The Daily Tar Heel

# HATE CRIME

Bindra – a Sikh from India.

All three pled guilty Dec. 7 in Orange County Superior Court to both assault charges - which resulted in jail and probation time for all - in exchange for the intimidation charge being dropped.

### HABITAT

of the Cross church, stood in a dirtstreaked street nearby, astonished by the sight.

"This is amazing. It's amazing," DeSaix said. "Wow!"

Such was the mood at the cul-mination of Blitz Build, a yearlong project headed by UNC Habitat to build a home for a University employee in just three days.

The event, which took place from Friday to Sunday in the Rusch Hollow neighborhood in Chapel Hill, brought together about 140 volunteers with supervisors from Orange County Habitat for Humanity and AmeriCorps.

The event, which has not been done on campus since 1998, has

been in the works for a year. Habitat and other organizations have raised about \$56,000 of the \$60,000 needed to build the home for University employee Linda Parson and her children Isiah, 5, and Imani, 4.

University students and faculty, with members of Habitat's part-nership with Chapel of the Cross and various campus institutions, as well as Parson herself, spent their weekend working morning and afternoon shifts constructing the home.

Volunteers, many of whom had never worked on a construction site, found themselves hammering down flooring, raising walls, gluing

## LIVING

lives in Chapel Hill, got infected. She grew up in a "tight-knit, mid-dle-class family" but had always had a wild streak.

"When I drank, I was the show of the party," said Tara, who request-ed that her last name not be used. "In high school, I would rather do drugs than learn. I was so daredevil always had lots of friends."

One of those friends gave her the virus. "I didn't know how to develop a

friendship with men without sleeping with them," she said.

Following her diagnosis, she spent three years of "complete denial" mired in a self-destructive drug habit before accepting the virus as a part of her life.

For the past six years, the only drugs she has taken are the medi-cations that keep her viral load "undetectable."

Tara is now a peer educator at a hospital, where she helps others cope with the virus. She also speaks at colleges to promote awareness.

Her four-year relationship with her fiance is a testimony to her faith in education.

"I told him immediately," she said. "I don't think he really knew what it was at first, so I had to educate him. His family knows now, and they've shown nothing but love." She stressed that her life doesn't

revolve around the virus. "It's not like I wake up every morning going, 'Oh my God, I have HIV,'" she said. 'I'm in school trying to graduate, have a nice home, some money in the bank and a career."

But HIV did change everything most of all Tara herself. "My ambition is triple what it's

Cousins said Friday that because there was little description provided on the suspects in that morning's hate crime, the investigation

has produced no leads. There were still no leads would ever have foreseen happening in Chapel Hill." Sunday. The police encourage anyone

with information relating to the incident to call the department at

"This is a very important Universitycommunity relationship. And I'd like to see this being extended."

ARCHIE ERVIN, ASSISTANT TO THE CHANCELLOR AND DIRECTOR OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

windows and scaling rooftops dur-

ing the weekend. "I think it's amazing," said volunteer coordinator Stephanie Bright.

"It's a little scary, too, but that's why we have all this skilled labor here to make sure everything goes just right."

Friday began as volunteers and supervisors nailed flooring onto the house's foundation and built the walls that would be raised the

following day. Over the next few days, what began as a simple concrete founda-tion slowly molded into the outline of a house, as volunteers and workers pieced together the wooden skeleton and put up walls.

By Sunday afternoon, students were setting the windows in place and walking across the blacktarped rooftop.

'It was scary at first, but after a while, you begin to feel more comfortable," said senior Rohit Bhandari.

"It was a lot like being on a sailboat for the first time.

Despite the apprehension Bhandari and others initially felt, the volunteers were eager to build.

ever been," she said. "There's no telling what life I might have been living right now. I would never have quit doing drugs."

Tara implores people to learn about the disease and their partners. "If the guy doesn't want to use a condom, or the woman's not asking you, you got to ask yourself, 'What's going on here?'" she said.

Tara said most people have probably been in that situation. "HIV is out there on college

campuses," said Dr. Charles van der Horst, professor of medicine at the University. "What's clever on its part is that it feeds into people's percep-tions that they're not at risk."

Van der Horst has been treating HIV/AIDS in North Carolina for more than 20 years. During that period, researchers have made mixed progress against the virus.

"We can now tell people that they'll live a normal lifespan if they take their drugs," he said. "But we've not made any impact in decreasing the number of new cases

Of 4.9 million people newly infected last year, UNAIDS estimates that 44,000 were in North America. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for 3.1 million of those cases.

Thirteen years after her diagnosis, Elizabeth Gordon fights the epidemic at the United Nations in South Africa. With 5.3 million estimated cases, it is the hardest-

hit country in the world. "Empowerment" is a word she uses constantly when telling her story; the power to resist the stig-ma, to ask for a condom, to live a normal life.

Her strength stems from her faith in God and her belief that, as a monogamous, married woman, her infection was no fault of hers. At first she kept silent about her

### From Page One 968-2760.

Contact the City Editor

said construction supervisor Tyler Momsen-Hudson from Orange

"That's what people want," Momsen-Hudson said. "They want

to come out here to have some-

The event has potential to forge

"I just think that this is a very

stronger town-gown relations in

Chapel Hill, said Archie Ervin, assistant to the chancellor and

important University-community relationship," Ervin said after a

brief dedication ceremony at noon Saturday. "And I'd like to see this

being extended in some meaning-

Walker, who was there with 10 of her fellow members from Zeta Tau

Alpha sorority, say the Blitz Build

has another important long-term

goal. "I think it's (important) for a

family to have not just a house, but

a home," Walker said. "Your whole

life feels more in order if you have

condition in respect of her husband's

wishes. Then in 1994, Bernice was

born. The woman who took her own

diagnosis stoically was thrown into

more information (on the virus)."

and Gordon hasn't stopped talk-

ing since. Everywhere she goes, she

tries to leave a message about HIV.

Many people have thanked her for

informing them about it, she said

girls turning to prostitution to sur-vive. "People aren't scared anymore.

They say, 'I don't care as long as my stomach is full, and AIDS takes

Her own low point came last

ar, not because of illness, but due

fection and needed medicine she

"I stood by the pharmacy, and

to financial strains. Bernice had an

my tears were dropping," Gordon said. "I thought, 'Oh, my child,

you need this antibiotic.' At night

I lay in bed thinking, 'To hell with this life. Maybe we should just kill

time to kill me anyway."

could not afford.

ourselves."

"HIV and poverty go hand in and," said Gordon, talking of young

'I wasn't empowered enough, she said. "I should have looked for

The couple separated in 1996,

anguish by her child's.

Contact the Features Editor

at features@unc.edu.

Others such as sophomore Kelly

director of minority affairs.

County Habitat.

thing to do."

ful ways."

a home."

ha

at citydesk@unc.edu.

about the incident.

MARCH

treatment and prevention will be heard.

"As a democracy, we have the ability to influence policy," said Rachel Fischoff, president of UNC's chapter of the Student Global AIDS Campaign, the national sponsor of the march. "And as U.S. citizens, we have not only the ability but the responsibility to change things

During the rally, students said the federal government hasn't reached its potential to alleviate the crisis.

They marched from the White House to Capitol Hill, rallying for debt cancellation, production of cheaper medication through fair trade, comprehensive sex education. more money for the global AIDS fund and continuation of the Ryan White CARE Act, which meets the health care needs of AIDS patients. UNC students hope their partici-

pation will motivate those on campus. "It's incredible to me it's not terparts in the Third World can't more in the spotlight at UNC," said junior Kelley Haven, who attended the march. "People just don't seem

to know anything about it." Haven's interest in the epidemic was piqued in a public policy course. Now she works at a Carrboro AIDS home, is directly involved in HIV vaccine trials at UNC Hospitals and helps fund AIDS treatment in communities in Uganda and Malawi.

"AIDS is an issue that once you become involved, it just drags you in," Haven said. "Once you know the basic facts, there's no way you

can turn away from it." A fall 2003 semester of study abroad in South Africa, where many students interned with groups that combat AIDS, inspired three students to bring the movement to UNC. Fischoff and seniors Annie Bachrach and Michi Nair

mother's efforts against AIDS. In 2001, they visited nine African countries with World Vision, a Christian relief organization, where she spoke to other children.

They look forward to visiting the United States this year to raise funds for Children on the Frontline, a community initiative that helps poor children at risk, and to speaking at the "Narratives of HIV" event organized by the UNC Student Global Health Committee.

Gordon cannot say whether or not her daughter understands what it is to have HIV — only that Bernice is at the age to discover for herself who she is and to find strength in that. Halfway across the world, van der

Horst also stressed the importance of finding strength in oneself.

He attributes the spread of HIV to discrimination against the under-privileged — especially women, who in many parts of the world lack the power to protect themselves. "Roughly speaking, if we could

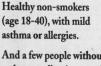
empower women across the plan-et, the epidemic would stop tomorrow. Contact the Features Editor

at features@unc.edu.

Bernice already has joined her

# The Genetics of **Environmental Asthma**

Duke University Medical Center



co-founded a local chapter of the

owed by some poor countries "The pivotal issue now is the fight for debt cancellation," said senior Marce Abare, coordinator of international partnerships for SGAC's steering committee. "It's either going to come off this year or not."

Abare's planning helped make the march part of a worldwide movement Saturday called Global Day of Youth Action, which included a meeting of nongovernmental organizations in India and a rally of 15,000 students in Cameroon.

Students hoped to show their disapproval of President Bush's proposed plan to cut funding for the global AIDS fund and to give \$15 billion to 14 countries through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. One-third of that money will go toward abstinenceonly education, Kolappa said.

The mobilization against AIDS might follow in the tradition of radical youth-led reforms such as the civil rights movement, she said.

"It's a really big deal because the march was completely organized by students," she said. "We're at a pivotal point in history. It could be a watershed moment.

> Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

push week in October followed by a local concert and date auction in November. "We're uniting the campus," Shalen said. "And we're helping so many people.'

The marathon's proceeds are contributed to the For the Kids Fund, which goes to the Children's Hospital.

Dance Marathon committee members announced that 356 fami-lies have been helped in the last 2 1/2 months, thanks in part to the 217 Food Lion cards, 1,390 phone cards, \$51,141 for bills and \$23,619 for transportation that has been donated to the For the Kids Fund.

Many families who are being helped by the Dance Marathon funds circulated the gym late Saturday afternoon. They were met with smiles and tears.

"They're thanking us," said Jeff Simpson, whose daughter, Rebecca Simpson, is in remission from acute myeloid leukemia.

"But we're thanking them." Rebecca's family members said

they were grateful for the dinners and phone cards provided to them. "These students are doing

something for people they don't know and will probably never meet," Rebecca said. She nodded in agreement when her father referred to the Dance Marathon as a huge labor of love.

"We got to see their faces. The marathon made it personal," said sophomore dancer Brett Gantt. "It was a painful 24 hours. But I have no doubt it was worth it."

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asthma or allergies. And a few people without MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

global campaign the next semester,

said Bachrach, who organized UNC

The chapter has spent the past year trying to educate the student

body about AIDS but will take

steps toward becoming more polit-

ical, UNC senior Kavitha Kolappa

said during a workshop she helped lead for Sunday's Youth Summit

to End AIDS. "Our focus has been mostly awareness," Kolappa said.

social justice issue, not just a health

problem. Pre-march speakers such

as Kolappa, a member of SGAC's

national steering committee,

stressed that those most affected by

AIDS are those most often denied

access to medication and education — minorities, women and the poor.

"The privilege I've been afford-ed in the First World comes at

the expense of the Third World,"

Kolappa told the crowd "I don't

want my daily Starbucks if my coun-

Dismissing "band-aid" solutions,

ralliers said the problem is rooted in

the structure of the world economy.

A June meeting of the world's richest

nations, the G8 Summit, likely will

begin a process of canceling debts

Hospital - eclipsing last year's

"It's a combination of the increased devotion of students and

our increased presence on campus,

said Marketing Chairwoman Allison Boothe, who shouted the total excit-

The success of the marathon can

edly to a friend on her cell phone.

only be measured in perspiration, she added, wiping her forehead.

But the money raised only repre-sents a portion of the event's success

and the efforts of those involved. Committee leaders estimated

that almost 2,000 people - includ-

ing dancers, moralers, volunteers

and spectators - turned out for this

vear's marathon. Even former coor-

"The energy in the room was out of control," said alumna Haley West,

who served as overall coordinator

in 2004. "It's not the only worthy

organization on campus, but it's

certainly an awesome cause." Other student organizations

graced the stage throughout the 24 hours, entertaining enthusias-

tic but weary dancers. Groups such

as the Loreleis, The Capulets and Inversions helped pass the early

"The moralers and entertain-

ment are what's going to get me through the next 20 hours," said

fund-raising committee member

hours of dancing that brought the

marathon to an end, fund-raising

efforts included a UNC ONE Card

In addition to the grueling 24

Brooke Bitler late Friday night.

morning hours

dinators came to show support.

total by more than \$14,000.

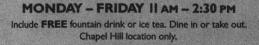
MARATHON

afford medication and condoms."

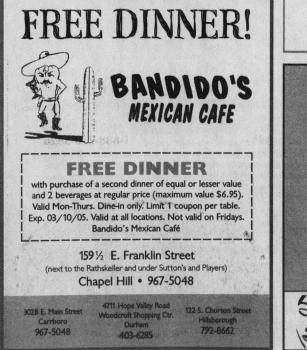
Students framed AIDS as a

students' travel to the rally.

### "I'm still honestly in a certain state of disbelief," Ruskey said "This is not something that I



LUNCH SPECIALS





ma or allergies are asked to participate in an asthma study.

Three visits required. Compensation offered.

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