

March for homeless children is Saturday

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Human Relations Department is sponsoring its 6th annual March for Homeless Children as part of the Winston-Salem Holiday Parade on Saturday, Dec. 6.

Residents interested in participating in the march to show their support for homeless children should meet at 4:30 p.m. at the Center City West parking garage across from the Chamber of Commerce Building on Fourth Street.

The march will raise awareness for the plight of homeless children, said Wanda

Allen-Abraha, the human relations director. "Homelessness does not just affect adults," she said. "Anytime a parent loses a home their children are homeless, too."

This is the fourth year the march has been incorporated into the Holiday Parade. Representatives of Project Hope (a program offered by the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools that addresses the needs of homeless children and their families) will be on hand to accept donations.

For more information, call City Link at 727-8000.



Wanda Allen-Abraha

AIDS Day

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munity relations director for ACS, told participants at the annual candlelit Reflections Service. "One of the most important things we can do is what we're doing right now - talking about it."

In addition to remembering the fallen, Lindsey said it is critical to recognize the thousands of local people who are currently battling the disease.

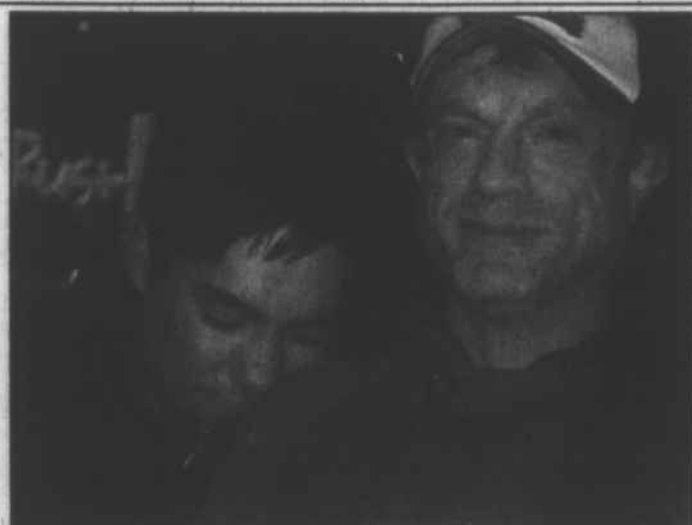
"We need to support the people who are living with HIV/AIDS," she remarked, gesturing to the ribbons above her head. "That's 2,146 people who need our help."

ACS Business Office Manager Mona Gary lost her mother to AIDS. She shared her story with the group and lifted up a prayer in observance of the day.

"As a worshipping community, we are all challenged by such a moment as this ... a moment where we can offer compassion to those who suffer from AIDS and HIV," Gary said. "In this moment, we all stand in need of God's healing."

Cheryl Lindsay said she first became aware of the disease when her mother's long-time friend, a nurse, contracted it after accidentally being pricked by an infected needle.

Lindsay says her mother, Gloria Lindsay, quickly took up the cause and became an advocate. Now Cheryl hopes to follow in her mother's footsteps, by helping to revive the Dinning with



Ron Benson, right, with his partner, Eloy Salas.



Rev. Charlie Davis sings



Mona Gary

Friends fundraiser her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, formerly hosted in conjunction with ACS.

"Education is key; without knowledge, people will continue to contract AIDS," Lindsay said.

Rev. Charlie Davis, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and a former folk singer, says he has watched the public's

awareness of the disease come nearly full circle over the past two decades. The initial fear in the 1980's gave way to heightened awareness in the '90's; but AIDS causes have fallen by the wayside in recent years, he believes.

"(The 1990's) were kind of heady days. AIDS had kind of national appeal; everybody was wearing red ribbons ... it was part of the national conversation," Davis said. "But shortly after, there was a whole new silence. It was a silence that AIDS was no longer news."

Ron Benson says he also noticed a decline in AIDS empathy after the fervor of the 1990's.

"I sense that people are more complacent now because people are living with the disease and not dying," said Benson, who was diagnosed with HIV in 1992. "I just want people to remember that it is out there and it is still as deadly as

ever. Benson and his partner, Eloy Salas, volunteer regularly at Holly Haven, ACS's family care home where Salas once resided.

"Everyday, we talk about how thankful we are because we could be so much worse off," Benson tearfully related. "(But) it's so fulfilling to go (to Holly Haven) and tell them our story. I feel like it gives them hope."

World AIDS Day observances were also held Monday evening at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, which hosted a "Celebration of Life" in honor of the day; and St. Anne's Episcopal Church, which held an event titled "Evensong."

For more information about World AIDS Day, visit www.worldaidscampaign.org

For more information about ACS, call (336) 777-0116 or visit www.aidscareservice.org.

Meeting

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need your help (in) trying to get past the police department that you had yesterday. We need to work together to do this."

Among those present was State Representative Earline Parmon, who told Cunningham of her own negative brush with local police. Parmon says she was going to door-to-door to register voters prior to this year's historic election when she was followed, and eventually stopped by two officers who told her her state-issued tags did not match her vehicle.

"I've been in the State House since 2003 - those tags are specifically assigned to your (House) seat number," she declared. "It was insulting."

Despite having done nothing wrong, Parmon says she was rattled by the officers, one of whom rested his hand on his gun when he stepped out of the car, according to her account.

"I remained calm and handled it well ... (but) what if it had been somebody else?" she intoned. "I realize they're just doing their jobs, but I still think they need to be culturally sensitive, par-



Photo by Layla Farmer

Last week's meeting lasted more than an hour.

ticularly in the black community."

Others also recounted tales of officers with apathetic or callous attitudes. Cunningham says the department is working with the officers, but needs regular feedback from the community, especially if they feel they have been wronged by police.

"If there's a complaint, you need to bring it to the department so we can look at it and deal with it," he said. "You need to tell us when you're not happy with our

advocate for children.

U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield, who represents North Carolina's First District, spoke before the awards were presented last week. Dr. Lloyd P. (Jock) Tate, president of the Foundation, also spoke, telling the crowd that, "Like Nancy Susan Reynolds, our unsung heroes always start with a positive attitude about the ability of individuals to affect conditions around them. They see needs and

service."

Bringing more diversity to the department is also a goal of Cunningham's, but he says many minorities from the area are deterred by the department's marred reputation and choose to serve in other communities instead. Hairston, a former member of the WSPD, said law enforcement officers should work to build relationships with the people in the neighborhoods they patrol.

Cunningham shares Hairston's sentiment. In fact, he told those present that he plans to add more officers to the department and give each a smaller, assigned "beat" to patrol in hopes that they will form

some attachment to the communities they serve. His plan will increase the number of beats from the current 18 to 24, and is slated for rollout in January 2009.

Above all, Cunningham asserted that he favors preventative measures over enforcement. It has become a familiar theme for Cunningham since he took office last summer.

"It's a philosophical shift at the police department," he remarked. "Policing is bigger than law enforcement ... it's education, it's prevention, it's getting out there and being seen. In my mind, law enforcement is a very important part of (policing), but it's only one part."

'Nobels'

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er together through dialogue and interaction. He has also worked to make department personnel diverse in terms of race and gender.

Phyllis H. Crain, executive director of The Crossnore School in Avery County, won for Advocacy. Despite fighting for her life against breast cancer, Crain continues to be a strong

figure out ways to meet them. They are resourceful people. They dream dreams and then somehow find the strength and the resources to make them come true."

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was founded in 1936 and provides grants in the areas of community economic development, democracy and civic engagement, environment, pre-collegiate education, and social justice and equity.



Rep. Butterfield

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