



Piedmont Bible College volunteers hard at work at the Best Choice Center last week.

Photos by Layla Farmer

**Volunteers**

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by a handful of members from the local chapter of The Links, Inc., an international service organization for professional women of color. The Links have served in various capacities at the Best Choice Center for the last two years and were instrumental in bringing the Bible College volunteers to the Center.

Linda Jackson-Barnes, a longtime Links member who serves as special assistant to Mayor Allen Joines, helped to snag the volunteers after officials from the College approached Joines in search of a project for their semiannual volunteer effort. Volunteers from the school also spent time last week working in a community garden in the West Salem neighborhood and helping to organize the library at Diggs-Latham Elementary School.

"I knew the College had a lot of manpower, and I knew that there was a great need here," explained Jackson-Barnes, who has worked with the mayor since he took office in 2002. "I am overwhelmed (by the response). We have such a willing community and a community of sharing."

Link Mable Stevenson coordinates the volunteer efforts of her fellow chapter members at the Best Choice



Morgan Huffman and her boyfriend, fellow Bible College student Zach Decker, both volunteered.

Center. The women recently collaborated with the children at the Center to grow an on-site garden. Several Links regularly serve as tutors at the Best Choice Center, which also offers summer programs and temporary education options for students who have been suspended from school.

"It's been wonderful; it's been a great experience," Stevenson said of working with the youth. "I think the kids appreciate it and the parents appreciate it."

Bible College volunteers helped to clean and reorganize the Center's kitchen in preparation for a Kids Cafe feeding program leaders at

the Center hope to launch next month. An initiative of the Second Harvest Food Bank, Kids Cafes provide young people with wholesome meals at youth-focused facilities throughout the county.

YWCA Vice President of Youth Services Courtney Saunders, who leads the Best Choice Center, said the work that was done would greatly enhance the quality of life for the children and staff members.

"There's just so many things that they're doing. It's going to be like a refurbished facility once they are finished," declared Saunders, who has worked for the YWCA for more than 20 years. "We are just so pleased that they are here. I'm excited about all of it, but I'm especially excited for the kids."

Of all the projects that took place, Saunders said she was most looking forward to having the Center's piano tuned. She dreams of hosting musical programs at the Center for the parents and hopes to somebody create a Best Choice Center Choir.

"It's just a blessing," she said with a wide smile. "We're just totally elated about it. We're very appreciative."

For more information about the Best Choice Center, call (336) 722-0597 or visit [www.ywca-ws.org](http://www.ywca-ws.org).

**Oct. 15 Symposium designed to benefit minority contractors**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Goler Community Development Corp., together with the Piedmont Triad Research Park, will host its Second Annual Symposium on Oct. 15 at the Piedmont Triad Research Park.

The Symposium is designed specifically to help contractors and subcontractors learn how they can participate in both private and publically-funded projects. The Symposium will take place from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Research Park's meeting facility at 115 S. Chestnut Street.

The Symposium's goal is also to provide networking opportunities among majority- and minority-owned contractors and subcontractors so that they can partner on bids for public work. More than 100 people attended the first conference last year, and this year's attendance is expected to surpass 200.



Representatives from public and private entities that have upcoming development projects and are committed to including minority contractors and subcontractors will be on hand, including ones from the N.C. Department of Transportation, Novant Health, High Point University, N.C. A&T State University, Piedmont Triad International Airport, Smith Reynolds Airport, Wake Forest University and the Piedmont Triad Research Park.

One session, led by Wexford, a developer for the Research Park, and Whiting-Turner, a general contractor, will focus on how local companies can bid for work on 575 Patterson Avenue, an \$87 million Research Park renovation just beginning in one of the old RJ Reynolds warehouses in the Park's Northern District.

Among the general local and regional contractors who have formed partnerships with the help of the Goler symposium are Rentenbach and Weaver Cooke Construction (both have partnered with Matthews Enterprises, LLC; Weaver-Cooke has also partnered with the Mention Group, LLC), and Frank L. Blum Construction Co., which has partnered with Metropolitan Drywall & Ceiling.

Advance registration for the conference is \$75 per person. There is \$90 fee for registration at the door. More information about registration is available at [www.golercdc.org](http://www.golercdc.org) or by calling 336-761-0595.

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