

THE CHRONICLE

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Nonprofit brings Christmas joy

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

The holiday season can be a tough time for a family when funds are tight. COVID-19 has placed many Forsyth County residents in this trying predicament. But thanks to Rasheeda Shankle and Honorable Youth Inc. (HYI), some struggling families will have something to smile about Christmas morning.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, HYI held a drive-through Christmas toy drive to collect as many toys as possible to distribute to needy families. They also distributed donated toys to children enrolled in their Angel Tree Program.

"Today we are just trying to bring a little Christmas joy to the city of Winston-Salem, considering everything that is going on with the pandemic," said

Shankle.

HYI is a nonprofit that works with area youth and parents to help them achieve intergenerational economic security. Shankle, executive director of HYI, says they also do a lot of financial literacy workshops with the families to assist them in becoming financially stable.

The idea for the angel tree came to Shankle out of sheer need. While communicating with the families involved with her nonprofit, one of their biggest fears was not being able to provide anything to their children for Christmas. Shankle and her team then jumped into action.

"During the pandemic, we have been providing rent and utilities assistance for our parents and what we did was we sent out an email asking how



Submitted photos

A mother and her young daughter pick up their toys from the toy drive.



Honorable Youth Inc. provided toys for 30 families this holiday season.

they were doing during the holiday season and all of our families weren't really able to do anything for their kids this year," Shankle said. "So, we got an angel tree and collected donations and we were able to get gifts for 30 of our families."

Shankle is glad to be able to provide assistance to those in their time of need.

"It's going to be awesome just to see them smile," she said. "We visited some families and took food boxes to them and since many people have been in bad spirits, we are excited to see the joy it's going to bring to the kids."

The pandemic has impacted us all in some way. For the families connected with HYI, the impact has been devastating.

"A lot of our families couldn't even pay rent," she continued. "By the grace of God, we were able to receive grant funding from the Winston-Salem Foundation and with that we were able to take some of the financial burden off of those families, but it wasn't a lot."

"We still have families right now that can't pay utility bills for this upcoming month, because they still are out of work."

According to Shankle, the HYI is working on

expanding their career development program to assist the parents in their program with obtaining essential jobs. They are also looking to get into affordable housing because that is also a need for their families.

Shankle says the positive messages she receives from the families she assists fuels her to continue to do more.

"To be able to be a support system for them is just amazing," she said. "Everyone has been very thankful and grateful for the services we have provided."

Local Ministers' Conference preparing for the future

'Praying will not be the last resort anymore.'

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Although there are few weeks left in 2020, the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity (MCWSV) is already laying the groundwork for 2021. At the end of each term the president of the Ministers' Conference is required to provide a report looking back at some of the accomplishments of the organization, and on Tuesday, Dec. 15, Pastor Tembila Covington gave her report and discussed the future of the organization.

Covington, who will be serving her second term

as president, is the founder and senior pastor of Crossing Red Sea Ministries in Rockingham, N.C. In her first term Covington said her focus was to build unity and strengthen collaborations with the community.

"Coming in I shared that I hoped that we worked together as a unified front and I said that envisioned faith leaders engaged in friendly and productive associations, collaborating and working together," Covington said. And in her second term she's looking to build on that success.

Under her leadership, along with a host of



other accomplishments, the Ministers' Conference helped raise more than \$28,000 in scholarships for local students, established the Julius Sampson scholarship, partnered with local organizations

on the #BLM street mural, hosted voter registration drives, community prayer events, established community gardens, and much more. The Conference also gained its highest number of paid members in nearly

a decade.

Moving forward, Covington said, "I envision faith leaders, laypersons, and people of all age groups working together engaged in productive collaborations and harnessing resources. ... strengthening relationships, communication, and partnerships with local, state, and national agencies, community stakeholders and nonprofits."

Covington also discussed a 'three-tiered approach' to reaching their goal that is guided by faith. She said as faith leaders, the conference has to remember to put God first.

"We have gone through

some trying times in 2020 with this pandemic and one thing it has made me to realize is that we need to remember as faith leaders to put God first," she continued. "This is not a political organization, it is about justice. It is about faith and we need to ensure we're putting all of our efforts, our outreach, our missions, our events on the forefront as faith leaders to make sure we're always representing the type of organization that we are. ... What does that mean? More teaching, more preaching, more theological reflections.

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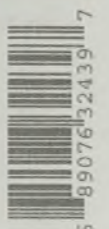
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