

Love

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the lower sections of their class. The remaining 20 are in the middle range of their class. Tapia targets these students because they are "diamonds in the rough"; each has potential, though it may be untapped.

To unearth these students' promise, the program focuses on the person as a whole, not just as a student. They attend summer classes in math, English and science.

Spiritual/Leadership classes attempt to give students an idea of, as Tapia constantly reminds them, "who they are and whose they are." The program also encompasses a physical fitness program in an effort to get them hooked on health.

But LOL does not end in August. Students attend workshops and activities throughout the school year to reinforce study skills, to coach them through the college application process, to develop spiritually.

Their parents must attend workshops, also, on topics ranging from dealing with CMS to handling questions on AIDS.

This holistic program has met with considerable success. The first class to reap the benefits of the full five years graduated from high school in June, and 29 out of 30 now attend college. A younger student remarked that her grades had improved from D's to B's.

Tapia herself notes a North Meck senior in the program as an inspiration. Originally forced by his mother to apply to the program, a previously quiet, withdrawn boy now as a high school senior rambles excitedly of attending college and pursuing education. To have instilled in him a genuine love of learning inspires Tapia and Miller to continue the program.

The Davidsonian recently had a chance to talk with Brenda Tapia. Below are excerpts from that interview.

Davidsonian: You mentioned once last year that you would like to take a group of Love of Learning students to a third world country. Why?

Tapia: That thought came to me when we started experiencing some of the behavior problems and attitudes that are common in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools. I realized that I'm dealing with kids who don't have the background or the history I have in terms of understanding and seeing what has happened for and with African-American people and are not as conscious of the debt that they have to pay to the people on whose backs we have crawled to come this far. Taking them to a third world country might make them realize that where they see students who don't have a pencil not because they forgot or didn't care, as our students will, but because there aren't any pencils. But yet they're willing and eager to learn. I somehow wanted to help them to see reality because I think children, especially white and black in the South, don't realize how blessed they are. I noticed that in the inquiries as a result of the Kuralt show, the majority of them have come from Northern cities, inner cities. Parents are calling trying to get their children in this program because what their children are having to deal with in public and private schools in the North is so much more devastating than what our students are dealing with here. When you have to worry whether or not you will physically make it to your next class. When you have to dodge bullets to get to class. When you have teachers who have given up and no longer care about whether or not you learn. When you are dealing with a situation where the resources and books are outdated and not adequate. When all of that has trickled down and the students are having to learn in

those types of environments, naturally parents would love to get their kids in a program where the student is important. I look at the students this way and encourage my staff to look at students this way: that being, we don't know who these students are. Some young boy or girl in one of our classes might be the scientist who has the cure for AIDS. You don't know who these kids are and what they will be capable of doing. I feel like many of the problems that we're confronted with as a society right now, the solutions to them are somewhere strung out on drugs, behind bars or lying in the gutters in the street. Are we going to lose a whole generation or generations in this manner?

Davidsonian: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are also having similar problems as you mentioned with lack of books and teachers. Do you think Love of Learning helps counter these?

Tapia: I think that Love of Learning does. Unfortunately because we're small, I feel like our effort is like one attempting to empty the ocean with a thimble.

Davidsonian: How do you keep the students' goals realistic and attainable?

Tapia: First of all, I think that really comes out in the Leadership/Spiritual (classes). In the Leadership we try to help the students to go within and to identify their particular gifts and talents. We don't give out grades. At the end of every summer program every teacher sits down with students and tells them their individual strengths and stumbling blocks. I think that's one of the major ways we help students to stay within the boundaries of realities for their particular gifts and talents. The other thing is to point out their uniqueness. I constantly tell students that we can realize the unique-

ness of silver and gold because it's not plentiful. I try to help students realize that they are unique. God did not create them to be anything but themselves. God created Michael Jordan to be Michael Jordan, but God created you to be you. And in God's eyes, the only eyes that are important, you are as important and special as Michael. So it's your responsibility to fulfill your destination, to find out what exactly what it is you have been created to be and to be the best at being you.

Davidsonian: How do you envision Love of Learning in the future?

Tapia: The future that I see for Love of Learning is Love of Learning satellites or similar programs across North Carolina and this nation. But I also see the program being not just for African-Americans because one of my goals from the beginning was to work with all children. I think the way we're educating young people, white, black, red, brown and yellow, in this country is totally wrong, and I think we have to take a more holistic approach.

Davidsonian: How can the Davidson College Community help Love of Learning?

Tapia: There are several ways I feel the Davidson College Community can be supportive of Love of Learning. First of all, praying for the program. I think we could change a lot of things in life if we were but to be still, turn within and go to God in prayer about it. Secondly, by attempting to be involved and participating in the program in whatever ways they can: helping out in the office since we don't have the staff we always need, being available to be tutors for the students, developing relationships. If some of them would adopt Love of Learning students,

be big sisters/big brothers to students, share who they are with the students. One of the things I've seen with the interaction of counselor-mentors with Love of Learning students has been the fact that they have only been a few years older than these students, and when they talk about what a student should be doing in high school and how they should be preparing for college, it has a lot more impact than someone who is thirty years older than most of them. And last but not least, spreading the word. We have students here from all over the country. I'm sure there are things Davidson College students can do to help promote programs of this nature.

Davidsonian: On a more personal note, being Director of Love of Learning, acting chaplain and "mother" to a number of students must be difficult. How do you handle all of these roles?

Tapia: I pray a lot. This has been a rewarding and growth-producing experience being on Davidson's campus. To be truthful I had forgotten I was anything but a woman until I came here. Davidson has really put me in touch with the double crosses that I bear being black and female. Anytime you seek to give and to do for others, you always receive more yourself.

SGA

Continued from page 1

thirty. The SCC, however, had intended that the additional 12 members elected this Fall come from the sophomore and junior classes only. There was widespread misunderstanding about this decision, however, and many seniors had been told that they would have the opportunity to run. To accommodate these Seniors the SGA decided to split the additional 12 position evenly among the three classes.

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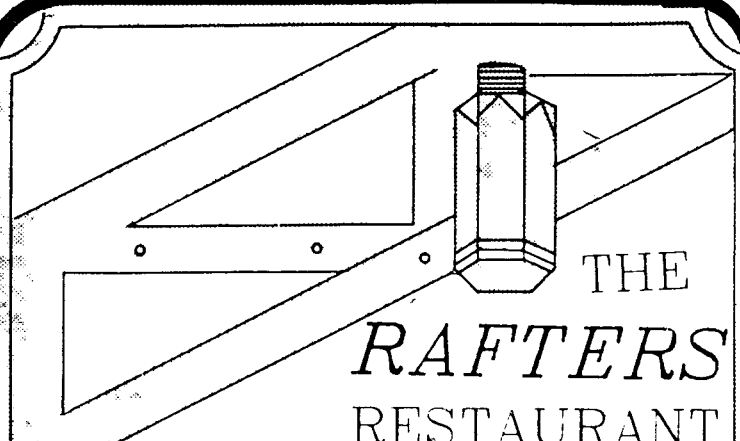
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WIND (PG-13) 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, 9:20	SNEAKERS (PG-13) 3:30, 7:00, 9:30
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