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Mintz gearing up for August opening of its new academy

by Amy Kelly

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Mintz Christian Academy, set to open in August 2009, began through the church's obedience to God's call, according to pastor Dr. John McBride.

McBride said the decision to start a Christian school derived from a "burden God placed on the hearts" of some church members. The idea was "planted within the fellowship about four years ago." Last year, the church began "acting out of obedience," in what has been "an awesome year of preparation," McBride commented.

The goal was "to start a good, credited school that would be a first-rate school," the pastor noted. The church considered the school a "mission" or "ministry."

McBride explained that public education has limitations for Christians due to the separation of church and state. He said the Mintz school will provide a "broader, rounder education that focuses on spirituality and academics in a wholesome atmosphere."

Reading, writing and arithmetic will be important, but the foundation, McBride said, would be the Bible, which will be studied and applied to all other curriculum. McDowell added that art, music, computer classes and physical education will also be part of the curriculum.

According to a brochure, "The mission of Mintz Christian Academy is to offer a nurturing Christian-based education on a solid spiritual, academic and social foundation that will enable our students to walk victoriously in their adult life."

The school principal, Joy McDowell, added that the textbooks they will use are all written from the Christian perspective and are accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The school will actually run much like a traditional school, but with a Christian emphasis.

Certified teachers will be in every classroom, and the teacher-to-student ratio will be one to 10, according to McDowell. The benefit of this, she explained, is that students can form stronger bonds with teachers due to the small class sizes.

Educational research shows other benefits of Christian schools, McDowell explained. On standardized testing, Christian students are generally two to three years ahead of public school students of the same age.

McDowell said another benefit of this Christian school is the like-mindedness of parents because they will "all be working in the same perspective."

Sampson County is the target area for student recruitment, but the principal and pastor hope for students from surrounding counties, as well. The principal said survey cards were used to find interest for such a school in the community, and response was positive. Prospective students and their parents were invited to an

open house on Jan. 25 to meet with the school board and view classrooms, handbooks, etc.

When the school opens in August , McDowell anticipates filling classrooms for kindergarten through fifth grade, with plans to add a grade level each year as students are promoted

The maximum number of students the facility can hold at this time is 60, but they already have plans to build a new building behind the church in about two years.

Much like public schools, Mintz Christian Academy will offer an after-school program, as well as a hot lunch program daily. The school will operate on a similar schedule as public schools, five days a week from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. with summers off.

Parents of prospective students should contact the principal at (910) 564-6221.

McDowell is also now accepting resumes from teachers. Interested applicants can contact her by phone, or mail their resumes to 371 Old Mintz Highway, Roseboro, N.C. 28382.

For more information, visit www.mcanc.com.

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