

Mighty MIGHT

Bernita Taylor is a force for those in need

BY TYRELL ALBIN
STAFF WRITER
TALBIN@LAWTON-CONSTITUTION.COM

Bernita Taylor helps people rebuild their lives, one step at a time.

Taylor is the director of MIGHT Community Development and Resource Center, a local program that teaches people in dire financial straits to become self-sufficient and rise above the obstacles they face.

MIGHT's office is located on the south side of the old Country Club Heights Elementary School, in a neighborhood in southwest Lawton that has seen better days and will hopefully see them again in the future. The newly renovated building houses MIGHT on the south side and the Saint James Baptist Church on the north side, which is pastored by Taylor's husband, retired Army Col. James Taylor. Taylor is an ordained non-denominational minister herself, and a state-certified behavioral health rehabilitation specialist.

MIGHT is Taylor's passion, her life's mission, and her ministry.

Taylor's desire to help others grew from her own experiences and her faith in God.

She grew up in Lawton, but left home at 16. Taylor said she had four children by the time she was 20. She was living in a small apartment on SW Wiscon-



MICHAEL D. POPE/STAFF

Bernita Taylor, director of MIGHT Community Development and Resource Center, has made it her mission to help families lift themselves out of poverty. MIGHT operates out of the old Country Club Heights Elementary School building, which is also the home of Saint James Baptist Church.

FACES OF SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA

BERNITA TAYLOR

sin Ave. Her first job was as a waitress at Lou Johnson's Cafe.

Taylor said she received food stamps and relied on her tips from work to get her children to and from daycare.

"I never saw those things as a way of life," she said. "I was just

a young girl, very alone and very afraid."

But Taylor always knew she would change her situation.

Years later, she felt a calling to help people in circumstances similar to those she had faced.

Her mentor, the late Linda Williams of Bethlehem Baptist Church, was working with Taylor in Alabaster women's ministry. Williams encouraged Taylor to start MIGHT.

The women began the program out of Williams' office in 2004. Soon it moved to a location in north Lawton, where it operated until 2009.

SEE FACES, 3A