## Thursday, June 7, 1984 - THE CHARLOTTE POST - Page 9A Young Wesley Paige Acts Out People's Problems



**RENEE PAYNE** 

Meets rigid requirements

## **Charlottean Renee Payne Receives** National Award

By Loretta Manago Post Staff Writer

.Several years ago the White House noticed that millions of America's school-age children were unfit physically. As a result of this diagnosis, the President's Physical Fitness Award was established. This award was given to students who displayed in excellence.

While children everywhere began doing callisthenics, the academic level began to decline. Therefore, another award was formed - the President's Academic Fitness Award.

Charlottean Renee Payne was one of the 108 students at East Mecklenburg High School who received this high recognition of academic excellence in the initial program of the award.

The Presidential Academic Fitness Award was founded basically to recognize graduating seniors who have attained a high level of academic achievement and pursued a solid core of academic cours-

> achieve and maintain acacemic fitness, encourage parents to support and supervise their childrens' efforts at home and sus-

tain a national interest in the academic fitness of our nation's youth By becoming a recipient

of this award, there were certain rigid requirements that Miss Payne had to meet. Throughout the ninth, 10th, 11th and the first semester of the 12th grade, Miss Payne had to attain a B+ average (equivalent to 3.3 on a 4. scale). In addition to this require-

ment Miss Payne had to

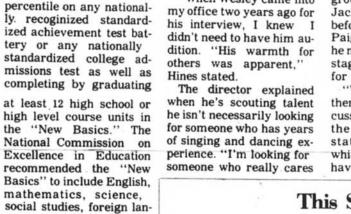
place in at or above the 80th

es, encourage students to

recommended the "New Basics" to include English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language and computer sci-

ence. Miss Payne, a 1984 graduate of East Mecklenburg, received both a pin and a certificate in recognition of her accomplishments. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Payne.

SHOP THE POST



**By Karen Parker** 

**Post Staff Writer** 

company sponsored by

Planned Parenthood,

played to about 9,000 people

Among the 12 members

which make up the troupe

is Wesley Paige. Perform-

ing with FOCUS two years,

some of his roles include

parent of a young daughter

who becomes pregnant,

"These aren't problems

that I've had in my life, but problems many people

can relate to when they see me perform in FOCUS,"

Paige explained. Accord-

ing to the actor, a min-

helped him to communi-

cate with his young, preg-

What qualifies this 18

year old to go on stage at

churches, schools, and con-

ferences and act out peo-

ple's problems and more-

so help them find an-

swers to their problems?

"It's his genuine interest

in people," director Phil

'When Wesley came into

Hines stated proudly.

nant daughter.

ister watching Wesley,

and a teen drug abuser.

this past season.

.FOCUS, a teen theatre



about people and who's enthusiastic," Hines as-sured. "The person may have never been on a stage; but that's o.k. We can teach anyone to act, but we can't teach everyone to care about others." FOCUS performs skits

about teen life from the teenager's point of view There are no scripts. 'Everything I do while on stage comes from within," Paige stated with sincerity. It doesn't matter if the group is performing at Jackson Training School or before a church group, Paige emphasized neither he nor his colleagues are on stage to resolve problems for people.

We act out a scene and then let the audience discuss ways they'd handle the situation," Paige stated. The messages which the troupe delivers have been inspiring, many

organizations have invited the students to perform more than once

Hines is already casting for another season. "I've cast all the girls that I need, but I still need boys,' he commented. Hines isn't looking for anyone who can act exactly like Paige.

"I usually have 12 different kids with 12 different backgrounds," Hines stressed. He explained the differences in race, age, sex, and cultural background is why people in every audience can relate to FOCUS. Being a part of FOCUS

requires dedication and a willingness to render hard work. The troupe will rehearse two nights weekly beginning June 12. The performances begin in September, and participating students receive one academic hour if they remain with the troupe for the entire season. "We have a few out-of-town trips, but the students never seem to mind that," Hines laughed. As for Paige, he won't be eligible for any more per-However, he stated he will drop in on some of the performances and will always be available to assist Hines. Paige commented he

won't ever forget FOCUS. "It has opened my eyes," he said. This summer he is looking for a job preferably in a restaurant. "I know that whenever I find a job, I should always just be my-

self," Paige stated confidently. "That's what I've learned as an actor in

FOCUS. "I gotta be me," he reiterated. Paige mentioned FOCUS has also taught him to avoid making hasty decisions. "If I have a problem I never try to do anything about it, until I've thought it out,"

Paige insisted. He feels wherever he's employed this summer. like FOCUS, it will be a treasured experience. 'The more people I work with the better, because I like people," Paige assured. By listening, I learn from them and I also

like helping them," he noted.

If you want to be a part of the learning experience which FOCUS can provide, telephone Hines at Planned Parenthood, 377-0841, Monday through Friday.

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