

Student athletes, performing artists make the grade

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High Point Correspondant

New research by Guilford County Schools (GCS) confirms what "soccer moms" have known all along: extracurricular activities enhance students' academic performance.

A 1996-97 study involving all 14 GCS high schools showed that students who were active in athletics or performing arts had better grades, lower dropout rates, better attendance and better behavior. "The areas of athletics and performing arts serve as a catalyst to bring structure and discipline to students' lives and therefore contribute to their overall achievement," explains Alan Parker, cultural arts curriculum specialist.

Parker and Herb Goins, director of athletics, activities and driver education, oversaw

the research. In 1994 the school system began tracking student participation rates in athletics and performing arts. During the 1996-97 academic year, the system tracked students and organized data related to grade point averages (GPA), dropout rates, discipline referrals, attendance rates and graduation rates. First semester data showed a strong link between those areas and participation in athletics and performing arts. These findings shoot holes through the "dumb jock" stereotype.

"Active high school students," said Parker, "are proven to be more successful than students who simply attend class."

Last school year, 4,815 high school students participated in sports and 3,102 in performing arts. The average

GPA for student athletes was 3.02. The average GPA for student performing artists was 2.81. The average GPA for students involved in neither sports nor performing arts was 1.92. On average, student athletes missed 6.92 days of school for the academic year. Students who participated in performing arts were absent from school an average of 9.57. Students who did not participate in either athletics or performing arts missed an average of more than 15 days. Students involved in sports or performing arts also posed fewer disciplinary problems. Approximately one in four of those students exhibited behavior requiring discipline referrals, while nearly two in five of other high school students received discipline referrals.

The findings were similar at

all county high schools regardless of racial, ethnic or socioeconomic factors.

In addition to athletics and performing arts, Goins noted, schools offer many other opportunities for student involvement. Clubs, publications, debate and student government are examples.

"Kids who are actively engaged and tied to their school tend to do better than their peers," Goins indicates.

Because activities take time away from academics, Goins explains, participating students learn to budget their time. Thus, extracurricular activities help develop responsible study habits.

"Our hope," said Parker, "is to continue our recruiting efforts at both the middle and high school levels and increase student awareness and participation."

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other officers were selected to become astronauts in the Air Force's now-defunct Manned Orbital Laboratory program.

Just six months after being selected, Lawrence was training another pilot on a new landing method when the student crashed the Lockheed F-104 jet at Edwards Air Force Base. The student was seriously injured; Lawrence was killed.

Under Air Force rules at that time, pilots had to fly 50 miles above the earth to earn their astronaut wings — a feat that Lawrence had yet to accomplish. Under NASA guidelines, pilots are considered astronauts as soon as they are accepted into the program. The Air Force space program merged with NASA's in 1969.

"On that day our space program was denied one of the great talents," said Gen. Robert Herres, one of Lawrence's friends. "His potential was truly enormous. He was a brilliant individual."

He was heralded on the front of the New York Times and other newspapers across the country as "America's First Negro Astronaut." But it was not until this year that the Air Force reviewed Lawrence's status and formally recognized him as an astronaut. In 1983 Guion Bluford became the first black astronaut in space as a member of the space shuttle Challenger crew.

Lawrence graduated from Englewood High School and later earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Bradley University and a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Ohio State.

He excelled at chess and almost set aside his love of flying to play classical piano. And when he was sent to teach flight school in Germany, he decided to teach himself German so he could better help his students.

"He was a remarkable boy," Duncan said. "He was interested in everything. He explored everything."

Lawrence will be formally honored Dec. 8, the 30th anniversary of his death, at Kennedy Space Center when the Space Mirror Memorial will be rededicated.

Aegis, defined.

Aegis (pronounced ē-jiss) isn't exactly one of those words whose pronunciation or meaning is on the tip of everybody's tongue.

In fact, if you ask Linda Depew, John and Etta Idol, Kathy Mitiku or the Hinton family what Aegis means, they'll each tell you something different.

That's because they, like a lot of people in Wilkes, Surry, Yadkin, Stokes, Forsyth and Caldwell Counties, associate the word "aegis" with Aegis Family Health Centers, which have come to mean many different things.

Aegis Family Health Centers are community medical practices staffed and equipped to provide

"Aegis means having a doctor who will discover things other doctors missed."

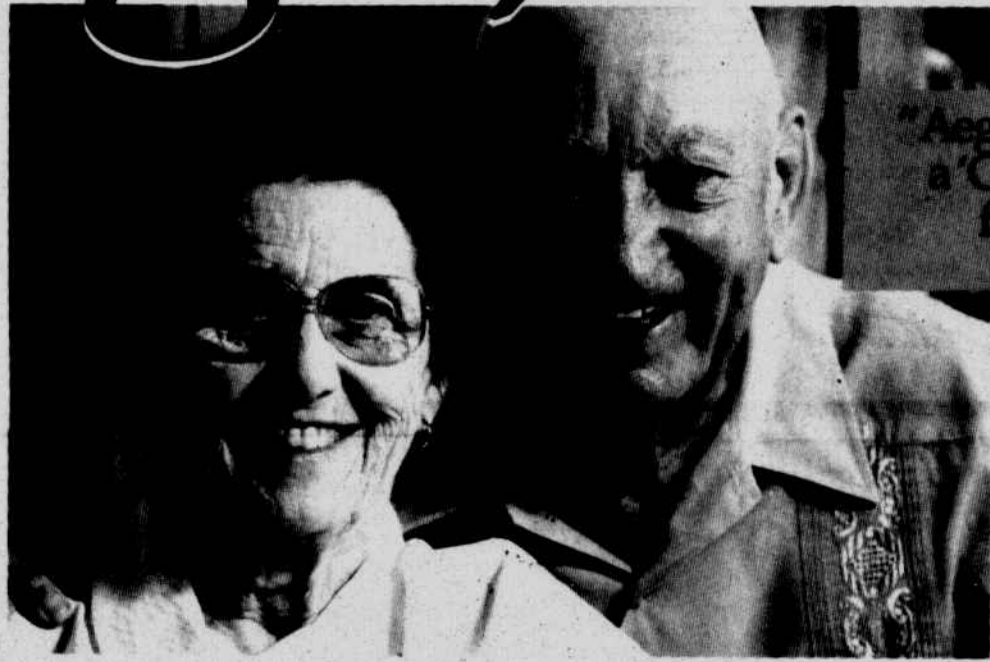
Linda Depew

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For Linda Depew, this meant finally finding a doctor who could diagnose the cause of migraine headaches that had plagued her for 15 years.

For John Idol, it meant finding a doctor who was so attentive when he had surgery that he calls her his "Guardian Angel."



"Aegis means having a Guardian Angel for a doctor."

John Idol

For Kathy Mitiku, whose son, Solomon, had a temperature of 106 and went into a seizure at their Aegis Family Health Center, it meant a cool-headed doctor who would stabilize him and then send his nurse to accompany Solomon and Kathy to Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center for additional treatment.

At Aegis Family Health Centers, we've found that even when people attach a less dramatic story to our name, it's no less meaningful. To the Hinton, for example, Aegis simply

means convenience. Since we have doctors for their whole

family in one location, close to their home, they don't have to run all over town to keep appointments. When you're a busy parent, that means a lot.

What could Aegis mean to you? It could mean a new experience with physicians who specialize in pediatrics, family practice, internal medicine, OB/GYN and occupational and environmental health.

It could mean you'll experience a new emphasis on prevention and

"Aegis means having a doctor who will go the extra mile."

Kathy Mitiku

health maintenance.

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And health means everything.

"Aegis means there's a doctor for all of us, all in one place."

Alma Hinton



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