

Workshops slated for groups aiming to help at-risk young people

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Center for Community Safety of Winston-Salem State University and Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods will hold orientation sessions on Jan. 19 and Jan. 21 for Operation Strengthen, a project funded by a \$548,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Operation Strengthen is a "capacity-building" project for faith-based and community-based organizations serving "at-risk" young people in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. Organizations meeting the eligibility requirements will have the opportunity to apply and receive free technical assistance, training, and sub-awards of up to \$11,000.

The Center for Community Safety is a community-based center of Winston-Salem State University that helps shape the way local communities respond to violence impacting residents. Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods provides grants, training, and technical assistance in leadership and development to Winston-Salem-Forsyth County organizations.

Attendance at one of the two orientation sessions is mandatory for eligibility.

To register for orientation or for more information visit www.centerforcommunitysafety.org or call Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods at (336) 631-9407.

Food bank will add job training component

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

For years, the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina has supplied food to dozens of agencies that feed thousands of people. But now the agency is expanding its mission to include job training for the economically disadvantaged.

Second Harvest will soon open the Triad Community Kitchen, a job training and food preparation venture.

"The Triad Community Kitchen is going to be a unique program that helps people in need on many levels," said Nan Holbrook Griswold, executive director. "The Community Kitchen will provide a job training program for 100 low-income and homeless individuals each year, giving them the basic skills they need to begin a career in food services. A chef will be hired who is a certified ServSafe trainer for safe food handling."

Second Harvest collects more than 9 million pounds of food each year, much of which would've been thrown away, from grocery stores, food companies, a community garden, and regional and national food drives. The food is inspected, sorted, and stored in a 65,000-square-foot warehouse for distribution to more than 380 partner agencies that provide more than 650 programs for people in need in 18 counties from Boone to Burlington.

Some of the foods Second Harvest receives are perishables, such as produce. Often the food bank will receive food when it's already near the end of its shelf life. Sometimes the food bank might have to use it within a week or a few days after receiving it. The Community Kitchen will solve that problem for many foods Second Harvest receives with short shelf lives, by transforming them into something more useful that will last longer.



Nan Griswold takes Attorney General Roy Cooper on a tour of the food bank's warehouse in 2005.

"It will also enable us to use the abundance of available perishable product to prepare food for our partner agencies feeding the hungry. Because of the unique process method used - the cook-chill method - the food will remain fresh in a refrigerator for four to six weeks, and longer if frozen," said Griswold.

According to Associate Director Mark Uren, the majority of the kitchen staff that prepares the food will be made of homeless and low-income trainees. Their work in the kitchen will be on a volunteer basis, but the training they will receive will be similar to what one might pay for at a technical college. The chef will train them in safe food handling and kitchen skills, giving them abilities that will make them marketable to restaurants and other food services.

Uren said those who are unemployed or underemployed could use the skills they learn to get a job earning \$9 or \$10 an hour. These skills could take many from minimum wage to a living wage.

The Community Kitchen will be located in Second Harvest's food warehouse. Second Harvest insulated floor space, ran electrical wiring and roughed in plumbing for the kitchen when Second Harvest expanded the warehouse in 2001. But the

funding to finish the project wasn't there. Now Second Harvest has raised more than 75 percent of the \$492,702 cost for construction. With commitments for more than \$370,000, only \$122,702 remains to be raised for construction, and \$92,670 is still needed for the first year's operating costs. If all this can be raised by March 31, 2006, the Kate B Reynolds Charitable Trust will donate \$75,000 toward construction.

Uren said that he hopes construction will begin on the kitchen in the spring.

The local Second Harvest is part of America's Second Harvest, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, with more than 200 regional food banks and food rescue programs, serving all 50 states and Puerto Rico. There are more than 80 Community Kitchens across the nation. The national network distributes 1.9 billion pounds of food to 50,000 nonprofit organizations serving those in need across the nation.

For more information about the local Second Harvest or to make a donation, go to its Web site, www.hungerwnc.org.

Film

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always imagined her. Georgia starts out emotionally handicapped, someone who can't really speak her mind. Latifah really dug deep and came through with those scenes as the character deals with her own emotions about dying."

LL Cool J, who has known Latifah for many years, takes on the role of Sean, Georgia's co-worker and the object of a crush. For that part of the role, Latifah was able to call back old feelings. "He's a very handsome guy, and I had a crush on him when I was growing up," Latifah admitted, "so I just recall how I felt when I

had his poster on my wall."

LL Cool J responded with surprise when told of Latifah's childhood infatuation. "Really? I didn't know that. We've known each other a long time, and playing scenes with her has been wonderful. She's such a smart young woman. She's taught me a few things."

In 2004 Latifah received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress, a Golden Globe nomination and a SAG Award nomination for her portrayal as Mama Morton in Miramax's "Chicago." After that, she starred in Disney's box office hit "Bringing Down the House," on which she also acted as execu-

tive producer through her company, Flavor Unit Entertainment.

She most recently starred in and produced the "Barbershop" spin-off "Beauty Shop." Along with the 2004 comedy "Taxi," her other films include "Set It Off," "Living Out Loud," "Brown Sugar," "Bone Collector," and "Jungle Fever," her film debut.

She also serves as co-chair for the Lancelot H. Owens Scholarship Foundation Inc. Established by her mother, Rita Owens, to perpetuate the memory of a loving son and brother, the foundation provides scholarships to students who excel scholastically but are limited in financial resources.

BET

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important strategic moves. First, it launched a home entertainment business through a groundbreaking retail deal with Wal-Mart stores to sell BET-branded content nationwide. Next, the company unveiled BET Mobile, a venture to access the lucrative world of ring tones, games and video content for wireless devices. BET then completed its realignment of assets by selling the BET Books division to publishing giant Harlequin Enterprises.

BET's programming engine was running full throttle in 2005 with a mix of mega-specials and proven favorites forming the right tonic for viewers. The '05 BET Awards earned the title of most-watched program ever by African-Americans in the history of cable television (Nielsen Media Research, 1996-present). Overall, 6.6 million viewers watched the annual showcase nationally across all demographics.

For the year, BET's daily sign-on to sign-off rating was .50, which calculates to an average of 485,000 viewers and 406,000 households tuning in - easily the best performance in the network's 25-year history.

Black college reality show "College Hill" was cable's No. 1 half-hour original program among African-American households during the first quarter of 2005. Viewer favorites like "106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live," "Bobby Jones Gospel," "Black-Buster Cinema," and a blend of syndicated sitcoms highlighted by "In Living Color" and "The Jamie Foxx Show" were consistent draws in their time slots.

BET struck a heartfelt cord with all of America in September with "S.O.S. (Saving OurSelves): THE BET Relief Telethon," which raised more than \$12 million in pledges and contributions for Hurricane Katrina victims.

News-focused specials performed well again for BET in December as "Richard Pryor: The Funniest Man Dead or Alive," a documentary on the life and death of Pryor, attracted 1.1 million viewers.

Going forward, BET's strategy rests on a re-energized commitment to more original programming. Lee announced in July the hiring of acclaimed Hollywood producer and director

Reginald Hudlin as BET president of entertainment. Hudlin's charge is to establish a solid pipeline of original programming from sources inside and outside of BET.

"We're giving Reggie and his team the latitude and resources to shake things up," said Lee. "The payoff may not happen overnight, but we're definitely moving in the right direction."

Hudlin has already had an impact. He led a multicity, coast-to-coast casting call that attracted thousands of candidates from which BET will unveil fresh new talent for a range of network

shows. BET's news and public affairs programming has been infused with a more contemporary delivery that shifts from half-hour newscasts to news briefs throughout the day; increases the number of issues-driven news specials; and further leverages the BET.com Internet portal as a news content source.

Next for Hudlin and BET is a slate of new 2006 programming that includes more genre-busting reality series; an unconventional talk show with religious leaders debating hot topics; a fast-paced news magazine; and more high-energy specials.

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