

# Saturday, August 28, 2010



## Smarty Mom: Parker White

By Rachel H

I am happy to introduce you to Greensboro native, Parker White, today! Parker was born and raised here in the Triad and then moved to Washington DC for seven years as she worked in the Senate. Parker is now back in the Triad and stays busy by wearing many different hats!



Parker is first and foremost, wife to Robert, and mom to Avery (age 3) and Perrin (2 months). Parker currently stays at home with her children but has been keeping very busy with a new idea she started called Backpack Beginnings.

You will love learning about Parker and her new charity...

**Parker, please tell us more about Backpack Beginnings.**

BackPack Beginnings directly affects childhood hunger in our county by sending school aged children home with backpacks full of nutritious and kid-friendly food on the weekends during the school year. It is based on The BackPack Program, a national model developed by Feeding America and Second Harvest Food Bank that has been implemented by Second Harvest in many counties in North Carolina – but not in Guilford County. BackPack Beginnings partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank and Guilford Child Development and launched a BackPack program at Wiley Elementary and Shiloh Head Start in January of 2010, feeding 50 and 15 children respectively. This fall we will be in three schools, feeding 100 children total, and hope to branch out to more schools and children soon.

North Carolina ranks number 2 in the nation for the highest rate of food insecure children under the age of 5 (only behind Louisiana) and number 10 in the nation for the highest rate of food insecure children under the age of 18. According to Guilford County School's Nutrition Office, 52.8% of children in our school system are on free or reduced lunches. That is approximately 37,000 children. Childhood hunger causes health problems, creates educational challenges and leads to workforce and job readiness issues. By feeding the hungry children in this program, BackPack Beginnings hopes to eliminate many of these problems and take care of our kids. To learn more, you can visit [www.backpackbeginnings.com/](http://www.backpackbeginnings.com/).

**What gave you the idea to start this program?**

When I moved back to Greensboro, I knew I wanted to do something that made a difference in the community. After having my first child, I also knew that I wanted to do something that benefited children. I had heard of other backpack programs across the nation and called Guilford County School's nutrition office to see if one was in place. I was shocked to hear that there was not an organized program in place here, so I reached out to Second Harvest Food Bank to get one started.

**What are some tips you have for other moms who are starting new businesses/charities while raising a family?**

Make sure you have the full support of your family. I couldn't do this if my husband wasn't there to help me out when I need to get things done or be out of the house.

**How did life in DC compare to the Triad?**

While DC will always be my favorite city, it was a better city for my husband and me when it was just the two of us. Greensboro is a better place for us as a family. The cost of living, lack of traffic and other benefits of a smaller city all contribute to a higher quality of life for our family.

**What do you think is the best kept secret in the Triad?**

Although it is not a secret to locals, those who don't live in the area would be surprised by how many kid friendly options there are here. From the Children's Museum to the Natural Science Center to ArtQuest and the parks, there is something for every age here.

**What is the smartiest way you save money?**

I have saved a lot of money at the grocery store using [www.couponmom.com](http://www.couponmom.com). I also save a lot of money on my children's clothes at [consignment stores and sales](#).

**What is your favorite family activity?**

We love going to the UNC football games as a family. My daughter loves getting her face painted, watching the band and seeing the fireworks.

**Favorite “me-time” activity?**

Reading, girl's night out, quiet time on the couch with no distractions, catching up on sleep

**Favorite place to eat dinner as a family?**

Anything Mexican

**Favorite date night spot?**

When we want to splurge, 1618 is our favorite!

**Favorite book you have read?**

That is hard, because I am in a book club and have loved so many of the books I have read recently. If you are looking for good, easy reads, Emily Giffin's books are wonderful.

**Best place to eat lunch with the kids?**

Yum-Yums, Chick-Fil-A

**Favorite place to shop for children's clothes?**

Bubbles. I find so many boutique brands there for a fraction of the price.

**What is the best birthday party you have attended?**

I have loved planning my daughter's birthday parties. I really get into it and try to be as creative as possible. I have found the website [www.birthdaypartyideas.com](http://www.birthdaypartyideas.com) to be extremely helpful when planning.

**What is your favorite mom's must have item for around the house?**

I have a bag of \$1 activities/crafts that I bought from the dollar store and Michaels, and my daughter can choose one to do each time I am nursing. They include flashcards, necklace kits, water color books, etc.

**Mini-van or SUV?**

SUV- We recently just purchased one off Ebay when we had our second child. It was a nerve-racking experience, but luckily everything worked out and we got a great price.

**Favorite park in the Triad?**

Johnson Park or Bog Garden

**Favorite or most helpful blog you have read on Triad Smarty Pants thus far?**

I love the [day trip articles](#). We are always looking for different things to do on the weekends that aren't too far away.

**Best thing about raising a family in the Triad?**

Besides what I have mentioned in other answers, I love the proximity of the mountains, lakes, and beaches to the Triad.

**I could not live without my...**

list of things to do and calendar. I would be lost without them!

*Parker, not only have you started a fabulous organization, but you are a wealth of information! I learned so many new things from your interview today and I hope our readers did, too!*