

Young Knights of Pythagoras explore life beyond basketball

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Chronicle Staff Writer

Fifteenth District Deputy Grand Master Francis Eaton of the Prince Hall Masons says he wants the young men of this community to know that there's more to Winston-Salem than just playing basketball in the projects.

Deputy Paul Miller wants to teach them to emphasize respect for womanhood.

Melvin Williams, the organization's counseling adviser, wants the young men to develop a sense of brotherhood.

These three men and other members of the Prince Hall Masons support the Knights of Pythagoras, a group of boys

and young men between the ages of 8 and 18.

"The Masons are very much concerned with the youth of our cities," says Eaton. "We want to get them in the right frame of mind and get something in their heads. Most of them in our group come from one-parent families or foster homes, and sometimes they're disillusioned. We're here to let them know that someone cares."

"Some boys of one-parent families with a woman leading the household have a complex about the black male/female relationship. They sometimes have negative feelings, especially toward black men. We've found that the boys will



Melvin Williams stands with young knights Tubu Douthit, left, and Antoine Partlow (photo by James Parker).

come talk with us quicker than their parents. We're here to educate them."

Part of the education that Eaton speaks of includes taking the young men on tours.

"This month, we toured AT&T. We're planning tours for R.J. Reynolds, Hanes and Piedmont Airlines to show them that there are more opportunities in life," he says.

The Knights of Pythagoras group was first brought to Winston-Salem and organized by past Grand Master Clark S. Brown Sr. Eaton says that the group now has 35 to 50 members.

Members meet once a month for business and plan recreational activities that include wiener roasts, fish fries, softball, bowling and swimming.

The young men are also enrolled in a golf league under the instruction of Winston

Lake pro Ernest Morris.

Eaton says that funds for the Knights of Pythagoras come from the Masons and the boys' parents.

"A lot of money is raised by parents so that the kids can go on trips," Eaton says. "The response has been great. When we get the boys in their younger ages, we're trying to prepare them to be future Masons. When they turn 18, they're eligible for the Masons."

Miller explains the need for the young men to focus on respect. He says placing emphasis on respect today will produce a better crop of leaders for tomorrow.

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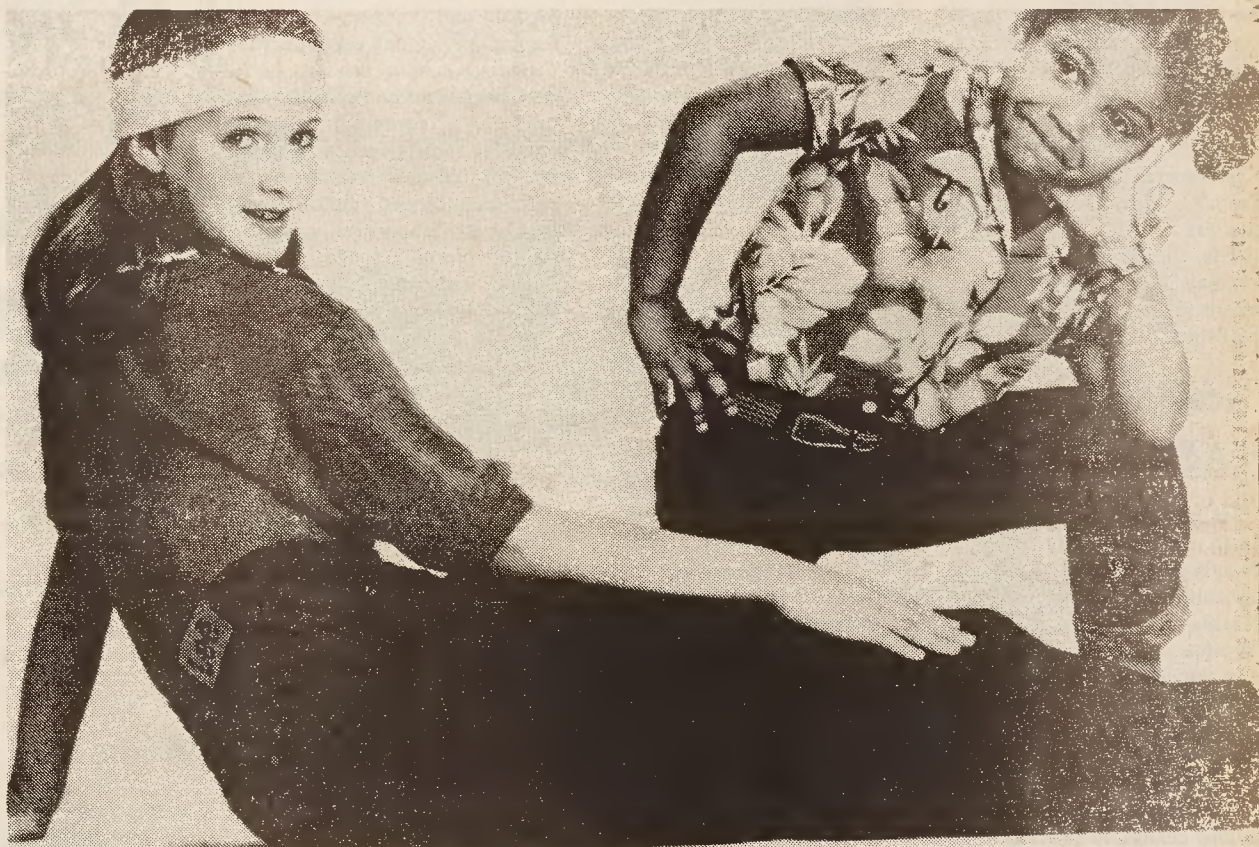
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