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WANT TO HELP?

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Kerry McKenzie stands in what was once the back bedrooms of her mother's home at 131 Kristie Lane. The rooms were destroyed by a fire on June 27. The family of six was rendered homeless by the blaze. McKenzie and a few volunteers are working hard to repair what is left of the house to get her family back home. To see how you can help, call Kerry McKenzie at 704-905-7908.

EMILY WEAVER / HERALD

Month later, family still fights to get back into home damaged by fire

EMILY WEAVER
Editor

Sixty-eight-year-old Vicki Williams sat on the screened-in front porch of what is left of her home at 131 Kristie Lane Monday afternoon fighting off the heat. Tears trickled down her cheeks as she remembered the June 27th early-morning fire that left her and five others homeless.

"I cried, 'Oh God what am I going to do?'" she said.

Minutes later a Kings Mountain man, who had read about the tragedy in the newspaper, called to help.

"He said 'God led me to call you,'" smiled Vicki's daughter Kerry McKenzie.

Since then, the Kings Mountain man has worked to rally support, seeking volunteer labor and supplies needed to help the family move back into their home.

No one died in the blaze and for that the family is eternally grateful. But rebuilding their lives from the ashes has not been easy. What remains of a houseful of belongings now fills half of a 10-foot-by-10-foot storage unit.

With a pink pacifier in her mouth and her father close behind, two-year-old Summer Bell padded quietly through the empty smoke-stained front room of the only home she's known. No toys in sight.

See HELP, 5A

DON'T MISS THE HERALD'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY KEEPSAKE EDITION INSIDE

'Dark Knight' victim had ties to KM native

ELIZABETH STEWART
lib.kmherald@gmail.com

The deadly massacre of 12 people in Aurora, Colorado and the injuring of 58 other movie-goers Friday shocked the country and hit home to Kings Mountain friends of one of the victims.

Rebecca Wingo, 32, a working mother pursuing a college degree, was the former wife of Robert Wingo Jr., 35, who grew up in Kings Mountain and graduated from Kings Mountain High School in 1995.

"Keep us in your prayers," said Robert Wingo Jr. to Betsy Wells, a retired Kings Mountain teacher whose son, Hart, was in his graduating class and keeps in touch with him on Facebook.

Wingo posted on Facebook that the mother of their two daughters, Jaelyn and Jewel, was a victim. He asked that "everyone be thinking of us at this time."

Marcus Weaver, who took two bullets to his right arm, told television reporters that he tried to shield the body of his friend and another woman and tried to get help.

Authorities identified the gunman as James Holmes, 24, a neuroscience student at the University of Colorado-Denver, who was arrested behind a car at the theatre where "The Dark Knight Rises," was premiering to a full house.

"My heart goes out to all the families," said Betsy Wells, who sent condolences to Wingo and learned that Horan &

See DARK KNIGHT, 5A



GOING FOR THE GOLD

KM's Dremiel Byers gets 2nd shot at Olympic gold

Kings Mountain's Dremiel Byers is in

London this week preparing for Friday's opening of the Summer Olympics.

Byers, a heavyweight wrestler in the Greco-Roman division, is making his second straight trip to the Olympics after winning the recent U.S. Olympic Trials in Iowa City, Iowa.

Byers finished seventh in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, but was disappointed in that showing. He said he took his opening round opponent lightly and has now has set his sights on winning the Gold medal in London.

Byers, 37, began his wrestling career at Kings Mountain High School where he was 1993 North Carolina State Champion. He thought his wrestling career was over when he went to North Carolina A&T on a football scholarship, but he resurfaced as a wrestler in 1999 with the U.S. Army World Class team in Col-

orado Springs, CO.

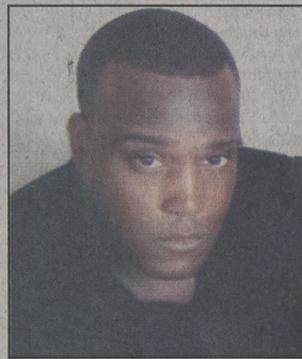
"This is a big opportunity for me," Byers says of the 2012 Olympics, which officially opens early Friday morning (London time) with the completion of the Torch Run.

"It's real important to make good on this one," Byers said. "I don't want to sit back and wait. Some of the guys are young and they come right at you. This time I'm going to put them in their place as soon as the whistle blows. I want to take points when I can get them. I'm not going to stop until the whistle blows."

"There's going to be a sense of urgency this time, because the last time I didn't score," he said. "That's not my way. I am going to go out and get the points."

Like anyone else, Byers would love end his career as Olympic champion, but at this time he says he has no plans to retire anytime soon.

"I still feel like I can keep going and be a world contender," he says. "I feel some pain in my back sometimes. I guess that's old age."



DREMIEL BYERS

Many of his Kings Mountain friends and relatives will be following Byers' Olympic gold quest via TV, internet, texts and other media.

"I'm very proud of the support of the people back home," he said. "I know they are all rooting for me. I promise them I will give my best effort. They can count on me to do all I can to make sure this happens."



KM's Goforth a Taekwondo World Champion

Kings Mountain native Jenny Goforth, a recording artist in Nashville, recently earned the coveted World Champion title in her division at the American Taekwondo Association's annual World Championships Tournament.

Goforth competed against nine other top ten finalists from around the world in the Women's Black Belt ring at the Little Rock, Ark. Statehouse Convention Center on June 21

and 22. After a year of hard work and strenuous competition, Goforth claimed the first place gold medal in traditional forms.

She also earned a third place bronze medal in traditional weapons. Goforth currently trains at ATA Karate in Brentwood, Tenn.

Goforth was just one of the 5,000 competitors, who traveled to Little Rock for the annual ATA World

Championships, which is a week-long celebration of Taekwondo. This year's event drew more than 20,000 martial art students, instructors and fans from nearly 20 countries for specialty training seminars, high rank belt testing and World Champion competition. The ATA World Championships is the largest annual convention in the city of Little Rock.

With active membership exceeding 300,000 worldwide, in-

cluding over 60,000 black belts, ATA is North America's largest martial arts organization dedicated to the discipline of Taekwondo.

Goforth grew up in Kings Mountain singing in churches, school and anywhere she could. After graduating from Kings Mountain High, she moved to

See GOFORTH, 5A

WORLD CHAMPION - Jenny Goforth earned the gold medal in her division at the American Taekwondo Association's annual World Championships Tournament.



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