

## The Guilford County Marriage Resource Center

Strong, healthy marriages have always been an important focus for the Family Life Council. Fairy tales and bridal magazines focus on the wedding and the promise of a “happily ever after”. However, a wedding is just the beginning of a new story. Each year, millions of dollars are spent on romantic weddings and exciting honeymoons. We pay much less attention to how relationships fare once the presents are unwrapped and the cake is eaten. The divorce rate still hovers around 50% and many married couples have found themselves struggling to have the quality of relationship they desire.

With a recent contribution from United Guaranty Corporation and other anonymous donors, the Family Life Council is thrilled to announce the creation of the Guilford County Marriage Resource Center. This center will serve as a clearinghouse of information for professionals, lay leaders, and the general public. The Guilford County Marriage Resource Center:

- Was kicked off at the **Love For Life** Celebration on January 29, 2004. (see From the Desk of the President)
- Will maintain a website of marriage related information – [www.gcmarriage.org](http://www.gcmarriage.org). This website contains a calendar of community events focused on healthy marriages. Organizations from across Guilford County can submit their programming information to be included free of charge.
- Will organize and host 4 training events at no charge to individuals and organizations interested in creating marriage support activities. These will be trainings in Prepare/Enrich, PREP, Marriage Mentoring, and an African-American Healthy Marriage Conference. (See Workshops/Trainings insert for details) or go to [www.gcmarriage.org](http://www.gcmarriage.org).
- Will provide a resource library for marriage support materials.
- Will continue promoting the Community Marriage Covenant for Guilford County.

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**FREE**

Prepare/Enrich Training  
March 26, 2004 or  
June 11, 2004

(see Workshops/Trainings insert for  
details)

## From the Desk of the President

**Kathleen Smith, M.A.**

As a way of recognizing what is going right with families today, the Family Life Council celebrated our first 35 years by honoring 35 couples from our community married 35 years or more. The first-ever **Love for Life Marriage Awards** held on January 29<sup>th</sup> was a great success in no small part due to the 35 wonderful couples we acknowledged. They were a delight to get to know and we wish them all many more years of wedded bliss.

The 2004 Love for Life Marriage Awards Honorees are:

- Ruth & Robert Allman, 42 years
- Earline & Bennie Boston, 51 years
- Rev. William & Betty Campbell, 42 years
- James & Patsy Campbell, 50 years
- Chris & Sandra Canipe, 36 years
- Rev. Howard & Louise Chubbs, 42 years
- Mildred & James Clymer, 42 years
- Audrey & Dessie Coble, 63 years
- Bill & Joanne Craft, 51 years
- Jack & Maxine Crews, 51 years
- Ron & Bernie Erickson, 34 years
- Mario & Rita Espinosa, 41 years
- Henry & Shirley Frye, 47 years
- Paul & Marie Gould, 59 years
- James & Marie Harris, 46 years
- Bill & Lynn Herzberger, 40 years
- Clifton & Edna Johnson, 54 years
- Naomi & Stuart Kaplan, 48 years
- Russ & Molly Keeney, 36 years
- John Marshal & Vicki Kilimanjaro, 47 years
- Lee & Ann Kinard, 51 years
- Arvi & Janis Kivi, 42 years
- Ronni & Zolman Kutchei, 54 years
- Doris & John Lockman, 60 years
- Charles & Anne McKee, 55 years
- Willie & Delores Noble, 52 years
- Lewis & Bernie Robbins, 37 years
- Sarah & Eugene Shoffner, 44 years
- Rev. William & Winnie Smith, 50 years

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Children of parents attending Family Life Council's Reach for the Stars parent/teacher training.

## Guilford County Partnership for Children Teams Up With Family Life Council

Current research shows that childcare programs and schools that make special efforts to engage families show better results in several ways that include: strong and consistent improvement in children's learning and academic performance; children who enjoy being in school; and children who are better behaved. It is, therefore, no wonder that The Guilford County Partnership for Children funded a grant to The Family Life Council which is helping teachers and parents work better together. The goal is to provide family support and parent education to parents and continuing education for teachers.

Under the Partnership grant, Family Life Council staff member Mary Lou Dickey is working with 30 daycare and homecare centers in Guilford County. Each center is hosting three parent/teacher training sessions on topics such as Parent/Teacher Relationships, Discipline, and Getting Your Child Ready for Kindergarten. Meeting with both parents and teachers at the same time helps parents better understand teacher's needs and roles and vice-versa.

Each session begins with a meal. "Eating together is a great way to get to know one another better and build relationships," says Mary Lou. But free child-care is also effective in getting parents to stay and learn new ideas during the sessions. Since October 2003, there have been 18 programs serving over 200 parents. It is one goal of this project to help parents understand how important their participation is in the success of their child's education.

Another goal is to help teachers encourage the parents to participate and be a part of their children's classroom experiences. "If parents learn the importance of taking part in their child's education when their children are young, research shows that this will carry over to the time when their children go to public school," says Cindi Dorman, FLC Executive Director.

There is no topic in education on which there is greater agreement than the need for parent involvement. (National Network of Partnership Schools) Looks like Guilford County Partnership for Children and FLC are on to something BIG!

## From the Desk of the President

Kathleen Smith, M.A.

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- Myra & David Stang, 57 years
- Gerald & Joanne Strasser, 49 years
- Naomi & Henry Thomas, 43 years
- Henry & Catherine Tripp, 46 years
- Alexander & Katye Watson, 48 years
- Gary & Judy Woodham, 40 years

I also want to thank the folks who worked hard behind the scenes to make the event such a great success. They are: Love for Life Co-chairs Lynne Alexander and Liz Reinecke and Planning Committee members, Ann Adams, Charlene Day, Dot Golden, Kathy Harrelson, and Emilie Samet. Special thanks to Mike Boger who took pictures for us at the event and to Virginia Reynolds of Web by Design for assisting with the Powerpoint presentation of the couples. Thanks also to Rev. Gary Chapman, author of [The Five Love Languages](#), for donating 35 copies of his book as gifts for our honored couples. We appreciate all of the contributions we received from our sponsors to make the event a special and memorable evening. Sponsors of the **Love for Life Marriage Awards** included:

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- Pepper Moon Catering
- Spring Garden Bakery & Coffee House
- The Fresh Market
- The Painted Plate
- Designs North
- The Junior League of Greensboro
- Donna Allred, LCSW
- Ted Dougherty, Ph.D., LMFT

## The Guilford County Marriage Resource Center

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Here's what you can do: **Get involved in helping to make this community one that supports and recognizes strong marriages.**

- *Encourage your faith organization to sign the Community Marriage Covenant. Go to [www.gcmarriage.org](http://www.gcmarriage.org) to download a copy of the covenant.*
- *Initiate a discussion among community and faith groups about strengthening marriage.*
- *Attend a training to learn more specific strategies for supporting marriage.*
- *Volunteer at the Family Life Council to provide programs, outreach, or office assistance.*
- *Submit information to be included on the website about community programs that support marriage.*
- *Donate funds to underwrite future programs for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment.*

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## Remembering What We Learn From Our Parents On Mother's Day and Father's Day:

by Ted Sikes

It has been more than ten years now, but I still remember those days when I hardly ever saw my mother. I was a sophomore in high school at the time, and my younger brother, Andy, was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Mom worked two jobs back then; she was employed full-time with the county Sanitation Authority, and part-time as a customer service representative at the local grocery store. Bone-tired, Mom would wake Andy and I up each morning and make breakfast for us before we left for school. It was the only time each day that we would see her. Mom exhausted herself every day for us, to give me and my brother the things we needed.

I learned some important characteristics about parenting from my mother during that time. From her example, I realized that:

- First and foremost, children come first. Parents make sacrifices in their own lives at times to make sure that their children have the best.
- Good parenting requires taking on a high level of responsibility and doing the best one can in a given situation.
- Parents teach their children values not just through discussion, but most importantly, by example.

Married, with two children of my own now, I think back to what I have learned from my mother, and how it helps me raise my own kids. Each Mother's Day, I reflect on my childhood and count myself lucky that I had such a great Mom, and I hope someday on Father's Day, my kids will think the same of me.

## Teens Need Relationship Training

It is clear that happy, successful, strong marriages are not the result of luck or of being a "good person" but that relationship SKILLS play the most important role. Skills in communicating, resolving conflict, and making decisions aren't learned when people marry, but are developing throughout life.

With all of the talk about the importance of strengthening marriages, we cannot lose sight of the fact that a lot of what is learned long before a marriage occurs. Children begin learning from their earliest relationships about how to be in a relationship. Adolescents, much to the chagrin of many parents, begin to look at the opposite sex differently and start the process of figuring out how to successfully negotiate through the ups and downs of their own romantic relationships.

To support healthy marriages we must include efforts to work with youth as they develop their relationship skills. The Guilford County Marriage Resource Center, a part of the Family Life Council, is now able to offer programs for youth to assist them in developing strong, healthy relationship skills. Call 333-6890 ext. 227 to set up a program for their middle and high school young people. There is no charge for this service and the dates and times can be flexible. It is never too early to support healthy marriages.

### DR. RUANO RETIRES

Hasta pronto! See you soon to Dr. Rafael Ruano, our Jóvenes Sabios Coordinator, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career. Dr. Ruano has worked with the FLC since 1998 when we first had the good fortune to hire him to translate the Wise Guys manual into Spanish and develop the Jóvenes Sabios program. His efforts have helped young men cope with the stress of moving into a new culture. His thoughtful and supportive encouragement to these young people was often one of the few supports they had. Dr. Ruano has been a bridge between their past and their future and his talents are greatly appreciated. We will miss his humor and skills, but he promises to keep helping out!



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