

In The Community

# Steve Hicks Stresses Importance Of Handling Alcohol-Related Problems

**Special To The Post**  
The effort to prevent and treat alcohol abuse in North Carolina involves many public and private agencies, ranging from law enforcement to mental health. One of the largest state agencies dealing with the alcohol problem is the Department of Human Resources' Division of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services. The division operates three alcoholic rehabilitation centers (ARCs) and oversees 150 community programs that help over 30,000 alcoholics every year.

Steve Hicks, Deputy Director for Alcohol and Drugs, stresses the importance of handling alcohol-related problems in the community.

"By providing help within the community the individual can keep his or her job and contact with the family," he said. "Community programs can get at the root of an alcoholic's problems within his or her own environment, whereas seeking help out of the community one can't deal with these problems as well."

Hicks pointed out that in some cases though, removing alcoholics from the environment is the only way to stop them from drinking, especially in the case of the chronic alcoholic. "The alcoholic rehabilitation centers are for the most severe cases," he said. "Most of these individuals have lost their jobs and have several medical problems as well. When community programs can't help them, they need the intensive, month-long treatment that the ARCs provide."

Hicks said the programs differ in each community. In the large communities, such as Wake County, comprehensive programs are available which include in-patient care, medical detoxification units, and counseling. Much of the funding for the larger programs is available because of a greater amount of local support.

"Most programs across the state have detoxification capabilities and if they can't provide it, then an agreement is made with another program or the local hospital for service," he explained. "Many of the comprehensive centers also have satellite centers in rural areas which provide counseling and rehabilitation."

Many communities have halfway houses which provide housing and group support for alcoholics. Sometimes these facilities are used for individuals returning from the ARCs because they provide a smoother transition back into the community. Counseling and rehabilitation are provided through the local alcohol treatment program for these clients. The staff members at each cen-

**Fourth in series**

ter vary according to the program, but as of January 1, 1985 new standards require that all state-funded programs have at least one certified alcoholism and drug abuse counselor, or a certified substance abuse counselor.

The community programs are staffed by these counselors, medical personnel, volunteers, and in some cases, recovered alcoholics.

Don Jones is program supervisor at the Alcohol Education Center (AEC) in High Point. He supervises the residential care services available at the center.

Jones is a recovered alcoholic who was treated at the ARC in Butner in 1972 and 1973. He distinctly remembers that May 14, 1973 was the last time he ever had a drink. He said that it was the treatment he received at the ARC that turned him around and inspired him to start helping other alcoholics.

"My drinking problem was my own fault and no one else's," he said. "For 13 years I blamed my problems on everyone else and tried to drink them away. The last time I went to the ARC I was up to two pints of vodka a day."

Jones says he drifted from job to job, became separated from his wife and alienated from his children. "I had loused up my life so badly that I could only get better," he emphasized. "After three weeks at the ARC I finally began to place the blame on myself and began to deal with the things that bothered me in a constructive manner."

Jones stressed that the hardest part of his rehabilitation was coming back into the community, and repairing the damage done to his family life. "It took several years for the relations between my children and myself to reach a healthy level," he noted. "It took actions, not words, and the people who helped me at the ARC made me realize that I had the power to do it."

Jones joined the staff of the AEC in High Point in 1975. He and his wife have also become volunteers with the telephone crisis line in the community. "My experiences have helped each of us grow a lot, and made us realize that helping others will make a difference in both their lives and our own lives too." Both the Joneses have been attending classes at High Point College and will graduate this year with degrees in behavioral sciences.

In his work at the AEC Jones sees two to three new cases of alcoholism a day. Once a month he visits problem drinkers at the ARC in Butner to help ease their transi-

tion back into the community.

"I feel very good about the work I do because I know that it helps," he stated. "My counselors got me to take a look at myself instead of pointing the finger at other people. The most important thing I brought away from my treatment was my life. I want to help others do the same."

Community programs, such as the one Don Jones works for, are often supplemented by support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon. In North Carolina there are 581 AA organizations with a membership of 7,359. These programs provide group therapy for alcoholics as well as counseling for family members.

"Community programs are the front line in fighting alcohol abuse," Hicks said. "By dealing with problems in the local environment we can hopefully prevent alcoholism from progressing to its most severe stages."

## Sorority To Host Two Events

The Iota Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority is hosting two events in the coming weeks. On Saturday, May 11, the Iota Chapter's Nurses' Week Celebration will be held at noon at McDonald's Cafeteria No. 2, I-85 and Beatties Ford Rd. Contact Harriet G. Love at 892-1036 between 5-8 p.m. if you want to attend.

The second event, a county-wide health screening, is being co-sponsored by the Iota Chapter and the Charlotte Medical Society. The screening will take place at the House of Prayer, 2321 Beatties Ford Rd., Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. The purposes of the free screening are to alert the public to the many services available in the community and to encourage public awareness of preventive measures and warning signs of illness.

## Kamp-A-Long

The YWCA has the answer for parents who are uneasy about leaving their children at home alone during the summer months. Kamp-A-Long begins at the Park Road Center June 10. Activities include arts and crafts, storytelling, international visitors, field trips, swimming, gymnastics, tumbling, and nature study. Transportation provided from downtown YWCA to Park Road.

The YWCA is accepting applications now for boys and girls ages six to 12 years. There will be 11 one-week sessions. Fees are \$42 per one week session. Scholarships are available.



Annette L. Cowan  
.....New director  
**Annette L. Cowan To Head Gastonia Las Amigas**

The Southwest region of Las Amigas, Inc. recently installed its officers for the 1985-87 term. Installation was held in Salisbury, N.C. The Southwest region of Las Amigas includes the following chapters: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Gastonia, Kannapolis, Mooresville, Salisbury, and Greenville, S.C.

The director is Annette L. Cowan, Gastonia Chapter; assistant director, Mrs. Ruth Settle, Greenville Chapter; recording secretary, Mrs. Barbara Garrett, Greenville Chapter; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Barbara Atwater, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Chapter; treasurer, Mrs. Carrie Grier, Kannapolis Chapter; parliamentarian, Mrs. Estelle Coffey, Gastonia Chapter; and historian, Mrs. Mildred Ware, Mooresville.

Las Amigas, a national civic and social organization is now in its 28th year. Director of the Southwest region, Mrs. Cowan, a native Charlottean, is employed as a teacher in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system.

Timisha Barnes  
.....Featured in gospel recital

## Timisha Barnes Leads Revival

Greater Bethel AME Church is hosting a Youth Revival the week of May 5-10. The theme is "Parents, ministers, educators, go ye into all the city and claim our youth." The week's focus is on peace.

Opening services at 4 p.m. Sunday will feature a Gospel recital by Timisha Barnes of Kannapolis. At 14, Miss Barnes has studied at the Children's Theatre and Barber-Scotia College. She has appeared in numerous plays and has been seen on WSOE-TV and WBTV. Miss Barnes will be accompanied by Evangelist J. C. Davis.

The featured speaker for the Revival will be Walter V. Howard, a student at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta and Associate Minister at Bethel.

The Rev. Marshall Hill of Charlotte will conduct a Prayer, Praise and Bible Study on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The Rev. Hill is president of Marshville Bible Center in Marshville, S.C.

The Youth and Sunbeam Choirs of Bethel and other Charlotte youth choirs will provide inspirational music. Services begin nightly at 7:30.

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