

Program Wants to Improve Quality of Life Through Teaching

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

North Carolina has the thirteenth highest adult illiteracy rate in the United States and more tutors are needed to stop the cycle from continuing, an expert said.

Hanna Fingeret, executive director of Literacy South, spoke to a group of tutors Saturday to give them tips on tutoring adults.

Fingeret said the state is getting involved in public-school reform and stimulating growth in the work place to accommodate more educated workers.

"It's necessary to have more economic develop to accommodate literate people," she said. "More emphasis should be put on adult illiteracy to improve overall quality of life and general standard for everybody."

Fingeret spoke to volunteers who are part of the Literacy Initiative of the Greater Winston-Salem YMCA.

The Literacy Initiative started as a special project by the United Way in 1990. After conducting a study in 1991, which found that one in three Forsyth County adults over 25 have not completed high school or received a GED, the initiative started providing direct services to adults.

Sandra E. Pennington, executive director of the Literacy Initiative, said the program has been successful in attracting adults.

"Nobody's going to come to center court in the mall and tell you they can't read," she said. "You have to be more creative than that. Most people will come and try to get help if they don't feel like you are singling them out."

The program is driven by volunteers who go through 12 hours of training and usually work with clients at least two hours a week.

Pennington said they have over 43 adults in the program and have partnerships with the Forsyth

County Detention Center and Forsyth Technical Community College. But due to a shortage of funds, many adults are still not being reached.

"We're only reaching 6 percent of the people who need help—that's just scratching the surface," Pennington said. "There's more competition for money to agencies providing survival services because you can live if you're illiterate."

The initiative works with a number of black adults, but Pennington said the problem crosses the color barrier and if a greater emphasis was put on illiteracy it would help solve other societal problems.

"We've found that it is tied to crime and poverty, but it's not a black thing," she said. "People want it to be, but illiteracy is a problem that crosses the color line and economic line. A lot of people have the potential to learn, but just didn't have the chance. We offer them that chance without them going back into the classroom."



Sandra Pennington is executive director of Literacy Initiative.

Currently, the Literacy Initiative is seeking help from the African-American churches and more African-American volunteers. Training sessions for tutors and volunteers are going on at the Literacy Initiative, located at 775 West End Blvd. Interested persons or those seeking more information can call 727-9850.

About 300 Relatives and Friends Attend Forsyth Tech Graduation

▲ Seventy-four students receive general equivalency diplomas at recent ceremony

By RUDY ANDERSON
Special to the Chronicle

A sea of smiling faces illuminated the auditorium of the West campus at Forsyth Technical Community College recently, as a crowd of more than 300 relatives and friends to watch graduation ceremonies of 74 students receiving their general equivalency diplomas.

The graduates included such combinations as three sisters in their fifties; a husband and wife; and a brother and sister. They all seem to indicate a sense of shared accomplishment and unity of purpose in facing the future.

For 34-year-old Dennis Keith Little, it was a dream come true. Little dropped out of school in the 10th grade, but later discovered he had made the wrong move. He began his program last July.

"I feel just great," he said. "At times I

wasn't sure I was going to make it. But I had the drive to achieve that goal."

He urged anyone who has dropped out to drop back into education.

Little, a materials coordinator for Baptist Hospital, said he was moving on to bigger and better things since completing his program. He has been accepted at Winston-Salem State University and plans to attend in the fall. Little said he wants to pursue nursing as a major.

"I never would have made it this far if I hadn't gotten my GED," he said. "This was a big first step."

It was also a big night for 21-year-old Kawanis Glenn, a single mother of four daughters, who dropped out of school in the 10th grade. She joined the program more than two years ago.

"There were many times that I wanted to give up," said Glenn, "but I kept thinking

about my children and their needs and what I needed to do for them."

Her future plans involve enrolling in the nursing program at Forsyth Tech and she hopes to pursue a career as a registered nurse. Her advice to anyone who had dropped out of school is to go back.

Passing the test was also a two-year struggle for Stacy Alexander, 23, who dropped out during his junior year.

"I really have accomplished something," said this father of two. "I never wanted to quit, but things seemed to keep getting in the way, so this means a lot to me."

Alexander said he began the program while with the city of Winston-Salem's service corps. He said he works for the city's street division as a crew leader. But according to Alexander, his career may be taking a turn.

"I'm trying to get a grant to continue my

education at Forsyth Tech," he said.

These students and their graduating classmates were challenged to be a "force for change" by keynote speaker Thomas C. King Jr.

King, who is senior vice president and chief financial officer for the state Department of Community Colleges, left them with six guidelines to follow: judge not that you not be judged; handle trouble in the open; always tell the truth; build a personal support structure; do not be afraid to take risks; and be able to forgive yourselves and others.

"Don't spend your life trying to decide what to do," he said. "Do something, even if it's wrong. And never take yourself too seriously."

Forsyth Tech's summer quarter GED classes begin June 6-7 in over 20 locations. All classes are free.

Community

EVENTS CALENDAR

How to Schedule Your Events: Send your information, concisely and neatly printed or typed, to the Chronicle Calendar, 617 N. Liberty St., Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102, before 5 p.m., the Monday preceding the week in which your event will occur. Our fax number is (910) 723-9173.

May

THURSDAY, MAY 19

• The Central Winston-Salem Association, the Winston-Salem Jaycees, Franklin's Printing, R.H. Barringer Distributing Co. and Rock 92 will sponsor "Alive After Five," a free after-work party in downtown Winston-Salem on May 19 from 5-7:30 p.m. The concert and parking are free. The parking lot is at First and Cherry streets. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. If it rains, the event will be held at The Elms, beneath the parking deck at the Marquee, 452 N. Cherry St. For more information, call Glenda Keels, Central Winston-Salem Association at 724-1399.

SATURDAY, MAY 21

12 p.m. - Members of the Atkins High School class of 1943 will meet at the East Winston Library. All interested persons may attend.
1 p.m. - Triad Black Media Professional will meet at the News & Record in Greensboro. All persons who work with the media or in a public relations/affairs capacity are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served and there will be guest speaker. The News & Record is located at 200 East Market St.

SUNDAY, MAY 22

4 p.m. - "What is Jabberwock Session" will be held at the Winston-Salem Urban League for rising high-school juniors and seniors who are planning to attend a four-year college and interested in a scholarship. Parents and potential candidates interested in Jabberwock '95 are encouraged to attend. The event is sponsored by the Winston-Salem Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

MONDAY, MAY 23

7:30 p.m. - The WSSU-Brown Alumni

Chapter will meet at the Golden State Insurance Building at East Fifth Street.

TUESDAY, MAY 24

8 a.m. - The Winston-Salem Merchants Association, a division of the DataMax Corp., is sponsoring a seminar entitled "Women in Management." The speaker will be Troy Ann Williams, who recently presented this program to the Greensboro Merchants Association and received outstanding reviews. For more information or registration, call Sherry Wiles or Chuck Lott at 777-3595.

5 p.m. - The Forsyth County Tourism Development Authority will meet at the Board Room at the Chamber of Commerce.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

1:30 p.m. - The city of Winston-Salem's Neighborhood Government Services office, 2301 N. Patterson Ave., will hold a seminar on "Project Graduation." The seminar will be conducted by Shirley Dixon of the Chamber of Commerce. Admission is free. Call 727-2975.

ONGOING

• Senior Financial Care is offering a variety of in-home services to older adults of Forsyth County. They will help balance checkbooks, reconcile bank statements, write monthly checks and help with budget matters. Medical-insurance claims and drug charges will be filed and monitored to make sure all benefits have been paid. Call 725-1972.

• Happy Hill Gardens Reunion Committee will meet every Saturday at W.C. Sims Center on Alder Street at 1 p.m. The meeting will dis-

cuss the reunion of Happy Hill Gardens, Columbia Terrace, The Trot, and Salem reunion on July 9th. Call William "Rock" Biting at 650-0858 or Ben Piggott at 727-2837.

UPCOMING

• Reynolda House Museum of American Art will sponsor a city art tour led by Marjorie Northrup, assistant director of programs, on Thursday, May 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The tour will include Diggs Gallery and downtown galleries followed by a picnic in Grace Court Park. The cost of the tour is \$22, which includes the bus and lunch. Call 725-5325.

• The Piedmont Epilepsy Association will sponsor a "Chili Cookoff" on Saturday, May 28, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Epilepsy Medication Fund. The cookoff will be held at Oak Hollow Festival Park, Highway 68 (Eastchester Drive), High Point. The admission is \$2 in advance, \$3 at the gate. Children under 12 are free. No pets, coolers, containers of any type. Call 1-800-642-0500.

• Neil and Camilla Wilcox will lead summer sessions for young people in creative writing and enrichment through art at Reynolda House Museum of American Art. The two-week long workshops for young writer in grades 5-10 will be June 13 and June 20 from 9 a.m. to noon. American Arts Discovery for K-5 will be on July 11 and July 18. Each session lasts one week and explores the Reynolda House art collection, gardens and grounds.

The cost is \$95 and early registration is recommended. Call 725-5325.

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