



The IRS' listing of 501(c)(3) nonprofits has increased by 40 percent in the last six years to a total of about 400,000 organizations.

Caring for kids

Raising dollars for children's insurance

In 1987, the Caring Program for Children raised enough money to buy health insurance for 30 children. Since then, the nonprofit has struggled, raising money through churches to buy health insurance for one child at a time. Thanks to a recent influx of government and corporate dollars, the program is expanding rapidly, and now is turning its fundraising efforts to businesses and corporations.

BY KATHERINE NOBLE

DURHAM

Every Sunday, Margaret pores through the want ads, searching for a better-paying job for her husband. In the three years since he was laid off from a bank, the family has spent its savings and sold its house. They now live on an old farm without a telephone or central heating.

But they've also lost something more valuable. Something that means the difference between peace of mind and nights of worry that one of their four children might get sick or be injured: health insurance.

So far, they've been lucky. Their only major medical expense was for stitches two years ago. Their luck, however, is about to run out. One child needs a hernia operation, and if he doesn't get it soon, he may be permanently injured. The only



Doctors at Cary Pediatrics are part of a program that buys health insurance for poor children. Here, Dr. Hugh Powell gives Blake Walters a check-up.

Photo by John Fletcher Jr.

remedy the family can afford is rest and Tylenol.

Until last week, that is, before Margaret heard about a small nonprofit that raises money to buy health insurance for children like hers — children of the working poor who live above the federal poverty level and don't qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford health insurance or

health care.

Now, it looks like her son will have the surgery he needs and all the children will get regular medical care, thanks to the Durham-based Caring Program for Children.

Founded in Pittsburgh in the mid-1980s, Caring Programs provide health insurance to poor children in more than 20 states.

Typically, the organization is part of a local Blue Cross insurance company. Here, the Caring Program is a separate 501(c)(3) that purchases health insurance from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. The insurance company also underwrites most of the Caring

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Timing is everything Calendar keeps nonprofits on track

Charlotte has created a community calendar that helps nonprofits and other organizations in the public and private sectors better plan their schedules.

BY BEA QUIRK

CHARLOTTE

When community activist and volunteer Judy Ranson sends correspondence to her board of directors, she affectionately signs it, "Your Calendar Girl."

It's a designation that makes sense. Ranson is the driving force and project coordinator of Charlotte's Master Community Calendar, a comprehensive list of events such as government meetings, sporting events, concerts, festivals, fundraisers, large business gatherings, major nonprofit meetings and the public school schedule.

If there's a community event that will attract a large number of people or a group of movers and shakers in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, you'll find it on the Master Community Calendar.

A growing number of nonprofits and corporations use the calendar to prevent scheduling conflicts for their events, helping to ensure greater success for each activity. Instead of looking in several different places, they can find everything they need to know in one place — not only the date, time and location of the event, but also the number of people expected to attend, the cost and a contact phone number.

"I'm surprised no one has come up with this earlier," says Tova Gunter, who coordinates special events for Epley Associates, a public relations firm in Charlotte. "Before, I used to go to several sources to find out what was going on. Now I know at a glance, everything I need."

Says Kimm Jolly, executive director of International House: "I'm



Judy Ranson

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Joining forces

Avery County hospitals move toward merger

Two hospitals that were former competitors are cooperating on a plan to merge. Cannon Memorial Hospital in Banner Elk and Sloop Memorial Hospital in Crossnore are being helped in their efforts by foundations.

BY BARBARA SOLOW

AVERY COUNTY

While politicians continue the health-care debate in Washington, some North Carolina hospitals are taking their own steps toward reform.

In Avery County, two nonprofit hospitals that were competitors have started down the road toward a merger.

Officials at Cannon Memorial Hospital in Banner Elk and Sloop Memorial Hospital in Crossnore are working on creating an "integrated health-care system."

The hospitals already have combined business operations, and hospital foundation staff are working on plans for a unified delivery network.

"We identified some time ago that two small hospitals trying to compete with each other just didn't sit right with us," says Eddie Greene, admin-

HEALTH

istrator for Cannon Memorial, which was founded in the early 1900s by the Presbyterian church.

"Our focus right now is forming an integrated delivery system that includes both hospitals. Once we facilitate that, we can start addressing other issues."

Pam Jameson, vice president of operations at Sloop Memorial, says talk of a merger dates to the mid 1980s, when a study showed the community was ready for a change.

"Both institutions have deep roots in the community and ties that were very difficult to break," says

Jameson, whose hospital was founded in the 1920s. "But the county geography just can't support two facilities. People are tired of the competitiveness."

Officials do not expect layoffs at either of the hospitals, which are located about 15 to 20 minutes driving distance from each other in a county with a population of about 15,000.

For the time being, the two institutions will continue separate operations while a capital campaign of approximately \$28 million is started for construction of a single facility.

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BRIEFLY

Duke to end ban on South Africa investing

Duke University has announced it will lift its ban on investments in companies that do business in South Africa, which has been in place since 1986. The end of the ban coincides with approval of a new Constitution in South Africa that guarantees equal rights for whites and blacks.

Kenan Institute to manage overseas partnership

The Kenan Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill will manage a partnership between the governments of the U.S. and Thailand. The agreement provides a \$10.1 million grant over the next three years to build economic development and trade between the two countries.

Charlotte children's home adds services

Alexander Children's Center in Charlotte has opened a group home to serve children who do not have families to stay with after completing the center's treatment program for emotionally disturbed youngsters. Funding for the home was provided by Nancye Markle, a longtime supporter of the center.

Charlotte arts council moves to new offices

The Charlotte Arts & Sciences Council began the new year at a new address. The organization's offices are now located at 227 West Trade Street, Suite 250, Charlotte, NC, 28202.

Bar association buys Y memberships

The Craven County Bar Association has purchased memberships at the Twin Rivers YMCA for youngsters at the Craven County Multi-Purpose Juvenile Home in New Bern. The home is one of five operated and managed by the Raleigh-based Methodist Home for Children.

Food Bank to hold benefit concert

A benefit concert for the Food Bank of North Carolina with Mike Cross will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 17 at the historic Carolina Theater in Durham. Call (919) 833-9027 for information.