

LIFESTYLES

6A

THURSDAY
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Nothing lost in saying hello first

Have you ever passed a stranger on the street who you wanted to get to know, but were afraid to speak to? Perhaps you saw someone at a party, at work or even at the store. Well, why didn't you speak? You were probably afraid of being rejected. You probably were thinking that your feelings would be terribly hurt if you said hello to that person and the person did not return your greeting.

This fear troubles most people. So, you are not unusual. But, it doesn't

have to be as tormenting as you think. The fact that you took the initiative to speak to another person means that you are a stronger person than one who refused to speak to you.

There are as many people in this society who want to meet you as there are

people whom you want to meet. But, they are afraid of rejection as you might be. If you continue to be assertive you will eventually be rewarded.

This is the usual unpleasant scenario of the fearful individual: you see someone whom you would like to meet, but because of your fear of rejection you are afraid to introduce yourself. After the person has left, you say to yourself, "Damn, why didn't I just walk up and say 'hello'?" If I ever see that person again, I won't miss the opportunity to get acquainted.

The next day, by sheer coincidence, you see that person again. You think "I'm not going to miss this opportunity to say hello." But, damn it, you still cannot find the nerve to break the ice. Another opportunity is missed. You begin to question yourself as a person. You begin to criticize yourself. This situation repeats itself time and time again until one day you get enough nerve to break the ice and introduce yourself.

But, the other person gives you a roll of the eyes and walks right past without even acknowledging your presence. You are devastated, thinking "Is there something wrong with me? Am I unattractive? Am I inferior? Will I ever have success with people?"

The basic problem in the above example is that you have transferred the problems for the world to yourself. Instead of concluding that the other person is at fault, you conclude that the other person is all right, but "I'm the one who is inadequate."

The following are some brief guidelines that you may use to avoid falling into this trap:

1. Evaluate yourself fairly and you will find that you are a person whose good points far outweigh the bad.

2. Know who you are. Be confident in yourself as a person. Maybe one person will snub you. Maybe two, or three or four will snub you. But, there are four billion people in the world.



Coping

CHARLES FAULKNER

Old Rosenwald is a tribute to blacks' struggle for an education

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The old Rosenwald schools serve as reminders of what education was like for blacks in the early part of this century.

Ben Hoover, 65, remembers that as a 10-year-old, it was his duty to light the fire for three pot belly stoves at McClintock School (one of 10 still existing in Mecklenburg County) before classes started.

"I'd get up at 6 and walk a mile and a half to school to start the fire," Hoover recalled.

In those days spelling bees, May Day celebrations, free apples and candy around Christmas were what black youngsters cherished and rallied around.

Hoover is heading a group trying to preserve the history by restoring old McClintock School. The Rosenwald School Restoration Committee of McClintock Presbyterian Church plans to renovate the school within the next year to use as part of the church facility.

Volunteer help, donations and grants will enable the refurbished facility to have an auditorium, office space, a study and a kitchen.

Hoover laments that many black youngsters don't know the price older blacks paid to get an education.

Many walked miles, sometimes through the woods to come, to school.

"You carried your own lunch," Eunice McIlwain, a McClintock Presbyterian Church member, said. "Some days some of the teachers would make a pot of soup. One of the teachers would sell peanut butter crackers." Often the teachers stayed in the community, boarding in a room with a family.

The schools were built between 1917-1932 for black children by matching funds provided by Sears Roebuck tycoon Julius Rosenwald. Rosenwald's money helped construct 5,300 schools, with 813 in North Carolina and 36 in Mecklenburg County.

The trademark white painted weatherboard buildings with front porches were symbols of community cohesiveness and learning. The four-room McClintock School accommodated first through seventh grades.

The schools stand as a symbol of the segregation that existed in the South. Often better built, white schools were nearby. Whites in school buses often passed blacks on foot, McIlwain said.

Because the county did not provide a high school in the Steele Creek area, students who wanted to continue their education after seventh grade had to make a long ride to Second Ward High School, McIlwain said.

"I knew girls who boarded with school teachers in the city to go to Second Ward," McIlwain said.

Rosenwald, who served as president of Sears, Roebuck from 1909-24, was influenced by educator Booker T. Washington and concerned about a Jim Crow South that required literacy tests for voters and meager funds for public education for blacks.

The Rosenwald schools were often built near a black church and served as community centers as well.

School, then, was a community event. It took everybody to make it work.

Parents in those days would faithfully attend PTA meetings, bringing lanterns with them for light. Electricity was not available at the school until the early 1950s.

When the school was phased out in the 1950s, a group of McClintock Presbyterian Church members "saw the need for the building and purchased it from the county," McIlwain said.

From that time until it was badly damaged in 1989 by Hurricane Hugo, the old school was used for church dinners and community meetings. Not much of the inside had been altered.

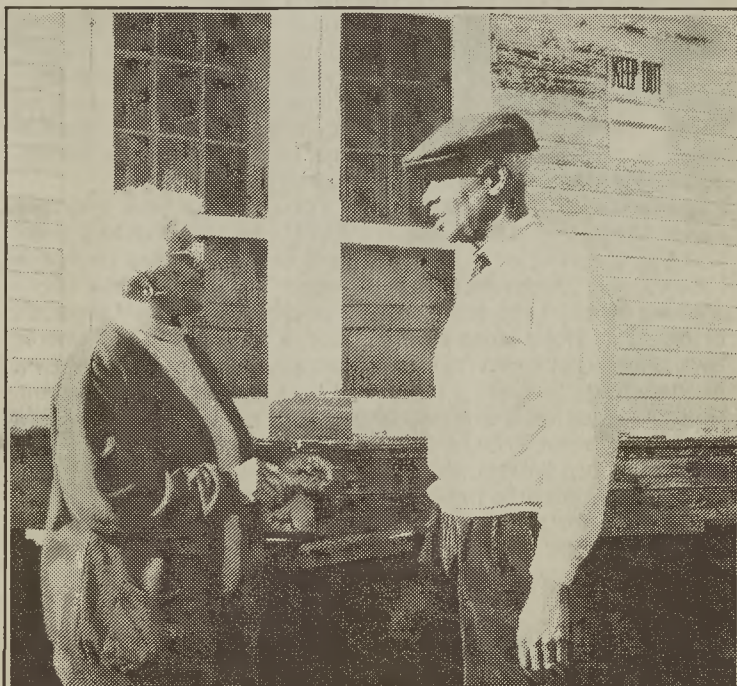
Interest in preserving history has long been prevalent at McClintock Presbyterian Church. In 1986 McClintock's pastor Rev. Robert Shirley launched a project to document the history of the building. Subsequently, the building was declared a historic landmark.

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McClintock, one of 10 Rosenwald schools in Mecklenburg.
Photos/Paul Williams III



Eunice McIlwain and Ben Hoover, who attended classes at McClintock School, review restoration schedule.



The school was used until 1989. Hoover checks out the old potbelly stove inside the building.

Program designed to give babies healthy start

By Vera Witherspoon
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Mothers who don't prepare for the task of parenting reduce their children's chances to succeed, say experts.

A new Mecklenburg County Health Department program is designed to help mothers give children a better beginning.

The Belmont Regional Center has a Healthy Start project to help young pregnant women become healthy mothers having healthy babies.

It is funded by a grant from the Healthy Start Foundation in Raleigh. The age range of the participants is between 14 to 22.

"We had our staff on board in April 1993. All community outreach workers in the program are members of the Belmont community," said Stanley Graham, director of Neighborhood Based Human Services for the Mecklenburg County Health Department.

"Our goal was to identify 10 young women who lived in the Piedmont Courts and Belmont communities in the first trimester of their pregnancy," he said.

During the first session, workshops were held every other week at Belmont Regional Center.

Women participate in discussions led by professionals in nutrition, exercise, substance abuse prevention,

self-esteem building, library resources, healthy male/female relationships, STDs/HIV education and prevention, family planning, methods of birth control and community resources.

Other activities include water aerobics, sewing, cook-outs, home hair care and applying makeup.

A young mother's self-esteem is tied to parenting, Graham contends. "These topics are conducted as a combination of discussions, lectures and mentoring," he said.

"We want these young women to come in and make a commitment. We have to have some sense of them understanding what their expectations are," Graham

said.

"We bring them in and tell them what the workshops are going to be about, who is going to be working with them and why we are doing this. Anybody who is having a baby wants a healthy baby," said Graham.

Anissa Taylor, 22, was a participant in the first session. She is originally from the Belmont area.

"She is an individual who has made a major change. She has set goals, strived to stay in school and knows what she should do," said Linda Woodland, community outreach coordinator.

"I now have a better relationship with my son's father," said Taylor. "The program taught me parenting

skills, how to raise a healthy baby, and about healthy relationships with the father, in the home or absent."

It also helps to deal with stress and knowing how to keep up with doctor's appointments. Most young women think having a baby is a game, but it's not, Taylor said.

"The faculty members are very good. They know how to relate to young pregnant women and give them support," she said.

"I want to encourage more young pregnant women to go to the Healthy Start program. It benefits young pregnant females by not criticizing, talking to you and getting ideas," Taylor said.



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