

In Our Schools

I had lunch with a friend last week. In addition to his usual briefcase, cellular phone and electronic calendar, he also had an algebra book. When I asked him what he was doing with an algebra book, my friend informed me that he was studying so that he could help his children with their homework each night. I commended him for his tenacity and ribbed him just a little, but then he reminded me that we both went to school A.A. (after the abacus) but B.P.C. (before pocket calculators). I helped him to study.

On Aug. 30, students in Forsyth County received help with their homework assignments through a service sponsored jointly by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Forsyth Association of Classroom Teachers (FACT) and Forsyth County Public Library.

Homework Hotline began in 1981 and offers students in Forsyth County assistance with their homework. Housed at the Main Branch of the Forsyth County Public Library, teachers from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools work in teams of four providing help but not answers to students who have questions about math, science, English and social studies. The teachers are all familiar with textbooks and curriculum. They have fully stocked resources and teachers' editions.

Kay Shields, the Donna Oldham school system's program manager for Community School/Volunteer Services, coordinates Homework Hotline and maintains statistical data on the program. Last year, the program answered 7002 calls. Of those, 5076 were math questions; 705 were English questions; 588 were social studies questions; 564 were science questions; and 69 calls were in other subject areas. Of the total number of calls, 6855 were from students in local public schools, and 147 were from students in non-public schools.

Students called Homework Hotline 6264 times last year. Parents called 687 times, and 47 calls were placed by other people including college students.

A breakdown of students who called shows that 3283 calls were placed by students in grades K-5; 338 calls were placed by students in grades six through eight; 1317 calls were placed by students in grades nine through twelve; and 64 calls were placed by other grades, including college students.

The stats also show that each year, calls to Homework Hotline increase. In 1990-91, 4750 calls were placed; during the 1991-92 school year, 5534.

Currently, Homework Hotline averages 54.7 calls per day. The program operates 128 days a year on Monday through Thursday from 5-8 p.m. when school is in session. The program is closed on holidays and professional days.

All children in the local school system were given a sticker and bookmark giving them the phone number and subject areas covered by Homework Hotline. The phone number is also listed in the phone directory and the 1993-94 Parents' handbook.



Donna Oldham

More Mothers Breast-Feed Their Young

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exclusive to — low-income, African-American women who come through the WIC program.

According to the Governor's Commission on Reduction of Infant Mortality, the number of infant deaths in Forsyth County decreased from 61 in 1991 to 45 in 1992. While it's not known whether the decrease is due to breast-feeding, Dr. Robert Jones, the director of WIC, feels breast-feeding promotes healthy mothers and babies.

He said the counselors are all women who were on WIC assistance and have successfully breast-fed their babies.

"We thought it would be better because they can relate to the women better," Jones said. "It's a better alternative than training my people because they all have something in common."

Women breast-feeding their children could become more common. The state legislature recently passed a law protecting women from indecent-exposure charges for breast-feeding in public.

Walter Shepherd, executive director of the Governor's Commission, said the commission supports the law because they advocate breast-feeding. He believes this bonding between the mother and child will help develop family values and could help offset criminal behavior as the child grows older.

"There is nothing more intimate between the mother and the child than breast-feeding," he said. "I'm pretty well convinced that there has to be a strong relationship between (bonding at birth) and eventual behavior. It's a natural progression."

Maria Franklin, a graduate of the program who successfully breast-fed her 11-month-old son, felt it was helpful.

"No one encouraged me to do it. I wanted to breast-feed my child," she said. "I knew it would (create) a tighter bond from the beginning."

Flack Gives Once-Troubled Nursing

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Flack ended up going to WSSU, where she graduated in 1968. The school had prepared her well for the state nursing board exam, she said, but she flunked it anyway.

"I was truly devastated," she said. She said she tells her students about that setback because she wants them to know that the test is passable, and that the reason she flunked was because of "her test-taking skills."

"That may be why I work so hard with my students," she said. She passed it the second time.

After graduation, she worked in hospitals in Charlotte and Tennessee, and when she returned to North Carolina she was an instructor in nursing education at Gardner-Webb College. While serving as director of health services at Vorhees College in Denmark, S.C., she earned a master's degree in nursing from the Medical College of Georgia. In 1988, as asso-

ciate director of nursing at Rutherfordton Memorial Hospital, she earned a doctorate in education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Because of a newspaper article that someone sent school officials, she was asked to speak in 1989 at the pinning ceremony for nurses. She spoke at the same time North Carolina was struck by Hurricane Hugo, and she said she was teased by school officials who said that she brought the hurricane with her.

Flack, whose resume attests to a hurricane of energy, said that school officials started talking to her about taking on the head job while she was in town. When the offer was made, she didn't hesitate for a second, she said.

"I really needed to come back and give something to the school," she said. "Somehow, I always knew I'd come back here."

She took over in July 1989.

In 1992, 96 percent of the students passed the state nursing exam. The two years before her arrival — 1987 and 1988 — the figures were 60 and 70 percent, respectively.

Major changes in the curriculum was one reason for the improvement, she said. She also discovered that students weren't getting enough hands-on experience with patients. But perhaps the most important change was gearing courses and test questions to what was on the state exam. The school has also instituted practice exams, which mirror the state exam, she said.

"It's real stressful," she said about the state test. "You're putting all your eggs in this and you want to be prepared."

She feels that the Clinton administration's desire to reform health care has thrust nursing into the foreground.

"I see nursing coming into its own."



Sylvia Flack

In terms of preventive care, we can do a lot," she said.

Flack is the divorced mother of a 19-year-old son, who is a student at WSSU.

Complaints Increase Against

from page A1

Internal affairs has been busy investigating their own lately. Complaints against police officers have steadily risen. In 1988, there were 133; 138 in 1989; 163 in 1990; and 191 in 1991.

The figure decreased last year, however, to its lowest figure since 1989 — 157.

These figures include civilian and internal complaints.

Cornatzer, however, said that number of complaints is satisfactory based on the number of arrests they make per year. The police department made over 57,000 arrests last year and responded to over 128,700 calls, he said.

"If you have all that contact and so few complaints, then someone is doing a good job," he said.

He explains the increase in complaints to "supervisors taking a closer look at our people than we did some years back."

Number of complaints from 1988-92:

- 1988 - 84 internal complaints; 39 citizen complaints
- 1989 - 123 internal complaints; 15 citizen complaints
- 1990 - 148 internal complaints; 15 citizen complaints
- 1991 - 154 internal complaints; 37 citizen complaints
- 1992 - 106 internal complaints; 51 citizen complaints

Number of arrests and calls from 1988-92:

- 1988 - 50,952 arrests; 99,677 calls
- 1989 - 49,064 arrests; 112,566 calls
- 1990 - 54,849 arrests; 122,000 calls
- 1991 - 66,493 arrests; 123,554 calls
- 1992 - 57,000 arrests; 128,700 calls

Source: Winston Salem Police Department

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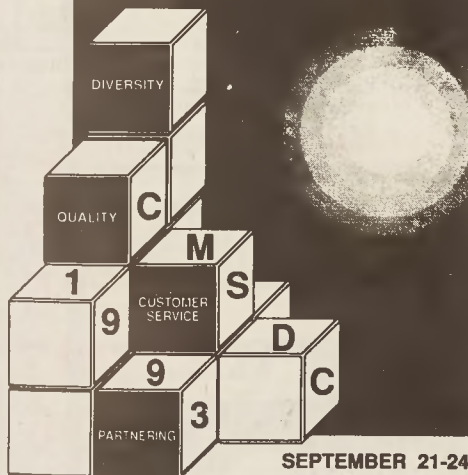
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