

YMCA

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YMCA. The regional YMCA has been subsidizing the Winston Lake Y since the branch moved to its current location at 901 Waterworks Road in 1985. YMCA of Northwest N.C. President Curt Hazelbaker said with dropping membership revenue across its branches, the regional YMCA can no longer afford the \$300,000-\$400,000 shortfall from Winston Lake. He said relatively low membership, the majority of whom are seniors who use insurance to pay, is responsible for the shortfall. He said it's

also one of the larger branches with a lot more space than is needed. He said changes like reduced hours and staff changes have already been put in place. Closing the pool, the most expensive amenity there, was also considered. He said the situation isn't unique to the Winston Lake Y, with similar measures at four other branches facing shortfalls.

Hazelbaker said partnering with the city was suggested at a meeting on the issue that was held with Winston-Salem Y members. The potential deal with the city would let the YMCA continue to have a

location there with a fully renovated Wellness Center including new strength equipment and a group exercise room, along with upgraded locker rooms with a sauna, steam room and whirlpool. He also expects members to have access to the gym and pool for classes. The YMCA plans to invest up to \$200,000 to

renovate its space. Hazelbaker said no jobs or programs would be sacrificed by the reduced space. The branch's popular Black Achievers and Hispanic Achievers programs are held off-site at local schools and wouldn't be affected. "We think it's a great opportunity for the Y, it's a great opportunity for the city," said Hazelbaker. The city's tentative plans would be moving the Recreation and Parks offices and activities for seniors and special populations into its part of the building, including Senior Games and Special

Olympics. Though the YMCA has invested substantially in upkeep of the facility, it will require \$1.25 million to \$1.5 million in renovations over the next three to five years due to its age. The Northwest YMCA's board voted to support the deal, as has the Winston Lake Y's board. Barbara Carter, who heads the Winston Lake board, said she felt the deal was a "win-win." The potential agreement went before the city finance committee for discussion on Oct. 10. Numerous city council members talked about the

importance of the YMCA for East Winston. Derwin Montgomery, who represents the East Ward that contains the Winston Lake Y, supports the plan. "It offers the opportunity for the asset to remain in the community and for some of the needed investments to take place," said Montgomery. The proposal will come back before the finance committee on Nov. 14 at 4:30 p.m. A letter has been sent out to Winston Lake members informing them about the potential partnership, and a forum on it is planned once more details have been finalized.



Hazelbaker



Photos by Tevin Stinson

Ministers Mike and Darla Rakes discuss the importance of keeping the faith following a on stage performance of "The Sting of White Roses."



NC Black Repertory Company artistic director Jackie Alexander welcomes the audience before the start of "The Sting of White Roses", an on stage drama written by Angelica Cheri.



"The Sting of White Roses," a production by the North Carolina Black Repertory Company, is steered toward the family and friends of those dealing with illness and the importance of having faith. (In Photo: David Seed played by Brandon Jones, Thea Seed played by Perri Gaffney, and Mina Seed Played by Eboni Keita.)

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Play

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with breast cancer, and for the first time in his life David is faced with a challenge that he doesn't have the answers to. While Mina fights like a champion, David begins to question his faith. Along the journey to renew his faith, David receives a lot of support from mother Thea, and older sister Esther. While it is no secret that more than 100,000 Americans are diagnosed with some form of cancer each year, "The Sting of White Roses" is steered toward thousands

of family members and friends who are indirectly affected by the dreaded diagnoses of cancer or any other life threatening illness. That's a feeling Winston-Salem First's ministers Mike and Darla Rakes know all too well. Last summer, the Rakes' family received terrible news that their daughter was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, a form of leukemia that affects the circulation of blood. Just as it did to the Seeds, the dreadful news shook the family to the core. Following

a production of the onstage drama last Saturday, the couple led an open discussion on the importance of keeping the faith during times of adversity. They also gave their thoughts on the production, and discussed what it's like to watch their daughter fight every day. Darla said a number of scenes throughout the play hit close to home. "All of the emotions expressed in the play, we have felt. So many parts of the play are real." Mike said the same questions David asked in the play he asked as

well. He mentioned that now he and his wife are at a place where they have put all trust in God, and put all of their confidence in Him. "We're walking through this, and we're struggling but we have put all our trust in God, and He has heard our prayers," he said. "Deep down in both our hearts we know our daughter is going to win." When asked how she is able to sustain her faith during such a hard time, Darla said, "Without faith in life there would be no comfort at all." "We have to trust God," she said.

Rates

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Superintendent Beverly Emory said, "We remain committed to our goal to raise the graduation rate to 90 percent by 2018," she said. "As we get closer, we must do all we can to help our students graduate prepared for college and careers." Local high school students' science scores increased as well, while reading and math scores saw a slight decrease. When using the GLP, or grade level proficient scale, to measure high school courses, 53.6 percent of WS/FCS students were proficient in Biology, 56.8 percent were profi-

cient in English II and, 55.5 percent were proficient in Math I. The scores for the 2014-2015 school year were 48.5 in Biology, 56.3 in English II, and 60.5 in Math I. The CCP (college and career proficient) scale shows 46.0 percent of students were proficient in Biology, 48.3 percent were proficient in English II and 44.9 percent were proficient in Math I. This compared to 41.4 percent, 47.5, and 48.1 percent the previous years. To improve math and reading scores, the board has implemented a number of student-centered initiatives, including a new balanced approach to reading. Each school will also have

a goal addressing its achievement gaps, and an improvement plan based on data and accountability. Emory said the initiatives are geared toward holding schools more accountable. She said, "Our work this year is rooted in our imperatives, which all schools will be held accountable for implementing with fidelity." "We will model integrity by improving our systems of evaluation and feedback," she said. "These are not new initiatives, but we are redirecting ourselves to making sure they are monitored and evaluated."



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