

Networking Picnic Scheduled This Weekend

BY CLARENCE BARR, II
Sentinel Staff Writer

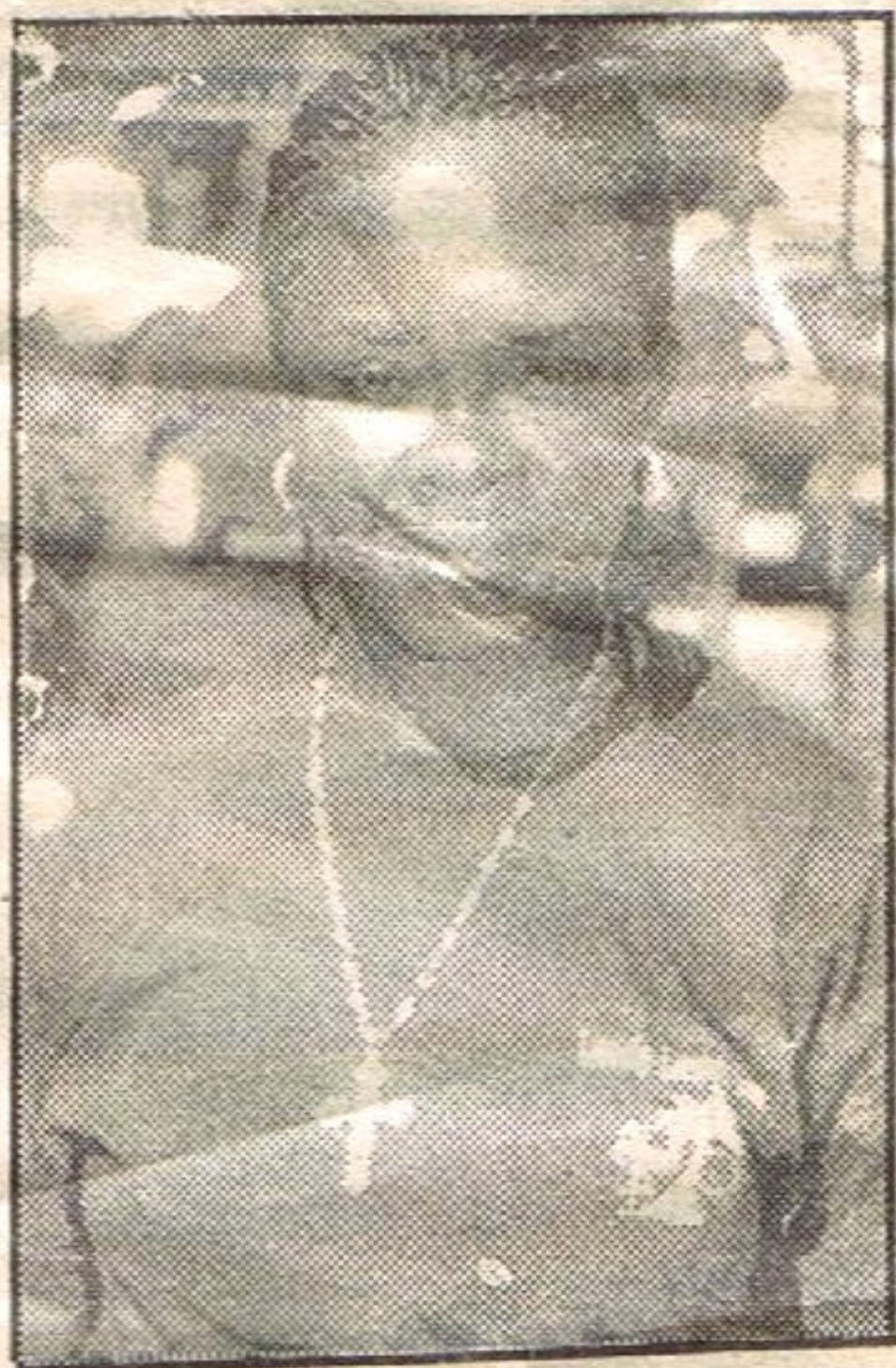
On Sunday, August 12th Rowlett Park will be the site of the first annual Community Networking Picnic. Organized by **Tonya Lewis**, owner of Lewis Lawn Care and **Jose Rodriguez** of the Wild Style Dee Jaze, the event was created as an opportunity to inform people of the Black owned and operated businesses that exist within their area.

According to **Lewis**, it's a creative way of bringing two segments of the population together. "We're holding a special event for the community, that businesses are sponsoring, by having a free cookout that will offer networking opportunities as well."

Lewis says, the inspiration for the event came about after years of watching young people, fall victim to the streets. "It was the kids," said **Lewis**.

"We have fallen kids in a fallen community. What we're doing, is that we're trying to get the kids to come out and see how we got started in business. We don't have a lot of good community leaders trying to help young adults.

"What we want to do is help some youngsters who are less fortunate and possibly have some of these business owners get them into a type of apprenticeship



Tonya Lewis hopes networking picnic helps inspire wayward youth.

program. That way, we can keep them out of trouble and off the streets."

The picnic is sponsored by such area businesses as: Ladies of the Sea, Tampa Auto Stylist, Andre Glass & Mirrors, Rome & Emma Game Room, Elliott's Upper Cuts, Platinum Management Entertainment, Mount Olive M.B. Church, Tampa Bay Lock & Key, Harvest Fellowship, Corporate Party Makers, Mason Realty, Isa Bomb Entertainment, Olin Mott Tires, Jimmy Sod Co., Auto Exchange, Woodards Welding, Music Maze, Street Sound, Mr. Mann, Jet Citgo, Sam Jewelry, and Discount Dry Cleaners.

The event will last from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and will include Tampa Police officers for security, music, food and

activities for children. Attendees are reminded to provide their own blankets.

Clubs, Organizations Unite In Big Toy Drive



Tonya Lewis (second from left, kneeling), and Calvin Bryant (third from left, kneeling), join members of the motorcycle clubs that helped with the toy drive.

BY LEON B. CREWS
Sentinel Staff Writer

On Sunday, December 17th, **Tonya Lewis** of Lewis Lawn Care Services and several others went on a successful toy drive organized by **Calvin Bryant**.

The toy drive was the result of several clubs and organizations uniting to provide Christmas toys for the children and families denied by other organizations.

"It took all of us to make this a reality," said **Bryant**.

It was a team effort of all the motorcycle clubs and other sponsors. Everything came together quickly, because we came up with the idea a month ago."

Among the sponsors who

made the toy drive successful are: **Children With A Vision, Inc., Suspects, Midnight Reapers, Ruff Ryders, Ebony Ryders, Latin Connectz, Prestige Cycles, and Backyard Bar B Que.**

Special thanks should also be given to: **Doo Doo #2** from *95.7 Da Beat*, **DJ Big Head, Legion Of Doom, Buffalo Soldiers, Platinum Angels, Diamonds and Pearls, Darian's Hair Studio, and Miracle Outreach of CDC, Inc.**

"Because our main goal was to provide for those families being overlook by the big organizations, I think we did an outstanding job," said **Bryant**.

Lewis Lawn Care To Host 2nd Annual Community Cookout

Tonya M. Lewis, owner of Lewis Lawn Care, is announcing her second annual Community Cookout to be held this Sunday, August 18th from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

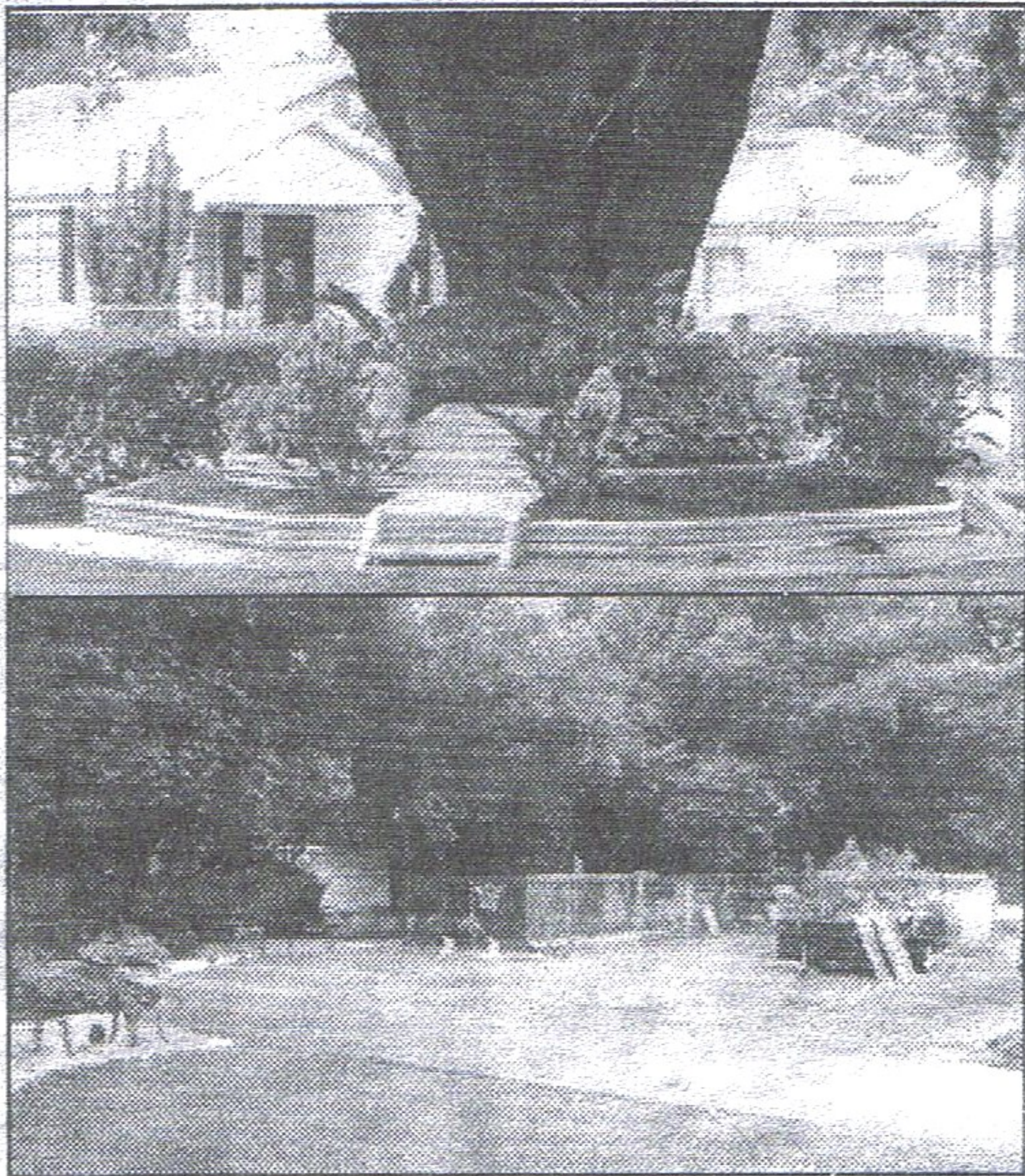
Last year's event was held at Rowlett Park. However, this year, Lewis is inviting the community to share an evening with her and others at her business, 3810 North 15th Street (corner of 15th Street and 32nd Avenue).

To make this year's cookout better than 2001's, Lewis has more sponsors, which means interest has spread. "I'm very excited about this year's event, and will enjoy socializing with the people who've made me successful."

Lewis said this will be an annual event that will always be held in August, and she will continue to give back to the people who've supported her and made all of this possible.

"Every possible convenience will be afforded, such as port-o-lets, covered eating and lounging areas, picturesque landscape designs for photo opportunities, plenty of seating, and the best food you've ever eaten."

There will be games for the children, good music, and security to make everyone feel comfortable and at ease.



This beautiful setting will be crowded with hungry people this Sunday enjoying the Community Cookout.

"Last year's event at Rowlett Park was a complete success, and I expect nothing less this year," said Lewis.

"As a matter of fact, I expect each event to top the one the previous year."

Lewis said this is a family

event, and all are welcome. She does warn some to come at their best behavior, or they will be escorted from the premises.

Reporter Leon B. Crews can be reached at (813) 248-1921.

SPOTLIGHT

Tonya Lewis Has Done It Again

Three years ago Tonya Lewis decided she wanted to do something special for the kids in the community. She took it upon herself to contact other bay area businesses and ask for contributions to host a back to school community networking event for the kids. On Sunday, August 10th 2003, Tonya Lewis and other bay area entrepreneurs gave back to the community and held there 3rd annual event.

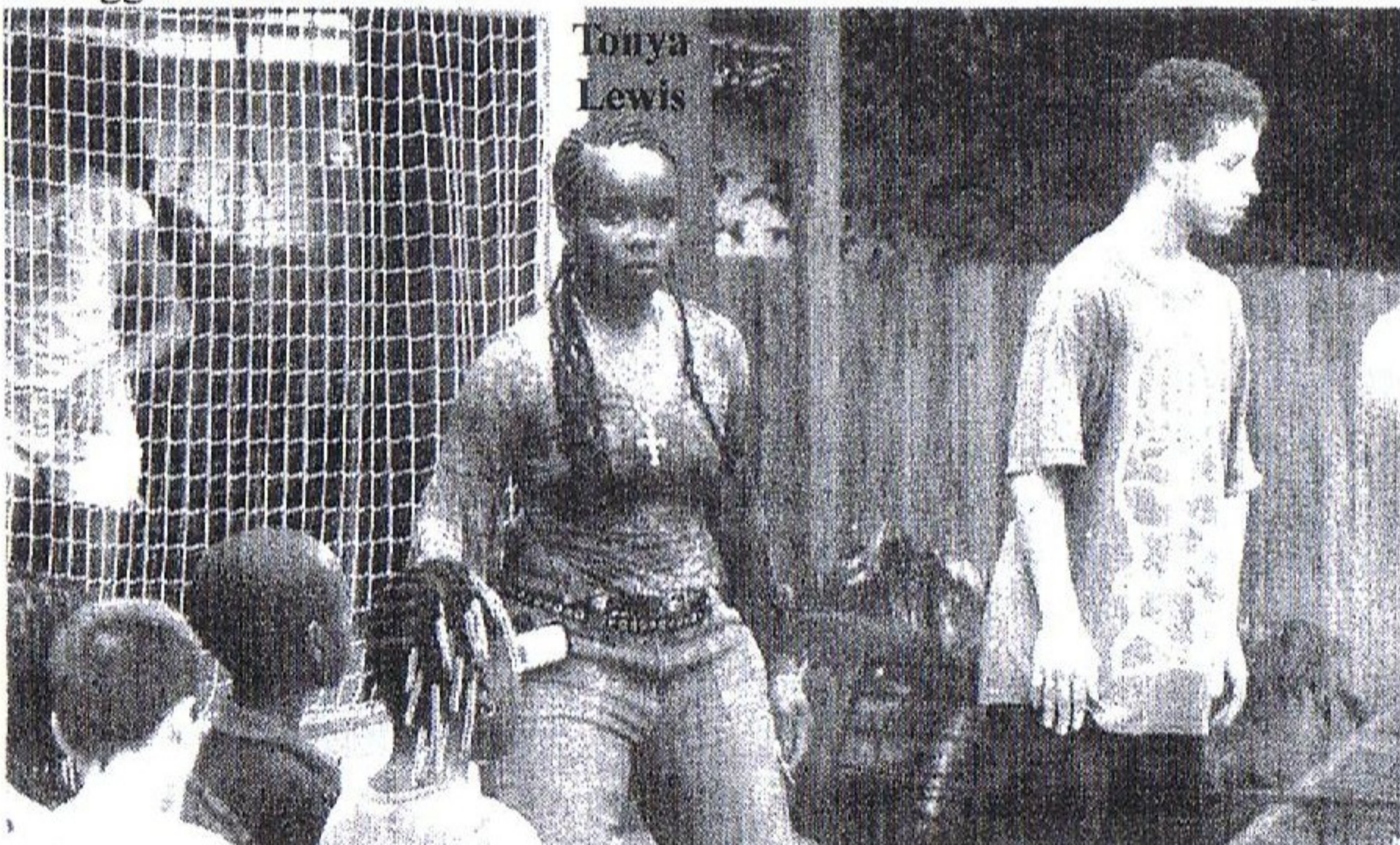
Pete's Towing, Lamb Distributors, Olin Mott tires, Progressive Personnel Inc., Creative Designs Inc.(CDI), Mason Realty, and Alina Meat Market all made cash contributions to offset expenses for supplies and food. Other bay area business donated products and their time and made this Back to School event the biggest and best ever.

Kids in the community as well as their parents came out for a day of fun, food and school supplies. What made it really special for Tonya was she did not have to have it in a park. She has plenty of room in her shaded spacious backyard and that's where it was held.

The Moon Walk and the Pedestal Joust set up that morning. Volunteers arrived in good spirits to help serve the food. Not an hour later, the people came rolling in. Adults and kids played musical chairs for prizes. Police Officers that patrol the community were there enjoying plates of barbecue chicken, baked beans, potato salad, yellow rice and soda along with the community they protect and serve. Students left with pencils, pens, note book paper, composition books, folders and book bags.

"It makes me feel great to be able to give to the kids and see their happy faces. The adults were funnier than the kids. You should have seen them playing musical chairs" said Ms. Lewis. "I feel blessed

to be able to host this event on my property. All of this would not be possible if it was not for the help from the volunteers and bay area businesses. I truly appreciate all of them."



Group Plans 3rd Annual Community Networking Event

On Saturday, August 10th, members of Business Entrepreneurs will host their Third Annual Community Networking Gathering. The purpose of the gathering is to reach out to the community and show gratitude and appreciation.

The event is slated to begin at 12 noon and conclude at 6 p.m. It will be held at 3801 N. 15th

Street.

Touted as a family event, the organization will hold a cook-out, conduct games, and family-oriented entertainment in a safe environment. The event will be drug and alcohol free.

"This year, 89 businesses have made contributions to make this successful. And 60 business owners in the community have donated every year



MS. TONYA LEWIS
Founder of Business
Entrepreneurs

since this event began," Ms. Tonya Lewis, founder of the organization said.

"In past years, we gave away school supplies. But this year we are playing a bigger role. We have supplies for 300 kids. The concept is to let the children see the businesses give back to the community.

"I want them to see us come together, have a cookout and have a good time. We get so caught up in working two or three jobs that we have gotten away from coming together as a community. I want the kids to know that they can do anything if they put their hearts and minds to it," Ms. Lewis said.

She further said that volunteers are needed to help make this event successful.

Anyone wishing to obtain more information about the event can contact Ms. Lewis at (813) 247-4010.

Businesswoman Announces 4th Annual Back To School Giveaway

BY LEON B. CREWS
Sentinel Staff Writer

Tonya M. Lewis, owner of Lewis Lawn Care, Incorporated, is announcing her 4th annual Back To School Supply Giveaway.

On Sunday, August 8th from 12 p.m. until 6 p.m., Ms. Lewis, along with several community leaders and business people, will be giving away free school supplies at her business located at 3801 North 15th Street (between Lake Avenue and

Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard).

Ms. Lewis said when she started this venture, she had few sponsors, and most of the expenses were out of pocket.

"And, I was dealing with the same number of kids then, as I am today."

Ms. Lewis will have supplies for at least 1,600 students available, and feels these kind of events only "make our community stronger."

"Over the years, the sponsors have grown from 55 to



TONYA LEWIS

more than 120. We've also gained corporate sponsors like McDonald's, Home Depot, Office Depot, Discount Auto Parts, and many others.

"Aside from the school sup-

plies, the Tampa Fire Department will be on hand and will donate smoke detectors and other information that will be put into the back packs for the children."

Also among this year's sponsors are professional football players Troy Hambrick, Charles Lee, and Chardrick Darby.

Ms. Lewis said the business owners who've contributed to this project have hired police officials to ensure the safety of children at the event, and firefighters will be arriving at 3 p.m.

"We've hired corporate party makers to come set up games and events for the kids like water slides and other games.

"Kids need to wear swim trunks/bathing suits for the water games, and wear shorts for the entire event."

An appreciation ceremony for the sponsors will be held from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and sponsors are asked to attend so they can receive their trophies and other awards.

Representatives from the Tampa City Council and Hillsborough County Commission will be attending.

Ms. Lewis asks all parents to accompany their children to this event.

"Parents, do not drop your kids off and leave. Any children unattended will not receive school supplies. The supplies will be given to the parents, not the children."

Free food will be available and the entire community is invited to come out.

Coordinating the event will be Lewis Lawn Care, Inc., Tampa Bay Bulldogs, Inc., Music Maze, and Ring My Bell, Inc.



1,500 YOUNGSTERS GET BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Approximately 1,500 youngsters were recipients of school supplies last Sunday when they attended a Back To School Giveaway. The 5th annual event was held at Lewis Lawn Care, owned by Ms. Tonya Lewis, coordinator of the event. Ms. Lewis says the support of area businesses and individuals insured the success of the event. Ms. Lewis, seated, center, is surrounded by Hope Volunteers: Chanel Phuphanich, Sakiya Glover, Saadrqah Miner, Keneeshia Wilson, Bocassa Brown, Cordale Brivett and Ms. Karen Peoples, rear. (Photograph by Micheal P. Floyd, Jr.)

5th Annual Back-To-School Giveaway Planned

Hundreds of youngsters throughout the area will have an opportunity to have a fun-filled afternoon on Sunday, August 14th. The event is the Back-To-School Giveaway.

For the past five years, **Ms. Tonya Lewis**, owner of Lewis Lawn Care, Inc., and **Ms. Michelle Walker**, of Miracles Outreach, CDC, Inc., have sponsored separate events. But this year, the ladies will join forces in order to serve hundreds of youngsters. **Ms. Nicole Tiller** will assist them in making the event memorable.

Ms. Walker said she began serving youngsters in the Sulphur Springs area of town 6 years ago. **Ms. Lewis** began serving youngsters in the East Tampa area. For the first time they are joining forces in order to serve more students.

The 5th Annual Back-To-School Giveaway will be held at 3801 N. 15th Street, from 12 noon until 6 p.m. However, all recipients must register between the hours of 12 noon and 2 p.m.

"No children will be allowed without parents or adults supervision and you must be registered to receive the school supplies. We will begin distributing the school supplies at 4 p.m.," **Ms. Lewis** said.

Those in attendance will enjoy food, music, entertainment, and displays of such items as a tanker truck from the Tampa Police Department and a large fire truck from the Tampa Fire Department. They will enjoy games and other activities as well as have access to health related information.

Volunteers from the Eastern Stars' Stars of Unity and the Masons' Lazarus of Malachi Lodge #33 have worked diligently to help make the event a success.

"It's a lot of hard work but we want the kids to know they can succeed. It's a struggle to stay



Ms. Nicole Tiller, seated, Ms. Michelle Walker, left, and Ms. Tonya Lewis will host the 5th Annual Back-To-School Giveaway on Sunday afternoon.

focused, but it can be done," **Ms. Lewis** said.

Ms. Walker said she began helping youngsters after observing many of the kids in the area who didn't have what they needed to begin school.

The giveaway is open to all school aged youngsters and the ladies said they have hundreds of supplies to give to the youngsters to help them start the year successfully.

"We also want to thank our many sponsors for making this possible," both **Ms. Lewis** and **Ms. Walker** said.

Reporter Iris B. Holton can be contacted at (813) 248-1921 or by e-mail at iris@flsentinel.com.

6th Annual Back To School Bash Planned

On Sunday, August 13th, two Tampa women will present the 6th Annual Back To School Bash Community Networking Extravaganza at 3801 N. 15th Street. The event will include entertainment, activities, and back to school supplies for youngsters in the community.

The Back To School Bash is being presented by **Ms. Tonya Lewis**, owner of Lewis Lawn Care, Inc., and **Ms. Cherylene Levy**, entrepreneur and owner of the Tampa Bay Bulldogs, Inc., Semi Pro Football Team.

The businesswomen joined forces initially to help provide school supplies to youngsters in the community. They contacted local businesses who agreed to help sponsor the event. In the years since its inception, the Back To School Bash has continued to grow.

This year, 212 business owners, and 35 corporate sponsors, **Chardric Darby**, #91, of the Seattle Seahawks, and others made generous donations to make the event possible. Representatives from local and regional businesses will be in attendance. However, **Darby**, who is in training, will not be at the event, **Ms. Lewis** said.

In the weeks leading up to the event, **Ms. Lewis**, **Ms. Levy**, and several volunteers spent many hours organizing the supplies for the youngsters. FM Radio Station 98.7 will broadcast live during the event. Members of the Tampa Police Department will pro-



MS. TONYA LEWIS

vide security, as well as have their Tank Truck on hand. The Tampa Fire Department, AmeriGroup Insurance Company, and others will also have equipment on display.

Guest speakers for the event will include State **Senator Les Miller, Jr.**, **Fred Hearn**s, Community Relations Director for the City of Tampa, **Kenny Rushing**, founder and CEO of House Hustlers, Inc., **Ms. Michelle Patty**, of Michelle B. Patty Referral Services, Inc., and Tampa Police Captain and Mayoral candidate **Marion Lewis**. Regional managers from MacDonal'd's, Home Depot, and Office Depot will also be on site as well.

Registration for the school supplies will be held from 12 noon until 2 p.m. The hour from 2 p.m. until 3 p.m., will be designated to recognize the sponsors during a special cer-



MS. CHERYLENE LEVY

emony. They will be presented certificates from Children With A Vision, Inc., Foundation, which was founded by **Ms. Lewis** two years ago.

"Our main focus this year is on the sponsors because they have been dedicated and devoted to what we are trying to do. We want to let them know we appreciate them," **Ms. Lewis** said.

The youngsters receiving the supplies, ranging in age from pre-school to high school, and their parents must be in attendance to receive the items. Although the supplies will be given on a first come, first serve basis, those parents who register will receive the items first, she said.

In addition to the school supplies, the two businesswomen have planned several activities for the youngsters, including a water slide. Parents are cautioned to

Annual Back To School Giveaway Draws Large Crowd

More than 3,200 people were on hand for the Seventh Annual Back To School Supply Giveaway, held on Sunday, August 12th, from 12 p.m. until 6 p.m. It was held at Regan Park Community Center, 1200 E. Lake Avenue.

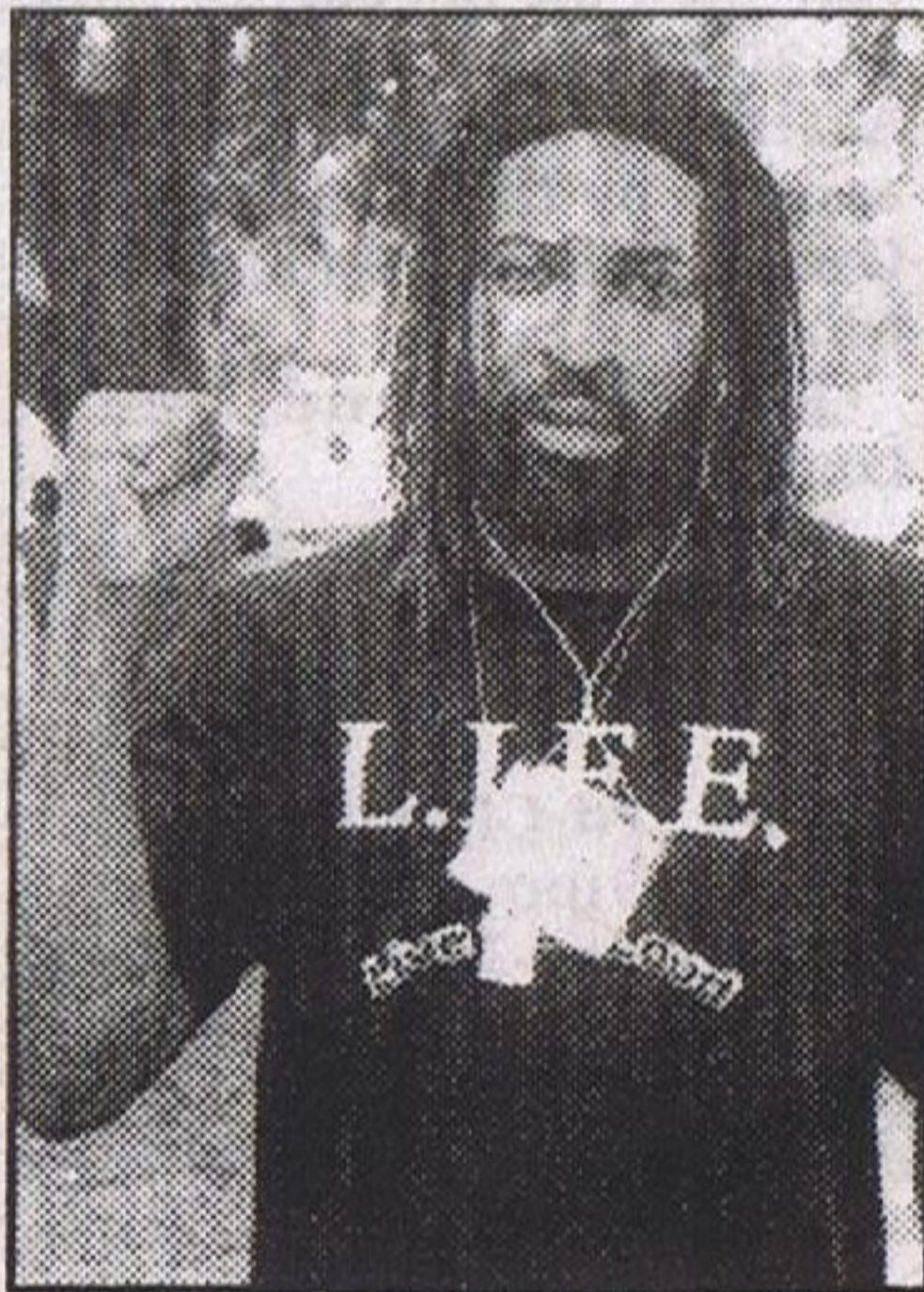
Ms. Tonya Lewis, founder of Children With A Vision, Inc., and event organizer, was joined by more than 200 business owners who donated time, energy, financial contributions, or supplies to make the event a success. (Photos by Jerry Brunson.)



Ms. Tonya Lewis, founder of Children With A Vision, Inc., is shown with businessman Joe Redner, one of the sponsors of the event.



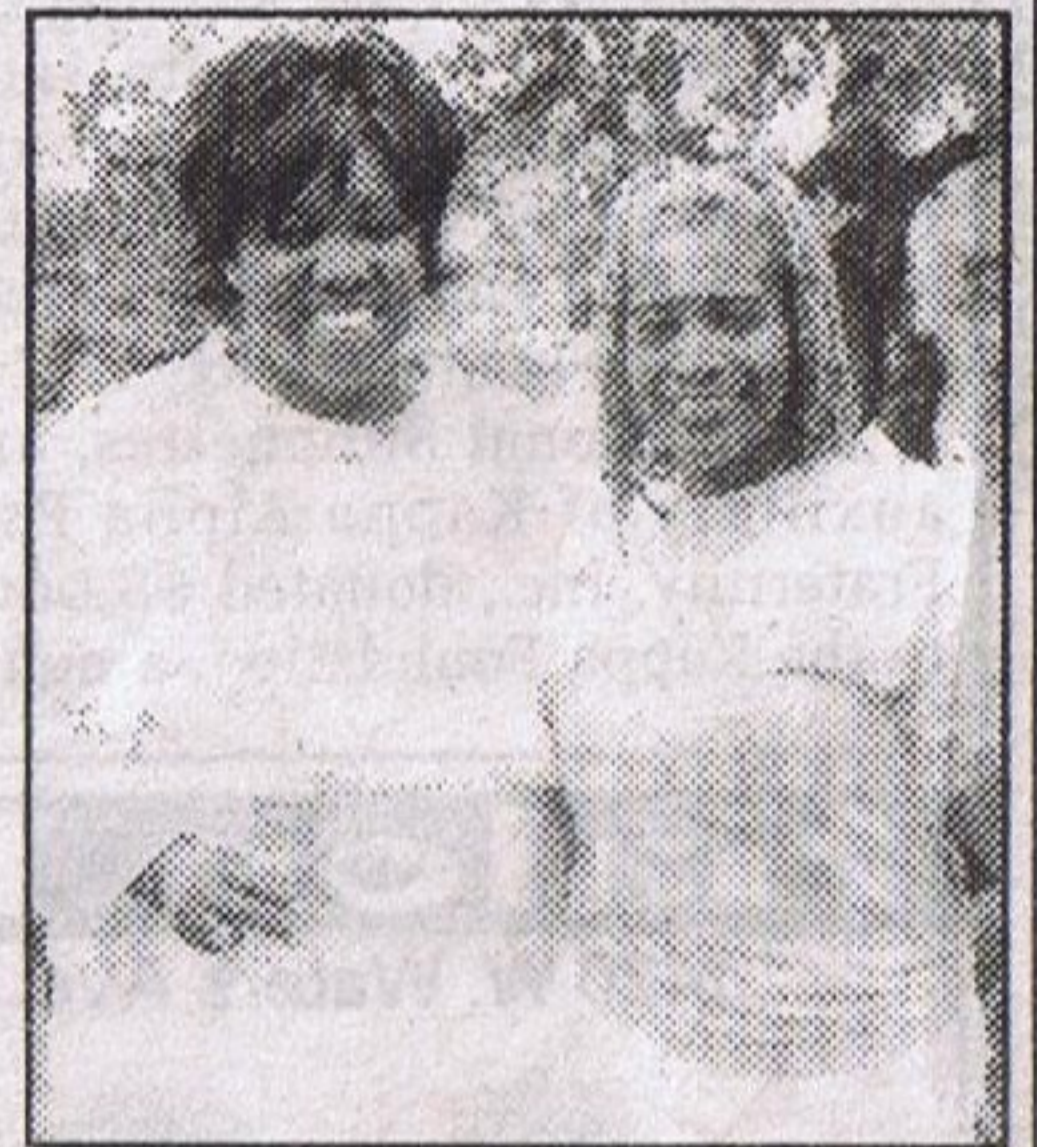
D. J. Tony provided music for the event.



Poet, LIFE was on hand.



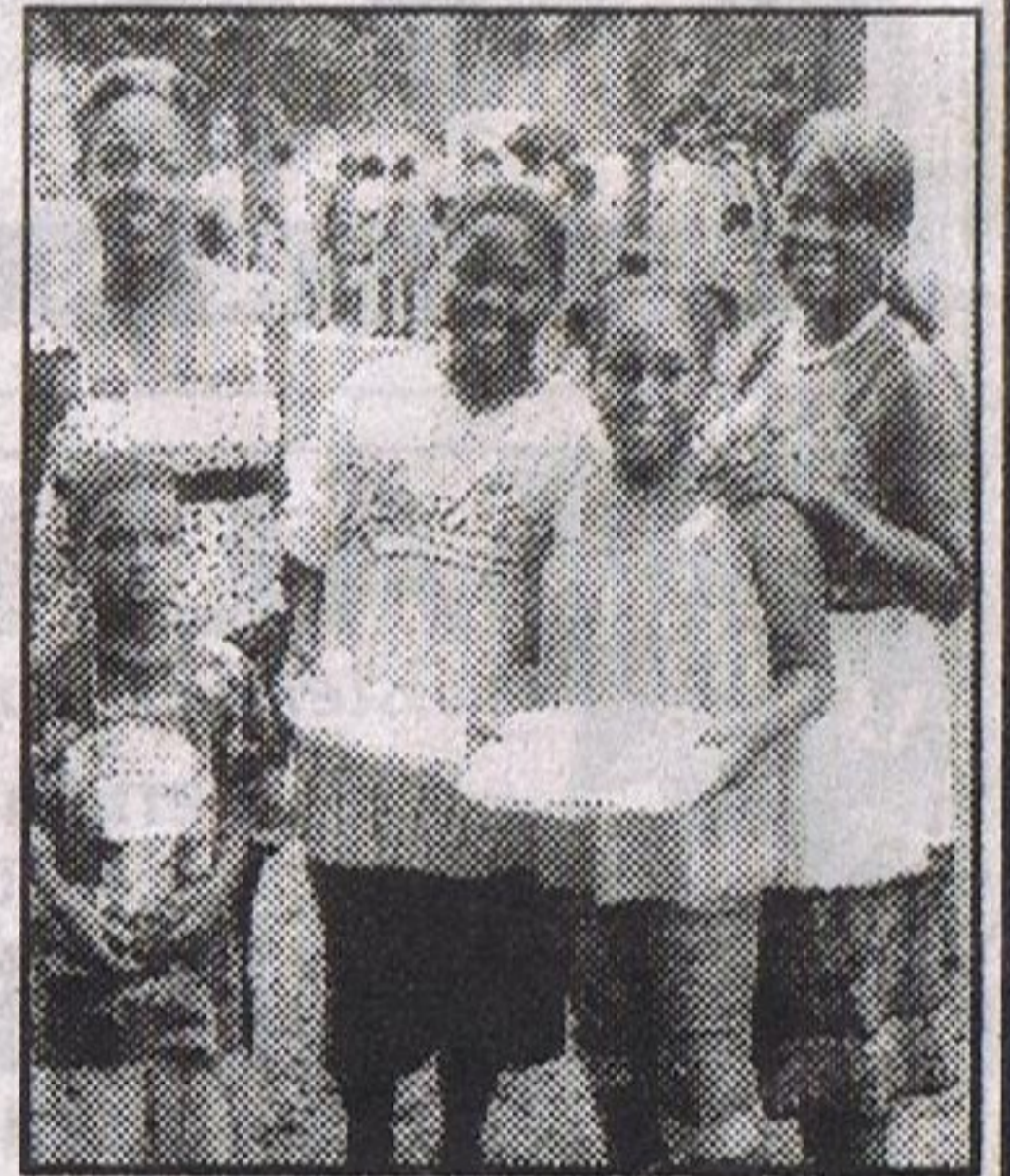
Ciera Dupree and Nicole Reese were in attendance at the 7th Annual Back To School Supply Give Away sponsored by Children With A Vision, Inc.



Natalie Richards, left, and Renee Brown, owner of Ladies Of The Sea Restaurant.



Ms. Marisol O'Bryan and Ms. Darlene Johnson represented Bank of America, and little Zion Avery.



Charmaine, Heisman, Jenall, Tre, and Stephanie were among those in attendance at the back to school give away.



Defying The Odds:**Children With A Vision, Inc. Reaches Out To Community**

BY DAWN GARDENER
Sentinel Freelance Writer

How do you defy these odds? On average, 40% of African American children will not graduate high school. Our young men outnumber any other race in our prison systems; teen pregnancy still remains high; drug use continues to be rampant; AIDS remains an epidemic; and our homicide rate can be heard in the wailings of parents who mourn the loss of young people everyday. But there's a community in Tampa who took the time on Sunday to collectively state, "it's time for a change."

The 7th Annual Back to School Event championed by **Tonya Lewis** was a phenomenal success. This was a joint effort of community volunteers and businesses striving to defy the odds at a most important juncture — education. By giving out hundreds of backpacks filled with the tools needed for academic success, the community put its money where its mouth is. Despite the sweltering heat, the anticipation and excitement was seen and felt everywhere — catered meals, an array of sounds (music, laughter, and screaming children), not to mention sponsors galore.

But the message of the day, 'equipping our children for scholastic success', was never

lost. This was no more evident than through the eyes of the parents and children. One notable attendee, **Ms. Alberta Jackson**, a 64-year-old grandmother, came with the hope of getting a backpack for each of her five grandchildren. In her matronly voice she stated, "This is my first year attending and I'm glad I came. It's good to see our community contributing to our children's learning. I thank God."

Her sentiments are further endorsed and echoed by several sponsors of the event to include **Jen Ramirez** representing AmeriGroup Florida, Inc., who simply says, "If it's about giving back you can bet AmeriGroup will be there."

Another enthusiastic contributor for a third year was Bank of America represented by **Darlene Johnson**. Bank of America provided additional counseling to high school students about the importance of establishing a savings account and the need for financial discipline.

On the lighter side of life, the Ruff Ryders, with more than 15 riders, made their mission known: "We're here because it's the place to be, period. When **Tonya Lewis** calls, we answer; we were there for her Toy Drive and we'll be out here for every event she hosts because we want to be a part of our chil-



This family was among the 3,200 that Ms. Tonya Lewis said were served last Sunday. They are Sherrisse, Christa, Ebony, Ms. Christina, Julian and Ms. Alford. (Photograph by Jerry Brunson)

dren having choices and not being limited," said **Audra "XXXTC" Cole**.

The effort and involvement of her committed sponsors did not go unnoticed, with several awards being handed out by **Ms. Lewis** as a small token of her appreciation for their involvement. One such recipient was **Waleed McFarland** of Mack's Barber Shop, a vet-

eran supporter for the last five years. **Waleed** noted the major difference in this year's event versus the last two he's attended: "the turnout this year is the largest yet. I hope it continues to grow because, in many cases, we're the only hope these children have."

Taking care of her community is the one constant in everything **Ms. Lewis** accomplishes

and it is primarily evident in her organization, Children With A Vision, Inc. To watch her move through the many roles of the day, chef, M. C., set-up crew, distributing backpacks, presenting certificates and gift baskets with a fervor and energy that says, "anything for my people," is mind-boggling.

What's her drive? In her own words, "My drive is my past. I've walked the same path as these boys and girls. I'm a product of a single parent household who struggled to make ends meet. I learned some valuable lessons through those difficulties, the most significant being never to forget where I came from."

"It may sound like a cliché, but it's so important. When I reached out to garner support from my many corporate sponsors, it was an easy sell because they saw a successful businesswoman before them who was once considered an underprivileged child. I made sure they understood it would take education to defy the odds stacked against these young children and we have to do everything in our power to get them on the right path to success."

Additional information about Children With A Vision, Inc., can be obtained by calling (813) 235-5656.

7th Annual Back To School Giveaway Planned

The Seventh Annual Back To School Supply Giveaway will be held on Sunday, August 12th, from 12 noon until 6 p.m. The event will take place at the Regan Park Community Center, 1200 E. Lake Avenue.

This year, more than 235 business owners have joined Tampa businesswoman, **Ms. Tonya Lewis** in an effort to provide school supplies to those youngsters who otherwise might not have them at the beginning of the school year.

The annual event is being presented by Children With A Vision, Inc., an organization created by **Ms. Lewis**. She said, "This is a way for business owners to show we care and give back to the community."

Ms. Lewis further stated that the supplies will be given on a first come, first serve basis for as long as they last. "However, parents must bring their kids during registration between 12 noon and 2 p.m. If we don't see the children we cannot give parents the supplies.

The students will receive book bags, notebook paper, folders, pencils, pens, rulers, and other items required for school.

"Every year, the event grows larger and this is the largest yet. We have gotten confirmation that representatives from our corporate sponsors will be on hand, so we are asking that everyone be on their best behavior.

"We want everyone to come out and have a good time. We



MS. TONYA LEWIS
Organizer of School Giveaway

have many activities for the children, we have water rides, free food, and numerous other fun-events. We are asking the parents to bring towels and lounge chairs for the children."

In addition to the activities, the City of Tampa Fire and Police Departments will have vehicles on display and vendors will be on hand.

Ms. Lewis said there are private homes near Regan

Park Community Center and she is asking that those planning to attend make sure not to block anyone's driveways. "There are going to be businesses that are closed because it is on a Sunday. So, we are asking that you park and walk to the center. We want everyone to have a good time without any problems."

Title sponsors for the event include The City of Tampa, ReHabbers Superstore, Joe Redner Enterprises, Inc., N-E-Where Transport, Inc., Amerigroup, along with numerous corporate sponsors.

Ms. Lewis further stated that she received sponsorship from **Chardric Darby**, #91, of the Seattle Seahawks and the Darby Foundation, and **Chris Hawkins**, of the Hawkins Foundation, who is a former NFL player.

Anyone wanting additional information can call (813) 235-5656.

Reporter Iris B. Holton can be contacted at (813) 248-1921 or by e-mail at iris@flsentinel.com.

LOCAL

Back To School Giveaway Planned

SEE PAGE 11

Book Bags And Goodies Distributed At 8th Annual Back To School Drive

School supplies, book bags and other goodies were distributed to more than 2,000 Bay area youngsters last Sunday when Mrs. Tonya Lewis hosted the 8th Annual Back To School Drive. Several area businesses and individuals assisted Ms. Lewis with sponsoring the event. (Photos by Brunson)



Tonya Lewis, host of the annual event sponsored by Children With A Vision, shows off some of the book bags that were distributed last Sunday at Ragan Park.



One of the sponsors of the event was Mama's Beauty Supply and Salon, owned by Jason Sadberry, who distributed loads of beauty supplies and materials.



Treyonna Monroe Brown, Tonya Thomas and Zae with their book bags.



Mrs. Lewis had suggested that parents bring their lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy the afternoon event. Tonya, Asia, Chanel and Meka did just that.



Melissa Brown with a Hannah Montana book bag.



Assisting with the preparation and distribution of food were Everlecia Taylor, Evernecia Taylor, Frankella Taylor and Tanisha Francis.



Entertainment for the event was provided by J. T. \$ With Heaven Old School.



Diamond and Rene.



Mary, Isaiah and Jeremiah McKeller.



Byron Knight, Mache' Bromback, Paris Williams and Asia Williams were among the young people who became involved.



Marjorie Daniels with Christena Horton and Jeremiah Horton.



Jolisad, Gerrod and Dontez.



More young people involved were Quicie, Brittanev and Everkesia.



In addition to book bags, the young people received hot dogs and other goodies. Helping to distribute these items were Shalisa, Octavia Rankin, Shanika McCray, Kristina Singleton, Asia Goodman, Zec Goodman and Jevonta Dean.



Adults involved in the distributed included Aesha Bailey, Phillip Ames, Bbay Jay and Kay-Kay.

8th Annual Back To School Bash Planned

BY IRIS B. HOLTON
Sentinel City Editor

Several years ago, Ms. Tonya Lewis realized that everyone could find a way to contribute to his or her community. She realized that by providing school supplies to children that she could make a difference in the lives of many underprivileged children.

Ms. Lewis created Children With A Vision, Inc., a not-for-profit organization and with the help of several organizations throughout the community, obtained much needed school supplies. She held the first Back To School Bash at her home, but the event outgrew her home because of the number of people seeking assistance.

This year, the event will be held at Ragan Park Community Center, 1200 E. Lake Avenue, on Sunday, August 10th, from 12 noon until 6 p.m. Ms. Lewis said the supplies will be distributed on a first-come first serve basis while supplies last.

"Every child may not receive a book bag, but he or she will still receive school supplies in a plastic bag. Our goal is to see that each child receives some supplies."

State Representative Betty Reed and Bob Conigliaro of MacDonald's



MS. TONYA LEWIS
Founder of Children With A Vision, Inc.

guest speakers. Others expected to attend the event include Attorney Constance Daniels, members of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women of America, Inc., members of the Jerusalem Lodge #100, of MacDill Air Force Base, and numerous others.

Ms. Lewis said she has changed the event from last year and eliminated the registration requirement. But, an adult must accompany every child and a child must accompany every adult.

Ms. Lewis said last year some parents complained about not being able to get certain types of book bags. However, she said all of the supplies are donated and

plies to start off the year.

She further stated that parents must give written permission for their photographs to be published on the organization's website at www.childrenwithavision-inc.com.

[inc.com](http://www.childrenwithavision-inc.com).

"This is a park atmosphere with food, games, face painting, and other festivities for the children. But parents need to bring their own towels, blankets, and chairs.

The supplies will be inside, but the activities will be held outside.

Anyone interested in obtaining additional information may contact Ms. Lewis at (813) 235-5656.

Children With A Vision, Inc.
Presents

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Ragan Park Community Center
1200 E. Lake Ave. Tampa, FL 33605

AUGUST 10th 2008
12:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.



Mrs. Tonya Lewis
Founder

For More Information Call:
(813) 235-5656

All Children Must Be Present And Accompanied By Parents

First Come, First Served!
While Supplies Last
Parents Bring Your Own
Chairs And Blankets

*** NO EXCEPTIONS***

Community Responds To Help Hurricane Victims

Last weekend, Hurricane Charley struck the western coast of Florida. In its wake, it left thousands homeless, without food, water, or even basic necessities.

However, people from throughout the country have responded to the needs of those individuals. And the citizens of Tampa have launched several initiatives to provide assistance to the hurricane victims.

Barry Campbell, a member of Re-Birth M. B. Church, said his sister, who lives in Arcadia, lost her home. His family gathered supplies and transported them to her shortly after the storm had struck.

"We went to deliver the items to my sister and I saw the impact, not only to my family, but to everyone. Those people need help and they will continue to need help in the future," **Campbell** said.

Compelled by what he observed, **Campbell** returned home and enlisted the assistance of **Bruce Bryant**, a member of New Hope M. B. Church, and **Woodrow Grady**. The men have gathered numerous items and transported them to Arcadia to help relieve the suffering of the people there.

Campbell said anyone wishing to drop off items for the upcoming trip can do so at Re-Birth M. B. Church, 1924 E. Comanche Avenue, (813) 238-8911. Donations will be accepted between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Friday, August 27th, and from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., on Saturday, August 28th.

Anyone wishing to contact **Campbell** can call (813) 731-4388.

One group of Tampa women pooled their resources and



WOMEN ON THE MOVE — Some of the members of "Women On The Move" includes from left to right: Ms. Pat Scott, Ms. Nicole Williams, Ms. Barbara Griffin, Ms. Jackie Scott, and Ms. Cherylene Levy. Shown in front are: Ms. Jackie Sno and Ms. Tonya Lewis. Not shown in this photograph is Ms. Kayla Scott.

will make a trip to Arcadia on Sunday morning. The troupe will leave out at 5 a.m., and serve food prepared in Tampa and transported to that area.

"We have helped two other people recently. When we watched the news we realized that they were talking about the more affluent areas that were struck by the hurricane. But they hadn't said anything about the people in Arcadia.

"Arcadia is made up of mostly poor people and migrant workers. So we wanted to do something for them," **Ms. Cherylene Levy** said.

The group, who work under the title of "**Women On The Move**," will begin cooking Chicken and Yellow Rice Saturday evening at the home of **Ms. Tonya Lewis**.

They will travel to Arcadia and serve the food for as long as it lasts. The traveling party will consist of about 30 women.

Anyone wishing to make donations of non-perishable food, clothing, personal hygiene items, or anything

the people can use can contact them at (813) 416-7713.

On Monday, August 23rd, the Feed Our Children Ministries, Inc., will leave Tampa. They will start in Bartow and travel to Punta Gorda. **Chaplain Moses Brown** is asking the community to donate water, flashlights, batteries, canned goods, and personal hygiene items.

"There is such a great need out there. Everything helps. And we will pick up clothing and other items anyone wishes to donate," **Chaplain Brown** said.

Anyone wishing to contact **Chaplain Brown** may call (813) 784-1021.

Reporter Iris B. Holton can be contacted at (813) 248-1921 or by e-mail at iris@flsentinel.com.

Businesswoman Succeeds Despite Odds

BY LEON CREWS
Sentinel Staff Writer

Tonya Lewis thinks of herself as a strong Black woman, and from all indications, that's exactly what she is.

Few Black women would start a business at the age of 22, especially in a field dominated by men. But, that's exactly what **Ms. Lewis** did.

Lewis Lawn Care Service is a very successful business, owned and operated by **Ms. Lewis**.

Born in Miami, **Ms. Lewis** said the violence in Miami so upset her mother, she moved the entire family to Mulberry, Florida, then later to Plant City, where **Ms. Lewis** attended Plant City High School. "In high school, I concentrated on my academics, and actually dabbled in woodwork and agriculture.

"I decided long ago, I wanted to be a business owner. I became educated in several technical skills, and from that point I evolved into a better person."

Aside from the personal obstacles in her life, **Ms. Lewis** had to deal with first, being a woman in a male dominated field, then being a Black woman in that field.

Ms. Lewis said starting a business isn't easy, and sometimes you want to quit. "My



TONYA LEWIS

first four years were tough. I thought about giving up several times, but I kept going and now I'm glad I did. My experiences have made me a lot wiser."

Ms. Lewis said she has a better understanding of how to set up a business, its long term goals, and how to make it last. "One of the first questions asked of me was whether or not I was getting into this line of work just to make money for a short term, or was I building something for the future. The latter definitely applies."

Ms. Lewis said she still gets strange reactions from people when she tells them she's in the lawn care busi-

ness. But, she says there is a purpose for her choice of careers. "I was never the type to sit behind a desk and interact with certain people. I was made to perform physical work, because that's what makes a Black woman stronger."

As far as her lawn care business is concerned, **Ms. Lewis** said it stands on its own merit. "My work speaks for itself. I also don't think of myself as having competition. I'll accept any challenge, anytime."

By being a successful business owner, **Ms. Lewis** said she hopes she's making a statement for the younger generation. "I want to encourage them to keep trying to make something of themselves. I was able to do it, and I had a lot of the same obstacles to deal with as they do right now. By the grace of God. I was able to keep going, and I enjoy my labor."

Ms. Lewis said her clientele has grown in excess of 93 clients. She also supervises a crew of three, but says that varies because of the lack of reliable labor.

Ms. Lewis is proud to say she's helped two men start a business, and they've become quite successful.

Tonya Lewis Opens Car Spa

Known in the community for her lawn care service and her annual back to school venture for the kids, Tonya Lewis has added something new to her neighborhood. One block south of MLK on 15th St. is her car spa that has been open for business for about 3 months or more. She held her official grand opening last weekend. Tonya, an avid cook, had barbecue chicken and baked beans, hot dogs and free drinks for all her patrons. Some like myself hung around and enjoyed a couple hands of cards. It was an all around good time, in a pleasant atmosphere. See her add on page 23 and stop by and have your car pampered.

When you leave your car will be shiny clean and will know that your entire car has had a bath. And if you can't tell from the pictures, palm trees, shade trees and air conditioning facilities are a comfort while you wait.



Battle Continues For Woman With Rare Lung Disease

BY LEON B. CREWS
Sentinel Staff Writer

Tonya Lewis, a local businesswoman, was alerted about the niece of one of her clients. She was told the young woman had contracted a rare lung disease and was in desperate need of a transplant.

On September 22nd, **Ms. Lewis** began a series of fundraisers to help **Gina Oliva** with her growing medical bills and to create awareness about her fatal lung disease. Joining **Ms. Lewis** is Pediatric Health Choice and Miracles Outreach of CDC, Inc., **Mrs. Michelle Walker**, founder.

Since the first story of **Oliva's** condition was reported, it has deteriorated, but family members continue to pray and keep hope alive she will get a transplant.

"The fundraising efforts went good," said **Ms. Lewis**.

"Now with her condition not good, everyone is preparing for the worse."

That is everyone except **Oliva**. Although she can't leave her home without having breathing problems, she maintains a positive attitude and is



GINA OLIVA

upbeat. Her family continues to pray and hope for a transplant.

"I'm alright," said **Oliva**.

"I'm still bored and waiting, I'm used to being very active, so this is hard for me. I haven't heard anything about a donor, but the doctors hope to have me in surgery by Christmas. I want to hurry up and recover so I can return to school to become a pharmacist. Sitting around is driving me crazy. I'm just not a good patient."

Ms. Lewis said **Oliva's** blood type, o-positive, makes it difficult for her to find a match for a successful transplant.

Anyone interested in helping this young lady can contact **Ms. Lewis** at (813) 850-4454.



*The Florida House of Representatives
Representative Betty Reed
District 59*

District Office
2109 Palm Ave., Suite 204
Tampa, FL 33605
(813) 241-8024
(813) 241-8027 (fax)

Tallahassee Office
1301 The Capitol
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 488-5432

Dear Friends,

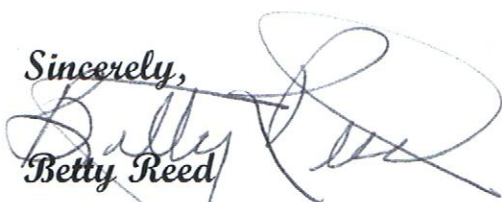
On behalf of the citizens of District 59 and the Florida House of Representatives, it is with great pleasure that I extend my sincere appreciation and offer congratulatory words to Children With A Vision, Inc. for hosting its' "Eight Back To School Bash."



Supporting organizations that silently impact our children and our community exemplify the ideals for which America stands. With that said, my office stands ready to support Children With A Vision, Inc. in achieving its' vision of annually bringing Bay area residents together for some community networking and most importantly, providing our youth with the necessary tools for them to achieve academic excellence.

Again, congratulations to the Children With A Vision, Inc. as we all enjoy this momentous occasion. I pray that this special day will be wrapped in warmth and filled with laughter and love.

Sincerely,


Betty Reed
State Representative
District 59

Committee and Council Membership:

Economic Development, Education Innovation & Career Preparation, and Economic Expansion & Infrastructure

KATHY CASTOR
11TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
TERRORISM AND UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
SUBCOMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON RULES

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND
POLICY COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT WHIP-AT-LARGE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0911

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3376

DISTRICT OFFICE:

4144 NORTH ARMENIA AVENUE
SUITE 300
TAMPA, FL 33607
(813) 871-2817

www.castor.house.gov

August 8, 2008

Ms. Tanya Lewis
Founder
Children With A Vision, Inc.
3801 North 15th Street
Tampa, FL 33610-8107

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I want to take this opportunity to offer my best wishes to Children With A Vision, Inc. for your 8th year Back to School Bash.

I applaud your organizations efforts in giving hundreds of school supplies to the youth in our community. Our youth will have the necessary tools for them to achieve academic excellence.

Again, please accept my best wishes for a successful Back to School Bash.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Castor".

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

KC:sp

**FROM THE DESK
OF
CORPORAL B. L. HUNT
DISTRICT THREE HEADQUARTERS**

Memo:

Date: December 18, 2007

TO: R. Guidara, Major
District Three

ATTN: C. Roberts, Captain
S. Hartnett, Lieutenant
M. Kitts, Sergeant

FROM: B. L. Hunt, Corporal
Squad 301

Major Guidara,

I was assigned to the 2nd Annual Bike Cook Out, "Toys for Tots", event at Ragan Park on Sunday December 16th from 12pm to 6pm.

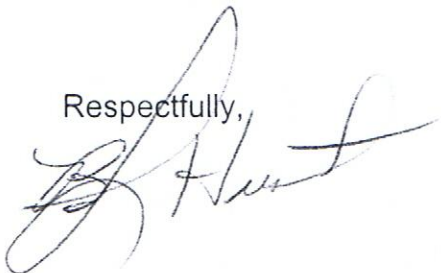
Due to weather conditions the event did not kick off until 2pm, in reference to the largest group of participants/supporters. I stopped by off and on between the hours of noon and 3pm. Upon my arrival at 3pm there were approx 100-200 people, (workers, adults & children). I remained on scene until 4pm. At this time almost everyone had left, except the sponsors and the clean up crew.

All in all, I believe this event was successful! No reports were made.

Ms. Tonya Lewis has turned her life around from the days of her youth. With all that she does for her community, I would like to recommend her for the 2007 TPD yearly citizen of the year award, which is presented in 2008.

Included with this memo is a copy of the 2nd Annual Bike Cook out booklet.

Respectfully,



Office number – 242-3800
Beeper – 339-5580
3808 North 22nd Street
Tampa, FL 33610