

Executive Director wins award



On Thursday, October 28, 2004, Cynthia R. Dorman, Executive Director of the Family Life Council, was awarded the Star of GCAPP by the Guilford Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. Dorman was honored for her contributions in improving the health of Guilford County youth by developing meaningful

resources for local teens. The Guilford Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention exists to reduce adolescent pregnancy by involving all sectors of the community in prevention through promoting healthy lifestyles. Ms. Dorman helped establish and maintain adolescent pregnancy prevention programs that have been recognized for their local and national impact. Programs that were started under her leadership include Good Beginnings for Teen Parents; Healthy Communities•Healthy Youth; and the nationally recognized Wise Guys program. Ms. Dorman's leadership has led the Family Life Council into collaborations with many agencies and organizations in Guilford County leading to a substantial decrease in the number of pregnant teens. The impact in terms of quality and quantity on the lives of local teens, and the community as a whole, has been enormous. Congratulations, Cindi, on this award!

MARRIAGE MENTORING WORKS

Mentoring is an age-old concept that has helped to empower the less experienced through a relationship with those with more experience. Marriage Mentoring follows this same path by pairing premarital, newlyweds or couples needing support with couples who have more experience, wisdom and a desire to help others develop healthy marriages.

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From the Desk of the President

Kathleen Smith, M.A.

When you volunteer on a nonprofit board, your determination is to make a difference. When you step up from community volunteer to board president, you hope that you motivate other volunteers to make that resolve greater. There are several accomplishments of the Family Life Council during my term as President that I feel especially proud of being a part.

The development of the Guilford County Marriage Resource Center gives me the most satisfaction because it provides a critical resource for many families at the core of their need for stability and creates a foundation for their futures. Out of this initiative have come so many ways to reach the community, such as hosting the first ever African American Healthy Marriage Summit on September 10 & 11 with almost 300 in attendance where volunteers were taught to do marriage mentoring and set up marriage preparation programs in their churches and communities; signing 86 congregations to the Community Marriage Covenant; sending 8 staff and volunteers to two Smart Marriages Conferences; offering the PREPARE survey and counseling to 31 couples preparing for their weddings; training 30 volunteers to administer the PREPARE survey in their congregations; and training 40 volunteers in PREP. All this success means good things for Guilford County and we are expanding the Marriage Resource Center into Alamance and Davidson Counties. We are building a resource library for religious and volunteer leaders that has literature, videos and other learning materials that individuals or groups can borrow.

I am also proud that while I have been at the helm of the board, we have served over 1260 young people in Building Healthy Relationship programs. We have witnessed the development of **Wise Guys: the Next Level**, and are providing male responsibility programs in colleges, etc. I am proud of having worked with volunteers who help keep our agency vibrant and current. Special thanks to them for revising printed materials, developing our new logo, new brochures, and working to build a better development program.

Being part of an agency that has grown to a budget of more than \$1 million and 20 full and part time staff is perhaps the biggest reason to be proud. Family Life Council will continue to serve this community well. We continue to meet the call of families in need.

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Helping Teens Handle Conflict

by Ted Sikes

There are three strategies that teens can use to handle conflict: avoidance, aggression, and assertiveness. Avoidance means postponing the conflict for another day. Aggression can lead to physical harm, suspension/expulsion from school, and trouble with parents and law enforcement. Here are a few ideas for helping teens handle conflict:

- Encourage teens to express their feelings and develop communication skills. Discussing their feelings may help them vent their anger in a non-harmful way. Talking about the problem with a trusted adult may also help teens find ways in which to resolve the conflict.
- Let teens know that they can talk about bullying or any type of conflict. Many teens are embarrassed, at first, to talk about what is happening, so it is important to build a trusting relationship so they feel comfortable.
- Help teens learn to empathize or think from another person's point of view. Bullies usually abuse others to try to feel more powerful, and have often been made to feel bad about themselves by others. Looking at things from another person's perspective can help teens be less reactive and more accepting.
- Encourage teens to use humor. When a situation seems to be spiraling out of control and tempers are flaring, a joke might be just the thing to take the tension of the moment away.

For more information, please contact Ted Sikes at 333-6890, x237.

Parents Get Help for the Hard Stuff

As parents, we can find teachers for music lessons ... swim practice ... driver's ed ... but if only we could hire folks to teach our children about healthy sexuality and relationships! Yet study after study shows teens are influenced most by their own families. They need to learn about values, feelings and age-appropriate information from their parents.

Through a grant from the Moses Cone~Wesley Long Community Health Foundation, the Family Life Council offers "Talking with Adolescents about Sexuality and Life." Since July, the Family Life Council has reached almost 500 parents in groups such as PTAs, scouts, neighborhood associations, and temporary housing programs.

Family Life Council parent educator Ellen Weiner, M.Ed., says parents of middle and high schoolers clearly appreciate the opportunity to hone their skills with others in the same stage of parenting.

This program gives parents the opportunity to overcome initial resistance or hesitancy. Weiner says, "We review statistics and the diversity of ideas our society offers teens, ideas that may be very different from the lives their family has modeled for them. We share age-appropriate communication strategies and tips, even role play situations."

According to Weiner, the goal is for each parent to leave ready to be intentional about stating their values and taking opportunities to accept and relate to their changing child in a more helpful, supportive way.



SIGN the Community Marriage Covenant

Join with over 86 Guilford County faith leaders and religious organizations to make a commitment to actively support marriages before and after the wedding. By signing the covenant, the community becomes more effective in strengthening families. While the covenant provides recommendations of activities that are helpful in supporting healthy marriages, each congregation can make their own decision about the requirements for marriages or programs that are offered. We encourage religious leaders and faith organizations to sign the covenant and thereby confirm that Guilford County supports healthy marriages. Please contact Rebecca Starnes @ (336) 333-6890 ext.227 to get your copy.

One group can do much, but a community working together can do much more.

Announcing Guilford County Marriage Month

February 2005 is Marriage Month – a time to celebrate, renew, and cherish healthy marriages in our community.

Start planning now to be involved by:

- Attending or publicizing programs offered by the Marriage Resource Center.
- Sponsoring a marriage education event.
- Preaching about healthy relationships and marriages.
- Scheduling a Healthy Relationship program for youth.
- Celebrating and acknowledging the couples who have successfully maintained their marriages.

Once your Marriage Month activity is planned, go to www.gcmarriage.org to add your event to the Community Calendar of events.

Complete the Prepare Inventory for FREE to strengthen your marriage before it begins!

Couples complete a questionnaire individually. The results of the inventories are then summarized and couples then meet for up to 4 sessions with someone trained to administer and interpret the inventory. The Guilford County Marriage Resource Center is able to offer this FREE to a limited number of couples. To learn more or to set up an appointment, contact Rebecca Starnes at rstarnes@flcgsoc.com.

Life Skills for Today's Families

MARRIAGE MENTORING WORKS (con't)

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With 50% of all marriages ending in divorce, Marriage Mentoring has gained understandable support from marriage educators, religious leaders and others who have an interest in helping marriages remain strong.

Marriage Mentor couples can often make the difference as to whether couples will be prepared to endure the challenges of marriage. Part of the reason for their effectiveness is that Marriage Mentors can share information about themselves that will be helpful to a couple that is inexperienced or struggling with transitions in marriage. These couples are trained to cover a variety of topics which include resolving conflict, family-of-origin issues, active listening skills, and financial planning and budgeting.

The Family Life Council is committed to offer programs and services for couples to help build healthy, long-lasting marriages. Through a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services (Compassion Capital Fund), marriage educators from the Family Life Council can work with pastors and other interested persons to help them create or adapt a Marriage Mentor program.

Of all the institutions functioning on the earth, marriage is without a doubt the most complex. With an awesome spectrum of needs looming over couples, there is an obvious need for balance, knowledge and patience. Marriage Mentoring can be an invaluable resource to provide help and encouragement to couples dealing with the complexities of life. Contact the Family Life Council to learn more about how you can establish a program for your organization or how you can become a volunteer. *Upcoming Marriage Mentoring programs are being planned for Guilford, Alamance and Davidson counties. Visit our website at www.gcmarrriage.org and look at our program section for information about scheduled programs. Call Rebecca Starnes or LaMonica Mitchell at 333-6890 ext. 227 to set up programs.*

WISE GUYS IN ZAMBIA



Jim Burchel (right), Edward Phiri (left) Edward is a local Youth Minister in Livingston who received a Wise Guys manual and is teaching the program in Zambia.

In April of 2004 Jim Burchel, Wise Guys educator, spent 10 days in the AIDS ravaged nation of Zambia on a missions trip. What makes this story relevant is that while there, Jim taught elements of the Wise Guys program and distributed manuals. After returning home, about 10 Wise Guys curriculum manuals were sent to local agencies in Zambia doing HIV/AIDS educational work.

We have received communication from several agencies who are successfully using the manual. Janet Brener, a missionary in Livingston has been using the manual with one of the local orphanages. "After receiving your book I loaned it to an orphanage that went to it like bees to honey. He has been using it with the boys in his "home" (20 of them) and is having great success! I would love to provide several orphanages with your life saving and life giving lessons of truth." More manuals are being mailed to Zambia contacts with hope for even more success!

Life Skills for Today's Families

The Top Ten Reasons why YOU should give to the Family Life Council

1. By giving to the Family Life Council you will definitely make Santa's NICE list this year and won't have to settle for coal or those darn switches.
2. You remember that goofy "birds and the bees" lecture your mom gave you and want to help parents talk more effectively with their adolescents about sex.
3. You already know that to PREPARE for marriage requires more than two rings and a bouquet; your gift makes this information available to new couples.
4. You and your spouse know how important good communication is and want to support other couples who are working to have a strong relationship; your donation will support programs that help couples prepare for or enrich their marriages.
5. *Families don't end when marriages do.* Your support helps underwrite our Parenting Children of Divorce classes, which help keep kids out of the middle of their parent's fights.
6. You just finished the Talking with Adolescents about Sexuality class and you now know how to respond to your teenager when she says, "I already know that, Mom" when you try to talk to her about sex. (You respond, calmly, as you were taught in our communication classes, "Tell me WHAT you know.")
7. Good Beginnings for Teen Parents classes mean better outcomes for cute cuddly babies.
8. Your seventh grader just finished the Wise Guys® program at school and has a new respect for all the women in his life, including his Mom, sisters, and teachers.
9. You can become a partner in eliminating the dreaded words "because I'm the parent and I said so" from the planet.
10. By making a gift to the Family Life Council you will be modeling positive, responsible behavior for the young people in your life. (Developmental Asset #14: Adult Role Models)

The holidays are a time of giving and your tax deductible gift helps us to build healthy relationships in Guilford County. The Family Life Council has been in existence since 1968, and last year we served 8,899 individuals in Guilford County with our numerous programs. As a donor you will receive our newsletter and hear about all the cutting edge programs that the Family Life Council is doing in our community.



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