

FUTURE

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 opportunity to [hold events] in the community," says Jones. "That builds up the community's image."

When it comes to attracting people, image is all-important. And many citizens view Washington Drive as unsafe.

Carlena Pettway, executive director of Washington Drive Resource & Enrichment Center, says there's a stigma associated with Washington Drive. The center's work with children, however, is sowing inspiration.

Founded by Lois Powell, owner of Haizlip's Funeral Home, the center opened in 1990. Powell purchased the building, formerly a fish market and a night club, in 1983 and renovated it at her own expense. "I knew I wanted to have the building as an outreach center

for the people of this community," she says. "When you are in business, you owe it to the people who support you — it is your duty to give back to them."

The center provides support for youth and families with programs that focus on academic and social skills and career exploration. Seventy-five youths are involved in the Total Child Summer Program, which emphasizes academics but also includes cultural and recreational activities. During the school year, the Tutorial/Homework Assistance Program challenges youths to focus on academics and encourages parents to have high expectations for their children.

These initiatives have earned the nonprofit agency the confidence of neighborhood residents and the city at large. "People can see we're making a difference in this area," Pettway attests.

"People don't have a fear of

coming here," she adds. "They know the environment that we're providing is a safe one."

That's all-important. The Rev. F.L. Andrews, pastor of First Baptist Church and president of the Washington Drive improvement group, says the area needs to be cleaned up. "We need to work with people with chemical dependencies so they can reach out and get help."

Pettway says joblessness also contributes to the blight. There's a need, she says, for "worthwhile programs to help chronically unemployed people who loiter in the area, to challenge them and give them some purpose to become more than just street people."

YMCA executive director Jones thinks that non-minimum-wage job opportunities are key. "Since welfare reform has taken place, the community has to have enough jobs to compensate for

people who are on the Work First program."

Teenage pregnancy, he adds, perpetuates existing problems. "I think teenage pregnancy in the community is on the rise. All kinds of problems are related to that, from drug abuse to infant mortality."

Andrews believes greater community involvement is needed to address these problems. "We're going to have to have the interest and cooperation from people who are genuine about seeing the area revitalized," he stresses. "We need to develop programs that will empower the residents to take charge," Pettway says.

One group is already showing leadership. The William Penn Foundation was formed to restore and preserve the Samuel Burford Auditorium on the William Penn High School campus. When the segregated high

school closed in 1968, the building was slated for demolition. Ann Andrews, a William Penn alumna, urged the school board to invite state archivists to assess the facility's historical significance. As a result, the building was spared. An initial fund raising effort netted \$300,000 for a new roof, windows and cupola to protect the building's interior.

Chaired by Delores Lipscomb, the foundation recently reorganized and is gearing up to raise funds for the interior renovations. With a stage the size of a basketball court, the auditorium needs new heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical systems.

Guilford County school board member Dot Kearns is the foundation's past chair. "The main thing now," she says, "is to get the auditorium completed on the inside so it can be a community resource."

The auditorium would indeed be a jewel in the community's crown. Its preservation would begin to fulfill the visions of those who are now breathing new life into the area.

Andrews would like to see the corridor "cleaned up and some worthwhile things placed on the street that would be of value to the people. Replace some of these things that were done away with." The YMCA's Jones wishes "the city would refurbish the historic buildings." A facelift, he says might attract motorists from the main thoroughfare into the Washington Drive area.

Pettway, longs for the area to reclaim its past glory. In the 1950s and 1960s, she remembers, there were flourishing black businesses. "I would like for Washington Drive to be a safe, happy area," she says, "for the people who visit and those who live here."

FORUM

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 was "Klan country."

Recently, however, the racial undertones have blared loud and clear. The Pulpit Forum, an African-American ministerial alliance, accused redistricting steering committee member Lynn Sotherly and former member Terry Lee of using race-baiting tactics to shore up opposition to the unity map.

In the southeast community publication, "The Pleasant Garden Post," Lee warns that the property value will plummet if Dudley High School is included in that area's zone.

In addition, Lee states, "Zone 3 will include every public housing development within the city of Greensboro." Lee later said that a printer's error omitted the word "virtually" in the last statement.

Lee also charges that the inclusion of southeast Greensboro will exceed present capacity by 1,100 students. The redistricting committee presently estimates the number is 891, the size of the new middle school that is included in the zone plan.

In a letter submitted to the "Pleasant Garden Post," Sotherly calls on her neighbors to take a stand against the busing of low-income and African-American students into the county. She claims that "special interest groups," such as the Greensboro and High Point Chambers of Commerce, the Realtors Association, the Junior League and the NAACP controlled the redistricting process.

"The NAACP believes they can use the minority overcrowding in this zone as a means to demand new minority facilities," Sotherly wrote.

Sotherly herself represents one of the five "stakeholder" groups the school board selected from Guilford County. There are 15 stakeholder groups total; the 10 stakeholder representatives from Greensboro and High Point have never joined together on a bloc vote.

Out of the original 60 members of the steering committee, 54 remain.

School board members have stayed clear of the redistricting forums, held since April, until recently. Members Dot Kearns, Peggy Abernathy and Anita Sharpe were present on Tuesday night.

The process has revealed a

gulf between African-American and white parents, indicated in Tuesday night's catch-phrase, "neighborhood schools."

White parents complained that when the steering committee used the term "neighborhood schools," they were referring to the entire zone. Most of those parents pressed for a new map that divided the county into 12 or more zones, versus the five offered in the unity map.

These parents claimed that they don't want children ripped from their communities. But many African Americans said the phrase "neighborhood schools" is being used as a euphemism for segregation, as neighborhoods in Guilford County are separated by racial boundaries.

"It's how we don't talk about race," said the Rev. Nelson Johnson, pastor of Faith Community Church and former Dudley parent. Amid heckles from the audience, Johnson asked that white participants speak honestly.

"We need to have a new conversation," said Johnson.

When a black woman stood up to comment on the racial tension she felt in the meeting, she was booed en masse by the white members of the audience.

Another African-American speaker, Carol Martin King, acknowledged the tension. King, who lives in the county, said that she found herself caught in the middle of the battle.

"I found myself being a referee in my community and in my workplace," said King. She said the comments she heard about Dudley were "hurtful," and added that she received a phone call from a white parent concerned about the property value rumor.

The audience laughed as King related what she told the caller:

"The only way [black children] could depreciate property value is if they take the school bus, drive it up your driveway and knock down your house."

But for most, the property value charge was no laughing matter.

"What does that do to the children's self-esteem when no one wants to be around them?" asked Dudley parent Linda Jones.

Republican County Commissioner Chuck Winfree blamed the tension on decades of "forced busing."

"The chickens have come

home to roost," said Winfree. He and fellow Republican commissioner Phyllis Gibbs said that they support neighborhood schools.

At the close of the meeting,

most white participants expressed satisfaction with the evening. "I think it went really well," said Denny Spencer, a southeast Guilford resident who favors a 12-zone redistricting

map. "It's been back and forth that it's a racial issue, and it's not." Most African-American parents saw things differently, though. "It's racist," said Wanda Moorehead, vice president of

Dudley's PTA.

Moorehead's gaze turned toward a group of white parents laughing together. In a soft voice she asked, "How can they say it's not?"

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WALL

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 week later.

The staff member, who spoke under condition of anonymity, said that CMI security guards entered Wall's office around 10:30 a.m., where staff members were packing boxes for the move. A CMI representative told the

workers present that they were dismissed immediately, due to "personnel issues." The representative then asked Wall's staff members to leave the premises.

Novant spokes people said that it was not unusual for security guards to be present when patient records are being moved.