

Hospice looks to attract more interest from black community

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Before attending the "Empowering Healthy Decisions for African-Americans" conference, Sherri Wilson had no idea that Hospice offers such services as in-home health care and grief counseling.

"I thought it was a place to come and die," said Wilson, who runs a computer lab at Winston-Salem State University.

By the end of the day, she understood that Hospice & Palliative CareCenter offers much more, including help with pain management and other comfort (palliative) care.

In Forsyth County, Hospice serves a proportionately smaller percentage of African-Americans than whites. Wanting to change that, Hospice invited members of the community and people from groups that serve African-Americans, including local churches, the Forsyth County Health Department, Senior Services, Novant Health and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, to the conference to learn more about its services.

Lack of knowledge about what Hospice offers is one reason a smaller percentage of African-Americans use Hospice services, said Ward Miller, a member of Hospice's Board of Directors and the chairman of its Inclusion and Access Committee.

"We're trying to take Hospice to the community," Miller said. "We want people to know that it's not just about dying, and it's not just for the sick."

And it's not just for people with money. For many people, Medicare,



Hospice staffers (from left) RN Elaine Little, Chaplain Ann Dalton, Community Liaison Sharena Connor and RN Chanda Miller.

Medicaid and other forms of insurance may cover the costs. Even when that is not the case, Hospice provides services.

"No one who cannot afford Hospice will be turned away," Miller said.

Distrust of health-care providers in general is another reason some African-Americans don't get the help they need, said keynote speaker Sylvia Flack, the executive director and founder of the Center of Excellence for the Elimination of Health Disparities, as well as the founding dean of the School of Health Sciences at Winston-Salem State and a professor of nursing there.

"Especially with older patients, there is a fear of health care facilities," Flack said. "African-Americans will wait almost until the end before they go."

Hospice's plans to establish an outreach center in the eastern part of the city could help change that.

"If Hospice puts a center in East

Winston, that is going to be an effective way to build trust," said Flack, whose address also focused on the great number of health disparities that exist between blacks and whites.

The conference gave Hospice the chance to tout many of its offerings, including its home health team, which includes a doctor, nurse, social worker, chaplain, volunteers and a home-health aide. The agency also offers grief counseling sessions that available to virtually everyone in the community.

Tracie Hunter-Bowens, the aging resources counselor for Senior Services, was among the 120 people who signed up for the conference.

"I'm impressed with how Hospice is embracing the African-American community," she said at the end of the day.

For more information about Hospice & Palliative CareCenter, visit www.hospicecarecenter.org or call 336-768-3972.



Miller

Young dancers to study in San Francisco



Monet and Chloe Beatty pose before performing last year.

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Sisters Monet, 13, and Chloe, 11, Beatty recently auditioned for the San Francisco-based Alonzo King Lines Contemporary Ballet Company.

The sisters are students of the Institute of Divine Arts and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Preparatory Academy, both of which are located in Winston-Salem.

Auditions were held at the North Carolina Dance Theatre in Charlotte and drew many dancers. Monet and Chloe were the youngest dancers to audition and demonstrated their technique and discipline with professionalism.

The pair are now slated to travel to San Francisco to take part in a summer training session sponsored by the ballet company. From June 14 - July 13, they will work with choreographers from around the world to further develop their technical skills.

Monet and Chloe Beatty - who also aspire to have careers in medicine and engineering, respectively - have long performance resumes. They have danced in UNC's production of "The Nutcracker" and performed with the acclaimed Greensboro-based Cyrus Art Production.

Allstate's Hicks earns \$1,000 grant for agency

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Allstate Insurance agent Bob Hicks, whose office is located at 131 Allen Street in Kernersville, has received the Agency Hands in the Community Award for his commitment to volunteering in the community.

With this award came a \$1,000 grant from The Allstate Foundation for The Shepherd's Center in Kernersville, where Hicks volunteers.

"Bob is an active and respected member of the business community," said Allstate's Southeast Region Field Vice President Bob Holden. "He also makes a point of getting involved personally by dedicating himself to making a difference in people's lives."

Established in 1952, The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by subsidiaries of The Allstate Corporation. The

Allstate Foundation partners with non-profit organizations on community initiatives that promote "safe and vital communities," "tolerance, inclusion, and diversity" and "economic empowerment." Teen driving and empowering victims of domestic violence have been priorities for the Foundation

since 2005.

"Allstate believes that it is very important for corporations to take an active interest in the communities they serve. Allstate is proud of Bob and his efforts to support The Shepherd's Center through the Allstate Foundation," concluded Holden.



Bob Hicks presents a check to Ruth Woosley, executive director of The Shepherd's Center in Kernersville.

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