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## Pastors asked to help battle HIV/AIDS

*About 30 new AIDS cases have already been diagnosed in Forsyth County this year*

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

AIDS/HIV is on the rise again in Forsyth County, according to STAR (Seeking Those At Risk) Outreach. Between January and February of this year, more than 30 new cases of AIDS were diagnosed in the county. Last year saw 94 cases of AIDS/HIV in Forsyth County, and local health experts are expecting that figure to reach 120 by the end of this year.

What those figures indicate to Thomas Clarke, director of the STAR Outreach program, is that people are still suffering as a result of not protecting themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.

STAR Outreach, a component of STEP ONE Substance Abuse Services Inc., assists those at risk or living with AIDS/HIV. STEP ONE, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, is an outpatient substance abuse facility that offers services in prevention, education, intervention and treatment.

According to Clarke, people of color represent more than 75 percent of all new AIDS/HIV cases. Clarke is both baffled and frustrated that the disease is devastating one segment of the population.

"In order to make a huge impact, we have to have the community involved," Clarke said. "One place that has been such an institution of strength, particularly in the African-American community, and I know in all communities of color, has been the church."

Clarke brought several area ministers together with local health agencies on Monday to discuss the status of AIDS/HIV in the community. Clarke sees the jobs of the clergy and health-care workers as going hand in hand - saving lives and saving souls.

"We're trying to keep people alive long enough for (churches) to save their souls. You can't preach to somebody who is dead," said Clarke, who explained that the meeting was also a start to rebuilding the public's trust of churches and religious institutions that have felt betrayed by scandal or estranged in recent times.

Pastor E.L. White, executive director of Mount Sinai Faith, Hope & Love Ministries in Thomasville, has long been involved in AIDS outreach work, and he is a staunch supporter of

See STAR on A10

## A Marv-tastic August

*Tom Joyner and crew to add to hoopla at this year's NBTF*

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem will get a double hit of national exposure in early August. The 14th Annual National Black Theatre Festival will bring more than 50 celebrities to the city for a week of shows, parties and special events, and capturing at least a portion of all of that will be popular radio personality Tom Joyner, whose "Sky Show" will broadcast from Joel Coliseum Aug. 8.

The nationally syndicated "Tom Joyner Morning Show" is locally broadcast on Greensboro-based WQMG 97.1. The station and Larry Leon Hamlin, NBTF founder and artistic director, worked together to foster the marriage of the festival - which will run from Aug. 4 - 9 - and the radio program.

"It is going to attract a huge number of people. We believe that we are going to reach a lot of people who ordinarily would not know anything about the festival," Hamlin said Monday about Joyner's presence.

Joyner's "Sky Show" has become a centerpiece of Joyner's efforts to raise money for the nation's historically black colleges and universities. Each month Joyner features a HBCU in an effort to generate money for the school. Companies and individuals appear on the "Sky Show" to



Joyner



File Photo

See NBTF on A9 Larry Leon Hamlin opens the 2001 NBTF.

## Principal, staff lose bet, sleep on roof

*Julian Gibson Elementary students collected thousands of points in book reading competition*

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Perhaps nothing motivates students more than the opportunity to inflict a little playful suffering on their teachers, or better yet their principal.

Students at Julian Gibson Elementary School are a case in point. Last Thursday the school's principal, Richard Watts, and eight other school personnel had to spend the night on the roof of the school after they ended up on the losing end of a bet with students.

The students got front-row seats to the spectacle, as Watts and his team of brave staffers ascended to the roof just after school was dismissed. Students laughed and cheered at the sight of school leaders atop the damp roof. (Hours earlier the sky had opened up, letting out torrential rains.) There was only a slight drizzle by the time the team got on the roof; the sun came out later.

Watts said a commitment was made early on to fulfill the promise, regardless of the weather. He and the others used sleeping bags and tents to protect them from the elements, although, according to Watts, "it was chilly," nevertheless.

School officials made the bet with the more than 650 students at the school near the beginning of the school year as a way to moti-



Photo by Bruce Chapman

Richard Watts holds an umbrella while waving to his students from the roof of Gibson Elementary.

vate students to read more. The school has an Accelerated Reader program, in which students get points for reading books and then passing a computerized test based on questions about the book. Watts and teachers challenged students from kindergarten through fifth grade to collectively earn 15,000 points. The kids not only met that challenge but exceeded it. Initially, Watts was going to

sleep on the roof alone, but when it became evident that the students were going to win the bet and he would have to pay the piper, he looked for other volunteers.

"I sent out an e-mail asking whether others wanted to join me," he said.

Watts said there was a gradual build-up to the students' excitement over the last few weeks. The excitement was at a fever pitch

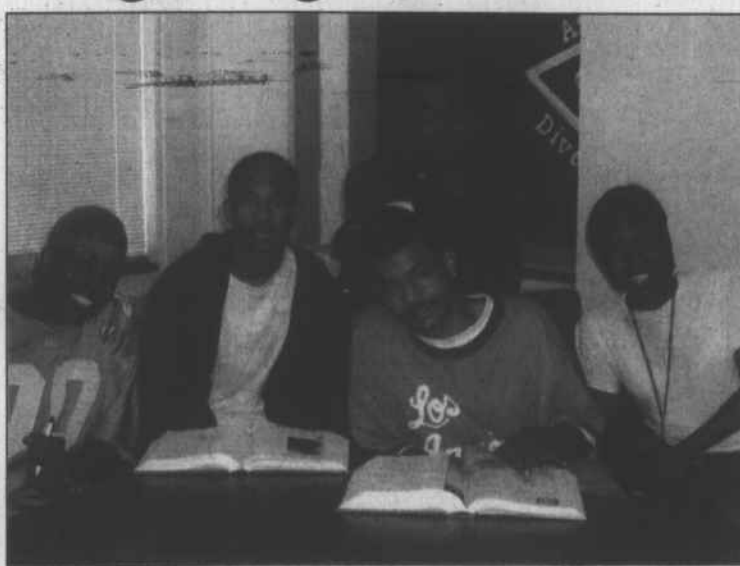
last Thursday afternoon during an awards ceremony for students that took place shortly before the end of school.

"We had students chanting, 'On the roof, on the roof,'" Watts said.

Watts and company spent all night on the roof, coming down at about 9 a.m. on Friday, just as students were beginning the last day

See Gibson on A4

## Program gives troubled students hope



Left to right: Jamel Tutt, Casey Miller, Fabio Mickel, Jason Morrow, and Carmen Clanton are among the first participants in N.C. A&T's new alternative education program.

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD  
THE CHRONICLE

**GREENSBORO** - As Winston-Salem is searching for ways to reinvent its alternative education program, N.C. A&T State University is experiencing great success in Greensboro.

A&T has partnered with James B. Dudley High School to create the Reach Higher Project, which offers over-averaged ninth graders an opportunity to complete their high school education in a smaller, alternative learning environment. Students are following their same high school course work but attend classes in A&T's School of Education, Guilford County, A&T and Dudley High School are funding the project.

Since March, nearly 20 students from Dudley have been working under the direction of the

See Reach on A9

*"Coming (to the project) is all about choices. We don't beg them to come to school."*

- Michelle Hayes, project's director

## Study: Local domestic violence needs attention

BY PAUL COLLINS  
THE CHRONICLE

The large number of domestic violence cases in Forsyth County suggests the importance of addressing domestic violence as a community safety issue. And the significant number of dismissed domestic violence cases suggests the need for victim protection and support strategies.

These are some of the conclusions of a local research project presented at a symposium titled "Creating Community Strategies to End Domestic Violence" May 29 at Winston-Salem State University's Anderson Center. The Center for Community Safety and the Domestic Violence Community Council co-hosted the symposium.

Other conclusions included:

- The large percentage of intimate partner cases involving unmarried couples suggests a need for strategies directed at those relationships.
- The large average number of prior charges and convictions suggests the need for earlier intervention and treatment of offenders.
- The high proportions of suspended sentences and proba-



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