

Ex-offenders start over by sowing Faith Seeds

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serious. Faith Seeds started about two years ago to support "the restoration" of ex-offenders back into the society. Members of the coalition include officials from churches, social service and housing agencies - entities that can provide much needed transitional help for a person coming out of prison.

Friday's event, which drew more than four dozen people to Goler Community Development Corporation Building, was designed to spread Faith Seeds' mission to the broader community. Guests included community leaders like NAACP President Stephen Hairston and State Rep. Earline Parmon, Assistant Police Chief Louis Saunders was there, too. They and other attendees rotated from table to table where various topics related to re-entry were discussed. Unknown to most of the guests was that many of those they sat beside at the tables were ex-offenders.

Sharon Glover, co-chair of the Faith Seeds Coalition and its executive council, said public disdain and prejudice are among the biggest obstacles that stand in between ex-offenders and a successful life on the outside. Glover said many are firm believers in the old adage, "Do the crime, do the time," but few truly ever forgive and forget ex-offenders.

"After folks have done their penance, why do we expect (them to) do their penance for all of their lives?" she asked. Many questions like that were asked and left for attendees to ponder. Bruce Ribeiro hopes that each of them thinks about that question especially hard. Ribeiro says being an ex-offender on the outside is like wearing a scarlet letter.

"On job applications or apartment applications... my record always comes up," said Ribeiro, who completed his most recent - and

he says his last - stint behind bars in 2000. Ribeiro has survived on the outside, though - thanks in part to the help he has received through programs like Faith Seeds. He works as the night shelter manager at the Bethesda Center and has a place to call home.

Ribeiro prays that others who are released will find the help he did because without it, he doesn't believe he would be a free man today. "The change in me came from within, but without the mentoring and encouragement... I would have been right back in there," he said.

Parmon has long been an advocate for helping ex-offenders make a smooth transition to the outside. But those like her are few and far between in the General Assembly, where any talk of starting programs to help ex-offenders could be viewed as being soft on crime. She and another legislator tried to push through legislation that would not require ex-offenders to reveal their criminal pasts on applications if they had served time at least 10 years ago. The legislation got a chilly reception from other lawmakers and died a quick death.

Parmon said until the community realizes that it is more sane and economically sound to help ex-offenders rather than locking them up time and time again, lawmakers will never change their tunes.

"It has to be an outcry in the communities across the state," she said.

Glover said ex-offenders are not looking for handouts, just helping hands that can guide them along the path that they must follow. Faith Seeds will provide some of those hands, but more are desperately needed, she said.

"This is not about giving them something. This is about creating an opportunity for them to be successful," said Glover.

NAACP leader protests innocence

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"I stand behind everything that I did," Hairston said about Allen's charges. "We answered every question on her complaint to the national (office). And they are conducting their investigation into it and I feel confident that we have not done anything wrong."

Because the investigation pertaining to the building is ongoing, Hairston said that he could not comment further about the building's acquisition.

Anson Asaka, the assistant general counsel for the national NAACP, heads the investigation and has declined to comment on the

case.

Hairston did clarify his position pertaining Allen's claim of himself and Phillips doctoring financial records to the national office regarding the assessment fee from the 2004 Freedom Fund Fundraiser. The charge is also under investigation by the national office.

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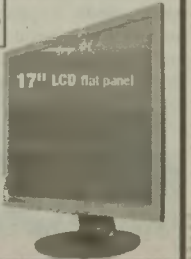
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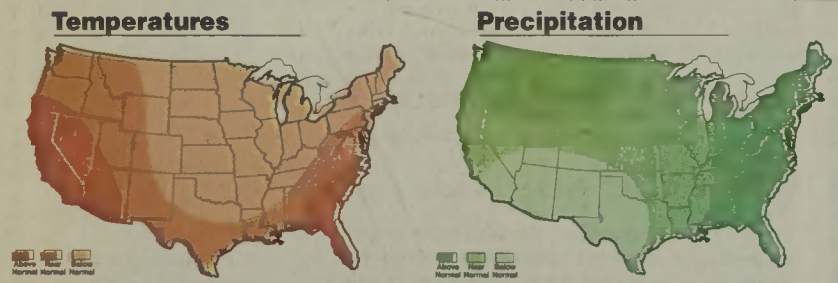
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AccuWeather.com 7-DAY FORECAST FOR CHARLOTTE, NC

Thursday	Thu. night	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Partly sunny	Partly cloudy and chilly	Mostly sunny and cool	A shower in spots	Cloudy with rain possible	Partly sunny	Windy with rain possible	Sunny
58°	30°	54° 33°	52° 39°	50° 35°	54° 45°	55° 42°	53° 44°
RealFeel 59°	RealFeel 30°	RealFeel 47°	RealFeel 44°	RealFeel 44°	RealFeel 47°	RealFeel 45°	RealFeel 49°

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WEATHER TRENDS THIS WEEK



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IN THE SKY

Sun			Moon			Moon Phases			
	Rise	Set		Rise	Set	New	First	Full	Last
Thursday	7:14 a.m.	5:12 p.m.	Thursday	7:24 a.m.	5:02 p.m.				
Friday	7:15 a.m.	5:12 p.m.	Friday	8:34 a.m.	5:58 p.m.				
Saturday	7:16 a.m.	5:11 p.m.	Saturday	9:38 a.m.	7:04 p.m.				
Sunday	7:17 a.m.	5:11 p.m.	Sunday	10:34 a.m.	8:16 p.m.				
Monday	7:17 a.m.	5:11 p.m.	Monday	11:20 a.m.	9:31 p.m.				
Tuesday	7:18 a.m.	5:11 p.m.	Tuesday	11:58 a.m.	10:43 p.m.				
Wednesday	7:19 a.m.	5:11 p.m.	Wednesday	12:30 p.m.	11:53 p.m.	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/23

REGIONAL CITIES

Thursday				Friday				Saturday				Sunday				
City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Aiken, SC	61	35	s	59	34	s	56	39	sh	59	40	r	Memphis, TN	53	35	sh
Augusta, GA	62	35	s	60	32	s	57	40	sh	57	42	r	Myrtle Beach, SC	60	39	s
Charleston, SC	64	39	s	61	38	s	59	42	pc	63	45	sh	Norfolk, VA	52	37	pc
Columbia, SC	62	34	s	59	33	s	56	40	pc	54	37	r	Raleigh, NC	58	35	pc
Durham, NC	56	35	pc	54	31	s	50	40	pc	46	33	r	Richmond, VA	51	32	pc
Greensboro, NC	53	32	pc	52	30	s	50	40	sh	43	31	r	Roanoke, VA	49	32	pc
Greenville, SC	58	35	pc	56	33	s	53	37	sh	50	38	r	Savannah, GA	65	37	s
Knoxville, TN	51	32	sh	50	32	pc	53	36	sh	54	39	r	Wilmington, NC	62	38	s
Lynchburg, VA	46	29	pc	44	24	pc	44	33	pc	43	28	c	Winston-Salem, NC	54	33	pc

U.S. CITIES

Thursday				Friday				Saturday				Sunday				
City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Atlanta	58	38	pc	56	38	s	53	43	sh	58	45	r	Miami	81	62	pc
Boston	48	36	pc	44	31	sh	42	28	c	42	29	pc	Pans	41	36	c
Chicago	34	20	sn*	30	16	sf	32	18	sf	32	22	pc	New Orleans	71	53	pc
Cleveland	39	24	sn*	29	21	sf	32	22	pc	38	27	sf	New York City	47	34	pc
Dallas	64	42	s	64	47	pc	69	50	pc	74	50	pc	Orlando	70	50	s
Denver	42	23	pc	48	26	pc	42	21	pc	38	15	s	Pittsburgh	39	26	sf
Detroit	36	22	sn	32	18	sf	32	22	sf	34	22	c	Phoenix	72	50	s
Houston	71	54	sh	72	56	sh	76	60	sh	76	50	sh	San Francisco	62	50	r
Kansas City	38	21	pc	37	23	pc	39	27	sn	39	24	c	Seattle	36	34	sn
Los Angeles	68	55	pc	66	52	sh	66	49	pc	68	46	s	Washington, DC	48	32	pc

World Cities

Thursday				Friday				Saturday				Sunday				
City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Amsterdam	39	34	c	45	39	c	45	39	r	46	39	r	Paris	41	36	c
Berlin	36	30	pc	41	34	pc	39	34	c	39	30	sn	Rio de Janeiro	83	71	t
Buenos Aires	67	63	s	73	58	s	77	67	r	75	61	s	Rome	55	43	sh
Cairo	87	64	s	88	66	s	86	62	s	81	59	s	San Juan	85	71	s
Jerusalem	79	58	s	81	60	s	80	58	sh	74	52	s	Seoul	39	18	pc
Johannesburg	67	52	r	76	52	pc	77	51	pc	74	55	pc	Sydney	83	69	pc
London	50	43	sh	50	43	sh	46	41	r	45	37	c	Tokyo	56	45	pc
Mexico City	72	43	pc	71	44	sh	73	44	pc	73	42	pc	Toronto	36	22	sn
Moscow	31	16	sn	30	21	pc	32	21	pc	30	24	c	Zurich	41	24	pc

Weather (W) = sunny, pc=partly cloudy, c=cloudy, sh=showers, t=thunderstorms, r=rain, sf=snow flurries, sn=snow, Ho

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