

A DOGGONE GOOD LAW



State of N.C. Photo

Susie, a pit-bull mix, joined legislators and state leaders earlier last month as Gov. Bev Perdue signs a bill into law that is named for the canine. Susie's Law, which passed the N.C. Senate 47-0, makes sentences much harsher to anyone who harms an animal. Susie is one lucky dog. When she was just a pup, her owner beat her and set her on fire. Public outrage was sparked when he received probation for his actions. Susie has since been adopted by a loving family.



Photos by Layla Farmer

Shawne Butler waits with some of the children from the Communities In Schools program outside Kimberley Park Pool last week.

Pools

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Kimberley Park Pool on Wednesday were not happy about the regulations. A group of children and counselors from the Willows Peake branch of Communities In Schools day camp waited outside the pool for nearly an hour after Pool Manager Hannah Sweat refused their admission. Sweat said all groups that enter the pool must have registered with the city and completed an orientation process before they can bring children in.

CIS Site Coordinator Willie Coker said he was aware of the new safety regulations, but knew nothing of the registration process.

"We are not going to ever fool with that pool again because that was a big turnoff for us," said Coker, who was eventually forced to bring the children back to Willows Peake after being denied admission. "...I understand them being safe over here, but there are such things as being too drastic."

Coker's niece, Onsite Coordinator Shante Baker, said she supported the regulations, despite the fact that they presented an inconvenience to the group.

"To save a life, we'll do anything; I don't care if we have to stay out here for an extra hour," she declared. "...I think it's needed because nobody's parents are here. I don't want anything to happen to anybody's child."

Butler said the one-time registration process has been in place for some time and is



Photos by Layla Farmer

Hannah Sweat

not part of the new policies. Liability papers must be filled out and signed by each group leader, and an orientation is conducted to acclimate them with pool rules. Groups must also notify pools of their intentions to visit, so that pool managers can ensure there are enough life guards on duty, he explained.

Sweat said she likes the new regulations, even though they do sometimes cause discord with would-be pool

goers.

"We haven't had any rescues this year, which is awesome," she said, noting that in the past, life guards have had to aid weak swimmers who become fatigued in the water or non swimmers who venture out over their heads. "...I'm still observing the pool and I'm still on edge, but it makes me a little less stressed out. I feel more safe knowing that 50-90 percent of the kids are in life jackets."

Butler thinks the new regulations are a good move



Life jacket policies are posted in Spanish and English.

for the city, and may have even helped attendance at the pools.

"I am noticing more people at the pools ... more families at the pools, which is very positive," he related. "We are very excited."

For the first time, the city is also offering free swimming lessons at all of its pools, waiving the \$20 fee that was traditionally charged for a three-week session. The change has resulted in a boom in participation. Nearly 350 swimmers signed up for the first session, Grant said.

"At a time when the economy is hurting everybody, we felt it was important to move towards that," he stated. "...I think it's providing them an opportunity to learn how to swim, but it is also helping their wellness and fitness."

For more information about pool regulations or to register a group, contact Butler at (336) 734-1212.



Submitted Photos

Art of Change poets pose inside of Diggs Gallery.

MOA

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year, The Art of Change is gaining popularity in the local community.

"I'm trying to keep it very classy," said Art of Change Founder LaShun Huntley. "I wanted a nice environment for people to come out and have a good time."

Huntley, a visual artist, said he was inspired to create The Art of Change, which raises money for MOA through its ticket sales, after listening to a song by old school rapper KRS One that had a socially conscious message. He worked with a five-member committee to form the Art of Change, which fuses music, poetry and food to create a unique affair that holds its performers to only two rules: they cannot use profanity and their poems must have a "community conscious" message.

"I can really see it growing into something big," commented Charles "Chuck" Crouch, who helped to organize The Art of Change. "...Every event gets better and better because I think people are starting to see what we're trying to do."

Crouch, whose pen name is "Silentwar," was one of the performers at the inaugural event, and has graced the stage at every Art of Change gathering since. A city native, Crouch has to make the trek from Raleigh, where he now resides to take part, but he says the long com-



Chuck Crouch

mute to the Twin City is well worth it.

"Anything that's going to help build up strong black men, I'm definitely for that," he remarked. "...The thing I like the most about it is it shows us in a different light as black men. It shows that some of us are trying to do positive things."

The Art of Change is the chief fundraiser for Men of Action, which is slated to officially launch around the start of the 2010-11 school year. The program, which Huntley founded with Marcellus Sunday, a well-known local mentor, is currently working to obtain non-profit designation. Huntley says the MOA will be housed at at least three different locations throughout the city, where small groups of boys will gather to meet with mentors and participate in a variety of workshops and training sessions.

"We have to stand up and be role models to young men," he stated.

Huntley and Sunday founded MOA last summer, after reading a study that

found that many male high school dropouts have mentally and emotionally "dropped out" of school by the time they reach the third grade.

"There's a high percentage of African American men who are not graduating high school, who are not achieving higher education," said Huntley, who currently serves as coordinator of the Forsyth County Department of Public Health's Healthy Community Coalitions. "That's a major problem."

Huntley has spent much of his career mentoring men and boys. The 42 year-old father of three has served as an educator in the local school system and as a case manager with Big Brothers Big Sisters. In 1999, he founded the MECCA (Men Excelling in Character Courage and Achievement) program for middle school aged boys, which he later merged into a joint effort with Sunday. Most recently, he worked with the Health Department's Fathers and Friends program for men who are supporting pregnant or parenting females.

"I see this as part of my service to humanity," Huntley said of his extensive community involvement. "...I look at it as my responsibility. I think God places things on people's hearts for a reason."

For more information about MOA, The Art of Change, or to volunteer, contact Huntley at (336) 686-0680 or MenOfAction@gmail.com.



Coker

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WS Spotlight

Member Spotlight: **Charles "Chuck" Crouch**, Chairman of Community & Cultural Development at Reynolds American. Part involved with the Chamber: 2 Secrets of His Success: "My role with Reynolds gives me the opportunity to work closely with the Chamber. It's been very good for me and the company to engage with the other businesses in Winston-Salem through the Chamber, while we look for ways to make Winston-Salem a better place to live and work."

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