

Clinton reaches out to community

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bishops, including George Battle of Charlotte, is working to create a regional pipeline to area high schools. It's also in the process of applying for accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a first. With SACS accreditation, the school will be eligible to receive federal Title IV funds from sources such as student grants and loans.

"I want to make sure we hammer down (accreditation) so there's no doubt, there's no question about where we

stand on academic excellence," Russell said.

There 117 historically black colleges in the U.S., including three junior colleges: Clinton; Shorter Junior College in Little Rock, Ark., and Miles College in Mississippi.

Clinton, which had a peak enrollment around 250 in the 1960s, saw those numbers fall as desegregation opened opportunities for African Americans at southern white schools. CJC is trying to rebuild its enrollment. "Clinton went through what most black colleges went

through in the '70s, and that was that they had to compete for students where they didn't have to compete before," Russell said. "Clinton was slower in responding to that."

But Clinton never reached the brink of closing. Spurred by its mission and backed by the financial support of the AME Zion Church, the college stayed open. Today, the school is just as committed to educating the young people who decide to enroll there. They have a champion in Russell, who'll do whatever she can - including teach classes.

Ministry looks to help more in Rowan

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of Rowan County's poor through cooperative community action. Hispanics, Caucasians, and African-Americans from the ages of three months to 82 years old being accommodated on a daily basis. The ministries have received help from 129 churches, 14 foundations, three governmental grants, 157 businesses, and almost 600 individuals to keep the program afloat last year.

According to Scott, almost \$750,000 was

raised last year, which all provided for the essential physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of Rowan County citizens, but the challenges of guiding the program never end.

Scott believes that the fate the Rowan Helping Ministries rests upon one simple philosophy. "The more resources we have, the more volunteers we have," he said. "The more dollars we have, the more income we have, the more we can serve."

Last Poet stretches artistic wings

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pose to offer to the public a full range of cultural expression having at its core the work of the Last Poets.

"An interested group may present a single poet, two, three, four, five or all six Last Poets in a variety of settings to include readings, performance, workshops, seminars, retreats, camps, book signings or appearance."

Three decades before the Poets' first performance, Salisbury's Meroney Theater only allowed black patrons to enter through a back entrance. Thirty years later, Nelson is on-stage at the Meroney, appearing as Uncle Henry in the Piedmont Players' produc-

tion of "The Wiz." At the same time, he is serving as chief artistic consultant for "The Wiz" at the Afro-American Children's Theater in Charlotte.

Talk to Nelson about the future of the Last Poets and he will tell you about destiny.

"One of my key words is destiny," he said. "The Last Poets is a part of my destiny - the unfolding of my destiny. I was put here for a purpose. We all were put here for a purpose - to express something and to manifest the presence of Almighty God."

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