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Expanded King Day celebrations draw crowds

Four entities unite to focus on late civil rights leader's legacy

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is dead, but the example he set of seeking change in non-violent ways was alive in Perquimans County Monday during annual Martin Luther King Day programs.

Kicked off with a prayer breakfast, the day's observances moved to a program at Perquimans Middle School before its conclusion with a service at Emmanuel Pentecostal Church.

The program at the middle school, which was jointly sponsored by the school and the National Council of Negro Women, focused on the day's theme of non-violence through music, drama, a community talk show and reviews of King's life.

Under the direction of Tanya Turner, middle school students presented a play depicting important components of the civil rights movement spearheaded by King titled "Non-Violence on the Move." The play focused on King's attempts to use reason to facilitate positive change for African Americans.

Audience participation in the program was encouraged during a PCMS/Community Talk Show hosted by middle school teacher Nettie Moore and Rev. Jon Strother.

Panelists were clinical social worker Linda Weinbaum, Dr. Charles Guyer, the Hon. J.C. Cole and the Rev. Alvin Boone. The theme of the segment was "Promoting non-violence in the home, school and community."

Responding to concerns and questions from the audience, panelists discussed the importance of parents taking the responsibility of being good role models for their children, setting limits, and forcing youth to suffer the consequences of negative behavior.

Discussion during much of the talk show focused on some parents' unwillingness to work with authorities, both in school and in the community, when their children do not follow guidelines for behavior.

Another point brought up during the segment was that children must learn that it takes a more mature person to avoid a conflict than to allow an argument to escalate into a physical confrontation. Guyer said that in his experience working with students, hurtful joking is often what leads to physical conflict.

Key to teaching children to avoid fights is the example set at home by parents, the panelists said. When children witness verbal and physical confrontations at home, they learn to use the same means to handle disagreements.

Boone said that the community must learn to speak the language of youth, and show them love and attention. Youth who do not get attention at home will often misbehave, he said, just to get the attention they need.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

Perquimans Middle School students presented a play titled "Non-Violence on the Move" (above) during a King Day program sponsored by the school and the National Council of Negro Women. The school's gospel choir, Voices of Praise (below) made their debut during the program. The day kicked off with a prayer breakfast and concluded with a church service sponsored by the NAACP at Emmanuel Pentecostal Church.

Weinbaum said that misbehavior, especially if it represents a change in a child's personality, can often be a sign of an underlying problem such as depression. While adults generally exhibit withdrawal, anxiety or crying as signs of depression, those characteristics are not necessarily key to diagnosing depression or other disorders in children.

The middle school Voices of Praise, a newly-formed gospel choir, made its debut during the program. The New Hope United Methodist Church Swat Team performed sign-language to music.



Local Smart Start partnership hires first executive director

By SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Just months after receiving its inaugural state funding, the local Smart Start partnership now has someone to help administer those funds for services to help area children get a better start in life.

At a meeting here last Thursday night, board members of the Chowan-Gates-Perquimans Partnership for Children unanimously selected Wendy Jewett as the organization's first Executive Director. Several board members said that Jewett, previously Chowan County's Work First Community Resources Coordinator, was labeled as a front-runner for the post throughout the selection process.

"I've worked with Wendy very closely over the past year ... and she has basically, single-handedly, helped us reform welfare in Chowan County," said Ben Rose, Director of the Department of Social Services in Chowan. "We (selection committee) pretty much had a consensus to select Wendy."

Rose described Jewett as an individual who would have little problem shifting roles.

"She's a work-aholic, I can attest to that," Rose said.

Jewett officially took the position Tuesday. According to Partnership secretary Leo Higgins, Jewett's salary will be \$40,000 annually. Reached last Friday afternoon, Jewett said her new role will be similar to her involvement with Work First in Chowan.

"As far as I'm concerned, only the clients I'm seeing

have changed," she said, noting that the inter-agency relationships with the Partnership will be similar to those she experienced with Work First.

Jewett said that the North Carolina Partnership for Children will assist the local agency with getting its services up and running during the next two years. The state will focus on aligning the local agency's accounting standards with statewide guidelines. Where services are concerned, the three-county Partnership will devise its own service plan, she said.

"We know best what our folks need," said Jewett.

Prior to being named to her position with Work First in Oct. 1997, Jewett served from Nov. 1996 to October 1997 as Director of Active Youth and Parents Program for Chowan County's 4-H service. She also served as a counselor for at-risk children and their families in Roxboro prior to her move to Chowan County. Jewett also spent 13 years as a Certified Financial Planner and Stockbroker, while also filling roles a number of other roles assisting at-risk children and their families.

The Partnership currently has a \$464,000 budget in which to operate for the remainder of FY 1998-1999, including nearly \$250,000 for service expenditures. But Higgins said that since state legislators were late in finalizing the budget in which the Smart Start funding was included, the state will allow unused dollars in the current budget to become part of next year's budget.

Along with naming Jewett

its executive director, the Partnership opened talks with Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland about the use of office space at the former White Oak Elementary School. Board chairman Ben Gregory requested that the Partnership draft a letter to the Chowan County Board of Commissioners requesting use of a portion of the vacant school building.

"We need to write a letter specifically asking what our needs are," added Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory, also a member of the Partnership's board.

Chowan's County Manager expressed optimism about the idea.

"I think we can certainly work something out. As of now, the building's vacant so I can see no problem," said Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland, also a member of the Partnership's board. "I think we got plenty of space (at White Oak) for a conference room."

Copeland said that Chowan officials had already considered a number of uses for the facility, including use by the Chowan County Senior Citizens Center, for vocational programs, and utilizing space for office use. In addition, he said that the deed to the school building has not been transferred from the Edenton-Chowan School System to the county, so an official approval from the commissioners would have to remain pending.

Copeland also said that the site is Internet-ready since its communication system remains intact.

MOVING DAY



Saturday was Parent Moving Day at Perquimans Central School, and dozens of parents arrived bright and early to help get teachers settled in the new building. Around noon, the work crews took a lunch break in the cafeteria/multi-purpose room (above) before heading for home in mid-afternoon. Students will return to class Wednesday in the new building. Demolition on the old building is set to begin Feb. 1.

Kidd to speak at Chamber banquet

A man experienced in heritage tourism development will be the guest speaker for the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet.

Dan Kidd, heritage tourism manager with the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development, will share his experiences on Feb. 9 at Angler's Cove Restaurant.

The Lexington, Ken. native served as Kentucky's heritage and cultural coordinator for seven years before moving to North Carolina in July. Kidd earned his master's degree

from the University of Georgia and is certified by the U.S. Department of the Interior as an architectural historian. After college, Kidd worked in the field of historic preservation for 10 years. He is heritage tourism adviser in the National Alliance of Preservation Commission.

Kidd has visited Hertford several times and describes the town as a "truly appealing place with rich potential for heritage tourism development."

"The fine state of preservation of the commercial district, the retention of friendly old

homes, the scenic view of the Perquimans River, and the kind hospitality of folks in Hertford all add up to a highly enjoyable experience," Kidd said.

During the banquet, awards for Chamber Volunteer of the Year, Chamber Ambassador of the Year, Small Business of the Year and a surprise award will be presented.

Tickets are \$20 each. For tickets, send a check made payable to the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce to the chamber at P.O. Box 27, Hertford, NC 27944.