



Kuralt aids Smart Start
Veteran newscaster Charles Kuralt will narrate a film documentary on child development being produced by the N.C. Partnership for Children, coordinator of the Smart Start program. The project is supported by a grant from the A.J. Fletcher Foundation in Raleigh.

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Eye on the dollars

Smart Start urged to raise more private funds

The state auditor has given the Smart Start program for early childhood development a clean bill of health in terms of its financial viability. But the report recommends that program leaders better define fundraising responsibilities and find more private donations.

By BARBARA SOLOW

The state auditor has recommended that North Carolina's Smart Start program for early childhood development take steps to strengthen the private part of its public/private fundraising.

A report released last month by State Auditor Ralph Campbell Jr. finds that state funds for the program's initial 12 pilot partnerships were being spent properly and there were "no instances of fraud or potential fraud."

But while Campbell's report praised the success of local Smart Start partnerships in removing waiting lists for day care and "enhancing" services for children and families, it recommended better coordination of fundraising activities.

Specifically, the report noted that "few private contributions have been realized in the first year of the Smart Start program." In response to questions from lawmakers, Campbell said Smart Start had received only about \$5,000 in private donations as of June 30, 1994.

(Private contributions, which now total nearly \$2 million, are expected to get a big boost soon with the announcement of several

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major corporate gifts, including at least one that could total \$1 million.)

While he acknowledged that more needs to be done in the area of private fundraising for Smart Start, Walter Shepherd, president of the N.C. Partnership for Children, says the audit did not include a tally of in-kind gifts from the private sector.

"We've received somewhere between \$3.4 million and \$3.7 million in in-kind support," says Shepherd, whose statewide nonprofit coordinates Smart Start. "That includes equipment, in-kind donations and leveraged resources."

Hunt has requested \$21 million to fund an additional 12 Smart Start partnerships next year. Shepherd says he hopes the audit will encourage state lawmakers to provide that support.

"I've never seen this level of energy and commitment at the local level. The message this legislature could send by stalling could be devastating. These collaborative relationships [spawned by local partnerships] are benefiting everyone. There is too much creative energy there to just let it go away."

The state's six-month audit - which covers the period between January and June of 1994 - is part of a monitoring process established by the legislation that created Smart Start in 1993.

Other key recommendations of Campbell's report include:

- Clarifying the roles of the NC Partnership for Children and the state Department of



From left, Ralph Campbell Jr., Robin Britt, Walter Shepherd.
Photo by Harry Lynch

Human Resources in terms of fundraising and oversight.

- Providing better guidelines to local partnerships on how to deal with fixed assets such as vehicles purchased by agencies that receive Smart Start grants.

- Documenting compliance with conflict-of-interest statements by members of local partnership boards whose agencies or businesses

might be receiving partnership funds.

- Ensuring that local partnerships have more control over monitoring compliance by service providers receiving Smart Start money.

At a meeting in Raleigh to present the audit, Campbell emphasized that the report covered only the first six months of the program - before it was expanded from 12 to 24 partnerships - and did not review "performance" standards or draw conclusions about the effectiveness of Smart Start.

But questions raised by Republican lawmakers revealed some concerns about those issues, including whether Smart Start "duplicates" services provided by other state agencies.

House Majority Whip Robin Hayes - who has been a vocal critic of Smart Start - wanted to know why the Frank Porter Graham Childhood Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is being paid \$2 million to evaluate the program when it has been involved in the startup.

"Is it reasonable to have the same people doing the program and evaluating it?" he asked.

Campbell explained that the Graham Center has two contracts with the state: one to provide training for local Smart Start leaders and another to evaluate the program.

State Secretary of Human Resources Robin Britt urged lawmakers to consider what would happen if they do not expand Smart Start.

"Studies are there documenting time and again the efficacy of these programs," he said. "That clock is ticking. Don't think it's not costing you money" when early childhood programs aren't funded.

Recycling for charity

Construction waste sparks new nonprofit

Two long-time friends have started a Triangle nonprofit to recycle material discarded at construction sites. Resale profits will go to charities such as Habitat for Humanity.

By SUSAN GRAY

Raleigh

Stacks of lumber, piles of brick, wheelbarrow-loads of concrete blocks. All in good condition. All destined for burial in a landfill beside chicken bones and old magazines.

That's what Bill Murdaugh and Mike Krause saw every time they visited a construction site in the Triangle-area as private safety consultants. They knew something could be done to recycle the material.

In 1994, the two men say, about 7,000 new homes went up in Wake

County alone, leaving what they estimate to be a heap of 700,000 bricks, 3.5 million board-feet of lumber, 233,000 square feet of shingles and 7,000 windows. All unused.

The two long-time friends - who served together in the army and attend the same church - say they knew something should be done to save the material, but they weren't sure they were the ones to do it.

After all, they didn't want to start a new business. They did that several years ago when they launched Cary Pacific Technologies Inc., a private consulting business for construction companies. So they dropped the idea.

But the sense of frustration wouldn't let go of them.

"Whenever Bill and I were at a construction site for an inspection and we saw all the wood there and the waste, we were reminded - 'Ugh, there it is again,'" says Krause, who

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is president of Cary Pacific Technologies. Murdaugh is vice president.

So the two men figured: If not a new for-profit business to handle recycling, what about a nonprofit?

With help from Duke University's continuing education program in nonprofit management and start-up funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Triangle Community Foundation and North Carolina Recycle Association, Krause and Murdaugh launched Woodbin 2 this past summer. The "2" indicates the material's second life.

Woodbin 2 follows a simple procedure. Volunteers collect scrap material from construction sites throughout the Triangle; they reprocess it, such as by removing nails from boards; and then resell it to the pub-

lic at 50 percent to 70 percent of the cost of similar material found at big building supply stores. All profits go to charity.

Murdaugh and Krause believe the material will be an easy sell. Last fall, as a test, they sold material they collected over the summer. They placed a single ad in a local newspaper. To their surprise, amateur builders from throughout the Triangle came to purchase the material, loading up truck beds with boards to build dog or doll houses, or additions to their homes. The material sold out by the end of the day.

"We're not going to ask for any more grant money," Murdaugh says. "We feel confident that this [nonprofit] can self-sustain itself - even with conservative estimates."

If Woodbin 2 can collect and resell material from 500 houses in 1995, the two men say, profits should be about \$50,000. Currently, all prof-

its go to Habitat for Humanity of Wake County, which builds homes for low-income families.

Habitat officials are pleased with the arrangement.

"They're being very responsible and innovative," says Dianne Eberhart, director of development for Habitat for Humanity. "Since we're home builders, we're trying in our own way to be a lot more environmentally conscious. I think it works in nicely."

But Habitat staff also are cautious. Before Woodbin 2, they say, fly-by-night do-gooders have approached the organization with big promises that never saw the light of day.

"We can appreciate that and understand that," Krause says. "The only way we can convince anyone is by our name and our commitment

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BRIEFLY

Estate attorney changes firms

Curtis Twiddy, formerly chairman of the Estate and Personnel Planning/Exempt Organizations Section for the Raleigh-based law firm Poyner & Spruill has joined the firm of Lynch & Eatman, L.L.P., also in Raleigh. The firm's new name is Lynch, Eatman & Twiddy, L.L.P.

Free display space available

The Philanthropy Journal is offering display space to a small number of Triad-area nonprofits at Philanthropy '95, its May 19 conference in High Point's Market Square facility. Call Kate Foster at (919) 836-2877 for information.

UNC, Brazil work on observatory

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill announced it will collaborate with Brazil on construction of an observatory in the Chilean Andes, one of the world's premier astronomical sites. UNC will contribute \$10 million - which it plans to raise through private funds.

Mental health group offers support

The Mental Health Association of Orange County offers support groups for Triangle-area residents troubled by a family member's suicide, mental illness or manic/depressive disorder. For information, call (919) 408-0633.

Association to raise disease awareness

The American Social Health Association in Research Triangle Park is working to raise awareness of sexually transmitted diseases for National STD Awareness Month. The group operates the National STD Hotline (800) 227-8922, and National AIDS Hotline (800) 342-2437.

Rural development group moves

The Southern Rural Development Initiative in Raleigh has a new office: 5 West Hargett Street, Suite 804, Raleigh, NC, 27601, (919) 829-5900, Fax (919) 829-0504. The group's mailing address is: PO Box 1972, Raleigh, NC 27602.