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Section

Sorority hold rites of passage for girls

By Latoya Hankins
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Seventeen girls will showcase their talents and skills March 25 as part of the first Zeta Phi Beta Rites of Passage program.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Delta Zeta chapter will hold the program at Lincoln Heights Elementary School, 1900 Newcastle Street. The program starts at 4 p.m. admission is free and open to the public.

"The purpose of the program is to give middle school girls an opportunity to learn and experience things they will need to help them develop into mature young women," said Renea Stitt, one of the events organizers and secretary for the Delta Zeta chapter.

"We have girls who range in age from 11 to 14 years old and they all said that they have had a good time participating in the program."

The girls that have been involved in the program are:

- Kyshara Allison
- Ester McIlwaine
- Alyson Byers
- Ashley McRae
- J'hanne Davis
- Taylor Reed
- Courtney Hall
- Maryssa Sadler
- Paisley Hart
- Jasmine Staton
- Kayla Jackson
- Jasmine Stephens
- Shelby Jackson
- Candace Stitt
- Sasha Jenkins
- Br-An Wiggins
- Jasmine Lee
- Candace Wilson
- Maya Lee
- Jaanai McNeill

During the program, the girls will be judged on their response to an interview question, their introduction, a selected talent and modeling of casual and formal attire. The girls will also select one of their own to be recognized as being Miss Congeniality and the members of the sorority will vote for Best All Around.

Stitt said activities for the Rites of Passage program began in December 2005 when the girls attended a sleep over during which they participated in two workshops dealing with finances and hygiene. In January the girls attended a workshop on sexuality and self confidence conducted by Dr. Octavia Cannon from Arbrethum Obstetrics and Gynecology and in February the girls attended an etiquette workshop.

"The parents of the girls have really been pleased with the workshops," Stitt said.

"One parent said her daughter learned a lot from the doctor and another parent said this has really helped with her daughter's self esteem."

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LIFE



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL: Cheryl Cox, owner of StageCoach Home Staging and ReDesign in Charlotte, transforms homes from drab to fab.

Home sweet stage

House needs an upgrade? Don't fret — hire a coach

By Cheris F. Hodges
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If it's time to sell your house but you haven't changed furniture or accessories since the mid 1980s, you probably need a stagecoach.

That's where Cheryl Cox comes in.

"Home staging is a concept that took off on the West Coast," said Cox, who runs StageCoach Home Staging and ReDesign.

It's also the premise for

several popular shows on Home and Garden TV and TLC.

Home staging makes the house more appealing to potential buyers by cleaning the house, putting in new furniture, accessories and window treatments.

Cox started StageCoach in 2004 after completing a staging course and was designated an Accredited Staging Professional by Barbara Schwarz of staged-

homes.com.

"I've always had an interest in interior design," Cox said.

After starting the business, Cox said it took her about eight months to get her name out there and what she does. Since then, she's built a clientele of several calls a week from people who want their homes staged to sell. Cox works with Realtors and individuals.

So does it work? According to Cox, it

does. She mostly stages vacant homes for Realtors. "Vacant homes are harder to sell," she said.

When a newly renovated bungalow in the Midwood community had been on the market for two months without any prospective buyers, Lexie Longstreet of Dwellings Realty decided it was time to call Cox. Within hours of staging, an offer was made to purchase. Please see HOME/2B

Men smokers put women at risk of stroke

By Aisha Lide
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Smoking men are putting women at risk.

Women smokers, whose spouses smoke are at higher risk of stroke than those married to nonsmokers, according to Stroke Journal of the American Heart Association.

Researchers analyzed data from 5,379 U.S. women who participated in the First National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Epidemiologic Follow-Up Study. Researchers then recorded women's smoking and marital status and the incidence of total stroke and ischemic stroke (a stroke caused by a blood clot blocking blood flow to the brain).

Overall, 2,347 of women were current or former smokers themselves. Of those women 1,904 were married to smokers.

"If physicians are to make a real impact on reducing stroke risk among their patients, they should not only address their patients' smoking habits but also those of their spouses or partners," said Adnan I. Qureshi M.D., professor and director of the Cerebrovascular Program at the Zeenat Qureshi Stroke Research Center in Newark, N.J.

Exactly what is a stroke? According to the American Stroke Association a stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain bursts or gets clogged. The affected part of the

brain doesn't get blood and in minutes begins to die.

Stroke can cause death, paralysis, vision, or speech impairment. You could also lose emotional control or become depressed.

Nonsmoking women married to smoking spouses did not have a higher incidence of stroke compared to nonsmoking women with nonsmoking spouses.

The relative risk of total stroke was 5.7 times higher in cigarette-smoking women with cigarette-smoking spouses and 4.8 times higher for ischemic stroke.

Stroke is a medical emergency. These are the warning signs:

- Sudden numbness or weakness

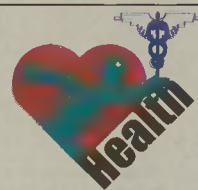
Please see STROKE/2B

FIGHTING BACK



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Local kids keep the beat at the First Ward Recreational Center as a part of a Fighting Back program. Studies show that getting children involved in music at an early age increases standardized test scores.



Generic Flonase headed for counters

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—Generic versions of the popular Flonase nasal spray for allergies are headed to pharmacies after all.

Generic makers Roxane Laboratories and Par Pharmaceuticals announced Tuesday that they had resumed shipments of their fluticasone propionate nasal sprays, after a U.S. District Court refused to continue blocking the sales.

The Food and Drug Administration had approved Roxane's generic last month. But Flonase maker GlaxoSmithKline immediately sued to block the competition, winning a temporary restraining order that had suspended sales. At a hearing Monday, the court refused to extend that restraining order, backing FDA's approval.

British-based Glaxo's legal fight had stalled shipments of Roxane's competitor and Par's version as well—even though Par makes a Glaxo-authorized generic. Pharmaceutical companies often license generic versions of their own drugs to undercut generic competitors just as they come onto the market.

GlaxoSmithKline sold nearly \$1.2 billion in Flonase worldwide last year. Generics typically cost 30 percent to 80 percent less than their brand-name counterparts.

Drug may delay high blood

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Treating people who don't yet have high blood pressure but are well on their way to it can delay the condition but not permanently prevent it unless drugs are taken lifelong, new research suggests.

It is the first extensive study of treating prehypertension, a condition 45 million Americans have, defined as blood pressure readings from 120 over 80 up to 139 over 89. Below that is considered normal and above it, high.

High blood pressure greatly raises the risk of heart failure, stroke, heart attacks and other medical problems. Doctors had hoped that two years of early treatment could permanently halt the progression from prehypertension to that more dangerous state.

The study suggests they may not have started early enough.

"We may need to rethink what we consider a normal blood pressure," said Dr. Elizabeth Nabel, director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Dr. Stevo Julius of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and doctors at 70 other sites around the country tested treating prehypertension with candesartan, a drug sold as Atacand by

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