

Leadership summit to kick off new year in U. City

Celebrate diversity, see community projects Feb. 22

By Jennie Crismore, Jada Earl and Grace Watkins

The second annual Faces of Leadership Summit will be held at the Barnhardt Student Center at UNC Charlotte on Feb. 22, 8 a.m.-noon. Hosted by the University City Community Building Project, the communitywide event will feature UNCC Chancellor Philip Dubois as the keynote speaker.

We're diverse, trusting

Started last year to identify and support current and emerging leaders in University City, the leadership summit will include a networking session this year and offer suggestions on how U. City can further build social capital.

Social capital describes the networks in our society that cultivate interaction and sharing — and that,

ultimately, lead to trust among a multicultural population.

Building social capital is key for the UCCBP, which operates as a special project of the University City YMCA. At the summit in February, the UCCBP will share the results of recently completed research that reveals additional insight into the social capital in University City.

The research, which was funded by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and conducted by the Urban Institute at UNCC, was designed to identify how University City maintains a high level of trust in the face of its highly diversity population. The information will be exported to communities throughout the region and nation.

Another highlight of the leadership summit will be the presentation of community projects completed by the

participants of the 2005 Leadership Academy. (See below for more information on one of the projects.)

The summit also will feature a list of organizations, dates and events where current and emerging leaders can become more involved in University City and help to continue to build social capital here.

To register for the 2006 Leadership Summit, go to www.uccbp.com and click on Upcoming Events. For more information, call 704-716-6792 or e-mail jennie.crismore@ymcacharlotte.org.

Where is Yousie?

Yousie the Bookworm sightings are happening all over University City. Pronounced "UC," the 4-foot-tall character is reading in more than 10 locations around the community. Elementary school children are challenged to find all 10 Yousie locations.

UCCBP, in partnership with the University City Magazine and with initial sponsorship assistance from Wachovia and TIAA-CREF, has developed a contest designed to recognize the educational opportunities in University City and highlight various points of interest in our area.

The first five children to report the 10 locations will be pictured in the March issue of University City Magazine and will receive a free T-shirt, compliments of the University City YMCA.

Yousie the Bookworm is a symbol of the lifelong learning that takes place in University City. From preschool to graduate school, a person's intellectual curiosity can be satisfied without ever leaving the area — something no other area of Charlotte can boast.

Many residents are grateful for the quality of education available here. Latonya Graham has two children who attend University City schools. "There is a true commitment on the part of the educators to provide quality instruction and encourage excellence," she said. "I also appreciate the fact that my children get to build a sense of community in an environment that is naturally

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