

GCF Community Foundation Funds Event

African American Male Conference Held at NCCU

The GCF Community Foundation (GCF®) funded the fourth annual African American Male Conference held on the campus of North Carolina Central University on Thursday, March 12. Approximately 400 African American and Latino male high school students from eastern North Carolina school systems attended the one-day conference. The theme was Affirming Our Community: Empowering African American and Latino Males. “Our support for the African American Male Conference is an attempt to address a major issue in our society,” said Dennis McLain, president of GIENC®. “That issue is the decline of the African American family due to the percentage of black males dropping out of school, those incarcerated, and those unemployed. “We were glad to have the opportunity to fund the conference so that the NCCU team organizing the event could concentrate on content rather than fundraising,” he continued.

Jerome Levisy, chief professional officer of the Boys & Girls Club of Edenton/Chowan County, was invited to bring a group of students to participate in the conference. “I was extremely pleased that the students were interested in open discussions about issues that severely affect their way of life,” he said. “My students were somewhat awestruck with the sheer number of African-American males gathered in one place for something other than a funeral, or sporting event.



Photo courtesy of John Riddick, NCCU Public Relations

“Not surprisingly, the community focus was my favorite,” he continued. “Nearly every participant in my sessions had a comment, and most want to improve the safety and aesthetic climates in their community.” Conference attendees had an opportunity to learn about GCFLearnFree.org®, GCF®’s free computer and life skills online training. They also heard from student leaders from the Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School, which was founded with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. These students, along with professional staff, led breakout sessions on education, community, and family.

The

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Goodwill Community Foundation
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INSIDE

GCFLearnFree.org is helping people around the world to find new opportunities.

Six new cisterns and new raised planting beds have been added to the grounds of the Nature Center.

Folks in the Nature Center have found an organic solution to harmful bugs.

Senior adults are enjoying the Nature Center.

GCF funded a conference focusing on African American male teens.

GCFLearnFree.org

Providing Resources to Job Seekers

With increasing company downsizing and layoffs, people are facing the challenge of searching for and securing a new job every day. It’s a daunting task for those who have been out of the job-seeking world for a number of years.

Record numbers of people needing help with these tasks are turning to GCFLearnFree.org, the free online computer and life skills training site provided by Goodwill Industries of Eastern North Carolina. There they are finding a Work & Career section dedicated to helping people polish their resumes and get their interviewing skills up-to-date. For those needing to improve their job skills, a full array of computer training is also available.

Online classes or tutorials on all Microsoft Office applications are available free of charge at GCFLearnFree.org. For those people utilizing the online class format, certificates of completion and continuing education units (CEUs) are available. These are valuable to job seekers as addendums to their resumes to show proof of their proficiency with a particular computer application.



Our Mission...

To create and provide employment, learning and life enrichment opportunities for people who desire to improve the quality of their lives.



GCF Community Foundation®
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Talk to us ...

It is a great pleasure to bring you our newsletter and to keep you updated with what is happening at the Goodwill Community Foundation. If you have questions or comments about our programs or if you would rather not receive the GCF Report, please call (919) 941-9600.

Nature Center Grounds Get Improvements

Improvements have been made to the grounds of the GCF Nature Center that make the process of growing fresh produce easier for participants and irrigation of the produce more efficient. New raised planting beds have installed and six new cisterns have been added to the six already in place to catch and reuse rainwater.

With the addition of 35 raised planters, the Nature Center has space to grow and harvest more produce than previous years. All produce grown by the Nature Center is donated to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina and this year they hope to greatly increase their donation. Each bed is 8' x 4' and is equipped with irrigation. The height of the beds make working with the plants easier providing a place for participants to sit on or lean against while working.



The raised planting beds give easier access to the produce being grown. In the distance, by the barn, the cisterns supplying the Memorial Garden are visible.

Getting the plants up off of the ground, away from insects, weeds and poor soil is an advantage of raised beds. The soil used in the beds is top grade quality and easy for Nature Center participants to dig in. As the plants mature, their height in the beds makes it easier to harvest. The beds are now home to strawberries, collards, carrots, broccoli, beets, and lettuce.

Tomatoes, cucumbers and other vegetables will be planted later in the season.

Adding six new cisterns will enable the Nature Center to capture rainwater that otherwise would have been wasted. With the new cisterns, the system now has the capacity to capture and store over 120,000 gallons of rainwater for use in the greenhouse and Memorial Garden.



Finding an Organic Solution to Harmful Bugs

At the GCF Nature Center we are proud that we are good stewards of the resources in our greenhouse and gardens. One of our goals is to use the safest means to grow fruits and vegetables for people in our community (all of our fresh produce is donated to the Food Bank of Eastern and Central North Carolina).



However, recently Kimi Dew, Nature Center coordinator, noticed that the greenhouse had become infested with aphids, an insect harmful to plants.

"Aphids suck nutrients from the host plant, creating a weakened plant with possible diseases and malformations," Kimi explains.

Since the decision had been made to keep the greenhouse pesticide free, Kimi was faced with the decision of how to remove the aphids. So she introduced a beneficial insect into the greenhouse environment which works to eliminate the aphids.

Kimi chose Parasitic Wasps, a natural predator of aphids, which find the aphids by using an alarm signal. When the female wasp finds an aphid, she injects it with an egg. Once a larvae emerges from the egg, it creates an "aphid mummy" where the larvae lives until it becomes a new parasitic wasp, continuing the work of controlling the aphid population.

What we have in the Nature Center is a win-win situation. By using the natural enemies of the "bad insects," we don't harm the environment or ourselves.

Classes Offered for Senior Adults

Our first group of senior adults began twice weekly classes in the GCF Nature Center in early April. They come to the center two days a week for a couple of hours and spend their time with one of the instructors, learning about different types of plants and growing some of them in the greenhouse.

Any senior adult interested in information about the classes should call GIENC at (919) 941-9600.

