

# Our Children

ELON HOMES FOR CHILDREN

Elon Campus • 201 South O'Kelly Avenue • Elon, NC 27244 • 336/584-0091

Kennedy Campus • 1717 Sharon Road West • Charlotte, NC 28210 • 704/369-2500

## Kennedy Charter School Establishes National Honor Society Chapter, Inducts 15 Students

Kennedy Charter Public School celebrated the establishment of a National Honor Society chapter on its campus with a ceremony that included the induction of 15 students into the new chapter. Parents and friends joined staff and faculty in honoring students and welcoming the chapter at the morning event held on the Kennedy Campus, Sharon Road West.

The National Honor Society, dating from 1921, is “the nation’s premier organization recognizing outstanding high school students.” The NHS honors students who have demonstrated excellence in Scholarship, Leadership, Service and Character.

Last fall when Christopher Lee moved from Kennedy Charter classroom teacher to become Student Activities Coordinator, he recalled from his own high school days the importance of the NHS in student life and began the process to secure a chapter for Kennedy Charter School. Lee also felt that a chapter made up of outstanding students, who met the same rigorous

academic standards and other criteria as all members, would help dispel any skeptical attitudes about the curriculum of charter schools and the achievements of charter school students.

Lee recruited teachers Tamika Griffin and Eugenia Franklin as co-advisors and together they complied with all required documentation and planning for a new chapter.

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*Kennedy Charter School members of the National Honor Society include students from grades 9 through 12.*



*NHS inductee India Thomas and her mother Vernice Simpson.*



*L to R: Co-advisors Tamika Griffin and Eugenia Franklin, Principal Stacey Rose; Co-advisor Christopher Lee, and Elon Homes President Fred Grosse assisted with the Honor Society ceremony.*

# From Your President



An old dog can learn new tricks! Now that is good news for us to celebrate in the Season of Eastertide and in the secular calendar of Spring. There is new life, new

opportunities, new ways to look at the world and new ways to behave.

Despite an almost widely accepted belief that our brains are fully formed in childhood and will forever repeat old learning and old ways of thinking, there exists in the recent past a body of research that says, in short, 'we can re-wire our brains and think and act differently.'

At Elon Homes for Children our board of directors has set one of our three main Ends or ultimate goals as Education. Education to us will have many vast and varied forms, from the formal classroom to teaching moments in the dining hall, the school bus or the hallway etc. What we mean by this is that we want our children to think, learn, process information, and make good choices. We can only hope for success in education if, in fact, the human brain can be 're-wired' which means we can think differently than we thought, and then acted, in the past. We want better decision making for our children.

This brain research and learning is called '**neuroplasticity.**' It was once believed that as we aged, the



brain's networks became fixed. In the past two decades, however, an enormous amount of research has revealed that the brain never stops changing and adjusting. Learning, as defined by Tortora and Grabowski (1966), is "the ability to acquire new knowledge or skills through instruction or experience. Memory is the process by which that knowledge is retained over time." The capacity of the brain to change with learning is plasticity.

**WHAT PROFOUNDLY GREAT NEWS.** A child who has experienced disproportionate amounts of violence, abuse and neglect can, through education and environment, learn new ways to cope and understand the world. This brain research is so vital to our understanding of the human life cycle. And not just for children in our care, but for all of us. We can change our opinions, our thought processes, and the way we respond and react to the world. Yes, an old dog can learn new tricks! We are learning that the brain is not just a recording machine but an ever evolving and re-organizing organism.

Eastertide is the celebration of new hope, new life, new opportunity, new revelations and, perhaps, new ways for us all to think and to act. Thanks be to God!

Blessings,

Frederick G. Grosse  
President

## OUR MISSION

*For the youth entrusted to its care,  
Elon Homes for Children offers*

**SAFE HAVEN  
LIFE SKILLS  
EDUCATION**

## OUR CHILDREN

*Published quarterly by*

**Elon Homes for Children**

201 South O'Kelly Avenue

Elon, NC 27244

www.elonhomes.org

Sharon Landis, Editor

**Rev. Dr. Frederick G. Grosse, President**

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*Elon Homes for Children Annual Reports for October 1, 2005, through September 30, 2006, are available. To request a copy, please call 704/369-2506.*

### SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- ❖ Transitional Residential, Level I
- ❖ Kennedy Charter Public School
- ❖ Family Foster Care
- ❖ Kids Central of the Carolinas, LLC
- ❖ Spiritual Life



## Stacy Sumner Jesso Joins Elon Homes Development Department



*Stacy Sumner Jesso, VP Development  
Elon Children's Foundation*

Elon Homes for Children is pleased to welcome Stacy Sumner Jesso as VP Development, Elon Children's Foundation. Jesso, a Charlotte native and Converse College graduate, has extensive experience in the fundraising arena, both as a professional and as a volunteer. At Elon Homes, she will be seeking philanthropic support for programmatic and capital efforts.

On joining the Elon Homes development team, Jesso said, "I am very excited to have the opportunity to work on behalf of all the children and families served by Elon Homes for Children. I have been a child advocate in this community for 25 years. I truly believe that all children deserve to have a safe place to live, a strong education and the resources and skills to help them live a healthy, fulfilling life."

Most recently, Jesso was affiliated with the Presbyterian Hospital Foundation where she managed the development team and foundation operations. As Development Director, Stacy was a key component in all fundraising initiatives for the Presbyterian Hospital Foundation. In 2005 she served as interim executive director of the hospital foundation.

Prior to her six years at Presbyterian Hospital, Jesso spent over a decade at St. Mark's LifeSpan, a not-for-profit organization that serves children and adults with developmental disabilities. She began her advocacy for St. Mark's as a campaign volunteer helping to raise \$2.5 million. She was subsequently hired as the Development Director to finish the campaign, lead the newly established St. Mark's Foundation, and build the foundation's fundraising program which included golf tournaments, an employee giving program, and philanthropy luncheons.

Many nonprofits have been beneficiaries of Jesso's fundraising and organizational expertise. Jesso has been involved as a volunteer with Myers Park United Methodist Church, Women's Impact Fund, Aldersgate Retirement Community and ARC of Mecklenburg County. She served as board president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), the Junior League of Charlotte, the YWCA and Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center.

In 2005, the Charlotte Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) presented its Outstanding Professional Fundraising Executive Award to Jesso in recognition of her "passion for charities and willingness to give of oneself to make a difference."

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## Kennedy Charter School Establishes National Honor Society Chapter

*continued from page 1*

All chapters adhere to the same high academic standard but each chapter determines the membership standards for the leadership, service and character requirements.

These students are the first inductees and founding members of the new KCPS chapter: Afamdi Abanukam, Dontaveon Craig, Courtney Brownlee, Dontaveon Craig, Markieth Eggleston, Tatiana Harris, Chasite Hudson, Mahogany Jones, Tahj Jones, Chaqwanda Rosa, Monique Spurgeon, Jade Stewart, India Thomas, and Nyeeshia Thomas.

Honor Society students meet once a month and engage in at least one service learning project a year.

On a daily basis, they strive to be diligent learners, provide leadership, promote service and demonstrate good character while being outstanding role models for their fellow students.

Looking ahead, the chapter hopes to send student and staff representatives to the National Honor Society National Leadership conference next March in Orlando, Florida.

Congratulations to these exceptional young men and women on their selection for National Honor Society membership. Three cheers for the Kennedy Charter Public School staff for this notable milestone in the school's history.

## Memorial Gifts

### January 1 - March 31, 2007

Names in bold are those being memorialized or honored. Names of contributors follow.

**Becky Akins**  
Damon E. Woodson

**Dr. Laurence S. Alspaugh**  
Dr. and Mrs. J. R. Arnall  
Mr. and Mrs. Harold B. Bates  
Mr. and Mrs. Dale T. Bennett  
Katherine P. Blackman  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill R. Christopher  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew R. Clark  
Mary P. Dickens  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel J. Ewing  
Dr. & Mrs. Frederick G. Grosse  
Joseph Hudgins  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Moore  
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Mueller  
Mr. and Mrs. Guy M. Ross  
Dr. and Mrs. Clyde L. Taylor  
Joan Wyrick

**Walter Bohannon**  
Cynthia Brewer

**Larry Brinson**  
Damon E. Woodson

**Judy T. Burwell**  
Mary Y. Scott

**Nell Carter**  
Joetta F. Shelton

**Pauline P. Gibson**  
BellSouth Matching Gift  
Center, Stuart, FL

**Carl S. Gray**  
Kathryn Gray Hester

**Mabel J. Latta**  
Mary Y. Scott

**Mallie J. Paschall**  
Mr. and Mrs. William T.  
Dickerson

**Cary Dexton Powell Jr.**  
Wake Chapel Christian  
Church, Fuquay-Varina, NC

**Esther Prince**  
Damon E. Woodson

**Laura Smith Shelar**  
First United Church of Christ  
Liberty, NC

**Theresa Sober**  
Edna L. Scarborough

**Jeanne Cates Summerlin**  
Damon E. Woodson

**Robin Warren**  
Phillis T. Yates

**Harold Williamson**  
Damon E. Woodson

**Eleanor B. Winchester**  
Ruth G. Wilkerson

**Samuel Thomas (Tom) Woodson Jr.**  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank P. Clowers  
Mr. and Mrs. William D. Epps  
Doreen M. Goodman  
Gary E. Ham  
Joseph Scott  
Mr. and Mrs. George R. Simpson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jesse J. Willard Jr.  
Damon E. Woodson  
Dale A. Woodward

## Honor Gifts

### January 1 - March 31, 2007

**Rev. and Mrs. Andrew J. Bierkan**  
Mr. and Mrs. Willard L. Maier  
Elaine E. Sloan

**In Honor of Rev. Andrew J. Bierkan's Retirement**  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Leist

**In Honor Of The Ministry of Rev. Andrew J. Bierkan**  
Vicki K. Celenza

**Lura N. Marshall**  
Goodwill/Belews Creek ECA  
Belews Creek, NC

**Marilyn Watkins**  
Salem Chapel United Church of Christ  
Frankye Rayburn Women's Fellowship  
Walnut Cove, NC

## Christmas Honors Program

*The Christmas Honors Program provides a meaningful way to recognize special personal, business and professional relationships. Honored individuals or businesses receive a beautiful card informing them that a gift in their honor has been made to Elon Homes for Children. Elon Homes is grateful to the friend listed below for his participation in the Christmas Honors Program.*

Gift processed in early 2007  
J. Harold Smith  
Climax, NC

In recognizing our many Christmas donors in the *Our Children* winter issue, we failed to mention **Wal-Mart** and **Burlington Coat Factory**. We appreciate every gift and thank Wal-Mart and Burlington Coat Factory for their generous support during the Christmas season.

## Bike Racks A Welcome Addition



*L to R: Maintenance staff Bobby Johnson, Yme Enuol and Charles Battaglia with one of the three donated bike racks they assembled for students.*

The Mecklenburg County-South Rotary Club again responded to a Kennedy Campus need by donating three bike racks, one each for the two sibling houses and one for the main entrance. The sturdy, attractive racks have become a necessity as bike riding is a favorite activity requiring more bikes on campus but with limited space for indoor storage.

The residential students, particularly the younger children who live in the sibling houses, enjoy their bikes and needed a way to keep them secure. The racks have solved a problem for staff and children and help insure the children will continue to enjoy their bikes.

Over the years, the Mecklenburg-South Rotary Club has supported the campus in various ways including landscaping projects, new picnic benches and as both a financial donor and as a source of volunteers when Habitat for Humanity and Elon Homes collaborated to build the sibling houses in 2004.

## Luggage Drive Nets Many Styles



*Life Group leader Desiree Osman (left) and Volunteer Coordinator Joye Harris prepare to store donated luggage items.*

Life Group leaders from Forest Hill Church meet periodically with Kennedy Campus staff to discuss how their groups can be supportive of students and programs. Some Life Group members with limited time were interested in what they label low impact projects, effective ways to be helpful without a large commitment of time.

One leader read a *USA Today* article that told of children in foster care using trash bags for luggage and proposed a “luggage drive” to insure Kennedy Campus students always have sufficient and practical luggage if they move to new placements. A luggage drive would be a low impact project while filling a real need.

Leaders put out the word to the Life Groups and soon bags, carry-ons, wheeled luggage, duffel bags etc. came rolling in. Thanks to thoughtful donors, any student needing luggage now has many styles from which to choose.

## One of the interesting signs of spring.....



.....on the Kennedy Campus: the resident geese pair up (Canadian geese are famous for life-long mating), nest, and prepare to raise a new generation of geese. While it's reassuring that spring brings new birth and new life, the advent of still more geese on campus is greeted with mixed emotions. Here Mr. and Mrs. typify the annual ritual that insures a steady supply of the downy baby goslings to delight students and staff. However, as they grow bigger they do lose some of their appeal especially as they begin to devour the grass, roots and young sprouts around the campus.

## Kennedy Charter School Promotes Field Trips, Service Learning Projects



*Student Activities Coordinator Christopher Lee and Volunteer Coordinator Joye Harris arrange several service learning projects and field trips a year for Kennedy Charter School students. During the 2006-07 school year, students have put on a puppet show for children in a local hospital cancer ward and visited several college campuses. Above: A group of 25 students from the charter school's Ninth Grade Academy (formed to assist with the transition from middle to high school) and the Kennedy Charter Student Government spent the day spreading mulch on the Precious Child Academy playground. Students enjoyed the service learning project and the day care center appreciated their help.*

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## Prom Preparations Underway



*One student, five personal shoppers to be sure the fit is just right, the jewelry coordinates, and the student knows she looks lovely.*



*Early shoppers*



*Open for business*

Students who shopped at the Kennedy Charter Public School “Prom Boutique” were assigned a personal shopper, volunteers from Forest Hill Church Life Groups. The Life Groups worked with school staff to be sure every student attending the prom would be beautifully or handsomely dressed. The teen center at Kennedy Campus was turned into Prom Boutique featuring formal attire including gowns, tuxedos, suits, jewelry, purse and shoe accessories. The Life Groups put out the word and family, friends and fellow church members donated generously to stock the boutique with fashionable attire.

Kennedy Charter School students in grades 9 through 12 attended the prom on April 27 at Paw Creek Presbyterian Fellowship Center.

## Wachovia Team Paints and Landscapes at Kennedy Campus



*The kitchen, as well as other rooms in the Kiwanis Unit, received a fresh coat of paint.*



*Wachovia volunteers put out new plantings to enhance the main entrance.*

Last November a group of 30 people from one of the Technology Services teams at Wachovia Bank devoted a day of volunteer services for Kennedy Campus. The group plans a volunteer activity every quarter, dividing their efforts between sites in Charlotte and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The bank promotes employee volunteer efforts with paid time off each month.

Elon Homes provided lunch for the hard working volunteers who painted one of the residential units and landscaped part of the grounds.

Wachovia Bank has also made generous financial contributions to Elon Homes including a \$50,000 donation to the Second Century Countdown Campaign. Wachovia is a great friend to the children and families served by Elon Homes for Children.



*Volunteers planted a magnolia tree, a Southern landscaping favorite.*

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## Spring Festival at the Park

The Foster Care department held its first Spring Festival at Reedy Creek Park on Saturday, April 21.

The children enjoyed egg racing, a water balloon toss, face painting and arts and crafts while foster parents were entertained by the children's antics. The whole crowd was entertained by sounds from Platinum Sound System while eating a delectable meal prepared by Morton's Catering Service. As the event concluded, the children's faces displayed expressions of fatigue which conveyed the message, "I am ready to go home."

James Johnson, Director of Community Based Services, guides the fast growing Foster Care program as it expands to meet the increasing need for good foster care families. He plans more action packed and family structured activities that demonstrate the agency's gratitude to its foster care families.

Currently in the Mecklenburg area, there are 80 families in the Elon Homes' Foster Care program, serving approximately 123 children. The Greensboro/Elon area Foster Care program has 23 families serving approximately 18 children.

**Please remember the Campbell's Soup Company has new instructions for its Labels for Education program.** Clip the UPCs from Campbell products instead of the front label panels which are no longer accepted. For some items, save the lids. Visit [www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com) for a list of eligible products and what to save or call Sharon Landis at 704/369-2510 for a list. Mail UPCs and lids to Brigitte McKee, Elon Homes for Children, 1717 Sharon Road West, Charlotte, NC 28210. Many thanks for your continued support. The program has helped Elon Homes secure many valuable and much needed items for its charter school.

# The Power of Philanthropy



Jane Grosse, VP  
Institutional  
Advancement

Anna Goode Turner, 89, a retired Suffolk, Virginia, public school teacher, died September 3, 2006. A native of Suffolk, she was the daughter of the late Zechariah and Mamie Tadlock Turner. Miss Turner was a member of Suffolk Christian Church and a former member of the Elon Homes for Children Board of Directors. Miss Turner supported Elon Homes for decades both as a volunteer and as a contributor.

Her father was one of the particularly strong supporters decades ago when the United Church of Christ churches would load railroad cars full of clothes, fruits and vegetables and send them to the children living at the Elon Homes campus in Elon, North Carolina. The Suffolk Christian Church is one of our historically strong supporting churches. Two former Elon Homes presidents came from Suffolk.

My husband Fred and I had visited Miss Turner shortly before she died and she still demonstrated the keen wit and independence that were hallmarks of her personality.

Elon Homes is the beneficiary of two very generous estate gifts from Miss Turner and her father. Mr. Turner created a trust to benefit Miss Turner until her death at which point 25% of the trust, approximately \$77,200, would create a new endowment within the Elon Children's Foundation called the Mamie Turner Endowment. Another gift of approximately \$270,000 directly through Miss Turner's estate will increase the value of the Z. Turner Endowment that the family created many years ago. We are immensely grateful to the Turner family for their philanthropic support of Elon Homes throughout their lives and in perpetuity through their estate gifts.

*Miss Turner was honored with the Elon Homes Caring for Children Award at the 1996 annual board meeting where she paid tribute to her "dear parents who instilled in me the love of children." Miss Turner recalled the railroad cars filled with food and other items for the children and her visits to the Home with her parents to bring gifts for the children.*



## The Plans of Giving

The Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust and the Charitable Remainder Unitrust are both irrevocable trusts that feature income based on the value of the property given. Both can be created to benefit yourself, someone other than yourself, or someone in addition to yourself.

The Annuity Trust pays a fixed income based on the value of assets at the time the trust is created, while the Unitrust provides a fluctuating income based on a fixed percentage of the Trust's annual value.

When the trust is created, capital gains tax can be avoided or postponed, and an income tax deduction is available for a portion of the value of the property. Income from the charitable remainder trust may be taxed favorably under lower capital gains tax rates. There can also be estate tax benefits. Please let us know if you would like more information for yourself and your advisors. [jane.grosse@elonhomes.org](mailto:jane.grosse@elonhomes.org) or 704/369-2506.

**M**ake a practice of reviewing your will and other estate documents on a regular basis. Among other things, the following events may alert you to the possible need to consult with your attorney and/or other advisors and update your plans:

- A move to a new state
- Birth of children or grandchildren
- A change in marital status
- Changes in wealth
- Travel plans

Should you wish to remember Elon Homes for Children, or another charitable institution, in your estate plans, give your attorney its full legal name to use. To make a bequest to Elon Homes for Children, Inc., use the following statement:

*"I leave to Elon Homes for Children, Inc., \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (or, \_\_\_\_\_% of my estate or specific property) (or, all remaining assets and residue from my estate)."*