

LIFESTYLES

Red Cross quick to action

ELIZABETH STEWART
Herald Correspondent

Forty-five families displaced by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Region found homes in Cleveland County due to the quick response time of the Cleveland County Chapter American Red Cross.

COOK "That's why we're here," says the new Executive Director Benny Cook, who is also chief operating officer at the Kings Mountain branch office on S. Piedmont Ave.

Cook says the Red Cross assists many local families with disaster relief from fire and other tragedies, conducts blood drives and offers training to the public in several health areas and could not operate without the 400 volunteers in the county, who back up a staff of five, and the generous donations from the public.

Ten volunteers worked in disaster relief in the Gulf Region and Florida during the recent hurricanes in those areas.

"My job focus to deal with quick response time is similar to my former profession as a 25 year law enforcement officer," said Cook. He is formerly Chief of the Tryon Police Department for eight years and the Belmont Police Department for four years. Before coming to the county six months ago, he taught at Rowan Cabarrus Community College and commutes to this county from Kannapolis where he grew up and has lived almost all his life.

Says Cook, "I like the Kings Mountain area and am house hunting." He said he saw a newspaper advertisement about the new Red Cross opening and jumped at the chance to apply. "I love working with the staff and with all the volunteers who make the program," he said.

The kindness of donors and private foundations support the non-profit organization which gets no financial help from the federal government. March was Red Cross Month and volunteers were honored at a banquet as a feature of the observance. Several fundraisers were also being held.

Cook reminds Kings Mountain citizens facing surgery or wanting to give a donation of blood for themselves or others can do so

directly at the local office. He said more classes will soon be available, including first aid, lifeguard training and CPR classes for children and adults. He said the local facility is also available to other organizations for meeting sites. Sponsors and donors are needed for bloodmobile visits in Kings Mountain.

Cook received his criminal justice degree from Mitchell Community College, his B.S. in social science from Gardner-Webb University and his Master's of Science in organizational leadership from Pfeiffer University. He is the son of Sylvia Strother of Kannapolis and the late Benny Cook Sr. and has two sons, Jay, 17, and Burke, 11. He has two sisters, Kelly Dickson and Holly Steele, all of Kannapolis.

Cook is proud of his staff, the five staffers having a total of 53 years of experience.

Sandi Bolick, Assistant Chapter Director and Assistant Director of the Blood Services Division for 18 years, is "so much of our program and gives so much to the Kings Mountain area," he said. Cook said that one of the biggest areas for potential disaster is the I-85 corridor and for this reason the Kings Mountain branch office is essential with addi-

tional resources in place to respond to disasters. Other staffers are Claudia Rose, for 16 years program director and disaster coordinator; Gail Warlick, office manager and Armed Forces Emergency services coordinator for 14 years; and Michelle Upchurch, finance officer for five years.

The Cleveland County Chapter is a chartered unit of the American Red Cross, a national resource. Cook explained that the local chapter pays assessment dues monthly to retain its charter. He said the public, unfortunately, may think that the Red Cross is a government agency, relating to Senator Elizabeth Dole's successful tenure as head of the organization. "We are dependent for funds from the public and are grateful for the support we have received from this area for many years," he added.

Cook, who likes to golf, may play in the Chapter's October fundraising golf tournament. He likes to write, plans to always keep up his law enforcement certification, and his favorite pastime is in the stands when his two boys play ball and enjoying athletic events.


"Our door is always open at the Red Cross," he adds.

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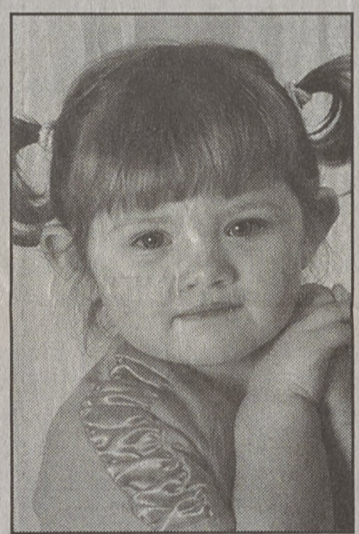
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BIRTHDAY



BREANNA GRACE COBB
Breanna Grace Cobb notes second birthday

Breanna Grace Cobb, daughter of Ashley and Donnie Cobb of Kings Mountain, will be two years old April 6.

Breanna and her family and friends will have a Carebear party at her home on April 8.

Breanna's maternal grandparents are Phyllis and Paul Clark of Shelby. Paternal grandparents are Chubb and Claudine Cobb of Kings Mountain.

Maternal great-grandparents are Grace and Clem Francis of Shelby.

BRIEFS

A summer full of adventure awaits girls at two area Girl Scout campsites.

Activities at Camp Rotary Day Camp and Camp Golden Valley resident camp are open to girls of all ages. You do not have to be a member of Girl Scouts to attend.

Camp programs are available for six weeks at each camp. For information on what each week offers log onto the Pioneer Council's website www.girlscoutspc.org/camp or call the Pioneer Council office at 704-864-3245.

Bethany Baptist Church and HIS Hawaiian Haven team will hold a spaghetti supper April 7 beginning at 4 p.m. at Bethany Baptist Church, Grover. All proceeds will go to Relay for Life. The price is \$6 for adults and \$4 for children under 10. For more information call Leslie Ramsey at 704-739-4782.

A car and truck show to benefit Wayne Hyder, who needs a lung transplant, will be held Saturday, April 29 on South Battleground Avenue across from Timms Furniture.

Register from 10 a.m.-12 noon. Top 20 awards will be given at 2 p.m. The show will be held rain or shine.

For more information call Doug Peterson at 739-4274.

The Cleveland County Republican Party will meet Monday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m. at IHOP in Shelby.

Those wanting to eat should arrive at 6 p.m. GOP county commissioner candidates will give a brief opening question followed by questions that are submitted.

Anyone wanting to submit a question should do so prior to April 10 by e mailing Kathyccgop@aol.com. The public is invited. For more information call Kathy Livsie at 482-2G0P.

Broad River Genealogical Society will hear a program from Bonnie E. Reece, Cleveland County Register of Deeds, Sunday, April 9 at 3 p.m. at the Neal Senior Center, H.T. Harris Dr., Shelby. She will speak on the "Transformation of the Records Office into the 21st Century." A door prize will be given. The public is invited.

The BRGS Archives, 1145 County Home Rd., Shelby, is open for research on the second and third Mondays from 12 noon-4 p.m., second and third Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and weekly on Tuesdays from 6-8 p.m. For more information call Beverly Barnes at 482-5166 or Heather Robbins at 471-9197.

A free genealogy workshop - "Learning to Use Heritage Quest Online" will

be held Sat., April 22 from 2-4 p.m. at Cleveland County Memorial Library. The event is co-sponsored by Broad River Genealogical Society. Sign up at the library or call 487-9069 ext. 221.

"My Medicare Matters," a group of trained counselors, will be at the Patrick Center, 909 E. King St., Kings Mountain, Wed., April 12 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. to assist seniors. Call the center at 734-0447 for an appointment. Take a Medicare card and a list of current medications and dosages. Those who have Medicare Part A or B are eligible for enrollment in a Part D policy. To avoid penalties, enroll by May 15.

A hot dog lunch to benefit Relay for Life will be held April 17 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Carolina Ear Nose & Throat, 1180 Wyke Road, Shelby. Plates are \$5. Delivery is available for five or more orders. Fax orders to 704-487-5230 by April 12.

Cleveland County Library, Shelby, will host a program by literary trio Randy Hoyle, Mary Lopez and Wayne Massey Sunday, April 30 from 2-4 p.m. Hoyle will present his play "Kingdom of Souls."

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