

Specialists Aim To Help Students Stay Out Of Trouble And In School

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County students who are more likely than others to drop out of school, become pregnant, commit a crime or otherwise meet head-on with trouble have friends in Mary Riley and Shirita Brown.

The two are prevention education specialist with Cape Fear Substance Abuse. New to their roles this year, the two women feel they're making a good team, drawing on each other's varied backgrounds and experiences.

Ms. Brown graduated in spring 1990 from UNC-Wilmington with a degree in psychology. She had completed a student practicum at CFSA and was hired by the agency in May. Ms. Riley has a health education background and holds a master's degree in public health from UNC-Chapel Hill. She was previously a health educator and drug education specialist in Durham County.

Together the two are "in some ways finding out what we're doing as we go along," following guidelines that allow plenty of discretion on their part and steering a course based in part on the records of the team previously assigned to Brunswick County.

Their positions are funded by a Community Based Alternative grant, which focuses on keeping adolescents out of training schools. "We're trying to keep kids in school," said Ms. Riley.

The specialists' approach focuses on drug abuse prevention, she continued. "We recognize that students who are involved with drugs are more likely to get in-

involved with crimes, or an unplanned pregnancy and other social problems."

Added Ms. Brown, "What I see that is happening is the kids are coming to high school with these problems. That's why we and the schools are trying to reach them at a younger age now where possible."

The two divide their time among assigned schools. Ms. Riley works with students at North Brunswick High School, South Brunswick High School and South Brunswick Middle School, while Ms. Brown works with students at West Brunswick High School, Shallotte Middle School and Waccamaw Elementary School. She also is the program's court liaison, working with referrals from juvenile probation officers Bud Thorsen and Jeanette Wyche.

The approach they take varies because every school and every group of students is different. At South Brunswick Middle, for instance, Ms. Riley and the school guidance counselor will share mentoring roles as they work with short-term counseling groups that meet only for four weeks. At South Brunswick High School, sessions continue all year long.

At Shallotte Middle, Ms. Brown's work supplements that of the Lion's Quest and Advisor /Advisee pro-

grams. She focuses on alcohol and smoking abuse prevention and breaking family cycles of abuse. At Waccamaw Elementary the focus is on two areas: students who are repeating a grade because of absenteeism and are potential drop-outs and family situations where substance abuse is present.

At all schools efforts are made to schedule group meetings at times when students are taking electives, not courses critical to graduation. Some groups meet on a rotating schedule so that students don't always miss the same classes.

Goals for the groups are generally the same: to use intervention techniques that give students the tools they need to avoid substance abuse. Efforts focus on development of life skills, decision making skills and building self-esteem—approaches that fit into the school system's overall substance abuse prevention program.

Some students will also participate in Cape Fear Substance Abuse's Outdoor Adventure Program, a ropes courses for small groups. Participants get firsthand experience in working as a team, analyzing and solving problems, overcoming obstacles, learning to give and receive help.

"We're hearing a lot of 'Just Say No' but we're trying to offer them alternatives—a lot of 'learning about me' things," said Ms. Brown. "Part of it is letting go of their defenses enough to give the group a chance."

Students who manage to do that see results.

CFSA specialists worked with a total of 150 students during the 1989-90 school term; similar numbers are expected this year as well.

Ms. Riley said results from last year's program were encouraging, though not dramatic. Situations for most of the students remained the same or improved. Problems escalated, she said, for "only one or two."

But CFSA loses contact with the students at the end of each school year, when services are terminated. "We don't know what happens to them during the summer," said Ms. Riley.

What she does know is that the following fall students who have participated in the program the previous year generally "look forward to being in it again".

Referrals to the CFSA program come from a variety of sources—school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, parents, probation officers and even students themselves.

The referral process starts with a phone call to CFSA at 762-5333, or contact with the school's guidance staff. An intake interview follows, then individual counseling, group counseling or some mix of the two for those accepted into the program.



BROWN



RILEY

Coastal Water Quality Report On CRC Agenda

The findings of a year-long look at coastal water quality issues will be presented this week when the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) meets at Atlantic Beach.

A state official also will discuss trends in water quality when the CRC meets today (Thursday) and Friday in the Sheraton Hotel. Meetings start both days at 9 a.m.

CRC members also will hear a status report on maritime forest protection and continue to discuss a draft rule that would allow maintenance dredging in primary nursery areas. At its December meeting, the coastal panel postponed a decision on a proposal to allow dredge boats in waters where baby fish, shrimp and other marine specimens spend their first growing seasons.

In other matters this week, the CRC will consider certification of several updated land use plans, including ones for Southport, Yaupon Beach and Caswell Beach in Brunswick County.

Land use plans set guidelines and policies that help town officials deal with growth and development issues. Plans typically are updated every five years.

The proposed update for Southport gives prominent mention of the town's waterfront access plan and proposal to redevelop the entire town, according to a Jan. 9 memo from Coastal Management staff to the CRC's planning and special issues committee.

The proposed land use plan update for Yaupon Beach indicates that the town thinks local land use controls and existing state and federal regulations are adequate to protect the environment and control future growth.

The memo says important issues for Yaupon Beach include the need of a central sewer system, deterring unattractive strip development along the main thoroughfare and relieving traffic problems that are expected to get worse.

The Caswell Beach land use plan update notes the need for a sewage treatment facility and the need to control both multi-family development and commercialization.

A survey of Caswell Beach residents showed that their biggest concern is beach erosion, according to the state memorandum.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

SANDBAGS STACKED TO FIGHT EROSION near the east end of Holden Beach will be reinforced later this year with about 45,000 cubic yards of sand pumped from Lockwood Folly Inlet. Dredge material also will be pipelined from Shallotte Inlet crossing to Ocean Isle Beach.

Dredged Sand To Be Dumped On Local Beaches

BY DOUG RUTTER

Sand that will be dredged from the Lockwood Folly and Shallotte inlet areas later this year will be pipelined to Holden Beach and Ocean Isle Beach to help build up the beaches.

A hydraulic dredge will dig about 45,000 cubic yards of fine to coarse sand out of Lockwood Folly Inlet and deposited on Holden Beach, according to a notice from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington district.

Approximately 20,000 cubic yards of sand will be dredged from Shallotte Inlet crossing and dumped on Ocean Isle.

Sand will be dumped near the east end of Holden Beach and at Shallotte Avenue on Ocean Isle, according to

James Wells of the corps dredging section in Wilmington. Both disposal sites have been used before.

The work in Brunswick County is scheduled as part of annual maintenance dredging of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from Morehead City to the South Carolina state line.

Other areas included in the project are Shinn Creek crossing and Carolina Beach, Mason, New River and Bogue inlet crossings. A cost estimate for the project was not available.

Wells said bids will be let next month, and work is scheduled to begin in early March. The Corps will decide which area will be done first based on need. The whole project should take five months to complete.

Holden Beach Mayor John Tandy

said the town desperately needs the sand at the east end of the beach to reinforce a recent sandbagging project funded by the state.

"It's pretty critical and chronic," Tandy said of the erosion. "It's really taken a toll. The last few years it really has gotten tough."

Tandy said past efforts to build up the beach with dredged sand have met with different results. "It's hung in there as long as a year or as short as a week or month," he said.

Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Betty Williamson said the extra sand has always helped hold back erosion damage near the island's east end.

"As always, we need all the material that we can possibly get to be placed at the east end so we can control our erosion," Mrs. William-

son said. "The late winter storms and early spring storms work on us down there at the east end. We need every bit of sand we can get."

Anybody who has an interest that may be affected by the disposal of the dredged material at Holden Beach or Ocean Isle Beach can request a public hearing.

Requests must be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in writing and must describe the interest that may be affected and how it could be affected.

Letters should be mailed to the U.S. Army Engineer District, Wilmington, P.O. Box 1890, Wilmington, N.C. 28402-1890. All requests for hearing must be received by Feb. 4. For more information, call Wells at 251-4824.

AARP Offers Tax Assistance

Brunswick County residents can receive free income tax assistance starting next week as part of the tax-aid program of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Volunteer counselors trained by the Internal Revenue Service will provide counseling service and assistance at the following locations, dates and times:

Southport Public Library—Tuesdays and Thursdays, Feb. 5 through April 11, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

West Brunswick Branch Library, Shallotte—Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Feb. 5 through April 10, noon until 5 p.m.

Brunswick Community College Interagency Building, Supply—Wednesdays, Feb. 6 through April 10, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. by appointment only. Call Debbie Bryant, 754-6900 ext. 400, for appointment.

John Angermayer, coordinator of the tax program, said the service is

designed to help older persons understand income tax forms and become familiar with special benefits available to older persons.

"Our counselors, many of whom are retired business people with considerable experience in tax matters, are trained to prepare returns for older taxpayers," Angermayer said.

From past experience, Angermayer said many older persons are unaware of special benefits they are entitled to claim. Some may not even be required to file a return because of limited income.

People who want to use this free service should bring with them copies of federal and state returns from the previous year and forms for the current tax year, including W-2s and other relevant records and materials showing income for the year.

For more information, call Angermayer at 457-4973 or Laurits Nielsen at 845-2121.

Holden Might Require Numbers On Walkways

BY DOUG RUTTER

A proposal to require beachfront homeowners at Holden Beach to put house numbers on walkways leading to the strand will go before the public next week.

A public hearing on the planned amendment to the zoning code is scheduled Monday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. as part of the regular monthly meeting of the town commissioners.

Another public hearing will be held on a long-standing proposal to limit the number of consecutive terms someone can serve on the town's planning and zoning board or board of adjustment.

The proposal to require house numbers wouldn't be a first for Holden Beach. The town has required numbers on the side of the house facing the street since 1986.

Those numbers have to be at least six inches tall and must be a color that contrasts with the color of the house so the numerals are clearly visible from the street.

Under the proposed addition to the zoning ordinance, numbers on beach walkways would have to be at least three inches tall, according to Interim Town Manager Diane Clark.

Commissioner Kenner Amos has said house numbers on beach walkways would be helpful in the event of an emergency. "We've had occasions where people have almost drowned and they wanted to call the ambulance and they didn't know where to tell the ambulance to come," he said.

Officials also have said numbers on oceanfront homes would help visitors. Because many beach houses look alike, visitors have become lost on the strand because there are no numbers to tell them where they

are.

The numbers also are expected to help volunteers involved with the sea turtle watch program. They have said it would be easier to record where turtle nests are located if there were numbers on the walkways.

Limiting Terms

A proposal to limit to two the number of consecutive terms a person can be appointed to a town board will be the topic of a second public hearing next Monday night.

Commissioner Bob Buck first proposed the limitation in June 1988, but it died due to lack of support. Since then, three of the former board members have been replaced.

Buck has said limiting consecutive terms would help ensure fresh ideas on the boards and allow different interests to be represented. He said he isn't trying to get rid of anybody presently serving on a board, but is trying to keep the same people from serving on the same boards year after year.

The Holden Beach Property Owners Association supported the proposal when it was first considered more than two years ago. Amos was president of the organization at that time.

The Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board has recommended against the proposal. Board members said they already serve at the pleasure of the town commissioners and can be removed from office at any time.

Buck, whose proposal has not received support from other commissioners in the past, has said he is willing to let it die if it isn't supported this time around.

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