

# A resource for women



Photos by Emily Saunders Forsyth County News

Board members, from left, Paula Waters, Laurie Heinze, Valerie Daniel, Dianne Johnson and Juthica Jajal help guide Faith's House, a nonprofit group for single mothers. The group meets monthly at the Cumming branch of the local library.

## Faith's House offers hope, help to moms

By Adlen W. Robinson  
For the Forsyth County News

Valerie Daniel has a keen understanding of the struggles single mothers face.

The Forsyth County resident was raised by one and was herself a single mother for years.

"My mother worked full time and in addition went to school to be able to better provide for my brother and myself," Daniel said. "I ended up taking care of my brother from the time I was in sixth grade, and we both really missed out on spending much time with our mother."

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Xochitl Haines, left, and Cadence Lewis play with a balloon under the watch of Faith's House founder Valerie Daniel. Haines is the daughter of board member Juthica Jajal, and Lewis the granddaughter of board member Paula Waters.

## Hope: Founder cites own life

In many cases, single mothers are so busy working and raising their children, they have little or no time to pursue an education or weigh other options.

Daniel knows the feeling and wants to help. She has founded Faith's House, a nonprofit organization that assists single mothers. The group meets each month at the Forsyth County Public Library's Cumming branch.

"Until we get [an] actual building, we will offer monthly networking meetings for single mothers," Daniel said. "We will provide child care so the women can bring their children to the meetings, and we will have people on hand who can help women in numerous areas."

Among the services offered are resume writing and college and job research, as well as exposing women to what community resources are available.

"So many single mothers are just completely overwhelmed," she said. "We want to be a one-stop resource for them and help them in any way we can."

In Georgia, there are more than a half a million single-mother-families, 42 percent of whom live below the poverty level.

It's all too familiar situation for Daniel, who found herself single and pregnant at age 20.

"There I was, without an education and feeling alone and scared," she said.

Desperate to find gainful employment, Daniel began working whenever she could at her mother's companies, and soon found she had a natural talent for landscape architecture.

"I was lucky to have someone who could teach me a trade, a trade that allowed me to provide for my son all those years when I was single."

Daniel said many women in that situation must work minimum-wage jobs because they do not have an education.

"So many single moms are in dead-end jobs, yet they do not feel they have time to go to school," she said. "And not only that, most are completely unaware of the resources that are available to them."

Daniel's years as a single mother to her now 20-year-old son, Adam, ended nine years ago when she married husband Rob. Even so, she knew she would always have a heart for

### Contact

Faith's House is scheduled to meet from 6 to 8 p.m. on Sept. 23, Oct. 21, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16 (all Wednesdays) at the Forsyth County Public Library's Cumming Branch, 585 Dahlonega Road. Contact: Valerie Daniel, (678) 468-7285.

helping single mothers.

"In 2000, while we were living in Boston, I attended a transformational experiential women's weekend, which encouraged women to explore and improve all areas of your life," she said.

"The most memorable exercise for me was when we were encouraged to think about if we had every single thing in our life that we wanted, what would give you joy beyond that."

For Daniel, the answer to that question was clear and life changing.

"It came to my mind immediately," she said. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if there was a home where single mothers could live with their children while they got their education?"

At that moment, the idea for Faith's House was born.

"I came home from that weekend full of excitement, telling my husband all about my ideas and what my vision was."

First, she needed a name.

"Faith is believing in something you cannot see. For single mothers, I want them to have faith and trust, as well as a safe and nurturing place they can live while pursuing their dreams."

The name has an even deeper meaning to Daniel. She also has a 7-year-old daughter, Faith.

As with most big undertakings, years passed before the project came to fruition.

"I kept thinking this is too big, how will I ever make this happen," Daniel said.

In February 2008, after a particularly inspiring Sunday sermon, she got serious. After much research, and fundraisers, Daniel began putting together a board of directors.

A friend and grant writer offered to file the necessary paperwork needed to secure nonprofit status. Before she knew it, Daniel saw her dream of Faith's House come to life.