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School copes in aftermath of girl's death

Students wrote messages of support for the family of Laura Ashley Williams.

BY MICHAEL KANAREK
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

The day after tragedy struck Grey Culbreth Middle School, officials are trying to minimize the impact that the incident will have on students.

Laura Ashley Williams, a 13-year-old seventh-grader at the school, died Monday afternoon after shooting herself in a school bathroom.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools officials said Tuesday that Williams enrolled at the school Oct. 1 and was a member of the school's Quiz Bowl team.

Chapel Hill police spokeswoman Jane Cousins said the only information currently available in the case was that Williams' injury was self-inflicted and that she used a family member's handgun.

The school sent home a letter with each student to give basic information about the case and to outline the support system that is in place for students and families.

Jim Huegerich, supervisor of crisis counseling for the Chapel Hill Police Department, said they were trying to create a "safety structure" for the students.

"The focus of the day was to make the day as normal as possible," he said. Huegerich said the incident was more personalized for the children because it happened at school.

"It makes school a less safe place to be in their minds," he said.

More than 60 professionals were on campus Tuesday to help counsel children and teachers, and more than 200 people — one-third of the entire school — sought counseling today, he said.

Huegerich said said officials did have some fear of "copycats" and were keeping an eye on some students.

"We have identified some students who are high-risk," he said.

Sherron Leplin, coordinator of exceptional education and students services for the school system, said they were helping children feel safe psychologically, physically and emotionally.

"It's a very healthy environment," she said.

The kids in the school wrote cards and poetry of support, which were

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Mother ON A MISSION



DTH/CARA BRICKMAN

Civil rights activist Willena Cannon is currently fighting to release her son, Kwame, from prison. Kwame Cannon was given two consecutive life terms for six counts of burglary.

BY BRADY DENNIS

ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

Willena Cannon has never been the type of person to sit and watch life pass her by.

Since the 1960s, she has spent most of her waking hours working, as she puts it, to erase injustice anywhere she sees it. She worked in the civil rights and labor rights movements in Greensboro.

"I was actually part of the sit-ins in '63," she said. "I've always wanted justice, and they showed me a way that I could actually fight for it."

From that beginning, she has been organizing ever since, to the point where she became a known activist in the Greensboro community by the 1970s.

She was instrumental in organizing a protest against a 1979 Ku Klux Klan march in Greensboro, a march she now calls the "1979 massacre." During the heated conflict, a shooting broke out, leaving five demonstrators dead at the hands of the KKK.

Cannon saw each offender go to court and be acquitted.

Life was not easy for her following the Greensboro march. Because she had helped organize the protest of the rally, Greensboro residents were afraid to be in her company.

"After '79, I was really blacklisted

SEE MOTHER, PAGE 7

On the trail

Greensboro Raleigh
of Justice

The Daily Tar Heel is following the Free Kwame Cannon March, which begins today in Greensboro and continues through Saturday in Raleigh. The DTH's coverage includes interviews with the people involved, the UNC students documenting the event and the march itself.

Group says laptop plan limits 'computer freedom'

Some UNC faculty have formed People for Computational Freedom.

BY PAUL HOBSON
STAFF WRITER

All is not quiet on the technological front.

Several faculty members have organized People for Computational Freedom to protest the administration's handling of the Carolina Computing Initiative.

The initiative will require all freshmen to have laptops in 2000 and all stu-

dents to have them by 2004. Financial aid will be available for students in need.

Morehead Planetarium Assistant Educator Michael Neece, who helped form the group, said he feared UNC would limit freedom of choice in computing.

"I've heard great rumors about the University limiting us to a single vendor for computers," he said.

Neece said the group supported the initiative but didn't approve of UNC's choosing a PC vendor to provide all computers to incoming freshmen.

"We're not anti-anything, just pro-freedom of choice," he said.

Planetarium worker Drew Gilmore, who formed the group about two weeks

"We're not anti-anything, just pro-freedom of choice. There's definitely room for more than one platform on this campus."

MICHAEL NEECE
Morehead Planetarium employee

ago with pediatrics research technician Jackie Kylander, said the University should not proceed on a PC-only basis, as the initiative stated it would. "There's definitely room for more than one platform on this campus," he said.

Neece said the initiative could ultimately cost everyone a lot of money.

"University departments have invested great gobs of money in computer systems," he said. Neece said many students and faculty didn't use PCs.

But Student Body President Mo Nathan said the initiative would not restrict what type of computers students used.

Nathan said the University would not continue to buy Macintosh computers for general computing, such as word processing and using the Internet in computer labs, but it would for programs or departments that needed them.

It's uncertain whether current machines will be phased out, he said.

Nathan said many classes and departments needed non-PC systems like UNIX and Macintosh and would continue to use them under the initiative.

People for Computational Freedom hopes to organize its platform and spread interest at a meeting Thursday at 11:45 a.m. at Silent Sam.

Nathan said he would attend the meeting to hear the group's opinions.

"I don't believe I agree with them, but I need to hear what they have to say," he said. Academic Technology & Networking Executive Director John Oberlin said he had not heard of the new group but said he supported dialogue on the computing initiative.

FIGHTING for a future

Sixteen percent of Chapel Hill's population currently lives below the poverty line.

BY SHELLEY LEVINE
STAFF WRITER

The word "poor" can mean many things to many people. It's an adjective, a noun and, according to many, a problem in Chapel Hill.

For Lendale McCall and Ethelene Drew, being "poor" means they can only visit their 6-month-old daughter once a week because she lives with her grandmother. It means they sleep on benches and collect money on Franklin Street, just trying to get by.

Gerald, who asked that his last name not be used, doesn't lack education or experience. He is "poor" because one felony conviction keeps him from finding work. He takes advantage of programs at the homeless shelter and spends his days distributing resumes and searching for a job so he can be independent again.

Another woman, who also asked that her name not be used, sits outside the shelter, waiting for a bed inside. She wasn't "poor" until her mother died recently, leaving her and her two children on the streets of Durham. Today her children are being taken care of in Durham, and she has come to Chapel Hill to look for work.

"(March 25) was the first night I had to spend outside," she said.

The federal government defines "poor" in Chapel Hill as earning less than \$21,926 to support a family of four. This figure is higher than in many other towns in the area because of the high cost of living in Chapel Hill, according to information from the Orange County Economic Development Commission.

Sixteen percent of the population of Chapel Hill lives below the poverty line, and those in the worst economic condition are the homeless.

No one knows the exact number of homeless people living in town on a particular day. A continuous shift of home-

SEE POOR, PAGE 5



DTH/LORRIE BRADLEY

Lendale McCall and Warren Steele sit on their usual bench on Franklin Street. McCall collects change from passersby, and he said that people in Chapel Hill seem friendly.

INSIDE

Healing touch

Senior of the week Paul Howell will attend the UNC School of Medicine after graduation. [Page 4](#)

Today's weather

Showers likely;
High 70s
Thursday: Partly cloudy;
mid 70s

Got a winning idea?

Do you want to see your story or photo-essay published in the Daily Tar Heel? If so, apply for the Joanna Howell Fund Award. The award honors the memory of Joanna Howell, a DTH editorial writer who was killed in the Phi Gamma Delta fire in 1996.

To apply, turn in a detailed, typed, double-spaced story proposal of no more than five pages, no later than Friday. If you have any questions, call 962-0245.

Action is eloquence.

Shakespeare