

# Orange County brings back program for at-risk youth

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CHAPEL HILL - The Orange County Department of Social Services has received a grant to fund its Building Futures program. The program is designed to help at-risk youth find educational and employment assistance.

Building Futures has been a program since 1998, but was under a different organization before being reinstated under DSS, youth program coordinator Caraina Garris said. It will be available to eligible at-risk youth ages 16-21 and go year-round.

To be eligible, an adolescent must be a school dropout; have basic skills deficiency; be pregnant or have a child; be homeless, a runaway or a foster child; or an offender, in addition to being low income.

The program will help with tutoring and study skills and training, and lead to the completion of secondary education. Summer employment opportunities linked to learning will be available, as well as paid and unpaid real world work experience such as internships and job shadowing. Guidance and counseling for drugs and alcohol also will be provided to participants who may need such services.

Garris said that since their initial informational meeting, they have had numerous referrals and have begun program enrollment.

"The application is long," she said. "They meet with DSS a few times and are assessed and come in for some tests, write an essay about why they want to be in the program and what they hope to accomplish."

Garris said once they get all the required information together, the staff decides who will be a good fit for the program.

The next informational session is Feb. 8 at 5:30 p.m. at the Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road in Chapel Hill.

# TROSA opens thrift and frame store at Geer St.

STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM - Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers last week held the grand opening of the TROSA Thrift & Frame Store at 1703 E. Geer St. The store is offering affordable and quality, gently used furniture, electronics and clothing.

"I am pleasantly surprised to discover how organized the store is," said customer Jean-Ann Hagy who traveled from Chapel Hill. "Everything is displayed very well; the prices are very, very reasonable; and the people who work here are more than helpful."

TROSA will operate the Thrift & Frame Store to help men and women find purpose and recovery from substance abuse through vocational rehabilitation and to generate revenue for the TROSA program. The enterprise will add to TROSA's proven track record in the region of providing vocational training and comprehensive treatment services to nearly 800 individuals each year.

Store Manager and TROSA graduate April Summerlin is one of the lucky ones who found a place to find help for her addiction while receiving vocational training and counseling at TROSA. Summerlin, who was 23 years old and dependent on methamphetamine when she arrived says, "I knew I had to do something or I would end up dead."



"It was not easy for her to give up the friends with whom she had used drugs. But at TROSA, she met others who once had been in her shoes."

"Seeing people who had been through the program and how their lives were, made me think it was possible for me, too," she said. "To see them having a job, having a car, having a home - that's what I wanted."

At TROSA, Summerlin saw that she truly did have a future. "It meant a lot for me to be able to develop solid job and leadership skills through the program, which are invaluable in my role now," she said. Summerlin has earned a position of trust at TROSA, serving as a member of its staff and supporting residents in the program.

TROSA residents come from many different backgrounds. Many were homeless and unemployed before starting the program. "It's exciting to know that we're making a difference in the lives of the residents here while bringing these bargains to the community," Summerlin said.

TROSA is free of charge to people who truly want to change their lives. In addition to receiving vocational training, residents take GED and college classes, participate in a range of therapy and have access to medical care. Graduates are eligible for low-cost housing and transportation and other ongoing support. All graduates have jobs when they transition back into the community.

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Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist exhibit opened last week at Nasher Museum on Duke's campus. Many of his most important portraits and cultural scenes remain in private collections; few museums have had the opportunity to acquire his work. Motley's scenes of life in the African-American community, often in his native Chicago, depict a parallel universe of labor and leisure. Significant works will be on view together for the first time. The exhibition will run through May 11.

Motley Jr. (1891-1981) was born in New Orleans and lived and worked in the first half of the 20th century in a predominately white neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest side, a few miles from the city's growing black community known as 'Bronzeville.'



For a community project, the Triangle RVers adopted the Central Children's Home of North Carolina. The Home provides family-centered services via an appropriate period of residential group care for children and youth ages 9 to 21. Triangle RVers began their involvement with the Home by sponsoring a spaghetti dinner for the residents during its annual festival. In September, the organization held its second annual golf tournament to raise funds for the Home.

Above: President William Fitzgerald, Vice President Shade Dawson and Assistant Treasurer Garcia Howard presented a check to the Home's director.

# CHAPTER NEWS

The Durham Chapter of the Alphabettes recently held a shopping spree for the young ladies in the Bryant Cottage at Central Children's home (formerly Oxford Orphanage).

The chapter "adopted" the Cottage several years ago and has continued to provide activities for the young ladies as well as funds for the home.

The students were bused to Durham from Oxford and given money to shop. Initially shy, they soon became actively involved in selecting from a wide variety of dresses and other clothing and shoes; they were most excited in shopping

for jewelry.

The primary purpose of the Alphabettes, an organization composed of ladies whose husbands are members of the graduate chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, is to support the fraternity when called upon.

In addition, the chapter supports projects that benefit the community such as the Duke Children's Health Center (sickle cell), the Durham Crisis Response Center, the Central Children's Home and the National Council of Negro Women.

The Durham Economic Resource Center is an initiative

of End Poverty Durham, a group of faith- and community-based organizations that work collaboratively to end poverty in Durham.

Its mission is to provide workforce development skills, job placement and to eliminate employment barriers. The DERC maintains a warehouse of new, name-brand merchandise available to member organizations for a small administrative fee.

Rosa Nolen is president of the Alphabettes; Renee LaBennett is the liaison with the Children's Home and Annie Jones Clement with DERC.



PHOTO/ALPHABETTES

Left to right: Kay Patterson, Vivian Lewis, Rosa Nolen, Rose Vaughan, Renee LaBennett, Dijuana McDougal and Annie Clement.

# SCHOOL NEWS

## DURHAM COUNTY

Hillside Theater Department presents A Raisin in the Sun Feb. 7-9 in the school auditorium. Call 560-3925, ext. 25240.

Southwest Elementary Principal John R. McCain was recently named area superintendent for elementary schools. McCain has led Southwest Elementary since 2011. He holds an MSA degree from N.C. A&T State University.



## WAKE COUNTY

Eighteen educational, social and public safety leaders from the Bahamas last month visiting Mary Phillips High School to learn about successful educational alternative programs that WCPSS offers. After a tour of the school, the delegation received an overview of high school alternative programs from Principal Daniel Colvin and his staff, along with an overview of the middle school programs from Mt. Vernon Principal Robbie Gupton and his team.

Drawings, paintings and other art by more than 75 students



at Barwell Road Elementary are being featured at the Marbles Kids Museum, 201 E. Hargett St. in downtown Raleigh through March 2. The exhibit is open to the public, and features large, multi-panel portraits of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. The 40 pieces of art were created by students at all grade levels with the support of art teacher Bryan Allyn.

Superintendent James Merrill has started a Superintendent's Direct Line series of community input events beginning. The first hour-and-a-half is earmarked for teachers and other school staff, the second hour-and-a-half to parents and the public. Signup begins at 4 p.m.

Feb. 3 - Southeast Raleigh High

Feb. 17 - Wakefield High

## Majority of fourth-graders reading below grade level

By Stephanie Carroll Carson  
N.C. News Service

RALEIGH - Imagine tackling fourth grade without proficiency in the most basic of skills - reading.

That's what 65 percent of North Carolina's fourth graders is experiencing, according to a report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Rob Thompson, director of communications with the Covenant with North Carolina's Children, says one predictor of reading proficiency is adequate early childhood education.

North Carolina's nationally recognized pre-kindergarten and early childhood education programs were cut by 20 percent in the 2011-13 state budget.

More than 17,000 N.C. children are eligible for child-care subsidies but do not receive them because of the underfunded program.

The Casey Foundation also found a large disparity between racial backgrounds - with 83 percent of black children not reading at grade level, compared with 55 percent of white children.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, senior consultant at the Casey Foundation's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, says those disparities impact children for the rest of their academic life and beyond.