



Golfer follows father's footsteps

- See Page B1



Big Brother Big Sisters

Members drive marks milestone

- See Page A3



Happy Meals get a little healthier

- See Page A9



Event shines light on hunger

- See Page C1

THE CHRONICLE

For Reference

Not to be taken

34 071405 *FIRM***5-DIGIT 27101
ADMINISTRATION
FORSYTH CNTY PUB LIB
7 660 W 5TH ST
WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2755

BRATING 30 YEARS OF COMMUNITY JOURNAL from this library

Vol. XXX No. 41

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 2004

Aaron to grads: Follow own path

Baseball legend shares life lessons with graduates at Forsyth Country Day

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

If Hank Aaron had followed the path his mother had laid out for him, he would have never broken Babe Ruth's home run record or even worn #44 in the first place.

"As much as I loved my mother, if I had listened (to my mother), I would have never put on a baseball uniform," Aaron said.

Aaron's mother wanted her son to be a schoolteacher, he told graduates at Forsyth Country Day School Friday. He told the story to convey to the graduates

that they too must follow their own paths, which may not necessarily be the paths that their parents and friends will applaud.

"Make sure the goals you choose are your own," he said.

Forsyth Country Day, a 32-year-old private school in Lewisville known for its top-notch academics, graduated 92 seniors last week. Hearing from Aaron was a rare treat for the graduates. The baseball legend received a standing ovation before and after his remarks from the hundreds who packed into the school's gymnasium for the ceremony. School officials told The Chronicle that the parent of a student arranged for Aaron to speak at the ceremony.

The bulk of Aaron's message was made up of lessons that he said helped make him a better baseball player and human being. He told the graduates to aim high in life, not for the middle or the



Hank Aaron

bottom. Overachievers do well, Aaron said, in baseball and in life.

"Not many people look back and say, 'Gee, I wish I had not tried so hard,'" he said.

Aaron's life is the stuff of legend. The Mobile, Ala.-native began his career in the Negro Leagues. The big leagues came calling in the early 1950s and Aaron was picked up by the Milwaukee Braves. During his 23-year major league career, Aaron racked up more batting records than any player in history, including most lifetime RBIs. Baseball fans around the world still remember the day in 1974 that Aaron hit his 715th home run, passing Ruth as the game's home run king. Aaron's history-making feat was marred somewhat by the racism Aaron experienced. He and his family received racially motivated death threats from people unhappy that a black man

See Aaron on A10

McCoy ready to lead LISC

Agency has lent support to many community projects

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Paula McCoy knows a thing or two about community. Growing up one of 13 children taught her about living, sharing and cooperating with others. Now McCoy hopes to use the lessons she learned from her large family in her position as the new program director at Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC) Winston-Salem.



McCoy

"I learned a lot about community from my father because that's something he instilled in me," said McCoy. "He spent a lot of time rounding up the children in the community, and we also had a big family. So I know a lot about community. It does start with family."

McCoy succeeds LISC's founding program director, Terri Beckman, who will start a community development consulting practice in Durham. LISC celebrated Beckman's contributions to the organization and welcomed McCoy to her new post on May 24 with a "Passing the Torch" celebration.

"(Beckman) did leave some pearls of wisdom for sure. She was a dynamic director. She set the foundation for this work being the founding director. Her advice has been not just to me but to the community to be honest with each other," McCoy said.

LISC helps resident-led community development corporations (CDCs) improve neighborhoods in Winston-Salem.

See LISC on A4

Woman's prayers being answered

21-year-old has gone from unwed, unemployed teen mother to homeowner in a few years

BY T. KEVIN WALKER
THE CHRONICLE

Carlene Riwdy says she knows the power of faith and the potency of believing in it.

Four years ago, Riwdy was a pregnant, high school dropout who had just been thrown out of the house by her mother. Today, she's 21, a loving mother, beloved employee and a soon-to-be homeowner. Her friends say her story is both remarkable and inspirational. Riwdy says her story was written by the hands of God.

"My thing is that I have always just prayed and had faith and held on," she said.

Like the housekeeping job she now has and the new three-bedroom, two-bath homes she will soon move into, Riwdy counts Dolores McGee as a blessing sent to her by God.

McGee has been by Riwdy's side for the last three years as Riwdy's life has taken a sharp turn for the better. McGee can still vividly recall the day the two meet. McGee and other members of the United Methodist Women from St. Paul United Methodist Church had come to Goodwill to explore the possibility of serving as mentors to some of the young women there in the welfare-to-work program. The women from St. Paul almost immediately began to pair up with the younger women. Riwdy, who was in the Goodwill program at the time, knew that McGee was the mentor she wanted.

"I just saw this little girl sitting over in the corner and she looked up and said 'I want you Mrs. McGee,'" McGee recalled. In McGee, Riwdy has found the motherly love that she has so longed for. The relationship between Riwdy and her birth mother has been estranged for years.

"In the process of me praying and reading my Word, God sent me a mother," Riwdy said, smiling and looking at McGee. In many ways, McGee and Riwdy have been more like mother and daughter than blood kin. McGee drove Riwdy to her very first job

See Riwdy on A10



Dolores McGee, left, helps Carlene Riwdy pack for Riwdy's move.

Photo by Kevin Walker

A SPLASH OF COLOR



Photo by Kevin Walker

On a warm, sunny day this week, children at the YWCA Empowering Family Center used a bright parachute to have some summer fun.

Black opera house finding footing

BY COURTNEY GAILLARD
THE CHRONICLE

Jarvis Hester has always wanted to be an opera singer. When the 25-year-old returned to Winston-Salem last year he decided to start an opera company for young, black, aspiring singers like himself looking to get their voices heard through the stage door. And so Triad Opera Theatre, "America's Premiere Young African-American Artist Program," was born in September.

Hester hopes to tap into local audiences of color who have not been exposed to the theatrical music genre.

"It's such a great cause, helping young African-Americans break into a field that, frankly, we've been held out of," said Hester. "We have so many great ideas and possibilities. It's just a matter of getting the funding behind it."

Hester is looking to "Change the Face of Opera," as the company's slogan goes, as the only other African-American opera company in the United States, second to Ebony Opera - the country's longest surviving African-American opera company, which is based in New York.

Triad Opera, which also succeeds Piedmont Opera Company in Winston-Salem, has received an endorsement from

See Opera on A5



Photo by Kevin Walker

Jarvis Hester and Triad Opera Theatre singer Sonya Bennett-Brown have high hopes for the company.



In Grateful Memory of Our Founders, Florrie S. Russell and Carl H. Russell, Sr.

"Growing and Still Dedicated to Serve You Better"
Russell Funeral Home
Wishes to Thank Everyone For Their Support

822 Carl Russell Ave.
(at Martin Luther King Dr.)
Winston-Salem, NC 27101
(336) 722-3459
Fax (336) 631-8268
russhome@bellsouth.net

The Only Choice for African-American and Community News