

P&P

PEOPLE AND PLACES

NOVEMBER 16, 2008

Pet of the Week

Surrendered to the SPCA because her owner could no longer care for her, Dixie was a little shy at first but quickly warmed up to the SPCA staff and any volunteer that walked her. One-year-old Dixie gets along with some dogs and most cats. Dixie is spayed, on heartworm preventative, microchipped and up-to-date on vaccinations. Her adoption fee is \$85, and there is a two-week trial period. Information: www.triadsPCA.org/page04.html or 375-3222.

FOR MORE NEWS AND CALENDAR LISTINGS, VISIT NEWS-RECORD.COM

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

GREENSBORO Senior Resources will sponsor free memory screening

Senior Resources of Guilford will sponsor an Alzheimer's memory screening from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday at the Senior Center, 301 E. Washington St., Greensboro.

The screening is sponsored by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America as part of National Memory Screening Day. The screening is free, and appointments are encouraged. Call Cathy McClellan at 373-4816 to register.

SRG will also hold a free retired senior's tax talk at 10 a.m. Wednesday at the center. A tax preparation specialist will share information on how to file taxes.

Information: 373-4816.

GREENSBORO

Helpers sought to aid Santa with toy drive

The Greensboro Youth Council is looking for community volunteer organizations to assist with the annual Santa's Workshop toy drive.

Volunteers are needed to help sort and clean donated toys to be distributed to families in need this holiday season.

GYC needs volunteers on the following dates and times: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 6, 2 to 5 p.m. Dec. 7, 4 to 8 p.m. Dec. 9 through 12.

Individuals or groups can contact Jenny Caviness at 373-2733 or gyc@greensboro-nc.gov to get information about volunteering.

GREENSBORO

She's building a better life

BY LYNNE BRANDON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Sixth in a series on "Advancing the Common Good Through Transformed Lives," highlighting a United Way of Greater Greensboro supported partner. This week: Family Service of the Piedmont

Life hasn't dealt a fair hand to Tameka Bedgood, but she has learned to make lemonade out of lemons. She remembers visiting her father in prison when she was 6 years old. He was incarcerated for 30 years for manslaughter and died behind bars.

Bedgood's home life wasn't much better and she lived with her mother who had a less-than-savory business: a massage parlor, some might call it. Her mother worked three jobs to make ends meet and was gone so much that Bedgood was raised by her great-grandmother, Pauline.

The hard childhood progressed into an even harder adulthood. Bedgood was soon a parent at the age of 17. Two years later, she had a second daughter who had 13 major surgeries in the first year of life. Courage and strength were needed for the infant who was born deaf and with spina bifida, as well as many other critical health issues.

Leaving an abusive marriage was the first step toward sanity, but a nervous breakdown ensued and Bedgood reached for cocaine, heroin and other drugs. Prostitution funded her drug habit, and she hit rock bottom when her children were taken away. "I thought the Department of Social Services was the enemy, but I learned that I was my own worst enemy," says Bedgood. "This was the wake-up call that I needed to get on track with my life."

In 2005, Bedgood was pregnant with her third child. It was time for a change, and she returned to her grandmother's home. Enduring painful withdrawals, she became drug-free and was introduced to the Family Service of the Piedmont, which would become her lifeline.



COURTESY OF UNITED WAY OF GREATER GREENSBORO

Tameka Bedgood shares her story at a United Way function. She credits a United Way-funded program with lifting her up and helping her build a better life.

"Tameka enrolled in our Healthy Start program, a home-based support system for pregnant women and new mothers, but we realized that in order for her to be a good mother that we needed to give her further tools to become well again," says Sue Spidell, director of Family Support Services.

To supplement the Healthy Start program, Bedgood received visits from counselor Shannon Harty in the new In-Home counseling program, also funded in part by United Way. Bedgood credits Harty's weekly visits and support with putting her on the road to recovery. "I couldn't be a good mother without Family Service and its programs," says Bedgood, who is the first graduate of the In-Home counseling program.

Harty attributes Tameka's success

to strong cross-program collaboration. "Thanks to Tameka's initial acceptance of Healthy Start services, she was subsequently connected to several other FSP programs, as well as a variety of community partners," explains Harty. "Once FSP providers proved trustworthiness, a true client/provider bond was formed."

Despair, drugs, disease and death have all touched the life of Tameka Bedgood. She has seen more in her 35 years of living than most folks see in a lifetime, but today she is on the road to recovery. "Guilt is a choice and I have learned that what matters most is what you do next," says Tameka, smiling.

For more information about United Way of Greater Greensboro, visit www.unitedwaygso.org.