

**BIG BROTHERS
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

BIG BROTHERS
BIG SISTERS
OF GREENSBORO

378-9100

Damien Thompson, a Program Coordinator with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greensboro wants residents to know the phone number to call to become a BB/BS or have a child matched up with a volunteer.

Big brothers offer friendship and guidance

By DAMON FORD
The Chronicle Reporter

As children mature, they need adults in their lives, and Robin Williams is one grown-up who makes herself available.

"A lot of our kids are not thinking past tomorrow. They're not preparing for 10 years down the road or five years down the road ... they're going to get caught short if we leave them to get it together on their own," said Williams, director of volunteer programs for Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BB/BS) of Greensboro. "They need the involvement of adults in the community."

BB/BS gives adults the opportunity to impact a young person's life. BB/BS is a volunteer program designed to match a mature, caring adult with a

young friend in need of friendship and guidance. The program serves children who may be neglected, lonely, having difficulty facing the challenges of living in a single parent family or in the home of a foster parent or guardian. BB/BS volunteers are asked to give two to four hours a week to a child between the ages of 6 and 14.

Next month will represent the 10-year anniversary of BB/BS in Greensboro. The national organization was formed over 90 years ago. Today, BB/BS is a United Way agency which operates under the servicing organization Youth Focus Inc. There are over 500 BB/BS's nationwide. Ten are in N.C. The triad area has one in Winston-Salem (724-7993) and High Point (882-4167) as well as Greensboro (378-9100).

Williams does not work alone. There are five

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Where are jobs for NC blacks?

By HERBERT L. WHITE
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A symposium on economic isolation in urban and rural communities next week with the hope that neighborhood leaders and organizations can formulate plans for action.

The N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development will sponsor the symposium Monday and Tuesday in Raleigh.

"With so much focus on the booming areas and companies not finding enough workers, there still remains sectors in the state being left behind," said Jonathan Morgan, the institute's research and policy director. "Our data shows there's pockets of individuals in urban areas and a mirroring underclass in rural areas."

The symposium is open to the public. Registration is \$ 60. For more information, call (919) 831-2467.

The institute's mission is to strengthen and build the asset base of economically-isolated communities. The institute provides

research, analysis and information and offers business assistance to minority- and women-owned businesses.

Although North Carolina's economy is expanding with new industries and growth, many poor communities — especially majority black ones — don't have a stake in it. Unemployment for African Americans is still twice that of whites, and coupled with economic, education and transportation factors, make the disparity greater, Morgan said.

"In the northeast part of the state — the Black Belt — fundamentally, there's no jobs," he said. "In Charlotte or Durham, there's some sort of disconnect with jobs, such as (the lack of) transportation."

Nationally recognized authors and academic leaders, including Neal Peirce, author of "Citistates" and Christopher Edley Jr., a Harvard law professor who has worked as an expert on the rural and urban underclass in the Carter and Clinton administration, will

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Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., holds a photo she claims shows Nicaraguan Contras and alleged cocaine dealers while testifying on Capitol Hill Monday, March 16, 1998, before the Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on drugs. Waters, who represents South Central Los Angeles, blasted a CIA report, citing extensive findings from her own inquiry of connections between the CIA-backed Contras and the flow of drugs.

Disabled students

One parent's experience with Forsyth County schools

By DAMON FORD
The Chronicle Reporter

This is the second part of a three part series on disabled students and their rights to receive help through Section 504 policies. Section 504 is a broad civil rights law that came about through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In October 1997, the WS/FC school system adopted these policies and procedures of Section 504. The Chronicle discussed the policies with a black parent. Because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, the names of the parent and children have been changed.

For one parent in Winston-Salem, it's too late to do anything about her two sons' education.

From the time that they were children, Jane Doe says her boys had problems learning. When they couldn't remember their ABC's and 123's she confronted school officials about this but they just told her that "there were no problems."

Doe kept pushing and by the time her youngest son, John Doe, was in fifth grade he was diagnosed as Learning Disabled. Before this time Doe says that teachers said her son John was well mannered, but after the diagnoses, things went down hill with his attitude.

Because John was LD he had to go to LD classes during the day, which wasn't a pleasant experience for him. Peers looked at him differently and he looked at himself differently. He would say "I'm dumb, I'm not going to be nothing," his mother said.

"I have no problem that he was learning disabled, I went to them (school officials) for this," said Doe. "What really hurt me is that it (being

LD) embarrassed my child."

What Doe did not know is that a child who is diagnosed LD, which is covered by the statute of IDEA, is also covered under Section 504. With 504 a parent has the option of having his or her child go to another class during the day to get help or have help come to the child's class.

Middle school proved to be no better for John. Teachers tried to get him to do his work like his peers, but he just wasn't able to perform these tasks. His behavior went down hill and Doe started receiving calls from John's school.

"We know that through years of research that labeling and being put in a special class will cause you to have problems," said Barry Tesh, a Licensed Professional Counselor in N.C. and native of Winston-Salem.

Once in high school John's troubles continued to mount. He was sent to the alternative school in the county, Independence High School. "One of the teachers at Independence told me 'he doesn't need to be here,'" said Doe. "He is not this type of child."

John dropped out of school in the 10th grade. Doe's oldest son dropped out in the ninth grade.

"I am very frustrated with the school system," said Doe. "I depended on the Forsyth County school system, not once but twice. They took something precious away from me ... my children's education."

Why wasn't Doe told about 504, if it was always in operation in the county?



"In my opinion, they were picking and choosing," said Tesh. "Parents are not educators, they are not therapists, they are not psychologists. (Parents) should not have to be familiar with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and go to school and tell them (school officials) about it. They should go (to school) and be told their options."

Emily Simeon, who has worked in the WS/FC school system for seven years and holds the position of division Director for Exceptional Children Services, says that 504

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Guilford schools suspend blacks more than whites

GREENSBORO (AP) — Black students account for almost 70 percent of out-of-school suspensions in Guilford County, a trend that's echoed across the state.

According to records given the News & Record of Greensboro by the school system, black students, who comprise less than 40 percent of the student population, were suspended about 9,000 times last school year. White students accounted for less than 4,000 suspensions.

A study commissioned in the 1995-96 school year by the state Department of Public Instruction shows a racial school-suspension gap crisscrossing North Carolina. That survey revealed that black youngsters, who comprise about 30 percent of the state's students, accounted for 56 percent of almost 120,000 reported suspensions.

The state survey also showed that black students were suspended longer than whites, an average of 3.6 days, compared to 3.1 days for white students.

In the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district, where black students make up a little more than 40 percent of the population, black students account for 75 percent of long-term suspensions. Black students in Wake County make up 26

percent of the public school population and account for 54 percent of out-of-school suspensions.

Reasons for the suspension gap offered by teachers, school administrators, sociologists, civil rights workers and students include:

- White teachers' preconceived beliefs that black children will be aggressive, disruptive and have difficulty learning.

- Socioeconomics. This is the reason, or reasons, given by most people, white and black, for the disparity. The grip of poverty and the black experience of racism and slavery lead in many black children to feelings of inadequacy and an early loss of self-esteem. Black students then manifest these feelings in class disruptions, fights, inappropriate language and other violations of the student Code of Conduct.

- Tough black standards. Some black teachers and administrators may be tougher than white educators in disciplining black students.

- Class. This reason is linked with socioeconomic reasons, minus the effects of race. Some believe the problem has nothing to do with race, that it is strictly one of poverty and class.

- Lack of classroom management.

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