



# Report: Psychology field ignores what makes black youths strong

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The field of psychological has ignored the incredible resiliency of African-American youths and has chosen instead to focus on their risk factors and the negative results of them.

That is the paramount finding of a study recently released by the nation's most respected psychological organization.

The American Psychological Association's Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents calls for reframing research to better understand "how certain factors traditionally considered risk factors can be re-conceptualized as adaptive or protective processes."

The seven-member task force was headed by UNC Greensboro Professor Dr. Stephanie Irby Coard. The task force reviewed 450 studies and surveys of African-American youth age 5 to 21 across all socioeconomic conditions and geographical areas to under-

## UNCG professor leads task force to findings

stand how factors such as racial identity, racial socialization, emotional regulation and expression, religiosity, and school and family support can prepare African-American children and adolescents to thrive in spite of various societal challenges.

The task force concluded that positive attitudes and behaviors that contribute to the strengths of these young people were de-emphasized in research and the current conceptions of African-American youth don't address healthy coping, adjustment and overall functioning. "There is no clear template

for how to ensure that African American children reach their full potential - but there is hope, according to the task force.

It called for future research to consider the complexities of racial, ethnic, and cultural factors as well as positive family environments and social support as key variables in identifying the "protective mechanisms" that are so important in promoting strength and resilience among African-American youth.

"Institutional racism and societal prejudice place all African-American youth, including well-resourced youth, at some degree of risk," said

Irby Coard. "Understanding what makes them strong requires acknowledging their experience here in the United States and how discrimination affects their daily lives. The study of success is just as important as the study of failure."

Research has shown that diverse cultural groups have different ways of enhancing positive outcomes for their children. African-American family life often encompasses racial identity, spirituality and a set of shared values that are crucial for children's resilience.

Keys to a "thriving or optimal functioning for African-American youth" are: active engagement, flexibility, communalism and critical-mindedness, according to the task force:

A full text of the report is available from at <http://www.apa.org/releases/RSBCAreport0608draftfinal.pdf>.



Coard



Griswold

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

# Grant will aid food bank's efforts

Wal-mart this week presented Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC with a check for \$53,500 during the graduation ceremony of the organization's Triad Community Kitchen Theta Class.

The money will help support the Triad Community Kitchen program as well as Second Harvest Food Bank's primary food distribution program, which serves as a significant source of food for nearly 400 non-profit organizations in 18 Northwest NC counties.

"We're well aware of the challenges Second Harvest Food Bank is facing right now in terms of the growing need for food assistance among families that rely on its partner agencies for help and we wanted to do more," said Jeff Powell, District Manager for Wal-mart and a Second Harvest Food Bank board member. Wal-mart serves these communities as well and is committed to supporting the organization's efforts to help ensure no one goes hungry in Northwest NC.

Wal-mart is a year-round supporter of Second Harvest Food Bank and 205 other member food banks of America's Second Harvest - The Nation's Food Bank Network, providing donations of food and funds and encouraging employee volunteerism. The nationwide partner-

ship began as a collaborative response to the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The partnership continues today at the corporate and community level to address the daily tragedy of hunger in communities across America.

National donors like Wal-mart, General Mills and others were consulted on the decision of the America's Second Harvest Network to change its name. In September 2008, America's Second Harvest will become Feeding America.

Food Bank Executive Director Nan Griswold notes that Second Harvest Food Bank of

Northwest NC has begun the work to consider changing its name to reflect the new name of its national organization. For example, work with focus groups will begin later this month. The organization's leaders are in agreement that this work is important and necessary. At the same time, there is agreement that the organization cannot waiver in its work to address current shortages coupled with increased demand for food assistance. To that end, Second Harvest Food Bank will be working with a number of community partners on initiatives for Hunger Action Month. For more information about ways to get involved in Hunger Action Month locally, visit [www.hungernwnc.org](http://www.hungernwnc.org).

## Faith

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is helping it along."

Customers can currently access more than 500 stores through Faith Rewards. Retail giants like Wal-Mart, Target, Apple and Nike have all agreed to contribute a percentage of the sales generated by the site back to the faith based organization designated by the consumer. This is good news for the consumer and the church, says Gibson, a former Bank of America executive.

Gibson is well-known in the Charlotte area. His wife is popular WCNC-anchor Sonja Gantt and his father-in-law is Harvey Gantt, a former mayor of Charlotte and two-time candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Being heavily involved in the capital campaign of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte, where he is a longtime member, Gibson says he noticed how difficult it was for churches to raise money for the programs and services they support.

"It leaves very little money to do any kind of mission work

when you're just trying to pay the bills of the church," he commented.

Traditional methods, like tithing, are not garnering as much income as they once did, he added.

"Tithing is an important thing in the Christian church, but only three percent of people tithe," he said. "Even though people are still strong in their faith, the pressures of society... unfortunately take a front row."

In addition to supporting their churches through shopping, Faith Rewards visitors can also help out fellow congregants by supporting the businesses they represent, Gibson says.

The site features Web pages for participating churches, where members can advertise their small businesses for a nominal fee. The directory allows church members to support one another and generates additional income for the church, which receives 25 percent of the advertising fees.

The online directory is a favorite among pastors, Gibson says, as many have reported fielding requests for

such listings from members for years.

Creating the site was a sacrifice for Gibson, who dug deep into his own pockets to get the business up and running, but he says it was well worth the effort.

"I had to take a leap of faith and believe that what I'm doing will ultimately serve God," he said. "I really think this is something that we need to make available."

Rev. Dr. Frank Ison, superintendent of the United Methodist Church's Greensboro district, forwarded information about the site to each of the 74 churches he oversees.

"I thought it was an innovative idea," he said of the site.

While shopping on Faith Rewards may help churches gain economic income, Ison was quick to assert that such contributions should not take the place of tithing.

"We're not looking for a consumers' mentality; we're looking for a commitment," he said. "The kind of giving we're looking for... (requires) folks to step up to the plate and

offer first fruits to God. Don't give God your leftovers."

## Cancer

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and communicators, streamline appointments, help patients identify and access financial services, help patients arrive at scheduled appointments on time and prepared, serve as a support system with respect to cultural issues, and help the patient utilize appropriate social services.

### What is the history of patient navigation programs?

Dr. Harold P. Freeman, an oncologist from the Harlem Hospital Center in New York City, saw that many of his patients came to him with very advanced cancer. He was concerned that these patients had "fallen through the cracks" of the medical system. He therefore created the first patient navigation program to help women with breast cancer.

### Is there a current recommendation for patient navigation programs?

In 2001 the President's Cancer Panel issued a report titled "Voices of a Broken System." This report is based on the testimony of American peo-

ple who sought treatment for cancer. Based upon this report, the panel's principal recommendation included patient navigator programs to help people obtain cancer information screening and treatment. The patient navigation offers a support system of helping people alleviate the burdens of patients seeking care in a broken health-care system.

In June 2005, the Patient Navigator, Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act was signed into law by the President of the United States. This act will provide \$25 million in grants. The money will help build and run navigation programs.

### Has research shown that patient navigator programs are effective?

A recent study from Emory University showed that implementation of patient navigation programs may lead to a significant shift in the stage at which breast cancer is diagnosed in African-American women. Women in this navigation program were two times as likely to be diagnosed with early breast cancer compared to more advanced breast cancer.

### Are there current navigation programs in our area?

Numerous evaluations of medical care issues in patients with breast cancer found that women of color were more likely to present with advanced cancer and less likely to undergo aggressive treatment of their disease. It is against this backdrop that the Wake Forest University School of Medicine has implemented the Survivors in Service (SIS) navigation system that takes minority women with breast cancer through the "critical window of opportunity for cure" described above. This network leverages some of the resources available to patients here at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center as well as external social support resources.

- Contribution by John H. Stewart IV, MD

Do you need further information or have questions or comments about this article? Please call toll-free 1-877-530-1824. Or, for more information about the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health, please visit our website: <http://www.wfubmc.edu/minorityhealth>.

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