

**Shoes**  
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Hargrove decorated with the Dallas Cowboys' logo, that he deemed them "Crantastic," a term that Hargrove quickly adopted. Davis, the father of three, has since commissioned Hargrove to decorate more than 20 pairs of shoes for him and his family.

"It's original—everything is original," said Davis, a Carver High School alumnus. "You walk around the city and you'll be the only person with that design. You don't have to worry about looking like anybody else."

Davis was not alone in his admiration for Hargrove's work. Hargrove sold over 100 pairs in his first year, but he wasn't satisfied. He continued working to perfect his craft and improve his designs.

"I'm a Virgo, so I want everything to be perfect," he remarked. "You've got to love what you're doing. It takes a lot of patience."

Hargrove, the elder of two children, says he uses the best leather paints available and spends anywhere from four to seven hours carefully fashioning each pair. Although there are other local creative types who also decorate shoes, Hargrove believes it's his attention to detail that sets his work apart.

"I do good work—good, clean work," he related. "Some people do rush jobs and they just want to get the money. I love doing it. That's why I take my time."

Stephon Wolfard, the owner of Comfort Zone heating and air company and another longtime friend, has a collection of Hargrove's works.

"I feel good," the 33 year-old said of donning a pair of Crantastic Soles. "I feel different; I feel unique, and I definitely feel that I got the most out of my outfit that I paid good money for. Those shoes really will make a difference."

Hargrove also does women's shoes—everything from pumps to ankle boots—which he embellishes with paint, glitter and jeweled studs.

"I try to see what the trends are, but I try to stay away from that and go another route," he explained. "They can wear a white blouse with it because their feet are gonna stick out regardless."

Despite his passion, shoe decorating remained a side venture for Hargrove, the father of one son, until January 2010, when he was laid off from his job as a Salvation Army case worker. Since that time, Hargrove has made his living solely off the income he generates from



Photo by Layla Farmer

**Hargrove shows off some of his designs for the ladies.**

the shoes and custom t-shirts he designs and sells locally and online—to places as far away as Italy.

When he isn't creating works of art, Hargrove is very likely to be making his mark in other arenas. For more than a decade, he has been a fixture in both the Winston Lake Family YMCA's YBA basketball league and the Steelers Pop Warner organization, where he has coached youngsters since his son, Pharoah, a rising senior at Carver High School, was a tot.

"Some people coach kids and get into that stuff for the wrong reasons," he stated. "I'm out there because I want to be out there, not because of any obligation."

Hargrove, who lost an infant son to SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) 16 years ago, says he feels called to be a role model to children, especially those who may not have a father in their lives or could use a boost of self confidence.

"Most of the kids I know that made it, they had somebody behind them, they had somebody telling them that they can do it. I want to be that person, if it ain't but for the hour and a half that you're coming to me (as a member of my team)," he declared. "I let them know that they can do anything and don't let anybody stop you from doing what you want to do."

Hargrove dreams of someday starting ventures where he can merge his passions for children and shoe decorating. Whatever the future holds, Crantastic Soles shows no signs of stopping.

"I love doing the work. I'm passionate about what I'm doing," Hargrove declared. "I'm just looking for those people who want their shoe game to be a little different, who take pride in their show game and who appreciate art."

For more information about Hargrove's products, find Crantastic Soles on Ebay or Facebook.

**Job seekers answer CAT's roar**

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

The shaky state of the economy was evident Tuesday, as job seekers flooded onto Forsyth Technical Community College's West Campus in hopes of landing a job at the much-hyped Caterpillar plant slated to open in Forsyth County next year.

CAT, an international manufacturer known for the school bus yellow construction equipment it churns out, held its very first job fair for the new plant at FTCC, which will play a key role in training local CAT workers.

Thousands braved the scorching heat and long lines for their chance at one of the assembler, painter, quality technician or forklift driver positions that the company is now looking to fill.

Lexington resident Ryan Lindsay waited in traffic for nearly an hour before reaching the job fair. The 28 year-old newlywed said he had seen the huge turnout on the TV news before making the trip, but being out of work for the last six months made the excursion a necessity, he said.

"I'd like to have a job so that's definitely my number one priority," said Lindsay, the father of a two year-old daughter. "I'm hopeful. I know eventually there's going to be something (for me)."

Alduse Lettsome, 38, had been waiting for close to two hours by the time job fair organizers began calling those who had been issued ticket numbers around 1400. Lettsome, whose ticket bore the number 2181, said he didn't mind the lull.

"It's a possibility there's a job in there waiting on me so I'm going to have to wait," said the father of two, who has been job hunting since he relocated to the Twin City from his native St. Thomas, Virgin Islands four months ago. "...It's either you want a job or you don't—perseverance is key."

City natives Shelia Taylor and her brother Carl Morrison squeezed onto one of the few available benches in the shade in the building's courtyard. Both Taylor and Morrison had been



Photos Layla Farmer

**Shelia Taylor poses with her brother Carl Morrison.**

laid off after long stints at former local powerhouses. Taylor, a grandmother of five, was cut from Hanesbrands last summer, after 19 years of service. Morrison was just three years shy of full retirement when he was dismissed from RJ Reynolds in 2008.

"Those are the breaks," he said, shrugging off his ill fortune. "A lot of other people got laid off too."

Despite having no steady income to care for the four grandchildren and one great grandchild that live in her home, Taylor says she has managed to stay positive during her 11 months of unemployment.

"You can't worry about what you can't change. It's nothing I did wrong (to get laid off). You just have to roll with the punches," she declared. "(Finding employment) is almost like a needle in a haystack, but all you can do is try."

East Forsyth alumnus Eric Rankins left his job working stock for Dillard's department store in March in search of better opportunities. Rankins, who is studying biotechnology at Forsyth Tech's main campus, dreams of becoming a research associate someday. In the meantime, however, Rankins says he just needs a paycheck.

"I'm just looking for something to have some income coming in," related the 40 year-old.

Despite the crowd that descended upon the job fair, Rankins said he felt confident that he would stand out—if not at the fair, then before another employer in the near future.

"I'm very optimistic," he declared. "As a born again Christian, I put my faith and my trust in Jesus Christ; He's my ultimate provider. I just believe He will open up a door for me."

For more information about available positions at the local plant, visit [www.jointeamcaterpillar.com](http://www.jointeamcaterpillar.com).



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