



Big-name supporter
Gov. Jim Hunt was among the volunteers who made pitches for donations for public radio station WUNC-FM during its recent on-air fund drive in the Triangle.

Slam-dunk for jobs

Midnight basketball heading for Triangle

YMCAs in the Triangle plan to run an evening program designed to help young men in the inner-city get on track to find jobs.

By TODD COHEN

Durham

The Triangle is on track to get a midnight basketball league that aims to keep young men off the streets at night and offer them a path to a good job.

Modeled on a Milwaukee league that in its first year reduced inner-city crime by 30 percent, the Triangle league would begin in January with 12 teams - five each in Durham and Raleigh and two in Chapel Hill.

To start up the league, organizers are seeking a three-year federal grant of \$180,000, as well as corporate sponsors for individual teams.

The league has been designed by the Urban Enterprise Corps at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and will be run through YMCAs in the three cities.

"It is designed to mend the social fabric of the community and provide alternatives to idleness in the inner-city," says Jim Johnson, director of the Urban Enterprise Corps at UNC-CH's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

The midnight league will build on the experience of, and be in addition to, a seven-year old weekend league, known as "Night Flight," that has been run at half-a-dozen sites by the Durham Parks and Recreation Department. That program is offered to a younger age group - 15 to 21 years old - and is less formal than the new midnight league.

"We're hoping that the Triangle midnight basketball will provide the next level for the Night Flight participants," says Ben Weber, executive director of the Durham YMCA. "It would allow the organization to develop a broader relationship with those participants."

In addition to offering basketball games, the midnight league will include corporate volunteers who will be recruited to work as mentors with young men who participate in

the league, typically ages 18 to 25 years old. They attend 30-minute "personal responsibility" sessions with their mentors after each game.

Four games of one hour each typically are played each evening from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Initially, the league will be run Saturday nights only, and eventually expand to other nights.

The league also will have a program to instill the entrepreneurial spirit in teenagers. All concessions at games will be owned and operated by high school students. As the league matures, that business will be expanded to include such items as caps and memorabilia.

Johnson was a member of a research team that evaluated the impact of the Milwaukee league. In addition to contributing to the 30 percent drop in the crime rate in the target neighborhoods, the research team found, the league "created a safe haven in which the participants and the fans could engage in positive social activities, channeled the energy of gang members

in a positive direction, and significantly improved the educational and career aspirations of program participants," according to a report by the research team.

The Milwaukee program is one of several created in inner-city neighborhoods throughout the United States starting in the 1980s. The Milwaukee league was set up with an investment of \$70,000, which Johnson says is roughly the cost of maintaining two inner-city minority males in prison for one year.

In Durham, the annual cost of sending one youngster to a training school is \$42,000 to \$47,000. In 1993 and 1994, 69 Durham County juveniles were sent to a training school for one year - at a total cost of nearly \$3 million.

"One does not have to be an investment banker to realize that programs like the midnight basketball league will generate a much higher return in terms of human capital development than any or all of the punitive and paternalistic policies that currently garner so much political and media attention," the research team says in its report.

For information, call Weber of the Durham YMCA at (919) 493-4502.

Laying the groundwork

Women's fund gears up for fundraising push

Volunteer leaders of The Women's Fund of North Carolina attribute a slow fundraising start to a lack of awareness about the need for an endowment fund for programs for women and girls.

By BARBARA SOLOW

Volunteer supporters of The Women's Fund of North Carolina say they are not discouraged by the gradual pace of donations from corporations, foundations and individuals.

The fund, which was established in October 1993 as a permanent endowment of the North Carolina Community Foundation, has raised only about \$40,000 of its \$250,000 fundraising goal.

"It's moving slower than we had hoped but it is moving," says Lena Epps Brooker, president of the fund's advisory board and diversity management director at The Women's Center in Raleigh. "This is a new concept, not just here in North Carolina but nationally. As a result, we are having to do a lot of education about why a fund like this is important."

Although philanthropic giving to programs for women and girls has increased during the past two decades, it remains a small piece of the pie - only about 5.3 percent of overall corporate and foundation giving, according to Women and Philanthropy, a national coalition that works to increase giving to women's issues.

Surveys by the organization show many foundations and corporate fun-

ders prefer to support "universal" programs that serve a general population, rather than those specifically aimed at women and girls.

Despite such attitudes, Brooker says once North Carolina donors hear about the existence of The Women's Fund, they are excited about supporting it.

"A lot of women and men are still not aware of how little goes to women and girls," she says. "When we start sharing with them some of the statistics about women in this state, it's a real eye-opener."

Activities supported by the fund in its first two years of operation includ-



Lena Epps Brooker



Elizabeth Fentress

ed a six-month series of programs on women's health issues broadcast on North Carolina Public Television; an eight-week model financial management program designed for members of the Carolina Girl Scout Council, and a conference on family-friendly policies in the workplace sponsored by N.C. Equity in Raleigh.

Brooker says health, education and economic empowerment will continue to be a special focus of the fund.

Founding members include Elizabeth Fentress, executive director of the Raleigh-based North Carolina Community Foundation; Joyce Fitzpatrick, president of the Raleigh communications firm Rudder-Finn; and Sarah Belk Gambrell of Charlotte, a principal of the Belk group of stores.

WOMEN

Newly-appointed volunteer advisory board members are Margaret Almond and Sharyn Elder of Charlotte; Jeri Fitzgerald Board of Lenoir; Linda McCrudden of Raleigh; and Warren Williams of Asheville.

The fund's first annual luncheon featured a speech by honorary Chairwoman Elizabeth Dole, a Salisbury native and former U.S. transportation secretary. On Oct. 17, the fund will host a luncheon with

New York Times columnist Jane Brody in Charlotte.

Organizers of the fund say future outreach efforts will center on attracting volunteers, donors and community leaders who can help encourage more philanthropy among women.

"When you stop to think about it, so much of the volunteerism in our communities is done by women - especially fundraising - but

we've never really worked on anything that would benefit us directly," Brooker says. "The bottom line is it's taken us longer than we'd hoped to make the connection to women we want to reach in the community. But we are reaching them and they are very excited about what we're doing."

For details on the Charlotte luncheon, call Elder at (704) 333-6586. For information about The Women's Fund, call Esther Hall at the North Carolina Community Foundation in Raleigh at (919) 781-2797.

Leading the way

English majors rank high as volunteer interns

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte places about 70 student interns a year in mostly-volunteer positions related to their studies.

Surprisingly, the division that places the most students in internships is the English department, school officials report.

UNC-Charlotte places English interns at companies such as IBM, Duke Power and WSOC-TV, as well as nonprofits such as Carolinas Medical Center, Spirit Square and the Leukemia Society.

Student interns receive academic credit for the training

they receive under faculty supervision. Volunteer interns must maintain a grade-point average of 2.5 or better.

Why is English such a popular subject for internships?

Because in the age of advanced communications technology, the ability to write and communicate is a sought-after skill, says Deborah Bosley, UNC-Charlotte's advisor for English internships.

Criminal justice is a close second to English, in terms of internships and, depending on the semester, sometimes places more interns.

BRIEFLY

Mary Semans receives award

Durham civic leader Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans was the only North Carolinian to receive a 1995 Distinguished Service Award from the National Governors Association. Semans, a long-time supporter of the arts, received the award on July 31 at a ceremony in Burlington, Vt.

Hopeline needs crisis volunteers

Hopeline in Wake County needs volunteers to staff its 24-hour crisis hotline. The hotline, started in 1970, receives more than 50 calls a day, and the number is growing as the region continues to grow. Training for volunteers will begin Sept. 12. Call (919) 231-7991.

Peace Booth needs State Fair volunteers

The Peace Booth at the State Fair needs volunteers for its 1995 educational display. For more than 40 years, the Peace Booth has operated at the fair as part of a statewide coalition of churches, individuals and peace activists. The fair runs Oct. 13-22. Call Patrick O'Neil at (919) 772-5777.

Volunteers needed to strengthen families

SAFEchild, the Raleigh child abuse prevention agency, needs volunteers for several programs: a nurturing class for 4-to-12-year olds; a story-sharing program for family literacy; and a welcome-baby program that pairs first-time mothers with mentors. SAFEchild provides training for all volunteers. Call (919) 231-5800.

Charlotte agency prepares for winter

Crisis Assistance Ministry in Charlotte will hold information sessions for prospective volunteers Sept. 5 and Sept. 20. The agency needs interviewers to work one-on-one with families in financial crisis. It also is looking for help processing and distributing donated clothing and furniture. To register, call Anne Davant at (704) 371-3001, ext. 114.

Camp to help grieving kids

Triangle Hospice and Hospice of Wake County are joining forces to present Camp ReLeaf, a bereavement support camp for children, on Sept. 29 and 30. For information about volunteering for the camp or sending or referring a child, call Faith Barnes at (919) 490-8480.