

# IT TAKES TWO

Men celebrate the first successful year of their mentoring program

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

Two local men are working to improve the lives of area youth, one boy at a time. Marcellus Sunday, parent involvement coordinator for Family Services; and Fathers and Friends Program Coordinator LaShun Huntley are longtime members of the Male Involvement Coalition, a multi-organizational initiative that works with men to help them become productive citizens and good parents.

"It's important for men to get involved," stated Huntley. "Even if it's not with (our organization) personally, you have to get involved with your kids."

Now, the two men have taken the coalition's mission one step further, by reaching out to fifth grade boys at Old Town and Gibson Elementary schools and at Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy.

They talk to the boys about respect, responsibility, leadership and setting goals. They talk to the boys about life.

"If it's an issue in school and it's not corrected or checked, it's always going to be a problem," Huntley pointed out. "We try to get them to see the problem ... then we let them think of a solution."

Many of the boys that the men work with hail from single-parent homes.

"These single mothers, they're doing the best they can," commented Huntley. "But men, we have to find our own way. We have to find what it means to be a man. You have to find it somewhere, and most of our adolescent males are finding it in music or on TV."

A little extra attention and guidance can help the boys' academic performance, Sunday believes.

"Trying to raise a child and teach them at the same time is hard on these teachers," he remarked. "But if you teach a child respect, then the teachers can teach them."

The men are charged with 11 boys at Old Town. They visit the children three times each month, carving the time from what would be their lunch hours.

"The program helps us a lot," declared fifth grader Raekwon Williamson. "They teach us how to be good and respectful."

In the months since the two began visiting Old Town, visible changes have occurred in the boys, Sunday says.

"I'm a big believer in outcomes: I don't like to do something just to do it," Sunday said. "We have something to show for what we are doing."

Teachers and administrators at Old



LaShun Huntley, left, and Marcellus Sunday are determined to see change.

Town are taking notice. "They couldn't believe they were the same boys," Sunday declared. "Now they are asking us to come back in October because the schools saw that change."

The staff at Gibson has taken the project largely into their own hands, relying on Huntley and Sunday only for the occasional visit.

"We at Julian Gibson Elementary school are blessed to have these two young men take the time to volunteer and work so hard with these young 5th graders," commented Walter Funderburk, who works closely with the boys at Gibson.

In addition to being better behaved, the boys are more engaged in their schoolwork, Sunday says.

"It's a good program, because it helps with our behavior and grades," said Derrick Cooper, another student in the program. "They influence us to do better."

The turnaround was impressive even to Huntley, a seasoned mentor.

"I learned that it's not hard; it's easy," he remarked. "If you're sincere in what you're doing, it doesn't take much to turn kids around."

Sunday, a mason and cub Scout leader, has dedicated much of his life to improving the lives of youth.

"People say it takes a village to raise a child," remarked the father of five. "I don't know who they think the village is."

Huntley believes it is his responsibility to look out for young boys who might otherwise slip through the cracks.

"If we say we are men, then we need to take on the responsibilities of men," he stated. "It's such an easy, easy thing to do — it doesn't require a Ph.D. or a college degree — it just requires some level of commitment."

For more information about the Male Involvement Coalition or to volunteer as a mentor, contact Sunday at (336) 727-0617.

**Bishop**  
from page A1

extraordinary," Hatch added.

McKenzie serves as the presiding prelate of the 13th Episcopal District, which includes Tennessee and Kentucky. She has also served as the chief pastor of the 18th Episcopal District in southeast Africa, which includes churches in Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Mozambique. The bishop made history again in 2005 when she became the symbolic head of the church as the president of the Council of Bishops.

McKenzie was greeted warmly by the crowd, but a few minutes into her sermon, she was sidetracked by how quiet the audience had become. She told them that she is used to congregations that verbally respond to her, a tradition at African-American churches. She took a couple minutes to school the predominantly white audience in the call and response tradition.

"If you agree with me you say 'Amen.' If it strikes a cord (that) you're not quite sure of, you say 'Well.' And if you totally disagree, just pray 'Lord help her, help her,'" McKenzie said.

The audience laughed and then responded with "Amen's" at appropriate points for the rest of the sermon. While McKenzie's tutorial on audience response drew laughter, her sermon was very serious. Her topic was leadership.

McKenzie said she's scared of leaders who are "just happy to be there." Leadership, she asserted, is not for those who have no other worlds to conquer or nothing else to do. What the world needs is driven, compassionate leaders who champion what they believe in, she said.

Her words also emphasized compassion.

"One should never take on the job of leadership if you're not willing to see beyond your own needs," said McKenzie, before urging the graduates to also reach back, regardless of how high they climb in life.

She challenged them to give back to their community.

"Which one of you is willing to go the extra mile to become personally involved in the communities where you live? Will you roll up your sleeves? Will you come out of your ivory towers ... and become actively involved in your community?" asked McKenzie.

She also challenged them to reach out to those who live outside of their communities and look different than they do. Leadership, the bishop said, is about looking out for others no matter who they are.

"What Jesus has is not just for the privileged few," said McKenzie. "From the White House to both houses of Congress, from the banking house ... (to) God's house and your momma's house, leadership is not for the privileged few."

McKenzie's sermon didn't mention her work in the church but she has plenty of experience in compassionate leadership. Prior to becoming bishop, she was pastor at Payne Memorial A.M.E. Church in Baltimore. There, she led the congregation to secure a \$1.5 million welfare-to-work contract from the state. With the funds, more than 600 people on welfare were educated, trained and placed into jobs.

As a chief pastor in her district, she oversaw expansion and improvements in both A.M.E. churches and schools. She expanded services to orphans of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Botswana, opened a computer center in Lesotho, built three large group homes without government grants in Swaziland and provided scholarships for 31 students.

At the end of her sermon she took a line from a children's game, "I Dare You." She "double dared" the graduates to take up their own fights against injustice and eliminate racism and sexism. The audience responded by giving the bishop a more than one minute-long standing ovation.

The bishop also took home an honorary degree from the school.

**NAACP**  
from page A2

raising money for organizations much like the NAACP. He is in sync with the NAACP to a high degree and we are very happy to have him with us... He's a perfect fit for us in every way."

Jealous' election was not without the heated debate that has long been typical of the 64-member board, packed with civil rights warriors from communities and trenches across America. Board members said discussions that started last Friday evening continued until the wee hours of Saturday morning.

"There was a great discussion, a great debate on the



Julian Bond speaks.

issues that are critically important to the NAACP," says labor leader Bill Lucy. "And I think those are the kinds of discussions that engender strong feelings. But, the fact that people debated it out into the wee hours of the morning shows it was a good, healthy discussion. The fact is that in the end, there was an agreement on his candidacy and that was a good thing."

Actually, sources said the debate was not all about the candidate. Much of it was about the process. Jealous had been selected unanimously by the organization's three-member executive committee after it had reviewed two other candidates. The three finalists had been presented to the executive committee by a search committee for

the selection of one candidate to present to the board for an interview, which sources say has been the normal process for selecting NAACP presidents.

Acrimony had started at previous meetings, when some board members pushed to change the procedure, arguing that the board should be allowed to interview all three finalists. Tension continued in last weekend's board meeting as some members said they had been disenfranchised by not having heard the other two can-

didates, who were Rev. Frederick Haynes, a 47-year-old pastor from Dallas, and Alvin Brown, a former Clinton White House advisor.

The final vote for Jealous was 34-21, according to the Baltimore Afro-American.

Responding to a question about how he will deal with board factionalism that has frustrated other NAACP CEOs, Jealous synopsized his leadership style.

"I'm a team player. I believe that in order to lead in the game,

you've got to be completely in the game, that in order to have people to follow you, they need to know that you're willing to following them," he said. "This isn't a new industry to me, if you will. This is the family, the movement that I was raised in. So, I expect to have nothing but success."

Jealous holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Columbia University and a master's in comparative social research from Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

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