

Ministers

from page A1

Union Baptist Church has also provided hotel rooms for some Alder's Point residents and provided them food and clothing. Alder's Point is a senior citizens complex in Happy Hill. The fire there displaced about 100 people.

The Minister's Conference held several meetings in the days after the first fire. Local churches amassed a large amount of donated goods to give away to victims on Tuesday. It took volunteers all day Monday to sort through them. Hundreds of paper shopping bags filled with toiletries were assembled. And what didn't fit in the bags filled tables and racks including clothing of all types and sizes, linens, food and extra toiletries.

Approximately 150 volunteers from 25 churches participated. Volunteer Pat Bitting wore her Happy Hill Reunion tee shirt as she checked off the displaced residents who came through the doors of the church. The Alder's Point fire hit home, because Bitting lived in Happy Hill in the 1960s. Her brother, Will "Rock" Bitting, is one of the founders of the Happy Hill Reunion.

"My heart just goes out to those who have been displaced," said Bitting. "At



Above: Volunteers serve food.

Right: Fire victim Annie Green.

any time I could find myself without, whether it's because of a fire, whether it's because of job placement, whatever, I could be in the same position."

Many volunteers prepared and served residents a delicious meal that included fried chicken and green beans. Others helped residents navigate the many stations the church had set up for them. There was a station where medical volunteers checked their blood sugar and blood pressure. Church counselors were on hand for those who needed to talk to someone.

But before all that, displaced residents got a sheet



to fill out, listing on the back their needs or all the things they lost. If fire took all their possessions, they were instructed to write "everything."

Annie Green appreciated the help. She lost everything in the Alder's Point fire, escaping with only the clothes on her back.

"That's an awful feeling. That's a sad feeling, I was out there lost and had no place to go at the time," said Green.

She's currently staying in a hotel room provided by the Red Cross while preparing to relocate to Chesterfield Apartments, where many of those displaced by the Alder's Point fire will be staying until their apartment building is rebuilt. She left Tuesday's event with linens and several bags of necessities - things that most of us take for granted.

"I thank God for this," she said.

A concert will be held to benefit those displaced by the fires this Sunday at 4 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church at the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and File Street.



Kids enjoy the refreshing water at a city pool.

New pool rules issued in wake of child's death

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

the big pool.

Nearly a month after six-year-old Ja'Nae Nicole McCullum drowned at Kimberley Park Pool, the Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks Department announced enhanced policies and procedures for city swimming pools. They are:

- A second safety line has been added in the shallow water to create a restricted area for non-experienced swimmers. This is in addition to the safety line that designates the deep end for diving.
- Effective immediately, the minimum adult-to-child ratio for day camps, day camps and other groups that visit the pools is changed to one adult for every 10 children or fewer in the water. Visiting groups should bring at least two counselors for every 10 children, so that the 1-10 ratio is maintained in the event that an adult must accompany a child to the restroom or the concession stand. All camp counselors age 18 and up will be admitted free of charge because they also have a responsibility to assist with watching their children.

- A wristband system is being implemented to enhance the safety of the children with groups. Red wristbands identify children age 5 and younger. All children wearing a red wristband must stay in the wading pool, water playground, concessions or deck area. Children wearing red wristbands are prohibited from

Yellow wristbands identify weak swimmers. All children wearing a yellow wristband will be allowed to play in the shallow area of the newly established section of the pool.

Green wristbands identify the swimmers. These swimmers have passed a swim test at the swimming pool they are visiting. All children wearing a green wristband may swim in any area of the pool and may use the diving boards.

- Day care staff will designate swimmers and non-swimmers upon arrival; if the staff does not know a child's swimming ability, the child will receive a yellow wristband if at least 6 years of age.

Recreation and Parks Director Tim Grant said the changes will make it easier for the pool staff to enhance swimmer safety.

"The wrist band system will make it easier for lifeguards to know at a glance if a child is in the appropriate area of the pool, and it will give day care supervisors a clearer understanding of where their children should be."

He added that swim lessons are available at all city-operated pools.

Ja'Nae Nicole McCullum was among a group of about 20 children from the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club who went to the pool for a summer outing. There were eight lifeguards on duty and at least two adult chaperones on hand when she drowned.



Grant

Mentors

from page A1

Children are matched with a "big brother" or "big sister" who has similar interests, and the two are asked to get together once a week to talk, interact and just spend time together.

"We'd love to get into churches, businesses and civic organizations to explain the need for more male volunteers," Sing said. "All they need to do is to commit for a year to do one activity a week ... however you like to spend your free time, we have little ones who like to do that too."

While the agencies typically are referred more young boys than girls, volunteers are more often female, Sing says. The organizations are hopeful that the 100 Men campaign, which has been utilized by other BBBS agencies across the country, will help to get more men interested in giving back by becoming mentors.

"We'd love to have 100 (men sign up) here," Sing remarked. "... the number is unlimited, because the need is unlimited."

Each of the three Triad organizations will host its own recruiting events to support the 100 Men campaign.

Sing said the Forsyth County outlet is focusing on events that might appeal to men, such as a tour of the Winston-Salem Police Department, slated for later in the campaign.

"I think it's just (a matter of) getting the word out," Sing commented. "Usually, when we have a big push (for new volunteers) ... people will respond."

While the program is designed to benefit the children, the adult volunteers also have much to gain from the interaction, Sing believes.

"In my opinion, (volunteers) will get more than they give," she said. "When you have somebody asking you for advice and looking up to you, you're really helping somebody to grow, and it's helping your own growth."

Winston-Salem resident Frank Thomas can readily attest to the personal rewards he has gained from being a big brother.

Thomas, the director of custodial services at Wake Forest University, signed up to become a "Big" last spring.

While he admits he was a little hesitant to get involved at first, Thomas, a 45-year-old father of three daughters and an ordained minister, says he is

glad he finally took the initiative.

"Part of my apprehension was I'm too busy, my plate's too full. Well, that's a cop-out for some of us," he remarked. "What's an hour a week? Not to mention the long lasting impact you could have on a young man, maybe even keep him out of the penitentiary or the cemetery."

Thomas and his little brother, Ja'Kishe, 11, have made the most of their time together, going bowling, to the movies and even the Opening Night of the Winston-Salem Dash's season.

"It's been great," he said. "... We are going down that road to doing some things that I was never able to do with my daughters - guy stuff."

Thomas is so sold on the idea of mentoring, that he works to recruit new volunteers to BBBS and the First Tee, a golf mentoring organization he also is involved with, all the time.

"Every chance I get when I talk to friends of mine or acquaintances, I drop hints about either Big Brothers Big Sisters or First Tee," he declared. "It doesn't take anything to volunteer but time and an open attitude."

For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters Services Inc., or to volunteer, call (336) 724-7993.

NBTF

from page A1

Classic Fairgrounds, but organizers have moved them to the lower level of the MC Benton Convention Center this year to allow the youth to be more a part of the action.

"We recognized that downtown is the hub, so we've tried to establish events (there) ... to make it a positive experience for everybody with a focus on assimilating the youth to the festival," said Assistant City Manager Martha Wheelock.

While organizers want young people to take full advantage of Teentastic events - which will include a talent show and celebrity guests - they discourage young people from coming downtown at night for adults-only events such as the nightly Celebrity Receptions at the Marriott Hotel.

"Everything that we're doing (with respect to rules and regulations) ... is being done out of concern for patrons' safety," Patton explained. "It's not that we're trying to prevent anyone from participating; we've added all of these activities so that there's a place for everyone."

Grant Minnix is the festival coordinator for the Twin City Quarter, which encompasses the convention center and the Marriott and Embassy Suites hotels. He

says hotel areas will be off-limits to guests under 21, unless they are staying at the hotel. Those under 21 with a ticket stub from the Monday Aug. 3 Opening Night Gala will be allowed to enter the Celebrity Reception on that night only. For the rest of the festival, ID's will be checked, and NBTF gatherings at the hotel will be strictly 21-and-up, Minnix said.

Planning ahead will help all those who choose to attend Festival events get the most bang for their buck, organizers say. Those who attend should be mindful that traffic will be heavy, parking will be in high demand, and seating at most plays will be first come, first served.

Justin Gomez of the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership says that downtown merchants hope that the large crowds mean extra activity for their cash registers.

"Everyone's really excited," Gomez reported. "I think there's a good bit of energy around downtown, judging from the people I've talked to. It's a good economic boost."

The National Black Theatre Festival will be held Aug. 3-8. For a full schedule of NBTF events, visit www.nbtf.org. Teentastic events, most of which are free, are also listed on the Web site.



Patton



Minnix

Suggs

from page A1

of two children, she decided to finally pursue her movie-making dreams.

Suggs entered into the project with a semester of film classes as her only training, so she "read and read and read" everything that she could to learn how to make a movie. She financed the project herself, with the support of friends and family members.

Suggs hired Gorilla Productions, which provided her with an experienced crew and filmmaking equipment. She turned to April Gerald of Head to Toe Styling Studio in Greensboro to do the actors' hair and makeup. All the scenes were shot locally at places like a Jamestown fitness club and even Suggs' own house.

She advertised for actors on local radio stations and on the mega-classified Web site Craigslist.com. Charlotte actress Tosha Thompson, who plays one half of the married couple, saw the Craigslist ad and responded.

Thompson already had commercial and film work under her belt and also some theater. She said her experience making "CAUTION" was a positive one, and that working with Stanis (Thompson is a huge "Good Times" fan) was icing on the cake.

One scene she shared with Stanis involved their characters getting into a shouting match.

"I grew up watching her and so now I'm sitting here across from her, screaming at her," said Thompson. "I had to pinch myself a little bit. I was a little intimidated; I was like, 'I can't scream at Thelma.'"



Photos courtesy of DD&G Entertainment.

Above: Will Dalton and Tosha Thompson playing husband and wife.

Right: Dornycya Suggs (standing, left) gives direction on the set.

Will Dalton, who plays Thompson's husband in the film, also had a pretty impressive resume when he was hired, including a leading role in a production of the highly-charged stage drama, "A Soldier's Play."

A friend told Dalton, who lives in Greensboro, about the audition. After working with Suggs, he predicts big things for the budding filmmaker.

"She was brilliant!" he said. Suggs found Stanis by sending out letters to talent listed with the Screen Actor's Guild. Suggs explained in the letter what she was trying to do and that the pay rate for the role would not be stellar. She was thrilled when Stanis - who plays Thompson's overbearing mother in the



film - responded.

Since all of her actors had screen experience, Suggs said she found them all indispensable during the shoot. She calls "CAUTION" an educational experience that taught her that even for short films, everyone puts in long hours.

"It's hard work," said Suggs. "We were there at 6 or 7 o'clock in the morning and sometimes didn't leave until 9 o'clock."

On Friday, the film will

have a red carpet premier at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Md., near where Suggs used to live. She said she will screen the movie locally sometime after the premier. She hopes the film will help her obtain better funding for her next project.

For more information about Suggs' film company, DD&G Entertainment, and to view clips from the film, visit www.ddandg.com.