



COURTESY PHOTO

St. Paul 5k committee members, left to right: Jerome Galbreath, Helen Galbreath, Russell Blackwell, Jackie Parker, Joal Broun, Anissa McLendon, Joe Bynum, Bettina Shuford and Angela Lee.

Community prepares for annual St. Paul Village fundraiser

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STAFF REPORTS

CHAPEL HILL - Amir Lyons-O'Kelly looks forward to the St. Paul Village Community Walk & 5k Run every year. The 11-year-old has always participated with his grandfather, David Lyons, so they can spend time together and enjoy each other's company.

"My favorite memory is when my sister tried to participate but just couldn't finish," Lyon-O'Kelly said. "But it was fun for her to at least try."

The event, sponsored by St. Paul AME Church in Chapel Hill, is March 4, 9 a.m., at McDougle Middle School, 900 Old Fayetteville Road.

(Visit www.stpaulamechapelhill.org for registration information).

The St. Paul Village Community Walk and 5k Run started five years ago when church member Jerry Neville suggested the idea to Joe Bynum, who shared the idea with another member, Anissa McLendon. A group met with Pastor Thomas Nixon, and from that meeting a committee was formed, with Bynum and McLendon as co-chairs of the event.

Proceeds go to St. Paul Village, a multi-use and multigenerational development the church plans to construct in the Rogers Road community at the crossroad of Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

The uniqueness of this particular fundraiser is the mix of ages, cultures, races

and individuals from the community who participate. It is organized by St. Paul AME Church members for the sole purpose of building the St. Paul Village. The goal this year is to have over 500 walkers and runners participate in the event.

"The greatest joy from this has been the outreach to the public and meeting people we didn't know, and forming relationships and partnerships with them," McLendon said. "This is the only African-American church to host a 5k walk and run."

Participants say some of their favorite parts of the 5k race are the hot beverages at the end of the race and the walk itself - testing their endurance each year as they get older. Also, they note the fellowship during and after the event, meeting new people and seeing the community come together for a common cause. The fitness class was a sponsor last year, and Tar Heel basketball great Phil Ford helped to carry the Fitness Class Banner.

The committee prepares for the fundraiser by getting church members fired up through skits for the church congregation, contacting people in the community for donations and participation, meetings and follow-up sessions, walking several times a week and attending fitness classes at the church.

The 20.4 acres St. Paul Village is at the corner of Rogers Road and Purefoy Drive, and will promote

healthy lifestyles and embrace the community as well as the church. The proposed project will be built in phases, which includes a new worship sanctuary and fellowship hall; mixed-use senior and affordable housing; child care, youth and senior centers; recreational facilities; a wellness center; a health clinic; a historical museum; and a memorial garden.

Of the proceeds, 10 percent will go to two nonprofits that are selected by the 5k committee as part of the mission to give back to the community.

The Community Walk and 5k Run has given \$3,400 to eight nonprofits: Club Nova, Empowerment Inc., IFC, Rape Crisis, Table, Oxford House, Bouncing Bull Dogs and Habitat for Humanity. The capital campaign has received \$28,340 from the Walk over the past four years.

The nonprofits receiving donations for 2017 are the Orange County Meals on Wheels and RENA (Roger-Eubanks Neighborhood Association).

A Shop for a Cause fundraiser is Feb. 28 to March 4 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Fleet Feet Sports. Gross sales will go toward the walk and run in Carrboro. Customers must tell the cashier that they are supporting St. Paul AME Church or the St. Paul Village.