

JCSU Friends Join Quest To Keep Kids In School

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A variety of potential and real problems trouble our youth today. Most youngsters are able, through the support of their family, friends, teachers and church, to live through the myriad of difficulties and enjoy productive school years. There are other young people, however, who have not been sufficiently insulated from the pressures of the modern world and soon become part of the problem.

The educational community calls these problem youngsters, at-risk youth. They are the ones who have the greatest potential to fall into a pattern of behavioral difficulties and who will likely drop out of school or face troubled school careers.

Some experts say that as many as one-fourth of the ninth graders currently enrolled in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools will at some time before graduation decide to leave school, unprepared to support themselves or their families. The cost to their lives, and children they may someday have to support is great, and the cost to society and the loss of their ability to lead productive lives is even greater.

Two years ago, however, an effort was begun to shortstop the problems experienced by these youngsters before they reached the critical stage. Cities in Schools was developed to deliver human services to at-risk youth at their schools. Cities in

Schools zeros in on the underlying problems of each of these students, including poor health, physically and mentally, low self-esteem and inadequate life skills. It uses a personal and wholistic approach in seeking to stop the problems before they get out of control and helps students to set goals, to develop academic skills and to stay in school.

This novel approach to the delivery of these much needed services and programs is enhanced by a strong working partnership between the public and private sectors of the community. It is the partnership that redirects students who may show signs of trouble, designs ways and surrounds at-risk students with a support team of caring adults.

Partners in the effort to work with our youth come from all sectors of the community. Most of the volunteers have come to understand, as a result of working closely with these at-risk youth, that they are diamonds in the rough. What they need to lead successful lives, say officials involved in the project, is the polish of motivation and

positive experiences. The community of partners in "Cities in Schools" apparently feel that these young people only have a higher potential or opportunity for problems, but that the potential for success is just as great if a different battery of opportunities are made available to them.

Last September, the Friends of Johnson C. Smith University announced at their annual banquet that Dr. Robert L. Albright agreed to earmark 12 tuition scholarships to CIS students who are eligible upon graduation to attend JCSU. Earlier this month the Friends of JCSU began the process of involving students in program activities that could mean for several students that their educational careers will not have to end after high school. Thirty-seven, eighth and ninth grade students from Spaug, Cochrane, J.T. Williams and Northwest schools spent part of their day on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University, learning about the history of the 120 year old institution, meeting members of the University's administration,

students and receiving details about the new program.

In addition to the tuition scholarships, the Friends of JCSU, plan to have volunteer members of the organization to work as mentors to each student. They expect to provide more on-campus experiences for the students to give them an opportunity to learn about college life. Through S.L.A.M. (Smith Linking Activities and Motivation), the name of Smith/Friends project, and with the help of their parents, the organization expects to provide educational experiences that will redirect a downturn in test scores on important examinations and provide them with motivational support for their class work and school careers.

Following the campus experience, 26 of the 37 students who attended the tour decided that they would like to become a part of the Friends Program. This group of students is now the first class of new program and they will receive support and help from the Friends of JCSU until they graduate in 1991 and 1992. This Sunday, March 27, the parents of this promising

new class will meet on the JCSU campus to learn more about S.L.A.M., and how their help can make the program successful.

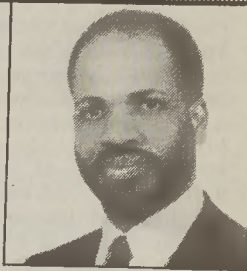
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Political Awareness For Youth

The Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Urban League will co-sponsor a Youth Political Awareness and Education Workshop at Johnson C. Smith University, Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. The theme of the workshop will be "Youth Can Make A Difference."

Arrangements have been made with the County Board of Elections to have voting machines on site, as well as registrars to register voters.

The workshop will cover topics from the two-party system to grass root politics. The intent of the workshop is for education, not to endorse a particular candidate or party.

The workshop is free. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. A breakfast snack will be served.

The Urban League and the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club think young people are our most important resource and have the capacity to make a meaningful contribution to the community.

The community's participation is urged.



Ranson Junior High School in Charlotte, NC, was one of 25 schools in the Southeast to win a "Just Say No" flag through Pet Dairy's "Just Say No" School Challenge Campaign. The campaign was designed to spread the "Just Say No" message into area schools, as well as help the schools start their own "Just Say No" program. Proudly displaying the flag are (from left to right) Otis Clark, Pet Dairy Territory Manager;

Anita Owens-Scott, Director of the 4-H Discovery Program in Albemarle, NC and Advisor of Albemarle "Just Say No" Clubs; Marlene Corbett, Assistant Principal for Instruction at Ranson; and Manu Bettengoda, Student Body President at Ranson. Pet Dairy, the leading manufacturer of ice cream and milk products in the Southeast, was one of the first companies in the US to support the "Just Say No" movement.

WCU To Hold Black Alumni Reunion

Cullowhee - Western Carolina University will host its second annual Black Alumni and Friends Reunion Weekend April 8-10 with headquarters at the Catamount Inn in Sylva.

Van Wilson, assistant director of academic services and coordinator of the reunion, said this year's activities will coincide with the university's annual Black Awareness Weekend and "should provide additional opportunities for alumni and current students to meet and share ideas and impressions."

Wilson said last year's first Black Alumni Reunion was attended by more than 80 people, including Ms. Lavern Hamlin Allen, WCU's first black student

and now a member of the university's board of trustees.

The weekend begins with registration April 8, at 3 p.m. at the hotel, followed by an informal reception from 9 until 11 p.m. Registration will continue until noon Saturday when the focus moves to WCU for a campus cafeteria luncheon that will include prospective Western students and their parents. At 1:30 p.m., there will be an alumni-student forum.

There will be a special step show at 3 p.m., followed by a dinner featuring Kevin Patterson of Charlotte's Focus on Leadership as the speaker. At 9 p.m., the Organization of Ebony Students will host its annual

OES Pageant and Dance at the Ramsey Regional Activity Center.

Sunday's closing events include a breakfast, a devotional service at 10:30 a.m. and a worship service at 11 a.m.

Registration fee for the weekend, which includes Saturday dinner, the OES Pageant and Dance, and Sunday breakfast, is \$12. Special room rates at the Catamount Inn are \$37.50 per night (one to four persons per room). Room reservations may be made by contacting the Catamount Inn, (704) 586-3315.

For additional information, contact Van Wilson at (704) 227-7222; or the WCU Alumni Association at 704-227-7355.

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