

Smart Start At Work Here

Robeson County Partnership for Children, Inc.

Volume 3 Special Edition

Smart Start Says Goodnight to a Dear Friend

The **Robeson County Partnership for Children, Inc. (RCPC)** lost a dear friend on July 30th. Her name was Tonja Rena Hester, and she was a true Children's Champion.

Tonja was born June 19, 1970, in Lumberton to Ella and Earl Hester. In 1988, she graduated from Magnolia High School. She earned a Bachelors of Science degree from Winston Salem State University in 1992, and a Masters of Business Administration from Fayetteville State University in 2006. She was a member of the

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Tonja was employed at the Robeson County Department of Social Services (DSS) where she held the position of Program Manager for Adult and Day-care Units for 16 years.

Anyone who knew Tonja knew that children were her passion. Indeed, she dedicated most of her all-too-brief life to them. During her tenure at Robeson County DSS, she oversaw the **Smart Start** funded **Child Care Subsidy** activity, and was the DSS representative on **RCPC's** Board of Directors.

As a service provider, Tonja was a joy to work with; as a board member, her dedication was well known. Within the **Child Care Subsidy** activity, Tonja did more than attend mandatory meetings, or submit reports on time. She could be counted on to put on a pair of jeans and tee-shirt to work hands on with the children of Robeson County at events like **Smart Start Day**.



day School teacher. There, Tonja encouraged them to grow both spiritually, and intellectually. Indeed, they respected and loved her as a trusted role model.

Few people can boast that in their life they literally touched the lives of thousands of children. Tonja could have made such a boast, but never would have. That was not her style. Instead, she

smiled her winning smile wherever she went, spoke

kindly and honestly to all who came across her path, and carried out her life's work.

It should also be said that Tonja was a real "Lady." She had pride in herself, but was not prideful. She presented herself in a way that commanded respect but was not domineering or arrogant. She was discreet in conversation but warm and friendly too. In short, Tonja was the epitome of class and grace.

She will be greatly, greatly missed.

Special points of interest:

- Remembering Tonja Hester
- You Can Support Smart Start
- Nurse Family Partnership

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Nurse Family Partnership in Robeson County

RCPC is proud to announce its support of a new initiative targeted at improving the lives of children and their families in Robeson County - the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) through the Robeson County Health Department.

The ultimate goal of the NFP is twofold; improve the long-term health, education, and economic self-sufficiency of the family, and help save community dollars by reducing the cost of welfare, healthcare, and juvenile justice expenditures.

Robeson County was one of only nine counties in the state to receive funding for implementing this program which began in December 2008. In addition to **Smart Start** funds, NFP also receives support through the Duke Endowment, and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. In all, the funding comes to \$472,484.

In Robeson County, the program allows four nurses to collectively serve up to 100 first-time expectant mothers who meet income guidelines. The nurses conduct home visits and provide several services. They check the mother's health and nutrition, provide information and educational literature regarding pregnancy and delivery, and help the expectant parents set personal education and career goals. Once baby arrives, the family will continue receiving services until the child is 2 years old. Through continued home visits parents will receive services such as information on parenting skills and finding quality child care.

The program has the potential to impact and enhance the quality of life for its participants. For instance, Robeson County has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state (86.6 out of 1,000), and one of the highest infant mortality and low birth

weight rates. Additionally, more than a quarter of the county's pregnant women receive little or no prenatal care.

The NFP is already making some progress. Approximately 65% of its current participants range in age from 13 to 18 years-of-age. Nurses help expectant mothers deliver healthy babies by encouraging healthy lifestyle choices such as improving their diet and eliminating harmful activities like smoking or alcohol consumption. The program also addresses barriers to obtaining regular prenatal care by having a registered nurse come to the expectant mother to conduct checkups.

If you know of anyone who could benefit from this program, or if you have any questions regarding enrollment, contact Cindy Herndon, NFP Nurse Supervisor, at 671-3419 or 674-6169

Upcoming Community Events

September

Pembroke Day
UNC-Pembroke &
Town of Pembroke
UNC-Pembroke Campus
September 9, 2009
10:00am-2:00pm

Community Awareness Fair
Lumberton Housing Authority
Turner Terrace, Lumberton
September 11, 2009
10:00am-2:00pm

The **Robeson County Partnership for Children** concluded its 2nd annual **Beautiful Baby Contest** on June 11, and the results were announced in the Father's Day edition of the Robesonian.

A 2010 **Beautiful Baby Calendar** featuring the contest's top twelve contestants will be available for purchase this coming Fall. The featured children are:

Smart Start Princess

Andrea Cordoba-Solis, age 19 months, of Lumberton.

Smart Start Prince

Carson Stephenson, age 2 years, of Lumberton

Second Place

Marlina Bullard, age 3 years and 8 months, of Pembroke

Third Place

Kaydon Locklear, age 19 months, of Maxton

Fourth Place

India Vazquez, age 5 years, of Lumberton

Fifth Place

Bryton Deese, age 2 years, of Maxton

Sixth Place

Tandon Haywood, age 4 years, of Maxton

Other Featured Contestants

Emanuel Scott, age 3 years, of Lumberton

Heaven Sosa, age 3 months, of Pembroke

Kabrina Oxendine, age 16 months, of Rowland

Khloé Locklear, age 6 months, of Pembroke

Kiera Oxendine, age 6 months, of Marietta

Photos by Vanessa German of Vanessa G. Photography
www.vanessagphotography.com

Calendar design by Bob Highest of The Graphics Place
lhighest@nc.rr.com

You Can Support Smart Start

Did you know you can help financially support **RCPC** and **Smart Start** in Robeson County without ever writing a check or sending a donation? Here are four ways you can help support **Smart Start** services in our county four different ways.

Food Lion Shop and Share

If you shop at Food Lion and have a MVP card, you can go online and link it to the **Robeson County Partnership for Children**. That way, anytime you shop and use your MVP card, Food Lion will donate a percentage of your purchase to us.

Good Search and Good Shop

Next time you want to search for a product online, use www.goodsearch.com. Just type in our name (**Robeson County Partnership for Children**) and verify that you want your search to benefit us. Once you confirm us as the beneficiary, shop away at lots of different online stores like Toys/Babies R Us, Amazon, Old Navy, Target, Ebay, and lots more. Each purchase you make will result in a donation to **Smart Start** in our county.

Funding Factory

If you are Earth conscience, and have old ink cartridges and cell phones you want to dispose of, send them to us. We can send these items to Funding Factory, and earn points or cash to use towards the purchase of office supplies.

You can always make a traditional financial or in-kind donation to **RCPC**, and you will receive a thank you letter reflecting the amount of your donation for tax purposes. See our donation form on this page for the three levels of support: Children's Advocate, Children's Hero, and Children's Champion.

Help us build brighter future's for **ALL** of Robeson County's Children.



RCPC Appreciates Your Support

The **Robeson County Partnership for Children, Inc.** would like to thank the following 4th Quarter donors for their commitment to helping support our efforts to better serve the children of Robeson County!

Children's Heroes

- Cakes & Pastries
- State Employee's Campaign

Children's Advocates

- Bo's Supermarket
- Food Lion
- Lowes Foods

RCPC also wishes to acknowledge once again all of those who supported our **Beautiful Baby Contest** fundraiser with their generous donations. Thank you for helping us raise over \$14,000 to support **Smart Start** services in Robeson County

If you would like to help **RCPC** in its efforts to Build Better Futures by making a financial or material contribution, please fill out this form, and mail to:

Robeson County Partnership for Children, Inc.

210 East 2nd Street
Lumberton, NC 28358

Children's Champion
(\$500.00+)

Children's Hero
(\$100.00-\$499.00)

Children's Advocate
(\$10.00-\$99.00)

I am including a financial contribution in the amount of \$_____

I am willing to make a material contribution of _____

If you would like your donation to remain anonymous, check here.

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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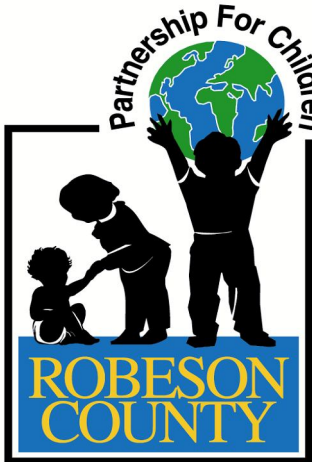
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Or Current Resident

RCPC Staff

Jessica Lowery Collins	Executive Director
Odessa Carattini	Facility Manager
Amy Cox	Program Manager
Sidney Hunt	Contracts Manager
Trish Lewis	Program Assistant
Gus Pitt	Facility Assistant
Tanya Underwood	Communications Specialist

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Make us your friend today and stay informed about
what is happening with [Smart Start](#) in
Robeson County.

