bikes at 8 a.m. was auto body student Cory Hooks. Hooks said he was glad to donate his time to a good cause.

"It gives kids that are disadvantaged ... the opportunity to have the same things other kids have," said Hooks.

Walker said new bikes will be accepted through Dec. 15 and that used bikes will be taken



Alton Allen and Mark Walker

until Dec. 8. He said that used bikes can be in any condition, even if the bike itself is unsalvageable, it can be used it for replacement parts for the other bikes. Recently, over 35 bikes were completed but Walker said they began on the smaller bikes first, which typically had the most damage, and the bigger ones will go faster. He tells the students to keep the end result in mind as they devote themselves to this massive project.

"I said when you see a little kid's face, all he wants for Christmas is a bicycle, it's worth the whole difference," said Walker.

For more information go to FTCC's website, www.forsythtech.edu and click on "A Bicycle Built for You." Mark Walker can be contacted about bike donations at (336) 734-7610 or mwalker@forsythtech.edu.

Hamllins

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"I didn't know much about theatre...but especially with this being a family business...you will get thrown in where you fit in," explained Larenté. But over the years, he says something else kept him with the company.

"Black Nativity," which the Black Rep stages each holiday season, was the first show Larenté Hamlin worked on.

He was hooked after that. "I stayed because I could be around my father and see how he conducted business. He always told me it was his dream that he and I would be on stage together, and we accomplished that," Larenté Hamlin said. "In Charlotte, we performed 'King Baabu' in 2003."

This was the first state-side reading of Nigerian Wolé Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Laureate in Literature.

"Somebody didn't show up for rehearsal and I was asked to step in. Then we did Papa C. W. Brown in 2004. Since it was just he and I in rehearsals. We spent a lot of time together."

While Larry Leon Hamlin did not tech shows, he was able to explain to his son the technical elements needed to create an illusion that would captivate audiences. It was these pearls of wisdom that sparked the technical interest in both Larenté and JáQuan.

Also, while Larenté enjoyed working on stage with his father...he says he prefers film because scenes can be re-shot

where as in theatre it's all live.

"Black Nativity" opens Dec. 14 at 8 p.m. For the next several weeks, Larenté Hamlin will be the resident technical director and JáQuan, his trusted assistant. They will make sure the correct stage light fixtures are in place, repair the set and secure a custom designed light curtain that creates the 'star filled sky' look on stage. They'll also pull gobos, a metal cut out that fits over a light fixture and projects an image onto the stage.

"I have a new respect for techs since working backstage," said Larenté Hamlin, his eyes brightening as he explains. "Especially for lighting because that is not an easy job. The costumes are very colorful and the skin tones are varied. So when dealing with a group you have to find colors that will make everyone look good."

Both Hamllins are taking direction and learning from Dr. Arthur Reese, who oversees the light designs of all NCBRC productions. Larenté's work with the Black Rep has broadened his interest in the arts. He is a budding film-maker and photographer. The arts gene is also strong in JáQuan, who plays the saxophone.

This is the seventh year the Black Rep is presenting "Black Nativity." Shows will also be Dec. 15 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Dec. 16 at 3 p.m. An extremely talented cast of singers and dancers will perform under the choreographic direction of Broadway veteran Mabel Robinson.

HIV

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city has had 17,415 reported cases of AIDS alone.

Shannon Hader, director of the city's HIV/AIDS Administration, declined to speculate on reasons for the city's high rate or the demographic shifts, though she said common culprits such as drug use and unprotected sex were likely major factors.

The city plans to use the data and trends it identified to try to stop the growth of the disease, she said.

A key initiative is greater testing for HIV and AIDS in a variety of settings. Hader urged medical providers and hospitals to routinely test for the virus, making it part of com-

mon checkups like an annual physical. Prisoners in the city jail already are tested for the disease.



Fenty

Hader said pregnant women should be checked early on in their pregnancies so that steps can be taken to protect an unborn child if the mother is HIV positive. By 2009, the city hopes to eliminate all mother-to-child transmissions.

"This should be something that should be part of getting regularly checked out by your doctor," she said.

Along with more comprehensive testing, the city also plans public awareness programs of HIV/AIDS risks that would target teens, women and black residents. By 2009, city officials also plan to hand out at least 3 million condoms annually.

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