

HAWS

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to get people out of public housing by giving them the essential resource of a sound education.

"Low income doesn't necessarily mean you have low standards, but I want people to realize they don't have to be low income. You can work your way out of that," Edwards remarked. "We like public housing, but it never was meant to be a permanent solution."

More than \$100,000 remains in the grant, which will expire in April 2012. HAWS is partnering with the Winston-Salem Urban League, which has agreed to conduct comprehensive career assessments on potential applicants to help them determine their best educational paths. Edwards is hopeful that the program's success will inspire HAWS to incorporate its cost into its operating budget after the HUD grant expires.

"This is part of our mission and vision. Our mis-

sion is to create and maintain sustainable communities through partnerships, and that's just what we're doing," she explained. "...My hope is that those persons that get a jump start (through LEAD) will be able to continue and we will see them through."

Tineta Brown has served as coordinator of the LEAD program since March. Brown, a resident of the Stoney Glen Apartments community for the last six years, knows firsthand the challenges many LEAD participants are up against. She completed her bachelor's degree in business administration from Gardner-Webb University in 2009.

"I felt like it was a very unique opportunity, me being a public housing resident myself and experiencing the

trials of being a single parent and going back to school to finish my degree," said Brown, the mother of one son. "I felt like I could really give some firsthand knowledge to the participants going through the program."

Those who have come through her door have been deeply grateful for the opportunity LEAD extends to them, Brown reported.

"They love it," she said of the tenants. "When I have appointments to come in, by the end when they leave, they usually hug me. They just think it's a wonderful program, and it really is."

Twenty-one year-old Ryan Evans, a business major at Forsyth Technical Community College and also a Stoney Glen resident, finished with a 4.0 GPA last



Evans



Brown

semester. The youngest of four children, Evans said LEAD has helped offset the expense of keeping her five year-old daughter, Jamiah, in daycare while she attends school. Evans, who has worked for HAWS for the last two years, hopes to transfer to High Point University to complete her bachelor's degree.

"The best thing we have is our brains," she stated. "My dad always said as long as you have a good education, you can do anything you want to do, so I feel like it's very necessary to succeed in life."

Evans says she is grateful for the support she and Jamiah have received from HAWS over the four years of their residency.

"They have provided so many opportunities for me," she said of HAWS. "All I can do is thank God for me being in the right place at the right time."

For more information about LEAD, call (336) 727-8500 or visit www.haws.org.

Study

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have included only a small number of young adults, making it difficult to draw conclusions about that age group.

Harris said that the high rate of hypertension among the Add Health study participants was surprising. Another widely cited and reputable study - the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, or NHANES - reported a much lower rate of hypertension (4 percent) for a similar age group around the same time period (2007-2008). Both studies use the same definition of hypertension: a blood pressure reading of 140/90 mmHg (millimeters of mercury) or more.

"Our respective findings may differ, but the message is clear," said Harris. "Young

adults and the medical professionals they visit shouldn't assume they're not old enough to have high blood pressure. This is a condition that leads to chronic illness, premature death and costly medical treatment.

"Our results show that the processes that trigger these problems begin early in life, but they are preventable, so it's important to check for hypertension now and head it off at the pass, in order to avoid these health and societal costs later on," Harris said.

The Add Health study also found males were much more likely than females to have hypertension (27 percent vs. 11 percent); and young adults without a high school degree were more likely than their college-educated peers to have the condition (22 percent vs. 17 percent).

Water

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ALWAYS swim with someone else - at least have someone watching you while you are swimming in case of emergency

- Teach your children not to run, push, or jump over others near the water

- Learn the steps of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) - CPR has been shown to save lives, when often it can take a few minutes for paramedics to arrive. Your local Red Cross offers these classes.

- Make sure you and your family always use life vests that are approved by the US Coast Guard

- Avoid drinking alcohol before swimming, boating or other water sports.

- Inflatable floats are not designed to keep swimmers safe or save lives.

- Make sure that you and your family swim in safe areas of rivers, lakes, and oceans

- Take yourself and your family to swimming and water safety classes - Most local swimming pools and YMCAs/YWCAs, as well as some parks, offer these types of classes.

- If someone is watching your children, make sure they know how to swim, know

CPR, and have a telephone close by for an emergency.

- If you have a pool at your house, make sure that the area is properly protected with locked doors so that children cannot go into the pool without adult supervision.

- If you go to the beach, make sure you do not drift away from shore when there is a rip tide

- If you do get caught in a rip tide, swim parallel to shore and you will eventually swim out of the rip tide, and then you can swim toward shore.

- Know the weather conditions before swimming or boating on lakes, rivers or the ocean

Enjoy the North Carolina summers with your family, but do so using common sense and by observing safety rules so that this beautiful time does not turn into a tragedy!

- Contribution by Sarah Langdon, MPH, CHES

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 Center for Health Equity, please visit our website: <http://www.wfubmc.edu/MAC/HE>.

Survivors

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and a half years ago, said he and his wife have become impromptu advocates, encouraging others who are grappling with the disease when they encounter them.

"If you meet somebody that has that, you can tell them the Lord healed you and if they trust in the Lord, He will heal them too," related the 70 year-old. "I say, 'I've been through that seven years ago and the Lord brought me through and I'm still doing all right...He let me make three score and 10 (years old). It's a blessing."

Brenda Sloan, a 17-year breast cancer survivor, says battling the disease has taught her to "live each day as if it's the last day."

Though she has enjoyed nearly two decades of good health, Sloan, who relocated to Winston-Salem from the Virginia eight years ago, says the possibility of a relapse is never far from a survivor's mind. Being able to commune with other survivors helps to salve the sting of uncertainty, she said.

"All these people have had different types of cancer and they've been at different stages, and they're happy and going on with their lives," she observed. "It's encouraging."

Dr. Patty Zekan, an oncologist for the last 30 years, believes it is important for those battling cancer to hear as many success stories as possible. She added that medical advancements are making success stories



Photos by Layla Farmer

Brenda Sloan (second from right) poses with fellow breast cancer survivors (from left) Vina Johnson, JoAnn Agnew and Etheleen Duckett.

more and more plentiful.

"We've got better survival rates, better control of the symptoms and people are more open and talking about it," she explained. "Thirty years ago, it was hush-hush...Now, people share their stories and realize that they're not alone and they don't have to be alone."

During his remarks at the celebration, Dr. Volker Steiber thanked the survivors for the strength and courage

they display in the face of such adversity. Steiber, whose mother is a cancer survivor, pledged his ongoing support to survivors as a physician.

"I want to thank all of you for inspiring all of us (physicians) to go to work every day to care for you," he declared. "I want you all to know that we're here for you. For the rest of your lives, we're here to walk that journey with you."

White

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White joined NBTF officials at the Embassy Suites Hotel as they announced the full slate of productions that will be staged at this year's festival, which will run from Aug. 1-6. White's show is first on the schedule; it will initially be staged immediately after the celebrity-laden Opening Night Gala. The opening show is the most coveted of all NBTF prizes. White has already shown herself more than worthy of the spot.

She made her Festival debut in 2001 with her one-woman tour de force autobiographical musical "From Brooklyn to Broadway." Hamlin was so impressed, he invited her back in 2003 to open that year's festival, although some were skeptical that a show of songs - even from the iconic pipes of White - could cut the mustard as the Festival opener.

NBTF Media Relations Director Brian McLaughlin concedes that he was one of those doubters before Hamlin eased his apprehensions.

McLaughlin recalled an exchange he had with Hamlin soon after Hamlin had picked White's "From Brooklyn to Broadway II" to open the '03 NBTF.

"I said 'Larry are you sure?' and he said, 'Brian, she will shut it down!'"

Hamlin was right, as was the case most of the time. White left the crowd spellbound, belting out everything from Broadway standards to an emotional cover of "Human" by '80s pop group Human League.

White says the new show that she and Graphenreed are preparing will again run the musical gamut.

"There will be a mixture ... old and new ... popular songs that we'll give a reggae spin," she said.

If it can be done vocally, few doubt that White can't do it. She's one of the Great White Way's few Quadruple Crown winners - having accepted Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and The People's Choice awards over the course of her glorious 30-



Photo by Kevin Walker

Lillias White sits between Gerry Patton and Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin (right).

plus year career. Most of the honors came for her performance as Sonja in "The Life" in 1997. The late theater great Cy Coleman created the role for White after being thoroughly blown away by her more than a decade earlier when he hired her for her breakthrough role in "Barnum."

Over the years, the roles have kept coming for White in hit productions like "Dreamgirls," "Once on This Island" and, most recently, "Fela," for which she just received a Tony nomination. But White says there were lean times in the beginning when she considered giving up her dreams of stardom and returning to school to earn a nursing degree to support herself and her two children. But she never had to hit the books.

"I have been blessed to sustain myself in this business," she said.

Another obstacle, she said, was juggling a burgeoning career with single-parenting, which at times was a dramatic production all its own.

"I has been very much a challenge ... parenting is not a perfect science," said White, whose now adult children have given her four grandchildren.

While White's children are fans of the arts, neither has seriously aspired to follow the immense path that mom has walked. White knew early-on that she wanted to perform. Her first spotlight was a kitchen light fixture, under which she would sing her heart out after Sunday dinners.

"(My grandmother) would

put me up on the dining room table - that was my first stage," White recalled.

White credits her faith - which includes many aspects practiced by the spiritual Yoruba people of West Africa - for all that goes right in her life, everything from being in good voice when the curtain rises to having her South Carolina-born mother still alive and kicking at 95-years-old.

"I pray. I meditate. I give thanks," she said. "When you give thanks for what you have, more comes to you."

Among her prayers these days is that some of the black Hollywood talent who used the stage as a springboard to stardom will come back home to create new opportunities for other African Americans in theater. She is thankful that the National Black Theatre Festival has been there to fill what she calls a great void in new, creative black-oriented theater. White says the Festival is promoting and inspiring a whole new generation of talent.

"This festival is integral in terms of getting people to write, produce more ... be more daring ... to do something on the edge," she said.

Before Opening Night Gala attendees see White shine at the Stevens Center, they will be witness to a star-studded awards show at the Benton Convention Center. Honorees will include "Cooley High" and "A Different World" actor Glynn Turman, who will receive the Sidney Poitier Lifelong Achievement Award; Playwrights Charles Smith and Samm-Art Williams; and

soap opera legends Count Stovall and James Reynolds, whose nearly 30-year run on "Days of Our Lives" makes him the most tenured black performer on a daytime drama.

Gerry Patton, the executive director of the N.C. Black Repertory Company (which stages the NBTF) says this year's gala will be like no other.

"We have so many touches of Broadway at this year's gala," she said. "I suggest you get your tickets now, because it is going to sell out."

The Opening Night Gala, which includes admission to the awards ceremony, White's performance and a celebrity reception, begins at 5:30 p.m. Individual tickets are \$255; tables of 10 are \$2,550. For tickets and/or a full listing of NBTF shows, go to www.nbtf.org or call 336-723-2266.

Plate

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is."

ChooseMyPlate.gov provides practical information to individuals, health professionals, nutrition educators, and the food industry to help consumers build healthier diets with resources and tools for dietary assessment, nutrition education, and other user-friendly nutrition information. As Americans are experiencing epidemic rates of obesity, the online resources and tools can empower people to make healthier food choices for themselves, their families, and their children. Later this year, USDA will unveil an exciting "go-to" online tool that consumers can use to personalize and manage their

dietary and physical activity choices.

"The new icon is simple and easy to understand, with more emphasis placed on fruits and vegetables," said Benjamin. "This new tool can be a fun way to help individuals and families make healthier meal choices. I encourage all Americans to follow the new dietary guidelines and become familiar with the new icon because it will serve as a compass to a healthy and fit nation."

Over the next several years, USDA will work with the First Lady's Let's Move! initiative and public and private partners to promote MyPlate and ChooseMyPlate.gov as well as the supporting nutrition messages and "how-to" resources.

WINSTON-SALEM

CATCH THE DASH FROM JUNE 10-15!

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