

POINTS *of* HOPE

The Newsletter of Building Together Ministries and Hope Elementary School

Winter 2001

A Word From the Director

There's a banner hanging in the auditorium of the building that houses Hope Elementary School and Building Together Ministries. It reads "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus!" That indeed is my attitude, one of expectancy and hope in Jesus alone. Reflecting back, I see the peaks, the victories. They are reminders of our rocky journey along the valleys of 2000. They are encouragement that we can do anything as long as Jesus is in it. Yes, we do indeed implore Him now as we enter this new era. What will 2001 hold? We don't know exactly, we know only that we will be His witnesses.



Breonna Allen
Third Grade



Rev. Wilbert B. Johnson
Executive Director

*And you will be
my witnesses*

Acts 1:8

Pride-For-Parents Report

By Anna Neal Blanchard

We were overwhelmed with the response to our Pride-for-Parents Christmas Store this Christmas season and wanted to let you know how grateful we are for your support! Never have we had so many donations of toys and money and enthusiastic volunteers. Despite the fact that our Halifax Court neighbors have moved out, over 625 low-income families from around Raleigh, including Chavis Heights and Walnut Terrace housing communities, shopped in the store this year. We were delighted to see many returning old friends and to meet

new shoppers who were thrilled with what they found. Throughout the month, we heard words of thanks and blessings.



Volunteers pray before Pride-for-Parents store opens.

Special thanks to:

- Everyone who gave and volunteered to bring joy to many parents and children of our city.
- The Raleigh YMCA for their Birthday Party for Jesus. A special thanks to Sharon Smith and her hardworking committee and the many Indian Princess and Indian Tribes that contributed to making this year a great success.
- Richard Tilley and son for coordinating bike assembly for the past 9 years.

BTM Board Members

Freddy Johnson, *President*
Addie Wright, *Chair*
Suzanne Chandler
Val Edwards
Ralph Ennis
Linda Hargrove
Keith Johnson
Skip Long
Robert Logan
Beth McMillan
Barry Parker
Al Reberg
Joy Sloan
Cliff Thomas
Bob Wynne

Building Together Ministries Staff

Anna Neal Blanchard - *Director of Development*
Dawnn Breynae - *Youth Leadership Academy/Camp Hope - Friends Program*
Cathey Ector - *Administrative Assistant*

Reggie Edwards - *Director of Ministries*
Sheila Harrelson - *Bookkeeper*
Eva Harris - *NeighborStore*
Freddy Johnson - *Co-founder of BTM*
Helen Johnson - *Co-founder of BTM*
Rev. Wilbert B. Johnson - *Executive Director*
Linda Riggins - *Community Outreach Coordinator*
Donna Sorrell - *Front Desk Receptionist, Preschool Assistant*
Stan Wiebe - *NeighborStore Manager/Haiti Liaison*
Kathy Boos - *Playing Together Preschool Director*

Hope Elementary Staff

Tamico Baker - *2nd Grade Teacher*
Janet Bell - *3rd Grade Teacher*
Cheryl Everette - *Kindergarten Teacher*
Jonathan Frieson - *Computer Lab Coordinator*
Robbie Graham - *Interim Principal*
Arlene Griffis - *3rd Grade Teacher*
Dione Hall - *1st Grade Assistant*

Sherry Harris - *3rd Grade Assistant*
Brenda Herb - *Reading Specialist*
Phyllis Lanier - *Kindergarten Assistant*
Mary Litzinger - *1st Grade Teacher*
Christine Plett - *2nd Grade Assistant*
Annie Singletary - *Administrative Assistant*

Hope Elementary School Board

Bynum Satterwhite, *Chair*
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Maurice W. Boswell
Helen Collier
Yvonne Coston
George DeLoache
Jesse Dingle
Chanetha Johnson
Teresa Reed Jones
Beth McMillan
Johnny Morisey
Meggy Rader
Addie Wright

Hope for Hope

By Anna Neal Blanchard

Students at Hope Elementary School are thriving! 48 at-risk, low-income students currently attend Building Together's school in kindergarten through third grade. Many of the students are here for their third year, despite the fact that their families have moved out of Halifax.

Hope now operates as a year-round school with four, three-week track out periods during which time, Hope students can attend Hope Camp Classes remain small, (12 or fewer) with a teacher and a teacher's assistant in each classroom. Hope's curriculum combines the N.C. Standard Course of Study with many effective techniques of well-known inner city educator Marva Collins. The focus is on mastering basic academic skills and developing Christian character.

The Hope school day goes from 7:45 am to 2:45 pm. Importantly,



Maurice Jones

Building Together provides the crucial wrap-around support for students, now offering its After School Academy to all Hope students, which lasts until 5:30 pm. (This extended day allows parents to work a full day, knowing that their children are in a safe, caring, educational environment). During the After-School Academy, focus is on discipleship through the formation of Good News Clubs. Additionally, Building Together will continue to

try to match each Hope student with a Christian adult mentor through its FRIENDS program.

At printing of this newsletter, Building Together is awaiting a decision by the NC Board of Education regarding whether Hope will become a charter school. After reviewing over 30 applications, the Charter Advisory Committee recommended that the State Board of Education award Hope one of the six remaining charter slots. (Currently there is a cap of 100 charter schools in North Carolina).

In December, Building Together's Board of Directors voted unanimously to accept a charter, should a charter be awarded by the State Board of Education. The board's decision came after two years of extensive research, prayer, and discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of converting from a private to a charter school. Throughout the two years, the board, staff and many friends of the ministry have sought God's leading and His will for the school. We now ask your prayers during this process.

HOPE FOR HOPE

A word from Interim Principal, Robbie Graham:
"Something good and hopeful is working at Hope Elementary. Periodically, I see a few children sitting quietly on the colorful bench located outside of the classroom. It is their moment of reflection for not making good choices. It is an opportunity for them to take a little time to think about what is acceptable behavior and what is not. In time, they demonstrate an understanding of the necessary consequences. As interim principal, I'm proud of the student discipline and the high standards of behavior here at Hope. My overall philosophy is that appropriate behavior precedes learning."



Here's a story from 1st Grade Teacher Mary Litzinger that offers a window into Hope Elementary: *Everyday we talk about how to solve our problems by talking them over with the person or persons with whom we have the problems. I heard Stephon and James disagreeing about something. The talking got rather loud and some unkind things were said. They continued without any interference from me or other students. After a short time they came to me with their arms around each other and said, "We talked it out and now we are friends."*

Spotlight on Youth Programs

The United States now has 13.6 million youths under the age of 18 who are defined as “at risk” (due to their involvement in drugs, crime, or teen pregnancy). It is for this reason that we continue to pour energy into youth programs. Dawnn Breynae is the Youth Coordinator at BTM. She’s in charge of the FRIENDS Mentoring Program, Youth Leadership Academy, and Camp Hope, the track-out camp for Hope Elementary’s year-round format. Below is a look at how each of these programs is living on despite the demise of Halifax Court and building a lasting foundation of truth and faith.

FRIENDS Program

A great friendship began more than ten years ago at the circus. That is when Bob Wynne met Chris Dickerson. At the time Chris and his mom were staying in Halifax Court. Chris was five years old and Bob was the father of three grown daughters. “We hit it off right away,” Bob explains.



Chris Dickerson and Bob Wynne

When BTM’s FRIENDS Mentoring Program began a year later, they were included on the roster. Now, almost 12 years later, they’ve moved beyond the FRIENDS Program and into a priceless friendship. “It’s a lifetime thing as far as I’m concerned,” says Bob. Chris, a quiet teenager, smiles and adds, “[Bob’s] like a father figure to me. He helps me out a lot.” The two have shared in Chris’ first moment in the Atlantic Ocean and many games of HORSE. “I’ve gained a lot from Chris,” shares Bob, “and from his mother as well. They’ve treated me like one of the family.”

Chris is 17, still in school, and is now in his third year working at

Chic-Fil-A. He’s in the market for his first car and Bob is helping him with lots of good advice. The main thing is their friendship. “I feel that we’ll be friends for the rest of our lives,” says Bob. Chris agrees.

The FRIENDS Program is in great need of male Senior FRIENDS.

The eight year friendship between Anna Neal Blanchard and Andi Hughes is another wonderful product of the FRIENDS Program. Anna Neal, Director of Development at BTM, and Andi, who now now lives in South Carolina, still meet several times a year. They keep in constant contact via email and phone calls. Andi, as

animated and articulate as her Senior Friend, plans to attend college in the fall.

Youth Leadership Academy

Fittingly, Dawnn’s friendship with Shediah Ector grew out of the FRIENDS Program. The faithful YLA participant has dreams of becoming a lawyer or a forensic scientist despite limited income and resources. These are not empty pipedreams. With Dawnn’s help, the high school senior is putting feet to her goals with a valuable internship and professional contacts.

Praise God for Youth Leadership Academy participants like Shediah. Pray for wisdom for her as she makes decisions for college.

Camp Hope

“When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.” This is the theme of Camp Hope, the track out camp for Hope Elementary, which went year-round during the last school year. The camp offers an average of 20 students the opportunity for Christian character development,

educational skills enhancement, cultural awareness and physical fitness. The full-day format seeks to be another tool that God can use to draw boys and girls into a closer relationship with Christ.

Camp Hope is in need of Internationals who can share a little of their culture through food, song, and language.



From left to right: Jasmine Lyon, Shediah Ector, Annika Barnett and Dione Hall

Playing Together's Garden

By Kathy Boos

Building Together Ministries has a large garden that is absolutely beautiful in the spring and summer when the flowers are in bloom and the plants are thriving. This garden, just like all gardens, takes a lot of work to keep it looking well groomed. Playing Together Preschool uses the garden as an outside classroom. The children have planted sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and lettuce plants. They have learned about composting and enjoy taking their breakfast and lunch scraps outside to the composter. They have identified flowers and hunted for insects in the spring, and tasted tomatoes and picked blueberries in the summer. During the fall, the garden is a perfect setting for a picnic lunch. This garden has been a delightful educational tool for our children, and we would love your help in keeping it a healthy and vital part of our educational experience for our children.

Playing Together Preschool is fortunate to have wonderful volunteers who help us reach our daily goal of reading one-on-one to each child in the classroom. Our children are very friendly and "huggable," and they love to be held and read to. We have two large beautiful rocking chairs in our classroom just for this purpose. With weekly volunteers like Tammy Summers, Anne Cooper and Carol Miller reading to our children, the preschool staff are able to work in small groups with other children needing assistance at the art, math,



science, and dramatic play centers. Our devoted volunteers help in giving each child the one-on-one affection that they love and need.

You can play a vital part not only with the garden, but also with reading time and more. Call the Playing Together Director, Kathy Boos (834-7626 ext. 19), if you can help.

- Volunteers are needed on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. during learning center time. Please consider spending an hour a week to help develop these preschoolers' love for books.
- Playing Together is also looking for volunteers or groups who are willing and interested in helping maintain our garden.

Friday's Desk

The question asked most often these days is: "now that Halifax no longer exists, why should I continue to support Building Together?"

While it is true that our Halifax neighbors have been dispersed throughout the city, many are still very much connected to the ministry. Many of our former neighbors are returning students at Hope Elementary School and receive the wrap-around support that Building Together provides through its After School Academy, Preschool, Friends Mentoring program, and Hope track-out camp. Many former neighbors benefit from Playing Together Preschool, Women's Summer Camp, GED and Youth Leadership Academy, as well as our ongoing Neighbor thrift-store and Pride-for-Parents Christmas Store. Racial Reconciliation efforts are citywide through our lively Supper Clubs and yearly conferences.

In the next three years, Halifax Court will be replaced by Capital Park. We plan to be perfectly positioned when the day comes to welcome our returning and new neighbors to the community. In the meantime, we will continue to stay involved with former neighbors and to make new connections with our elderly neighbors in nearby Murphy School Apartments who very much need our services.

So friends, there are more reasons than ever to support Building Together, as we expand our neighborhood ministry to one that benefits our low-income neighbors citywide. Although Hope, as a charter school, will receive some funds from county and state government, it will need to raise additional support to ensure that it remains a first-class school and can provide more than the absolute minimum to its students. Likewise Building Together continues to need funds to provide Hope the critical wrap-around Christian support through its many programs.

I hope this answers the question of "what is Building Together doing now that Halifax is gone?" and points out the great need for your continued support. We give great thanks to you who make our ministry possible, here in the inner city.

From Helen's Desk

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes," I recently read. Prior to our coming home from sabbatical, word came to us, "Brace yourselves for the change! Most of Halifax Court is no more. Neighbors have moved. Prepare yourselves for the desolate landscape!" And so we prayed, "God give us new eyes in the midst of destruction, give us eyes of hope to see Jesus in our neighborhood and how we might serve Him."

Our minds went back to our first few months in the community as we sought to define Building Together Ministries. Strong memories of elderly neighbors like Johnny, Vergie, Eileen, and Alma

flooded our hearts. Ministry to the elderly was high on the list back then. But it was put on the back burner as we responded to the cry of many Halifax Court mothers, "Help us help our children!" Looking across the bare landscape that was once called Halifax Court, we ask, "Is there still a need for such a ministry today?" Mike James, the owner of Person Street Pharmacy, offers his answer:

Many elderly citizens in our area have found themselves trapped in an economic void. They need help they cannot provide themselves. They are unable to carry out the daily fundamental chores necessary to keep them from falling through the cracks. There are many good citizens in the Mordecai, Oakwood and surrounding neighborhoods that can continue to enjoy their daily lives with the help of Building Together Ministries.

Seeking confirmation and discernment, I met with Linda Riggins, BTM's Community Outreach coordinator, for prayer. She told me of a survey she had recently given to the

residents of the Murphy apartments for the elderly. The survey sought to determine how BTM might offer other services to the senior neighbors just a few blocks away. Linda reports that her phone has been ringing ever since. Someone needed a flu shot ASAP. Another needed a warm winter coat from our thrift store.

The next day a retired couple from North Raleigh called to offer 15 handcrafted quilts and hand-woven rugs for someone in need. Another offer of friendship, loaves of bread and pound cakes, proved God was answering our prayer. I immediately thought of my senior neighbors in Murphy Apartments.

Mother Teresa said "I never look at the masses as my responsibility, I look at the individual. I can love one person at a time. Just one, one, one." And so we begin with one trip to the doctor for a flu shot, one winter coat to stay warm, one precious quilt, one more visit, one more hug. Luke wrote: "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized HIM!" (Luke 24:31)



Helen Johnson, Linda Riggins and Louise Hardy boarding the BTM van for grocery shopping.

Resolutions, Passions, and Haiti

By Anna Neal Blanchard

With the coming of a fresh new year, Building Together is making resolutions. One of our resolves is to encourage staff members to align their God-given passions with their God-given gifts and talents in their daily work. Accordingly, long time staff member Stan Wiebe has made a bold change. In mid-September, Stan left his 11-year position of accountant at Building Together so that he could devote more time to his passions - the Neighbor Store and Building Together's ministry to Haiti. As

Thoughts from a recent sojourner, Dr. Roberta Mothershead: *This is my testimony to Haiti ... for Haiti. Actually, it's not a testimony at all, it's a confession. I confess that I have fallen in love. In love with Haiti and her people, because I met God there...*

In Haiti I shed my illusions of independence, self-reliance, and all illusions that money can buy security or safety or happiness. I learned to travel light. I experienced the unexpected joy and freedom of being forced to choose between WANT and NEED.

Everyday I had to literally decide what to carry with me that day. It had to fit in my bookbag. So I carried medical supplies, my journal, and a book of poetry. I carried a handkerchief, a compass, sunscreen, hand disinfectant, my toothbrush and toothpaste, and Kleenex. And water. Sometimes I carried a few snacks, mostly not. Scott, my husband, carried his Bible and we shared it. The group shared water, medicine, food, prayers, tears, the presence of God. We didn't need anything else. We depended on God and it felt like coming home. We had known all along, my husband and I, that somehow this trip would be a pivotal point in our pilgrimage. And so it was.



Stan and Patty Wiebe with some of the children from the Children's Home in Gonaïeve, Haiti.

Neighbor store manager, Stan will work to build up the customer and volunteer base so that eventually, the store can operate five days a week with greatly increased sales.

As much as Stan loves the store, he has a stronger heartbeat for his friends in Haiti. As Building Together's liaison to its Haitian missions, Stan and his wife Patty, take groups to this amazing country several times a year. They also coordinate with the directors of the projects BTM supports - including schools, churches, and a children's home.

Before coming to BTM, Stan served as a missionary in Haiti for five years. He returns often and encourages others to go with him to see, smell, experience, serve, love, and to be loved. Over the past 11 years, Stan has taken over 20 trips to Haiti. Each trip is different; each trip is memorable.

Haiti Mission Needs

- Pray about being a part of a 5-day mission trip coming up in late March 2001. Spaces are still available (Sunday school class, father/son or mother/daughter teams). Call soon!
- Consider planning a program for Stan Wiebe to speak to a small group, Sunday school class, etc. about Haiti.
- Pray about sponsoring a student in the desert school at Pacot (\$10/month) or a child at the Children's Home (\$25/month).
- Consider having Haitian Pastor Jean Francois speak to your group in the spring or have the Children's Home Quartet sing and give testimonies this summer.

NeighborStore Facts

- 10% of all sales go to support ministries in Haiti. You are invited to shop, volunteer (sort, price, assist customers), or contribute (clothing, furniture, household items).
- The store is open Wed. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat. 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- The store is open for the general public to shop. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

Call Stan Wiebe at (919) 834-7626 ext. 26 or email him at swiebe@bellsouth.net.



Let's Keep Talking

By Linda Hargrove

Word had it that there would be a low turnout for the Building Together Racial Reconciliation Conference this year (January 13 through 15). What, with all the other MLK Weekend events, who could blame a body for not attending a conference entitled, "We're Christians, But Are We Reconciled?"

The Conference Planning Committee consisted of several area pastors: John Bender, Raleigh Mennonite; Kofi Atta Ben Bani, Nova Shalom Ministries, Kevin Thumpston, Christ Our Comfort (PCA); William Morgan, Bethlehem Baptist, Donald McCoy, Pleasant Hill United Church of Christ, Don Bickle, member of RMC and Reggie Edwards, BTM's Racial Reconciliation Outreach Coordinator. Their sole purpose was to make this Conference a meaningful experience for all attendees by getting to the hard issues.

To facilitate the event, the Committee contacted fellow reconcilers and members of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) Jarvis Ross and Chris Martin of Knoxville, Tennessee. Jarvis pastors the Community Evangelistic Church and Chris an Associate Minister at the church is Executive Director of the Knoxville Leadership

Development Foundation. "Great things happen when we work together," said Reggie and that is exactly what happened.

Over a three-day period, the conference brought more than 150 people out to hear the message of biblical reconciliation. That message came in the form of song on Friday night as the One Heart Community Choir sang of oneness in Christ. That message came in the form of questions and answers as white and black Christians in attendance grappled with the hard issues of living within a country still bound by racial rules. That message also came in the form of a joint communion service and litany on Sunday at Bethlehem Baptist, the host church. Overall, it was a challenging message—one that will keep us all talking for some time to come.

- If you would like to know more about biblical racial reconciliation efforts or join a supper club discussion group, call Reggie Edwards at 834-7626 ext. 15 or e-mail (erw_btmm@bellsouth.net).
- If your church would like to participate in the on-going activities of Churches United for Reconciliation, please contact Reggie Edwards or schedule a visit.

CEF Comes to BTM

John Perkins, the visionary and founder of the Christian Community Development Association and his wife Vera Mae Perkins praise the work of Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF). Their late son Spencer Perkins at a young age made a decision to follow Christ while attending a CEF



Michael Davis

Good News Club. The visible change in Spencer's life led John to surrender his life to Christ and to follow Him.

At BTM, we've been praying for 11 years for God to send a Good News Club leader to our children. We are grateful to announce that Michael Davis, a CEF missionary and member of the Body of Christ Church leads a Good News Club on Thursdays in the After-School Academy. Michael reports that 33 children have made decisions to follow Christ and are being disciplined.

- Praise God for CEF, Michael Davis, The Body of Christ Church and our partnership.
- Pray that the children will grow in obedience to Christ.

Computer and Technology Needs:

- 2 VCR's
- Computers (*we accept 486's or better as long as they have functional CD ROM*)
- Educational Software
- Laser printers for administrative office
- Desperate need for Macintosh G4 editing software support

If you are interested in learning how to teach English as a second language, BTM will be holding a class. Please call Reggie Edwards for more information, (919) 834-7626, ext. 15.

GIFTED HANDS

Four years ago, locally hand-crafted gift bags began appearing at Big Sky Bread Company in Cameron Village. It was the result of an agreement between the proprietor, Nancy Molesworth, and Gifted Hands, BTM's Craft Cooperative. Today, BTM neighbors like Diana Allen still fill Nancy's custom bag orders. Nancy and her customers find the original designs appealing. "They like the idea of helping others," explains Nancy of her customers. "It's a way of giving back what the community has given me," she adds. In this community partnership, everyone profits.



Nancy Molesworth and Gifted Hands participant, Diana Allen

Big Sky Bread Company is located in Cameron Village Shopping Center off Cameron Street in Raleigh.

Thanks, Thanks, More Thanks

Thanks to Jubilee Peace Center's Steve Derthick and Nekisha Rolle for their leadership in coordinating the Christmas program for Hope Elementary and conducting weekly lessons in solving conflict "The Jesus Way."

Thanks to Robert Boone, Jere Royall and Chuck Millsaps for their faithfulness in conducting Bible Study for Hope's third grade boys. The study is from *Heroes of the Faith* by McWalters, Schultz and Ray.

Thanks to Saint Timothy's School for inviting Hope students to their Christmas performance.

Thanks to Grace Christian School for their generous Christmas gifts for the students at Hope.

Thanks to Wake County Human Services/Healthy Students Program for a \$10,000 grant enabling BTM to begin a new youth project "Tuned in Youth." Students will learn life skills and have the opportunity to produce and star in their own television program.

- Need Macintosh G4 - editing software support for this project



Thanks for the faithfulness of the Tuesday Morning Women's Prayer and Bible Study that has met for ten years to pray for BTM and now Hope Elementary. Special thanks for Rev. Chaneta Johnson for her leadership in the study of the *Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson.



Jubilee Peace Center

Make A Joyful Noise!

If you are interested in singing in the Community Choir for the March 27th Banquet please call Reggie Edwards at (919) 834-7626, ext. 15.

Building Together Ministries Annual Fund Raising Banquet

Tuesday, March 27
Raleigh Civic Center
6:30 - 9:00 pm

After-School Academy

By Linda Riggins, Director

I praise God for answered prayer for volunteers. On any given afternoon, you can visit the BTM

After-School Academy and witness a wonder — children excited about reading. I am so excited about our



Stephone McQueen, 1st grade

partnership with the Raleigh Charter High School and other helpers. Each week, volunteers read to the 35 Hope students one-on-one for a minimum of 15 minutes a day. In addition, about 25% of the students participate in Bible Study and/or Reading Comprehension groups. It is rewarding to hear the children respond with confidence to questions about the biblical passages and the true stories that are read to them. Each reading period ends with the children writing summary sentences about the day.

Wish List:

Books from our reading list
Nutritious snacks



building Together
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