

OPINION

In the stories we read to young children before they can read to themselves, there are a lot of wishes.



There are the wishes that genies grant if you let them out of the lamp, and the wishes that you get if you steal leprechaun gold. There are star wishes and birthday wishes and dandelion

wishes.

Durham's Partnership for Young Children and the Champions for Young Children initiative have just one wish this year: They want the N.C. General Assembly to hold the line on funding early childhood education.

In an alert this week, the Champions for Young Children warned that the proposed senate budget "rips \$27 million" away from Smart Start, More at Four and the working parents' daycare subsidy.

Advocates for those programs — including the East Durham Children's Initiative and Duke University's Office of Durham and Community Affairs — often point to data that say disadvantaged kids who go through those programs are far more prepared for early elementary school than their peers who did not. They get a jump on reading, basic math and classroom skills. Full funding for those programs is a worthy wish.

But, there are a lot of valiant programs that are pleading for help. And in this story, where the wishes are limited, the heroes aren't just the legislators who make the hard choices — they will also be the North Carolinians who stand up to support their priorities.

■ Durham's Rausa McManas, a registered nurse who is also president of Nurse Care of North Carolina, served as the Nurse of the Day at the N.C. General Assembly on Wednesday.

As described by the North

Carolina Nurses Association, it sounds like an interesting gig: "McManus ... provided service such as taking vital signs, checking blood pressures and dispensing [over-the-counter] drugs for headache, upset stomach and allergies to legislators and legislative staff members at the state legislature."

In strapped budget times, it had to be tempting to do a little horse trading — say, one aspirin for \$250,000 toward AIDS prescription programs? — but we gather that McManus resisted.

■ It is *officially* official: N.C. Central University's centennial has been commemorated by the U.S. House of Representatives.

A few highlights:

Expansions: The university was accredited as a Class "A" institution by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1937. Two years later, it was authorized to add graduate schools, starting with the law school in 1940 and a master's degree in library science in 1941. Today, it offers bachelor's degrees in more than 100 disciplines, and graduate degrees in 40 areas of study.

Accolades: N.C. Central is the best of the public Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the country, according to U.S. News and World Report. The law school has been selected as the best-value law school by National Jurist magazine for two years in a row, and the Marching Sound Machine band has been invited to perform in the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Maybe you didn't know: Student athletes from N.C. Central won eight Olympic medals (five gold) between 1956 and 1976. The school was the first state university to require community service for graduation.

With all that in mind, the members of the U.S. House of Representatives resolved to honor N.C. Central University's centennial. We're resolved that they could hardly do anything else.

The Herald-Sun

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EDITORIALS

Week's end