

COMMUNITY

Students volunteer for El Salvador

By John Higgins
Emerald Contributor

About 70 volunteers armed with paint brushes, hammers and hoes contributed time and labor to the community Saturday while raising money for medical projects in El Salvador. The Committee in Solidarity with Central American People organized the work-a-thon, which focused on improving Whiteaker Elementary School and the Chicano Affairs Emergency Shelter.

The event was one of 50 work-a-thons conducted nationally. Organizers said they wanted to emphasize humanitarian aid over military aid to El Salvador by "thinking globally and acting locally."

Volunteers raised money in pledges for the amount of time they worked. The work-a-thon raised nearly \$6,000 in collected and outstanding pledges, said Tracy May, a CISCAP volunteer.

CISCAP plans to send \$5,000 to the Bravo Fund, a project of the Farabundo Liberation Front that has fought a bloody civil war against the Salvadoran government for more than 10 years. The fund provides medical aid for members of the FMLN, captured government soldiers and the surrounding civilian population.

CISCAP will put the remaining \$1,000 toward work-a-thon

expenses, such as bills for event T-shirts and work materials.

Many CISCAP volunteers put in their hours painting the interior of the Chicano Affairs Emergency Shelter, 676 Polk St. The shelter provides temporary housing for up to four Chicano families.

"It feels really good," said Stuart Shulman, a University graduate student. "This is the most good-feeling thing I've done."

Shulman helped organize the painting brigade at the shelter and said students and faculty at the University should involve themselves more often with community problems.

"People should know what's going on in their own backyard," Shulman said. Every fall CISCAP organizes students and community members to raise money for humanitarian projects in El Salvador. Past events have included bike-a-thons and walk-a-thons, but never a work-a-thon.

"I think it's really important to do something. There's a lot in this world that can be done," said Laurie Ewing, a Lane Community College student.

Ewing helped design and paint a colorful mural for the Whiteaker Elementary School cafeteria. Other projects at the school included landscaping,



Photo by Sean Poston
Pat Lambert plants in front of Whiteaker Elementary School as part of CISCAP's weekend work-a-thon.

remodeling and building playground equipment.

"We'll take free labor anytime we can get it," said Paul Randall, the school's principal. He said the Whiteaker community is the poorest area in Eugene and the school relies heavily on volunteers to provide adequate services for the children and the community.

Speakers calls for action to solve nation's problems

By Gerrit Koeppling
Emerald Reporter

The apathetic are the key to reforming our society, said the keynote speaker at the NAACP's annual Freedom Fund Dinner on Saturday at the Eugene Hilton.

Lacy Steele, president of the Seattle branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for the last 19 years, was elected two years ago as an NAACP National Board Member At-Large.

"There are those that say that the people on the far-left or the far-right are the problem," Steele said. "But it's not the people on the left or the right that are the problem, at least we know where they stand. It's those people that sit in the middle and do nothing that are our problem."

Among the estimated 200 people at the \$24.50-a-plate event was Springfield Mayor Bill Morrisette and University President Myles Brand.

Teen-age pregnancy, drug abuse, poverty and racism are all problems plaguing not only the Eugene community, said Steele, but every community in the country.

"These problems are not black problems, not white problems, not red problems and not yellow problems, but they are America's problems," Steele said.

What is needed, Steele said, is for people to become active in their communities. It is not an excuse to rely on past action to justify current inaction, he said.

"Many people will tell you what they did 20 to 30 years ago but you can't just rust on your laurels," Steele said.



Lacy Steele

He challenged each member of the audience to ask themselves, "What have I, not my neighbor, done lately?"

Part of this activism, Steele said, can even take the form of challenging people who tell jokes that are derogatory to minority groups. "We must challenge a lie when we hear it or it will become the truth," Steele said.

Aside from activism, Steele said what is needed is innovative solutions. "If we are going to solve today's problems we need today's solutions," Steele said.

Steele said parents should talk to their children because if parents don't talk to their kids, drug dealers will. Central to talking to children is understanding their language, Steele said.

"Those persons who recruit our children for drugs speak their language," he said. "They listen to the rap records, whereas most of us say that we don't have the time."

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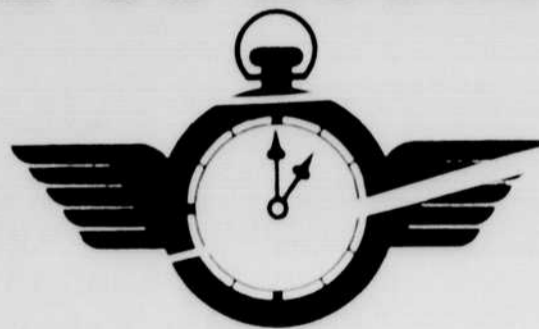
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