

the life in MYERS PARK

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December 2012



Holiday 2012 Issue

Join Symphony Guild of Charlotte members (from left) Cookie Parnell, Julie Mahanes, Lisa Phillips & Sallie Moody in celebrating the joys of the season with lots of exciting neighborhood news & photos inside...

**The Symphony Guild of Charlotte's
2nd Annual Festival of Trees Fundraiser**

Photo courtesy of Daniel Coston

Meet *your neighbors*

The Neilsons...*Angels Among Us*

By: Contributing writer Gwen Path


Inside the Neilsons' home, you'll find there are angels everywhere. These are the paintings that Anne Neilson has become famous for. Her abstract angels have been commissioned by Oprah and are hanging in homes across the Charlotte area. These paintings have also helped raise more than \$100,000 for community charities. There are angel cookies spread out on the living room table, wrapped and ready to be used as decorations at a special luncheon honoring the launch of Anne's breathtaking new coffee table book, *Angels in our Midst*. And there are the angels *around* the table, Anne and Clark Neilson and their four children. Each one follows the family mantra: to whom much is given, much is required.



The Neilson family traveled to Peru to do mission work for Samaritan's Feet.

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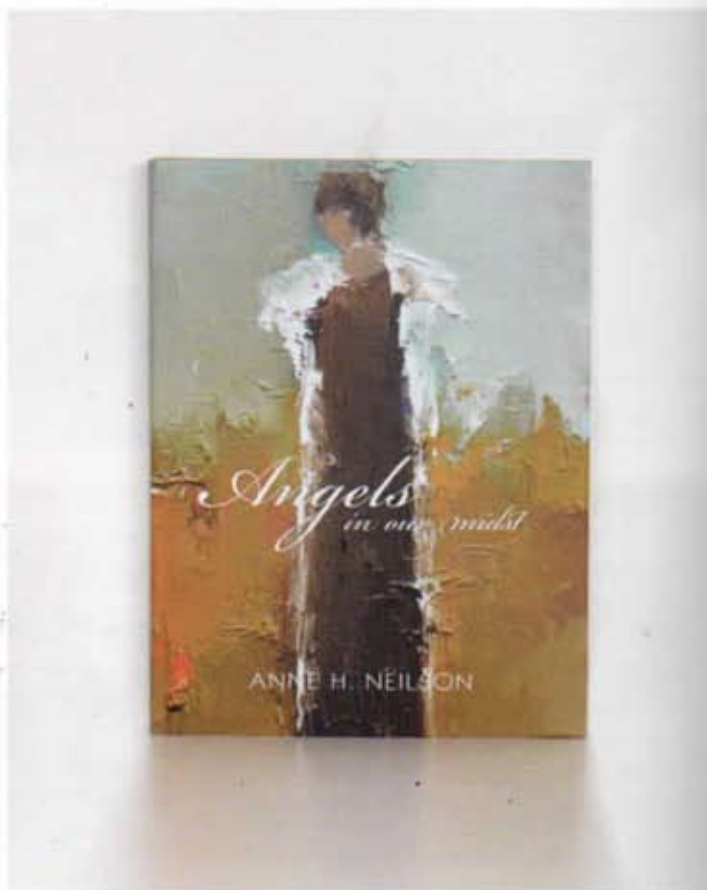
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Anne Neilson's new coffee table book, *Angels in our Midst*

Anne has always said it was important to use her God-given talent in a way that would contribute to the community. This year she hosted the second annual "Strokes of Compassion" event, where she donated fifty percent of the proceeds from the sales of her paintings to the Harvest Center. In the past she has given to Levine Cardiac Kids, the Allegro foundation and the Urban Ministry Center.

Family patriarch, Clark Neilson, who runs his own land surveying business, says he traces his need to give back to his dad's military service. "He was a career military officer...giving back was just what he did as a job. I didn't go into the military, so I thought, there must to be another way for me to give back."


This past summer, the family travelled to Peru to work with Samaritan's Feet, giving shoes to kids who cannot afford them. The Neilsons were part of a small group that included Carolina Panthers star wide receiver, Steve Smith. The youngest Neilson child (and the only boy), twelve-year-old Ford, says the experience in Peru has stayed with him, and he can't help but think of the kids they worked with every time he puts his own shoes on. "They don't have much, and we have a lot, so it felt good to do that for them," he says.

The oldest of the Neilson bunch, 18-year-old Blakely is a senior at St. Mary's boarding school in Raleigh. It's the school where her grandmother went, and the fiercely independent daughter says even though she's away at school, she still carries on the family tradition of giving back, regularly taking part in school-run community service projects. "Our parents have always encouraged us to help people, and I think based on that, I wanted to do something on my own," she says.

Sixteen-year-old Catherine gets up before the sun every Sunday morning so she can volunteer at Elevation Church (the whole family attends services there and each volunteers in some way). Catherine runs camera for the church's weekly production.

Blue-eyed Taylor is a budding model. The fifteen-year-old walked in her first fashion show in September. A freshman at Myers Park High School, she, like her sister Catherine, is on the school's tennis team and is most proud of the impromptu fundraiser she helped organize for a friend's dad while he was fighting pancreatic cancer. She and a group of girls held a bake sale at Park Road shopping center. "We made t-shirts and baked everything ourselves...cookies brownies, cupcakes - it took us a whole night and day to bake. It felt really good that I could help her out." Taylor says. The Neilson parents are proud and grateful they have Charlotte as a home base for their outreach, and clearly their children will carry on this tradition of service and caring to their own families some day.

To recommend a neighbor to be featured in *Myers Park Life*, please submit to Cindy Markey at citeditor@n2pub.com.



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