

SPARC-ing it up at St. Aug's

By Annette Hinkson
Staff Writer

During the day the laughter of little children reigns through the campus, in order to create a dynamic and engaging learning community that builds on the strengths of its members, and promotes excellence in student achievement.

"SPARC Academy gives the education classes at St. Aug some real world issues right here on campus," said Jackie Mburu, Education Officer for SPARC Academy. "The children bring a younger life to the campus; the children benefit because they get to interact on the educational, financial, and philosophical level."

The Academy's goal is excellence in academic achievement, greatest development and competent social adjustment for the students. The Academy's current enrollment for the 1999-2000 school year is 230, ranging from grades K-8.

According to Mburu the Academy needs volunteers in the early morning, 7:30-8:30 a.m., and after-school program, 3:45-5:45 p.m.

There are some familiar faces that are St. Aug alumni and students. There are teacher assistants, two special education teachers and nine lead teachers.

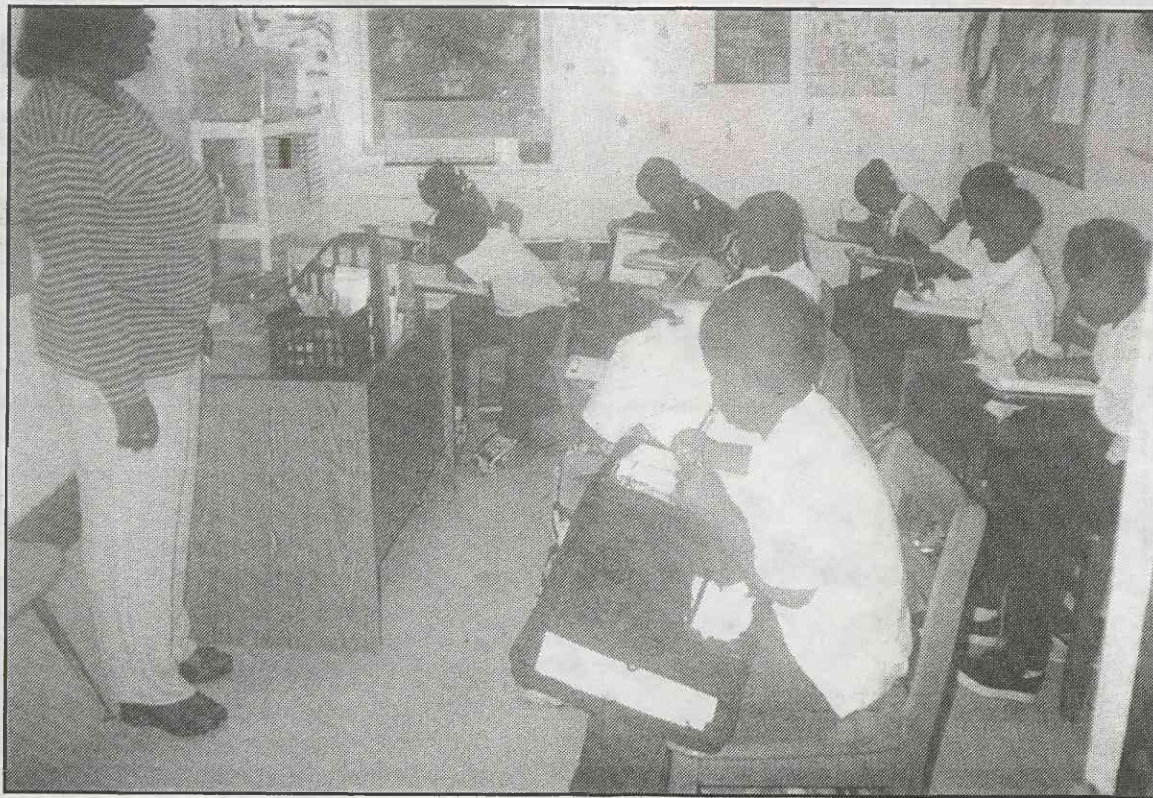


Photo by Annette Hinkson

Fourth grade students working hard to make good grades in the Sparcs Academy program.

Seventy-five percent of the lead teachers are certified or have applied for certification. Teacher assistants have their degrees and are applying for state certification.

After talking to April Love, curriculum specialist at SPARC and Debra Davis, resource room teacher for grades K-4.

The responsibility as curriculum specialist is to help develop the curriculum era making sure the teachers are following the curriculum, based on North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Core Knowledge curriculum.

Love is a graduate from Western Carolina, located in the Smoky Mountain of North Carolina. Davis is an alumnus of St. Augustine's College.

"The academy took these students in from those public schools that were not giving them the assistance," Love said. "The academy is also an alternative route the students have to be successful."

According to Mburu, before coming to St. Aug, the SPARC Academy had four different locations: a YMCA, a church, a community center and a day care;

all located in Southeast Raleigh.

"Between these locations, we were not at each very long," said Mburu.

They will remain on campus for the entire academic school year. The students' first day of classes was Monday, Aug 23. This is the longest yet, and there are hopes to continue the location past this academic school year.

The students have had several achievements. They were winners of a Black History Essay Contest, they took second place in a statewide basketball tournament, and

participate in an ongoing service to Magnolia Retirement Center. The students also have extra curriculum activities such as Middle School girls' tennis and boys' soccer, also Kijiji (pronounced Ka-ge-ge)-village.

"Kijiji is a character development workshop that promotes umoja (unity) through African dance drumming and story-telling," said Leslie Myles, fourth grade teacher.

The academy has a program called 'Mentor-Teacher Program,' and it has four retired educators serving as coaches for teachers with less than three years classroom teaching experience. The current mentors have a combined total of 92 years of experience as teachers, assistant principals and principals.

"The duty of the mentors is to sit in the classroom while the teachers are teaching to observe their teaching skills and offer suggestions," Davis said.

The Academy's community involvement includes a partnership with the community and St. Augustine's College for services and programs. The SPARC Academy is looking to spark up the campus of St. Augustine's College, and they are looking for help with their young students.

"The concept to the teachers and parents working together is to enhance the children's educational goals," Davis said. "It takes dedication to be there for the children because the children are first."

Mini flood takes toll on Lynch Hall residents

By Billy Williams
Managing Editor

Early Saturday morning was to be no ordinary day for Cedwin Edwards. Upon entering his suite, after spending a night on the town, Edwards found water leaking from the ceiling onto the floor in the hallway of his suite. As he approached his room, two suite mates pointed out to Cedwin the trash can they put out to catch the water falling from the ceiling, but it wasn't helping much. Edwards passed the trash can and proceeded to open his door. Upon entering, anger filled Edwards as he found water had come into his room from under his door and from the sides of his wall.

Edwards, a resident assistant, lives on the third floor of Lynch Hall. Extremely upset, Edwards stomped into his room and looked to see if any of his possessions were damaged. After finding most of his stuff OK, he grabbed his insulin out of his refrigerator, and went to find a residence hall director.

"I was appalled when I first saw this condition in my room," Edwards said. "Water had come from the cracks on the side of the wall inside my room, and it also came from water leaking out in the hallway."

Lynch Hall is a male residence hall at St. Augustine's College, where the leaking problems occurred. Eight suites had reports of water damage.

According to Rachel Pridgen, housing director at St. Augustine's College, Lynch Hall was scheduled to be fixed during the summer; but roofing construction didn't start until early July.

"I kept checking to see when the roof was going to be started on, and it upset me to see that it started so late," Pridgen said.

As for Edwards, this was not the first time his room was flooded. Water flooded his room on August 13 and 20.

"When I first moved in, the room had water all over the place," Edwards said. "I was told that the roofing construction was complete, but it rained on August 13, and my room was slightly flooded. I then told the dorm directors the situation in my room, and was insured that the roof was to be completed in the next few days. Seven days later it rained again and my room was flooded."

The dormitory directors could not be reached for comment.

According to Pridgen, damage was said to be at a minimum when it leaked in the residence hall. The water did manage to short out the fire alarm system and leak through

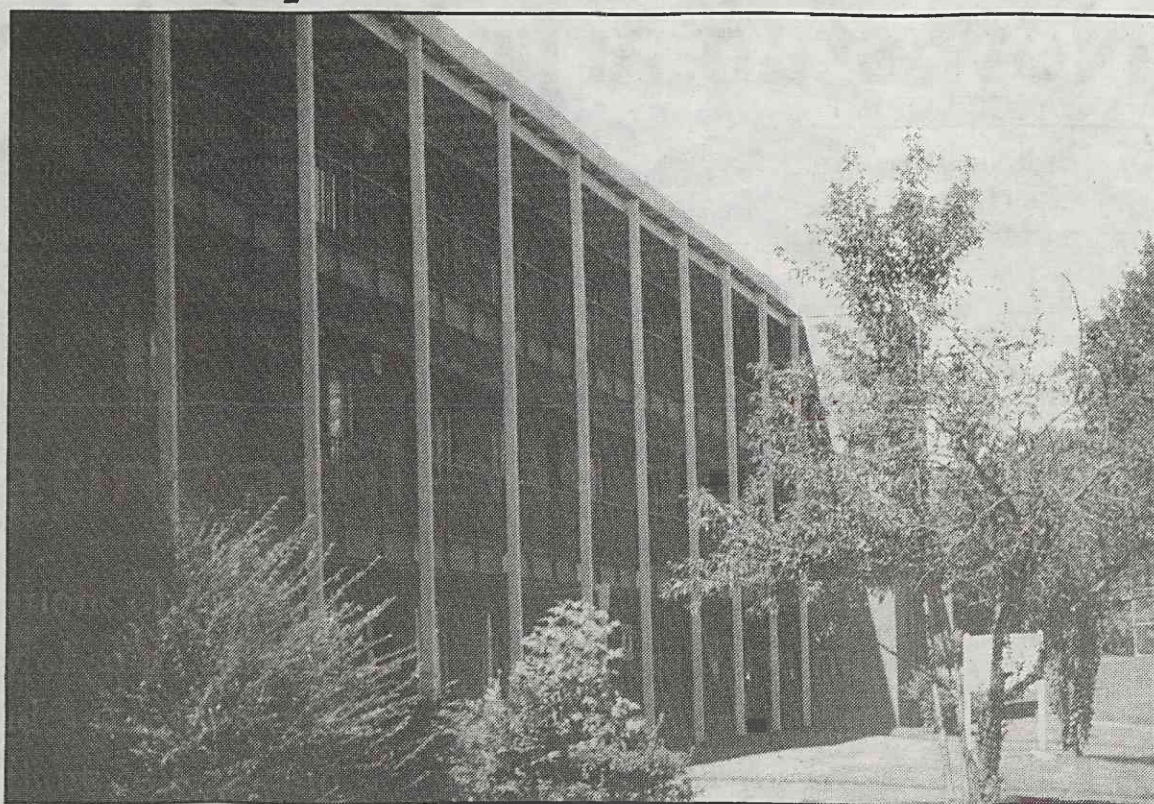


Photo by Harold Freeman

The outside of Lynch Hall does not look as damaged as the inside of some residents' rooms.

the cracks of the wall into other rooms on different floors.

"Water came down on the side of my walls," Gary Abra, a senior, said. "Water got mostly on my bed, but damage was not my total concern. My concern is the unsanitary conditions we've been put in, and what the school is going to do about fixing these conditions."

Since then the fire alarm system has been fixed by Johnson Control

and the roofing constructors has sealed all the problems associated with the leaking.

As for Edwards, other than a shirt soaked with dirty water and a notebook being destroyed, there was nothing else damaged in his room on August 13 and 20.

Lynch Hall is now questionable to Edwards in regards to its safety.

"If they couldn't finish fixing the roof before I came back, what will

happen when something else needs fixing?" Edwards said.

Most of the students in Lynch Hall coped well with the water leaking from the ceiling, but a lot of those same students were upset at the fact that it happened.

"I'm still angry that I was lied to, but my mother told me to let God work everything out and He did," Edwards said. "I'm just glad my roof isn't leaking anymore."