



Toure' DuBois Bradley



Tahirah Farrer-Bradley



Brandy Chamell Blackmon



Sierra Ferris-Douglas



Ruby Ann Davidson



Jeri Davis-Westmoreland

These contestants of the "Little Mr. and Little Ms. Simpson-Gillespie" baby contest of Simpson-Gillespie United Methodist Church, hope their

smiles, cries and soulful, sweet looks will encourage you to support one of them in the competition on March 29.

Phifer Succeeds As NBCSL Executive Director

Washington, DC - President of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Representative David P. Richardson Jr., Pennsylvania, announced the appointment of David P. Phifer, Esq., as the new Executive Director of NBCSL. This action was ratified at the first quarterly meeting of the organization's executive board, held in Milwaukee, WI February 7.

Mr. Phifer, former chief counsel for the Department of the State of Pennsylvania, takes the helm of the operation with an enthusiastic perspective. Phifer's background includes a J.D. degree from Yale Law School (1975), and a B.A., Magna Cum Laude, from Lincoln University (1972). His former work experience includes positions with Pennsylvania Department of Health; Pennsylvania State University; legal consultant for Harrisburg School District, Pennsylvania; Dixwell Legal Services, CT, U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Housing Court Litigation Bureau of New

York. Mr. Phifer stated that the organization's challenge is endless.



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New Community Facility Houses Service Agencies

A groundbreaking ceremony was held recently for the Community Services Facility, a unique center housing both private and public agencies and offering a wide range of assistance to persons in emergency situations. The ceremony was at the site of the new facility, on Spratt Avenue, near the intersection of Statesville Avenue and North Graham Street.

The 52,284 square foot facility designed by David Furman of David F. Furman Architecture PA, represents the combined efforts of Mecklenburg County government, United Way of Central Carolinas, Inc., and a number of committees and concerned citizens who have worked for several years to pull together and centralize services that meet certain emergency needs in this community.

The facility was funded with \$1,940,000 in County money, \$350,000 from United Way, and \$20,000 from Metrolina Food Bank. It will house the following: Crisis Assistance Ministry, Crisis Clothing Ministry, Metrolina Food Bank, the Christmas Bureau, Travelers Aid Society, the Department of Social Services Commodities Distribution Program, and food storage facilities for the Senior Citizens Nutrition Program, and the Sheriff's Department. The general contractor for the center is Allen S. Meade Construction Company.

Local community leaders, realizing the need to adequately assess and to address the problems faced by poor people experiencing true short-term emergencies, began to

pool their efforts in the early 1980s. The Emergency Financial Assistance Project Committee was formed in 1982 and was chaired by former County Commissioner Ann D. Thomas. The United Way and Mecklenburg County government, in cooperation with appropriate agencies then began developing data on the nature of the population in both emergency and in chronic need, identifying the

roles of the private and public sectors in meeting the needs, and identifying the most efficient and effective methods for serving those in need. A second committee, chaired by former Mayor Pro Tem Betty Chafin Rash, then developed a service model concept, which included a central facility where those in need would come for assistance.

In addition to Crisis Assistance Ministry, which administers public General Assistance Funding under contract with the Department of Social Services as well as Federal Emergency Energy Funding -- working with strong volunteer and church support, the center will provide a new home for the community-wide Christmas Bureau. This effort provides food and toys to approximately 8,000 families each year. The Metrolina Food Bank, which collects edible, but commercially unsaleable food items, redistributes them to eligible, nonprofit organizations. The County's Commodities Distribution Program will be providing surplus commodities to 9,000 to 12,000 families annually from the center.

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