

Fraternity, city host successful back-to-school event

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem Recreation and Parks Department and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. sponsored the recent Back-2-School Community Cookout and School Supplies Giveaway at the Carl H. Russell Sr. Recreation Center.

More than 450 students of all ages, parents and guardians showed up on Monday, Aug. 24 to meet with neighbors, school administrators and city officials, including Mayor Pro Tempore Vivan H. Burke, who opened the event by thanking the men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and the many community volunteers who made the event a success.

Greetings were brought by the new Carver High Principal Nathaniel Barber, Carver PTA President Dr. Felecia Piggott-Long and Nicole Piggott, director of Jacket Intergrated Academy. The food was provided and prepared by Harden Butch Wheeler and his staff. Cedric Russell, son of the late Carl



Brothers Benjamin Piggott, Anderson Noble, Reginald McCaskill, Darryl Prince, Sean Hawkins and Frank Thomas.

H. Russell Sr., provided cases of water and ice.

Ben Piggott Sr., the head of the Russell Recreation Center, and Renee Vaughn, a Carver High graduate who is an on air personality on 97.1 QMG, were the master and mistress of ceremonies.

The Carver High School Marching Band performed, under the direction of Juan Eckard. The varsity and junior varsity football teams, led by Coach Brennon David, were also in attendance.

The attendees were treated to free haircuts by Cutting Edge



Barbers from Cutting Edge Barbershop.

Barbershop, and Battle of the Bands tickets were donated by Donna Montgomery of Total Entertainment and presented as giveaway prizes.

"The Back-2-School Community Cookout and School Supplies Giveaway was needed just to let the children from the surrounding communities know that we (Phi Beta Sigma) care about them and we support them as well."

stated Sean Hawkins, a Carver graduate and the social action chairman of Phi Beta Sigma.

Ben Piggott concluded the event by thanking school supplies donors - the Recreation and Parks Department, the Men of Phi Beta Sigma, Paul Thacker of Wake Forest University, and Kenell Caesar, center supervisor at the William C. Sims Sr. Recreation Center.

Paul

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for Paul afterwards. Students from Moore Magnet Elementary School, where Paul attended as a child, grilled him about the teachers that taught him. The students were thrilled to learn that many of Paul's teachers are still at the school.

Jana Jjereki Miller, a third-grader at Forest Park Elementary School, got the honor of sitting beside Paul as he read. When asked why she liked Paul, she responded, "Because he's cute and he's funny."

Paul also made a strong impression on Davie County resident Jerrel Marshall, 18, whose dream of meeting Paul was fulfilled through the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to young people with life threatening illnesses.

Paul granted another one of Marshall's wishes by providing a trip to Jamaica for the teenager and his family. "He's my idol," said



Jerrel Marshall

Marshall, who has Hodgkin's Lymphoma. "He's someone who came from same area I'm from and, like he said, someone was always telling him he was too small to do it, and I always felt the same way. If he can make it, I can make it too."

Student volunteers from local high schools and Winston-Salem State University continued reading Paul's book to the children after the NBA star left the room to complete his next good deed: packing boxes for HeroBox, an



Little ones listen to Paul read his book.

organization that ships care packages to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Dozens of local student volunteers joined him in packing the

boxes with everything from Texas Pete hot sauce to toothpaste.

Mathu Gibson, an 11th grader at West Forsyth High

School (Paul's alma mater), took a few hours out of his day to prepare HeroBoxes, along several other West football players. He said it



Mathu Gibson

was a thrill working beside Paul, but that the service was equally rewarding.

"It feels good to give back," he said.

After the packing project, Paul moved on to the Club's gym to play a game of hoops with Special Olympics athletes. Later in the day, Paul went to Groves Stadium and helped load boxes of food for Feed the Children. The CP3 Foundation donated 400 boxes of food to the organization to feed local families.

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