



A growing volunteer pool

North Carolina ranks fifth in the nation as a place to retire. The percentage of retirees settling here rose from 2.4 percent in 1980 to 3.4 percent in 1990.

NOVEMBER 1996

Becoming real partners

Initiative aims to link health schools, communities

A North Carolinian is helping to create a national program to strengthen partnerships between health schools and their communities.

By BARBARA SOLOW

Greenville

Thomas Irons is interested in what he calls "equal partnerships" between academic health-care institutions and their communities.

"Universities too often go into communities doing what they think is best for communities without any real leadership or partnership with the community," says Irons, who is associate vice chancellor for Health Services at East Carolina University in Greenville.

"Those programs usually don't

HEALTH

work or are not sustainable in the long-term."

East Carolina's Medical School has long been a leader in the field of service-learning, an academic discipline that makes community service an integral part of the curriculum. Now, the school is involved in a national effort to further strengthen ties between academic health centers and the people they serve.

Irons is a member of a strategic planning committee that hopes to create a national organization called Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. The partnerships program is an outgrowth of Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation, an initiative supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Corporation



A third-year ECU medical student draws blood from a patient at the People's Health Clinic in Tillery.

photo courtesy of ECU

for National Service and the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

The health professions initiative sponsored a national conference in March that drew hundreds of health educators, medical students and staff of community-based organizations. At the conference, participants identified a pressing need for a national organization that could build and sustain alliances between communities and health professions schools.

"The primary concept is that communities and institutions should partner as equals," Irons says. "They should be equally represented in programs that are implemented and have equal roles in such things as needs assessments."

The proposed Community-

Look for INITIATIVE, page 9

Igniting support for children

Nonprofit brings playgrounds to low-income communities

Durham has been targeted by Kaboom, a year-old nonprofit based in Washington that helps low-income communities build playgrounds.

By ASHLEY PEAY

Durham

For William Shelton, director of Brookland Manor Boys and Girls Club in Washington, D.C., the idea of building a safe place for kids in the community to play was an unaffordable dream.

In May, with the help of community volunteers and Kaboom Inc., a Washington-based nonprofit, a playground was built in three days and the dream became a reality.

Kaboom was formed after co-founders Darell Hammond and Dawn Hutchison approached other nonprofit organizations about building playgrounds.

"Everyone that we talked to loved the idea of bringing playgrounds to low-income areas where there are lots of children and not enough play areas, but they didn't see this as a part of their mission," says Hammond.

Hammond and Hutchison previously worked for several other national nonprofits, including Youth



With the help of Kaboom, volunteers construct a playground in a low-income community in Washington.

Service America, a trade organization located in Washington that provides legislative information to service fields.

The organization, which was founded last October, has helped build 48 playgrounds in low-income communities in 13 states, Hammond says. Kaboom has targeted a number of cities for playground sites that it

CHILDREN

hopes to build by the end of 1997. Durham is one of the cities on the nonprofit's list.

Kaboom hopes to have a playground built in Durham within two years but has not yet looked at potential sites.

In searching for target cities, Hammond says, Kaboom first looks for communities with a high percentage of low-income housing, and communities where the organization already has strong nonprofit contacts that can help organize the project.

In Durham, for example, Kaboom has named Tony Deifell, executive director of the Institute for Public Media Arts, to its board of directors.

"The need for playgrounds is pretty obvious when you go into low-income areas across the country and see kids playing in abandoned cars, throwing bricks and playing in tunnels or just hanging out in the streets," says Hammond. "There simply is no play space. No basketball courts. Our organization understands that there are more important needs in the community - housing, education and employment - but it shouldn't be an either/or choice."

Kaboom focuses on forming partnerships with individuals, organiza-

tions and businesses to promote neighborhood investment and development in low-income areas through community-built projects.

Playgrounds are Kaboom's focus but long-term plans include murals and gardens, says Hammond.

Playgrounds range in size from 8,000 square feet to 12,000 square feet, with costs ranging from \$40,000 to \$50,000, Hammond says. Playgrounds can be built in three to five days.

Playgrounds are financed with a challenge grant from a lead organization, business, foundation or individual in the host community; money raised by the property owner to match the challenge grant; and grassroots fundraising within the community.

After completion of the project, the playground belongs to the owner of the property on which the playground is built.

Neeka Sullivan, a resident at Brookland Manor in Washington, says that residents of her community are proud of the work they've done on the playground there.

"It makes me want to cry just to look at this - we actually did this. This is our first step. If we came together to do this, we can do almost anything."

For information, call Hammond at (202) 986-4500.

PTA raising \$2 million

The West Millbrook Middle School PTA in Raleigh has launched an ambitious campaign to raise \$2 million to pay for an equally ambitious initiative to integrate communications technology throughout the school's curriculum.

Organizers of the campaign, which kicked off Oct. 1, hope to raise the bulk of the funds from corporations, foundations and individuals. Capital Ford in Raleigh is working with PTA officials to market the campaign, and Computer Decisions in Morrisville has helped plan the initiative, including training faculty members.

"A whole new approach to how we better fund our schools has to be done, and we're taking a little bit of a risk to try this," says Janet Livengood, president of the school's PTA.

The school, which has nearly 900 students, has a single computer lab with nearly 30 computers that are used by students and faculty. Only one computer is connected to the Internet, the global computer network. The campaign will pay for five computers in every classroom - or roughly 200 to 225 classroom computers - plus a second computer lab with 30 computers. Additional equipment, including phone lines and network facilities, also will be purchased.

BRIEFLY

Employees volunteer for center

About 70 employees from West Brothers Transfer and Storage Inc., IBM Corp. and Glaxo Wellcome volunteered a day from their jobs in September for the Tammy Lynn Center for Developmental Disabilities in Raleigh. The event was part of the Triangle United Way campaign kickoff.

YMCA seeks volunteers for center

The YMCA of the Central Carolinas in Charlotte has opened a Women's Center Resource Library, offering services to women trying to become self-sufficient, including resume writing and job searches on the Internet. Call Kirsten Sikkelee, (704) 522-8510, ext. 217.

United Way volunteers announce goal

Volunteer leaders of the Triangle United Way kicked off their 1996 fund drive with a goal of \$16.7 million - an 8 percent increase over last year's combined total for Durham, Orange and Wake Counties. Frank Daniels Jr. is volunteer chair of the United Way's first regional campaign.

Mitsubishi group helps homeless

The Mitsubishi Organization of Volunteer Employees in Durham hosted its annual back-to-school party for children living in homeless shelters. The celebration began four years ago as a way to provide school supplies to needy children. This year's party drew 45 children and their parents.

Catholic school kids help with Fran

Students in Charlotte's Catholic schools collected nearly 4,000 food and household items for victims of Hurricane Fran in the Triangle and on the coast. The food drive was held in cooperation with local Harris Teeter food stores and the Metrolina Food Bank.

Garden supporters launch campaign

A fundraising campaign for The Center for Duke Gardens was launched in October. Supporters of the gardens, located on the Duke University campus, have wanted to build a center for nearly a decade. So far, \$3.4 million has been raised toward the campaign's \$5.2 million goal.