

# Religion

## FOCUS

### Working with young people: An 'addiction' this lady's proud to have

By ROBIN BARKSDALE  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Working with children can be an addictive experience and it's an addiction that Angela Pearson, director of the Children's Loft, is proud to have.

Ms. Pearson has been involved with the program for four years and spent many hours as a volunteer before becoming the director of the loft. Meeting and mingling with the youngsters who frequent the center in the Patterson Avenue area, she said, has been a very rewarding experience.

"It's something you get attached to. They're not

... It's something that I feel good about. Working with these kids and helping them can get to be addictive. You just want to do more and more with them."

-- Angela Pearson

like your average kids and they've had some problems," said Ms. Pearson. "We've had to break through some walls. But it's something that I feel good about. Working with these kids and helping them out can get to be addictive. You just want to do more and more with them."

The Children's Loft was started in 1982 when First Baptist Church on Fifth Street discovered a potentially troublesome situation in the Patterson Avenue area. What they saw was youngsters being exposed daily to alcoholism, drug abuse and crime. What they did was to open a place which would serve as a haven to help steer kids away from the

streets. The church, along with the Crisis Control Ministry, approached the Downtown Church Center and asked the agency to sponsor and supervise an after-school program for children in the Patterson Avenue-Northwest Boulevard neighborhood.

With the support of the DCC, the groups secured space above the Samaritan Soup Kitchen to house The Children's Loft. Merlin Blandford, a staff person at First Baptist, was appointed to direct the loft, and the DCC provided supervision.

In September 1983, The Children's Loft opened its doors and began showing youngsters that there were alternatives to the lifestyles they saw in the streets.

The Children's Loft now provides 5- to 17-year-olds with a broad range of activities and tutorial programs on a year-round basis. The youngsters take field trips, attend Bible study classes, sponsor seasonal fashion shows, participate in sports and other activities.

Ms. Pearson says the loft has been successful in offering children meaningful activities and exposure to positive things in life.

"It's a great program for youngsters, especially



Photo by Mike Cunningham

Angela Pearson: "(The Children's Loft) is a great program for youngsters, especially after school because it gives them a chance to get away from things that might be bad for them."

after school because it gives them a chance to get away from things that might be bad for them," she said. "The Children's Loft is a good outlet for these kids and they really seem to enjoy it."

Ms. Pearson and another volunteer were hired to run the loft after Blandford resigned his position in 1984. Although the center had only budgeted money for one director's salary, Ms. Pearson and her friend agreed to split the salary so that they could run the loft together on a part-time basis.

Disturbed by a lack of participation by churches in the area, the loft's staff and volunteers formed The Northwest Neighborhood Ministries. The group was charged with generating more involvement from churches in the loft's neighborhood. The committee is comprised of area church members, and works to help guarantee that the loft will be able to continue to offer services.

"The Downtown Church Center recognized the need for the loft, but they didn't have money budgeted specifically for the program," said Nigel Alston, chairman of the Northwest Neighborhood Ministries. "The intent is that Downtown Church Center will continue to provide supervision for the loft but not direct the budget for it. The Northwest Neighborhood Ministries is responsible to get volunteers to serve on the board or at the loft."

Alston said that churches and individuals can assist the loft by volunteering for one of the committees or by actually working at the loft. Volunteers, he said, are needed to teach classes or programs.

In early July, the loft relocated to St. James AME Church on Patterson Avenue. Churches

sponsoring the loft include Antioch Christian Church, First Baptist Church on Fifth Street, First Presbyterian Church, Friendship Baptist Church, Mars Hill Baptist Church, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Union Baptist Church, Union Chapel Baptist Church and St. James AME.

Alston said that it is important for churches in the area to support the program and provide services.

"The Children's Loft gives youngsters a chance to participate in activities they otherwise may not have had the opportunity to do," he said. "It also gives them an opportunity to see people they can pattern themselves after. It gives them a sound place to pursue challenging things and things they need to get involved in."

He said also that it is incumbent upon the people in the community and upon the churches to help steer the youngsters in the right direction.

"It's an outreach for the church to get involved in an area that desperately needs it. From a spiritual standpoint, that's what a church is about," Alston said. "It's important that we do something for our own kids. We're always talking about empowerment and doing for ourselves. This is an opportunity to take advantage of something that we're always talking about doing."

Other committee members are Maxine Brannon, Florence Corpening, Cheryl Harry, Mr. and Mrs. C.L. Reynolds, Susanna Roseborough, Carl Perry, the Rev. Connie Robinson and the Rev. Garther W. Roland.



Photo by Mike Cunningham

William Hood, 11, and Sharrika Jackson, 7, concentrate on making the right moves while playing a game of checkers at The Children's Loft.

## CHURCH CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JULY 30

• Robert L. Wise Jr. and the Voices of Deliverance Choir will be sponsoring Brian Moore and the Mount Vernon Community Choir of Mount Vernon, N.Y., at 7:30 p.m. at Macedonia Holiness Church of God Inc., 4111 Whitfield Road. There will also be other groups from in and around the city. Admission is free but a love offering will be taken. Dr. Robert L. Wise Sr. is host pastor.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

• The General Assembly of the Church of God Apostolic will be held at the Benton Convention Center beginning Monday, Aug. 15, and running through Monday, Aug. 15. Guest speakers will be Kenneth Hagin of Tulsa, Okla., and John F. Avanzini of Fort Worth, Texas. Sessions will be held at 10 a.m. and at 7 p.m. The youth will be ministered to by guest speaker Pastor Stephen Wiley of Tulsa, Okla., the originator of "Gospel Rap." Children's church services also will be held. For more information call St. Peter's Church of God Apostolic at 722-2285.

• The St. Philips Day Care Center is now accepting applications for the ages 2 to 5 for the fall and winter months. The day care center is state certified and licensed. The hours of operation are from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information call Linda Wright at 723-5270.

• There will be a free medical clinic operated by doctors from Bowman Gray and nurses from the Public Health Department held at First Baptist Church at Fifth and Spruce streets on the first Tuesday of each month. Private physicians also operate a free clinic at Trinity Moravian Church on the first and third Thursday of each month. Both locations are open from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information call 724-7875.

## CHURCH NOTES

### All Baptist General State Convention gathers in Twin City

By ALBIRDA F. JACKSON  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The All Baptist General State Convention convened at the Benton Convention Center Monday, following an agenda that consists of four days of special joint sessions, workshops, and evangelistic services. The Woman's Baptist Home and Foreign Missionary Convention of North Carolina, also known as the Woman's Baptist State Convention, sponsored the Pre-Convention Banquet, with their president Dr. Luella D. Edwards

### Curry to speak at Revelations of Faith

Evangelist Gwendolyn Curry will be the guest speaker at the 11 a.m. service at Revelations of Faith Church in Winston-Salem on Sunday, July 31.

Evangelist Curry is from Brooklyn, N.Y.

The church is located in the Piedmont Circle Area.

Evangelist Sarah C. Hauser is host pastor.

The church is located at 1236 E. 26th St.



Dr. F.J. Boddie photo by Mike Cunningham

presiding. "The Challenge of the Unfinished Task in Christian Stewardship," John 4: 34-35, is the theme of the convention.

According to the past president of The Woman's Baptist State Convention, Dr. Johnnie B. McLester of Durham, they support many objectives such as the Sunday School, Baptist Training Union, and the Laymen League, which are auxiliaries guided by the General Baptist Convention. She also said that the General Baptist State

Please see page B7

### Youth Service to be held at Greater Faith Chapel

An all-day Youth Service will be held at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday, July 31, at Greater Faith Chapel Church of God in Christ, 520 Glenbrook Drive in Winston-Salem.

The Rev. Harry Smith will speak at the 11 a.m. service.

The Rev. Leon Oglesby will speak at the 6 p.m. service.

Evelyn Frazier is the youth president.

The Rev. John McClurkin is host pastor.

### Sunshine Band, Youth Missionary to hold program

The Sunshine Band and Youth Missionary Department of Morning Star Baptist Church, 1400 Fifth St., is sponsoring their youth missionary program at 4

p.m. on Sunday, July 31.

The guest speaker will be the Rev. Douglas E. Summers and the congregation of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church.



Evangelist Sarah C. Hauser