

## Growing Through Seeds of Faith – StepUP Graduation

**T**hey signed up for their first workshop over a year ago because they heard from another participant about their life-changing experience through the StepUP Life Skills program. A year later Wonita and nine other participants found a new way of life and graduated from the StepUP Life Skills program.

They all knew that they needed help, but they were so afraid of failure. After being paired with a co-partner, and several weeks of getting to know staff and fellow participants along with a committed group of volunteers, they gained traction. They learned to create a working family budget by bringing in their receipts and pay stubs and grew by sharing their day to day lives very openly with a stranger...their co-partner.

No one can predict whether these participants are going to stay the course for the full program. If we can get them hooked on budgeting, and if the instructors and co-partners can get them engaged with learning good habits, there is a very good chance that they will graduate and move up to stable ground.



Wonita Wilkins, Ciera Martin & Samir Martin

### “I AM FINALLY ON STABLE GROUND.”



AFTER 20 YEARS, StepUP Ministry has grown from a small education and housing program run by a few committed volunteers to a well designed set of programs with a mission of finding good jobs for good people and building better lives. The depth of the program design can truly be felt through words of one of our recent Life Skills program graduates... “I am finally on stable ground.” Furthermore, we continue to receive positive feedback from those we helped to stand firm on stable ground several years ago.

Today, our mission remains the same, yet we now rely on the commitment of more than 150 volunteers to make the programs

happen. Volunteer co-partners significantly support the transition to self-sufficiency process through which we are guiding our participants. We always welcome new co-partners!

Finding jobs, planning for a move up job, learning how to budget, setting achievable goals, learning great parenting skills, forming good habits, and fostering good relationships are all part of the objectives for each participant over the course of a year.

Congratulations and a sincere thank you for helping us move people to stable ground. We look forward to continuing our work together!

With sincere thanks,

Jennie Armstrong EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Jubilee Jobs at Work in the Community

BY CAROL ANNE MOEHRING

AS A DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH at First Presbyterian Church, we see many people who are just getting by on a string. We often refer these folks to StepUP for their many resources, especially the Jubilee Jobs program. Without the benefit of family and a network, many people are stuck in low paying or part-time jobs. Jubilee Jobs gives employees the resources of caring staff and committed employers. By sitting in on a Job Friends session, you understand how beneficial this group of mentors, peers, staff and employers are to new employees.

We were pleased to host a breakfast at First Presbyterian Church highlighting the Job Friends program. By inviting church and community members with potential employment positions, we gave Job Friends the opportunity to demonstrate their program. Employers were exposed to the mission and commitment of the staff and participants of this program.

We are honored to be involved with this positive program in our community.

## Mitzvah Day

BY KEN KAUFHER & DONNA TURNER

MITZVAH DAY, an annual spring event held by Temple Beth Or, is a Sunday dedicated to family volunteer work in the surrounding Raleigh community. On June 1, nearly 200 members of Temple Beth Or participated in 14 different "Mitzvah" projects, a Hebrew word meaning "good deed" or "act of human kindness." This year's projects included housing repairs made to a StepUP apartment on Boylan Avenue. Jeff Danneman, Jacob Dinner, Sandy Mitofsky, Bryan Wiggins, Jeff Zidman and Zachary Zidman replaced vents in the foundation, repaired furniture, updated plumbing, and landscaping work. "The work of these volunteers enabled StepUP to get work done that would have been costly," said Donna Turner, StepUP's Director of Support Services. "This group made a great effort to beautify the place and had a wonderful time doing it."

StepUP is grateful for the work of these volunteers from Temple Beth Or!



Sandy Mitofsky (top) & Zachary Zidman

## STEPPIN' OUT FOR STEPUP RAISES \$17,000

Great thanks go out to our sponsors, co-hosts and everyone who attended for making Steppin' Out for StepUP such a grand success!

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# Car Blessings from Wheels4Hope

BY MOLLY NICHOLS

THREE STEPUP PARTICIPANTS have been blessed with cars from Wheels4Hope this year. Joanne is a recent graduate and single parent, so her car is about the freedom to drive to work and independence for her family. Sean is a recent graduate and single father with three young boys, so his car is about providing safe, reliable transportation for his family. Danny has been riding a bicycle to work for a number of years, so his car is about a better job. Like a good job and affordable housing, a reliable car is an important component for someone dedicated to improving their life and moving toward stable ground.

One of StepUP's primary partners is Wheel4Hope, a faith-based 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that takes in donated cars and fixes them up for individuals and families referred by local social service agencies like StepUP. Founded in 2000, Wheels4Hope began as a mission project of West Raleigh Presbyterian Church. John Weistart and Chris Simes saw a need among struggling families for reliable transportation. "A vehicle is a critical part of getting and keeping a job in our area, where public transportation is limited. In fact, most of what we take for granted as normal family life requires a car- it is only when our car goes in the shop that we experience the sense of isolation and limitation that countless families face daily," said co-founder Chris Simes.

Often StepUP participants have transportation needs so the collaboration between Wheels4Hope and StepUP is a natural fit. "For the StepUP recipients it's not so much



Danny Horton

about the car itself, but the journey they have traveled to achieve car ownership. The journey has been about gaining life long lessons and moving forward with hope, peace and independence," said Myra Bradley, StepUP Case Manager.

When a family comes to Wheels4Hope to pick up their car, the volunteers gather for a "car blessing". They circle the car holding hands, scripture is read that is individually selected for the new owner, and the car is prayed over— thanks are given for the donor, the mechanics, other volunteers, and God is asked to bless the car and keep it safe and reliable for the recipient. A volunteer shows how everything works on the car; a "gift bucket" is presented containing jumper cables, a tire pressure gauge, an ice scraper, and some car cleaning supplies. Pictures are taken, hugs are given, and off they drive in a good reliable car having been blessed by the journey to ownership with hope for the future.

## StepUP Welcomes Eight New Board Members

Sheldon Fox  
Jennings Glenn  
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Al Rankin  
Kemp Reece  
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Bob Wright

## StepUP Gratefully Acknowledges Financial Gifts Received

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## StepUP Wishes To Recognize The Following Support For The Children's Program

Charles E. and Alberta B. Dolan Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation  
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Claude and Adele Thomas Fund of the Triangle Community Foundation  
North Carolina Theatre Share the Stars program

StepUP Ministry is an interfaith community that prepares people who are ready and willing to make positive changes in their lives to become self-sufficient.

STEPUP MISSION



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STEPUP MINISTRY  
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# Read all about it . . .

BY LINDA ROBINSON



Diazah Stanback & Cara Watson

STEPUP CHILDREN WILL be busily engaged this summer learning the same three phases as the adult program—financial literacy, self development and career (academic) development! White Memorial has provided access to the Computer Lab, and the students are developing computer literacy skills as well as strengthening their research, math, reading and science skills through selected web sites. A special emphasis will be placed on writing skills this summer. Students in the elementary grades are painting canvas journals, and then writing to a specific topic each week. Students in the middle and high school grades are studying various journalistic roles, newspaper layout, sections of the newspaper and various writing styles. As their finished product, they will produce a newspaper about the StepUP Program. In addition, State Employees Credit Union is working with the children on a financial literacy program.