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Brutko resigning as chamber director in KM

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When Shirley Brutko assumed the job of the director of the Kings Mountain office of the Cleveland County Chamber 16 years ago she felt that she could tout mainly two things about the city.

"I would tell people 'we have great churches and great schools.' Which was true," she said, in looking ahead recently to her April retirement.

Fast forward to 2014.

"We have an arts center, a historical museum, trails," Brutko said, explaining that in her role with the Chamber she's worked to get more out of the town and an area she has called home for most of her life.



Shirley Brutko has served as the director of the KM office of the CC Chamber for 16 years. She will be hanging up her hat this spring to pursue her love of art.

Through tireless promotion and a lot of research and elbow grease, Brutko over the years has worked

See BRUTKO, 7A

'Steering' kids in the right direction

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With money from his own pocket, Al Adams started The Steering Wheel Organization seven years ago from his home in Grover because "I saw a need."

Seven years later he is seeing kids he mentored growing their minds, expanding their education and following their dreams.

Adams is modest about his leadership of the program. He gives the credit to the kids and to the sponsors who help him and his wife finance the program. "We meet the challenges," he said.

Adams philosophy: "I didn't want to be one of those people who say, they ought to do this or that, and then do nothing." He looked at his two children, Candus and Travis, five grandchildren and others in the community and decided his was a calling.

He got his computer out, made contacts, lobbied local businesses for help and today his one-on-one classroom includes 31 young people from elementary school age to high school. Their experiences and opportunities have resulted, among other things, in debt free college educations. Seven of his original Steering Wheel kids are graduating from college on scholarships this summer.



Al Adams started the Steering Wheel Organization as a way to help kids in need with their education.

Taking a personal interest in each kid, Adams is bursting with pride at their accomplishments.

A self-employed business consultant and project manager, Adams and his wife Jeanette chose the name "Steering Wheel" because that's the purpose of the organization — to steer kids toward a career path and motivate them to reach their potential.

"I saw a lot of good kids with challenges in their young lives and I wanted to expose them to different career paths in the community and broaden their horizons," he said. By all accounts The Steering Wheel Organization is successful.

His first activity in 2007 was inviting four teenagers to play golf through the First Tee Program at Riverbend Golf Club, where they learn life skill lessons as well as another sport.

He took older youth to see businesses in Charlotte like solar manufacturing, those interested in home building were shown the mansion owned by former Charlotte Hornets' Larry Johnson and taken to

See ADAMS, 7A

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Christi Morrow is congratulated by Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey for winning first place with her photograph "Forever Yours."

Photo by Dave Blanton

MLK art contest evokes kindness and peace

City leaders and art lovers gathered Monday for a photography exhibit meant to capture the spirit of civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr.

Photographers pointed their lenses at subjects ranging from young children holding hands to radiant flowers in bloom in a competition that drew more than 25 entrants.

"I am very impressed," said Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey, who helped judge the photographs. "So many of

these moved me and remind me of the spirit of the day."

Claiming first place and a \$150 prize was Christi Morrow, whose poignant photo "Forever Yours" shows a young child with the hands of her adoptive parents on her shoulders.

Kim Howell, a Shelby native who currently lives in New Zealand, won second place and \$100 for her "A Father's Love," a

See CONTEST, 7A

King breakfast celebrates the dream in progress

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The legacy of the visionary Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was celebrated Monday morning at an "I Have a Dream" community-wide breakfast hosted by Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church by speakers who said that Kings Mountain has a reason to celebrate.

Rev. Dr. Andrew Smoke, Presiding Elder of the Hendersonville District AME Zion Blue Ridge Conference, said King's dream was a dream for a better America and issued the challenge that "ours is a dream in progress."

King's "I have a dream" speech is one of the most revered orations and writings in the English language.

Smoke based his remarks on Genesis 37:19-20 the Biblical story of Joseph. "Here comes the dreamer, let's kill him (Joseph) and say a ferocious animal devoured him."

Smoke said that God protected Joseph for the good of others. "Dr. King had a dream and his dream is still in progress, he planted a seed for justice and love but his dream remains unfulfilled; he taught us how to serve and to continue in his vision but we have miles to go before we sleep."

The pastor called King a "drum major for justice."

"God put a dream in his



"But we have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep," Presiding Elder Andrew Smoke at the "I have a dream" service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day Monday at Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church.

Photo by DAVE BLANTON

heart and we have come a long way for equality for all and now it's time to push ever forward," he said.

Presiding Elder George H. McNeely of the Linnerton District, Western North Carolina Conference, introduced the speaker and said he remembered King as a classmate of McNeely's brother.

"He paved the way for us and we need to carry that banner forward," he said.

"Don't let Dr. King's dream die," said Mildred Sadler, who was honored with Ina Hager, with surprise plaques of appreciation.

for their leadership in the church and community. "Keep the faith," said Sadler, 89, and active in the church 54 years.

"I have seen segregation at its worst, we need to fight for our children, and make that dream come true," she added.

Other speakers on the program were Rev. Joann McGill, who presided and presented special music, and Phillip Hager, who gave the welcome. Prayers were also offered by Rev. Donald Campbell and Miquel Marion.

The national anthem of African Americans, "Lift

See DREAM, 7A

Grow your business in 2014!



The Herald's new advertising rep is ready to help

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes Annie Jenkins as its newest advertising representative.

A Kings Mountain native and KMHS graduate, Jenkins has previously worked for Hoveround in Sarasota, Fla., and Electrolux in Charlotte.

Jenkins is active in Zumba and likes to call Kings Mountain home because of its small-town charm. She replaces Rick Hord, who left the company in December. "He felt like he was leaving the accounts in good hands," she said. Jenkins will handle new and existing customers in Kings Mountain and Gastonia.

Jenkins has recently worked as an advertising representative for the Belmont Banner and The (Cherryville) Eagle.

Housing plan on the table

A down trend in the housing market in 2006 put on hold plans by Mecklenburg County developers to build a major subdivision at the Kings Mountain intersection of Crocker Road and Phifer Road.

The developers want to resurrect that plan.

One of the developers — John Wayne Thomas — told city planners last week that the housing market is improving and he wants to develop 238 lots for single-family homes at Crocker Road and Phifer Road. Thomas took his preliminary plans to the Kings Mountain Planning & Zoning Board last Tuesday night.

City Planner Steve Killian said that the original request was presented in 2006 by three developers in Mag Land Development, LLC and Thomas, one of the trio of developers, is resurrecting the housing project.

In 2006 the plans for the development were recommended for approval by the city zoning board and city council voted approval.

The Thomas plan includes a connection to Carolina Thread Trail.

The planning board is recommending to city council the approval of Thomas' request for residential 8 rezoning, the first phase of a four phase building plan.

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