



(photo by Mike Cunningham)

Master Chefs

Students at Moore Alternative School recently participated in Young Author's Week. Participants in the activities prepared books and stories in observation of the special week. At left, Samantha Williams, far left, Allison Martin and Lori Guess demonstrate some of the recipes outlined in their book, "Our Recipe Book." Some of the recipes included in the authors' book were "Sarah Beth's Bugs on a Log," "Cate's Spinach Dip on Hawaiian Bread" and "Erin's Tutti Fruitti."

Baptist's good cheer man From Page A1

Ask around the hospital about "Sam" and without hesitation patients, staff and family members respond with an "Oh, yeah, Sam. What a neat guy" or a "Sure everybody knows Sam. He's such a special person."

Sister Dennis Eileen, a hospital chaplain, is one of Hickerson's biggest fans. She said she spends a lot of time at the hospital and is fascinated by the time and care that Hickerson gives to each person that arrives at the hospital.

"He's a real special man," she said. "I think he's just tremendous. He leads by example. It's sort of contagious, the kind of good cheer he spreads. It's like love. He's the best public relations man this hospital has. He treats old people with respect and he treats sick people tenderly. He's just a very special person and he cares so much."

Hickerson is reluctant to toot his own horn. But patients who return to let him know how their treatments went and those who refuse to pull off from the hospital without first chatting with "Sam" reveal his celebrity status. Hickerson, who also is the pastor of New Light Baptist Church, said he is just trying to make a small difference to people who are in need.

"I feel that if I can get a person to smile, I can help them to feel just a little better," he said. "It's rare that you'll get a smile in the hospital. People have bills to pay, they're sick, they're grieving,

but I try to find in them that sparkle, that dominant flash of joy. Sometimes I have to look real deep. But they smile and they feel better and then I feel good for the rest of the day, too."

Often, Hickerson said, his concern and friendships have extended beyond the confines of the hospital. He has traveled to Virginia and other areas of North Carolina to visit patients he has met at the hospital or to sit and pray with those who have asked him. He visits patients in their rooms and frequently patients ask him to sit and pray with them or ask him to have his church members include them in the congregation's prayers.

Dr. Bobbie Atwell, director of the cancer patient support program, called the good feelings generated by Hickerson and his team an "asset" to what the hospital hopes to accomplish overall in patient care.

"The major purpose is to make cancer patients treatment as pleasant and as comfortable as possible," Dr. Atwell said. "Although Sam and his staff aren't a part of the support unit, it just thrills me to see our patients treated so lovingly. It's just heartwarming. He knows them by their first names. He can make them feel so special and that cheers them up. Sam is an asset to this medical center."

But Hickerson maintains that what he does isn't so much special as it is living out an adage in which

he firmly believes: That you have to give in order to receive. He gives a kind word or greeting to patients, he said, and they in turn give him a smile or some other sign of good feeling. Those simple gestures, Hickerson said, make his job worthwhile.

"I like what I'm doing, no, I love it," he said. "I try to find something in everybody to make them feel good about themselves. I absolutely love this job. We don't make any distinctions with people because of their particular status. What we do for one we do for all of them. There are no big cars and little cars and I like that. I really like that. Sickness tends to bring people to a common level. ... Today we've gotten a little out of touch with giving. We've got it backwards and we think about receiving instead of giving. But I stand by it. If you give you will receive."

Because of the ties Hickerson and his staff often develop with patients, they, too, feel the loss when a patient dies. One case in particular that touched Hickerson was Chessy Dunn, a former development officer at SECCA who died last month from cancer.

"Chessy was a very special person and I would see her whenever she came to the hospital," said Hickerson. "She would bring us cookies or something sometimes. I visited her in her room and at times I know she had to be in so much

pain but she always managed to smile just to help make my day better. She was just that special. That's what makes my job so wonderful. Being able to help spread that kind of love. Chessy was such a special person."

Hickerson said that his job is also made special by the little arms that children wrap around his neck and by the times when small, sick children find the strength to run and greet him and hug him.

"What really blows my mind," he said, "is when those little kids come down that walkway and they see me and they start to run and I can run to meet them. And they just smile and hug me. There's nothing in the world like it."

Hickerson said other people allow him to do his best at what he does. He said that he would not be who or what he is without a special mentor, his church or the people with whom he works.

"My staff makes me what I am. I am who I am because of them," said Hickerson. "I learned how to be pleasant from Mr. James Ford. I was a driver for him for about 15 years. He cultivated all these inner ingredients in me. If I have anybody to thank for helping bring me out, it was him. My church is made of very loving people and that's where all this love started."

Clipper boycott ends From Page A1

munity for the way we were treated," said Little. "All we wanted all along was dignity and respect."

Little said that he had tried to talk with Pantazis to get him to see why his actions and statements were racist.

"They have major problems

understanding their own biases and racism," said Little. "But when the community came together and boycotted his business, then it affected his pocketbook and that's an issue that anyone can identify with."

Little said he would continue

to monitor the actions of the Clipper owner to see what he does. He said that the issue extended beyond him and his wife.

"This goes to the entire community and how they are treated by the establishments that they loyally

patronize," he said. Little said that he was not totally pleased with the settlement reached, but that he felt it was important for the Pantazises to give something back to the community from which they derived a major portion of their economic support.

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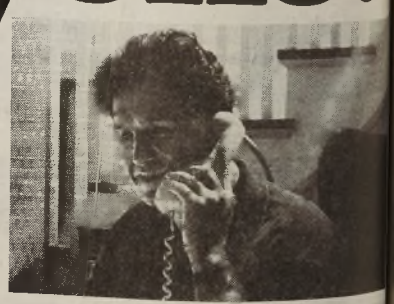
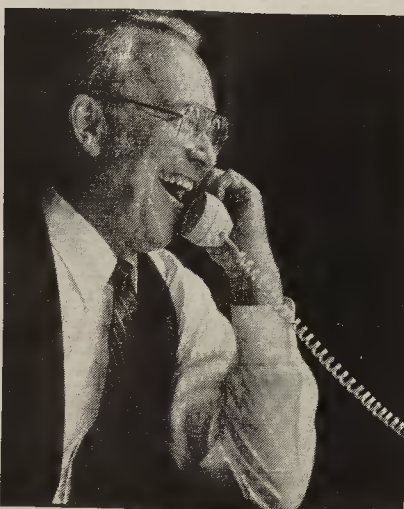
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