

Bullying

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school for more than a year, until the abuse became physical. When the bully pushed Kofi's head into a window on the school bus, Kofi finally broke the silence.

McIver said he was shocked to learn the extent of his son's suffering. He and Evans met with the abusive child's parents and with school administrators in search of a solution. In the end, it was Kofi who put a stop to the ordeal.

"Kofi was the most effective in addressing the problem," McIver said. "He went to the boy and said, 'You don't really realize the good friend that you're missing out on.' After that, Kofi became a little leader in his class."

Today, Kofi is back on track, and excelling in his third grade class at Phoenix Academy in High Point, but McIver said the experience made an impression on him. In hopes of sparing others from the heartache his family suffered because of bullying, the Wake Forest School of Law alumnus founded an anti-bullying program that he hopes will change the mindset of area youth.

"I've wanted to do something for awhile. As a lawyer, I wanted to give back and get a social action program together, and this just seemed like a good fit for my practice," he said of the project, which will target local students through a variety of local partnerships and initiatives. "I have just a soft spot for kids."

The project began in earnest last week, when The Law Offices of Roderick T. McIver footed the bill for 20 high school students from the Goler Institute for Development and Education's Youth Education Academy (GIDE-YEA) to travel to Greensboro to see "Bully," a groundbreaking documentary about peer-to-peer bullying in America. GIDE-YEA Program Director Bill McClain said he was grateful for the law firm's support.

"I appreciate him having the courage to step forward. Most adults don't get involved in youth issues," said McClain, who has worked with young people for close to two

decades. "It'll set an example for the kids and let them know that there are adults who care about them, and that makes them care about themselves more."

McIver, who was out of town over the weekend and unable to make the trip to the movies, met briefly with the youth on Thursday at Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy. As the students gathered around him in the school's gymnasium, McIver shared Kofi's story and his aspirations for the program, which has yet to be named.

"Luckily, we were able to address it and help try to fix it, but it never should've happened," he stated. "He didn't deserve to be bullied."

Eighteen year-old Maleek Peoples said he already has a low tolerance for bullying.

"I don't condone it," stated Peoples, a senior at Carver High School and longtime GIDE participant. "I don't like it happening around me, so I try to stop it as best as I can."

GIDE participant Darrell Sims says he understands how easy it can be to get caught up in peer pressure and forget the effects bullying can have on its victims.

"It's been a couple of occurrences at school where a couple of kids got bullied," related Sims, the fourth of seven children. "At the time, I was going along with ... the bullying, then a couple of my friends actually got on me about it."

Sims says one of his schoolmates committed suicide because he was being bullied. The West Forsyth senior added that he now realizes the gravity of the situation, and would handle things differently if he witnessed an act of bullying again.

"You've got a lot of kids committing suicide," he pointed out.

McIver said he hopes his program will help students like Sims to recognize the danger in condoning or participating in bullying before it's too late.

"My whole focus is to make it uncool," he said.

For more information about McIver's anti-bullying program, visit www.nobullybumper.com.



Sims



Peoples



Photos by Layla Garms

Local Christians left their hands in prayer on Tuesday evening.

Residents come together to pray

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

Christians from across the city convened at Old Salem Tuesday evening to take part in "Come Alive, Winston-Salem."

The citywide prayer event was the first staged by the Winston-Salem branch of the New Canaan Society — an international group for male Christians — and Love Out Loud, a local organization that fosters Christian love through community outreach.

James Helvey III hosted Tuesday's gathering, which also included women. He is one of the founders of the Winston-Salem Chapter of the New Canaan Society. Helvey said he attended a New Canaan Society national retreats following his unsuccessful bid for U.S. Congress in 2004, and felt compelled to bring the organization's message and mission to the Twin City.

"It's really just men getting together based on friendship with each other and based on friendship with Jesus Christ," Helvey said. "It's really just men telling their story about how God has been active in their lives."

The local chapter, which meets twice a week, boasts 400 active members, representing more than 50 local churches. Love Out Loud Leader Chuck Spang is also a mem-



Kalim Andraos reads.



Terrance Hawkins (left) with Chuck Spang.

ber of the Society, which he describes as "a life-giving group of guys, energizing one another and growing together."

praised the event, calling it unlike any he has seen in the Twin City.

"Things like this don't happen a lot as far as across denominational lines and racial lines and socio-economic lines," said Hawkins, who serves in Winston-Salem First's Outreach and Evangelism department. "I think it's a unique thing and hopefully, a sign of renewal for the city."

Hawkins said he believed the event's inclusive nature would breed other good things for Winston-Salem.

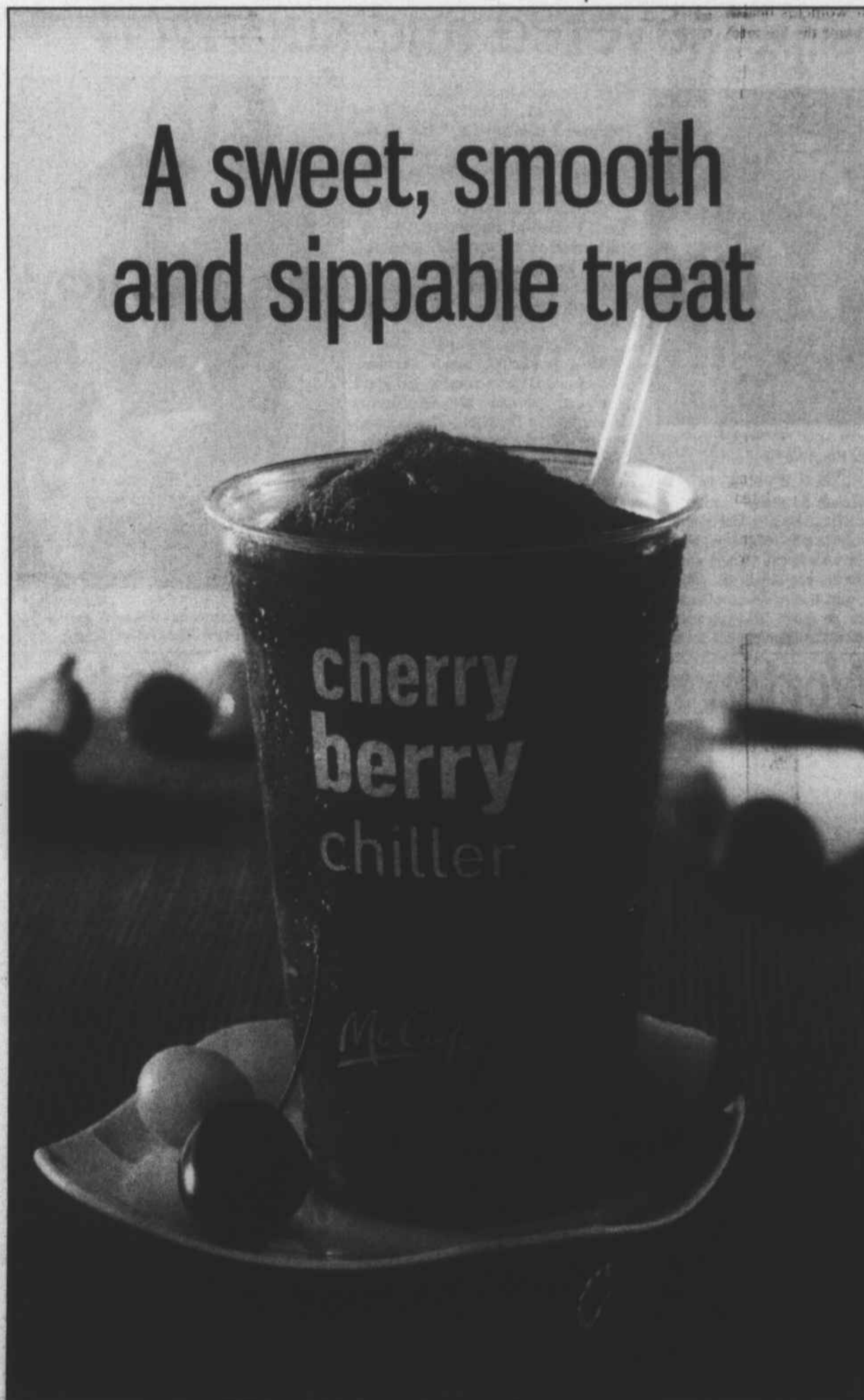
"I just see it as a group of people who love Jesus and love this city linking arms to pray and ask God to accomplish his work in this city of redemption and renewal," concluded the Mount Tabor alumnus.

Andraos was one of six bilingual men who read a designated prayer in their native tongues during the "Come Alive" service. He also led the group in a Prayer of Repentance, one of six formal prayers offered as part of Come Alive.

Audience members murmured their fervent agreement as one prayer melted into the next.

City native Terrance Hawkins

For more information about the New Canaan Society, visit www.newcanaansociety.org. For more information about Love Out Loud, visit www.loveoutloudws.com.



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