Center serves senior citizens

Model Cities Senior Adult Service Center is an operating agency that acts as an outreach service to all senior citizens. The project office is located at 3904 N.E. Union Avenue.

Joil Southwell, Project Director, employs a staff of about ten full-time and over thirty part-time employees, to render services to more than 1400 people daily.

Services to senior adults include providing daily telephone services to sick and shut-in adults, transportation and handyman services and many other services designed to improve the quality of life for elderly citizens in the Model Neighborhood Area.

Services to Model Cities Senior Adults is one of the primary functions of the Senior Adult Service Center. The center's director is Joil Southwell. Over 1400 Senior Adults receive service from the center daily.

STOP petitions

On Monday, March 13, the Sensible Transportation Options for People Executive Committee voted to continue circulation of its motor vehicle gas tax initiative petition to enable fuel tax monies to be used for mass transit purposes. Governor Tom McCall had suggested to STOP that it consider alternative language and file a new petition. STOP officers said that the Governor and other state officials agreed in principle with the aims of the present petition, but felt that technical changes should be made.

After discussions with the Governor and Glenn Jackson, Highway Commission Chairman, STOP decided to continue with the present wording because of time deadlines within which signatures must be gathered. Over 53,000 valid signatures must be filed by July 7, 1972, with the Secretary of State. People interested in circulating petitions can contact Mrs. Stephen Malm, Portland, coordinator for the initiative campaign.

White House reports civil rights progress

Washington, D.C. -- The White House has released a special report citing progress in "civil rights and related social programs."

The report listed forward steps in employment of blacks, education, justice, welfare, minority business, housing and drug abuse.

The report was released during a recent White House news conference. Top Administration blacks participating in the briefing included: Robert J. Brown, Special Assistant to the President; Samuel Jackson, Assistant Secretary of HUD; John Jenkins, Director of the Commerce Department's Office of Minority Business Enterprise; Samuel Pierce, General Counsel, Treasury Department; Samuel Simmons, Assistant Secretary at HUD; and Stanley S. Scott, Assistant to the Director of Communications for the Executive Branch, The White House.

The report listed these highlights of the Administration's civil rights record:

** Federal civilian minority employment increased from 389,251 in 1969 to 390,051 last May, meaning that minority workers hold 19.5 per cent of the Government's nonmilitary jobs. The President has appointed seven black Ambassadors, increased the number of black military officers of general or flag officer rank from two to seven and increased the number of blacks in Government "super-grades" jobs from 63 to nearly 100.

** The percentage of black children in all-black schools nationwide decreased from 40 per cent in 1968 to about 12 cent last fall. Aid to black colleges has more than doubled from the 1969 spending level.

** The Justice Department has increased its staff of attorneys to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars Federal aid to schools that discriminate, from 93 in 1969 to 185 this year. Civil rights reviews to determine compliance with the law are expected to increase from 12,300 in 1969 to 52,000 next year.

** The number of counties not offering food stamps to the poor has been reduced from 440 in January 1969, to nine and the number of persons aided has quadrupled.

** Minority business aid from the Government increased from $200million in 1969 to a budgeted total of $505.8 million for 1973.

** Public housing starts for low and middle income families from 156,000 units in 1969 to an expected total of 566,000 next year. The housing is subsidized by the Federal Government.

** In addition, the report said, drug abuse prevention efforts include a two-thirds spending increase from 1969 to $371 million this year; a special action office has been created for drug abuse prevention and it reports directly to the President, and Veterans Administration drug treatment centers for drug addicted veterans have increased from six to 32.

Scott said that the report, the first of its kind under President Nixon, was meant to counter unjust criticism and "let people know there is concern for all segments of life in this Administration."

PDC awards park contracts

Mitchell/McArthur/Gardner/O'Kane Associates, landscape architects and planning consultants of Portland were awarded a contract for park development in Irving and Alberta Park in the Model Cities area at a meeting of the Portland Development Commission, Monday, March 13.

The contract calls for the consultant to develop a master plan and a first stage construction plan for Irving Park in the Irvington Neighborhood Development Project, and develop a master plan and an overpass design for Alberta Park in the King-Vernon-Sabin Neighborhood Development Project.

A representative of the planning firm, Ken O'Kane, explained some of the first stage construction plans for Irving Park. They would include an additional Little League baseball diamond, both cinder-jogging and paved paths through the park, 90 new light fixtures, playground equipment, a "tot-lot" for pre-schoolers, and new facilities for basketball.

A number of residents of the area expressed their approval of the park project at the meeting. Residents have been active since November in developing plans. The Irving Park Design Committee made a special effort to visit area schools to find out children's ideas for inclusion in the park plan.

O'Kane noted that the present schedule would allow for planning and approvals to meet a May 1, 1972 deadline for the awarding of a construction contract.

The Commissioners were also told at the Monday meeting that authorization from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is expected soon which will allow rehabilitation work to begin in the Boise-Humboldt neighborhood in Portland under the Portland Development Commission's Neighborhood Development Program. Although a budget of $500,000 has already been allocated to the PDC by the federal government, written authorization from HUD to proceed has not been received as yet. This is required before costs can be incurred.

Boise-Humboldt residents have set housing rehabilitation and replacement as their primary objective during the initial stages of their project.

When work begins in the Boise-Humboldt neighborhood it will mean that only the Eliot neighborhood in the Model Cities area will not have started an action program. The Portland Development Commission is working with the residents to develop priorities for improvement in Eliot and bring them under the Neighborhood Development Program.

To date in the Model Cities area, the Neighborhood Development Program, which has been underway for two years, and the recently completed Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project have resulted in the rehabilitation of some 935 homes as well as improvements of streets, alleys, sidewalks, lighting and parks; the development of new parks; additions to school sites, and improvement of other public facilities.

Other long range priorities noted by the residents include improvement of streets and traffic safety; developing of pedestrian walks; improvement of building of community; social service and recreation facilities including parks, rehabilitation of commercial structures and planting of street trees.

What happened to the James?

The Christian Century (Chicago) March 1, 1972
pp. 255-256.

A ruling handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court last June 21 holds that federal agents may be sued if they enter a home unlawfully to search and arrest its occupants. But what constitutes unlawful entry? Many believe that agents must show a warrant before entering a home. But Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. James, Sr., of Portland, Oregon have learned differently. As a result of events that began on January 4, 1971, two of the James children - Charles, Jr., and Cheryl - are serving sentences in federal penal institutions. They were convicted on charges of assaulting federal officers - two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents who had entered their home without showing a warrant.

Appeals were filed on behalf of both young people with the U.S. circuit court of appeals in San Francisco. Charles's appeal was turned down, and he is confined in the youth detention facility at Littleton, Colo., to serve an indeterminate sentence with a six-year maximum. Cheryl's appeal will be heard March 7. What led to the assault charges?

On that January afternoon Mrs. James was at home with 14 of her children. When 11-year-old Timmy ran into the living room shouting, "Mama, the FBI is here!" everyone thought he was joking. But a moment later two white men in civilian clothes entered the room and approached 20-year old Charles, a combat veteran who had been wounded in Vietnam and decorated. He was wanted because he was AWOL from the navy.

The FBI agents did not know the details of Charles's case, nor would they listen when Mrs. James tried to explain. Three months previously Charles had requested and been granted a leave so that he might marry his fiancee before their child was born and be with her at the birth. At the last minute the leave was canceled, but he carried out his plans anyway, leaving the Long Beach naval base and traveling to Portland. There he made no effort at concealment; he rented an apartment and took out a telephone in his own name. Immediately he phoned an officer on his base to make known his whereabouts, explain why he had left, and promise to return as soon as the child was born.

But there were complications. The baby became ill and was kept in the hospital. Charles himself was ill. His parents kept urging him to return to his base, and his father went with him to visit the Portland office of Congresswoman Edith Green to try to straighten things out. Finally, by the first of the year, everything was arranged. His wife and baby were home from the hospital, and he had completed the necessary arrangements to travel to Long Beach the following week.

That was how things stood when the two FBI agents entered the James home on January 4 and refused to talk with Mrs. James. Instead, they walked up to Charles, and agent Bittner said: "Come on, boy, we're taking you." Charles answered, "Don't call me 'boy'." Bittner repeated his exact words, the second time placing emphasis on the word "boy".

At that point, insisted Mrs. James later, trouble could still have been averted: "If they had just let me talk to Charles myself, he would have gone with them without any fuss. I tried to tell them to let us talk to him, and they just wouldn't. They just took over." The two agents, Bittner and Phelps, moved in on Charles to handcuff him, and a scuffle broke out. Charles reached for a lamp, but his mother and two of the girls grabbed it before he could. In the general confusion and panic, the family dog rushed Phelps. David, the 14-year old, tried to pull the dog off, but Phelps misinterpreted the boy's action and secured a stranglehold on him. Shouting to Phelps to release her young brother, 17-year old Cheryl got hold of a rolling pin. The agent maintained the hold and Cheryl hit him over the head. During the melee a bottle was knocked to the floor, and agent Bittner sustained cuts when he fell on the broken glass.

The agents dragged Charles out of the house and took him to Rocky Butte jail, where he was held without bail. Bittner was treated for his cuts, and it was determined that Phelps had suffered a concussion and a broken nose.

The subsequent events were graphically described by Mrs. James to an interviewer who called on her at her home some time later.

"I asked the children to gather around and pray that Charles would not be hurt. But they (the FBI) came back in about 20 minutes or so and it looked like about 20 agents. They jumped down behind their cars and drew their guns toward the house. The neighbors can tell you the agents had guns because they saw this too.

"Some of the other kids said, 'The FBI is back,' and I came to the kitchen door and Martha went to answer the front door. She had just come in from school and didn't know about Charles getting arrested. Martha went to the door and said, 'Mama, the FBI . . .' and that's as far as she got. They slammed the door back against her, and the next thing I knew they threw her against the wall and then down on the floor, and three of them sat on her. She was screaming for me to help her. She said they were pulling her hair and bending her fingers back.

I said, 'You're hurting her. Do you have to do all that?" One of them sneered and said, 'Get that woman away from me.' They picked Martha up and took her out. She was charged with assault and resisting arrest. But they assaulted her.

"They took Martha and Cheryl to Rocky Butte, both of them. I yelled out the door and said, 'They are juveniles.' They claimed they didn't know they were juveniles, but I told them that when they left the door. And they took them both to Rocky Butte. That's the adult jail. I think they took Martha away that same night and took her to the juvenile home. I think Cheryl stayed overnight there, and then she was taken out to Clackamas county and put in a women's jail out there. But she was still considered a juvenile. Martha was kept about four or five days, and they let her go without bail. Cheryl was in jail about three weeks, before there was a bail for her."

Mrs. James reports that the agents refused to speak with her and did not show her a warrant. "I was the only adult in the house," she said, "and I feel that this is really wrong. We have rights. Especially in our home. They said they identified themselves to David, my 14-year old. But I feel they should identify themselves to the head of the house and not to the children.

"I don't think they even had a warrant. We asked about this over and over, and they kept saying they didn't have to have one."

After the trial U.S. Attorney Sidney Lezak told the press: "What's all this about a warrant? If the man's a fugitive and there is probable cause to think he's in the house, a warrant is not needed and is irrelevant." But he conceded that the FBI had not sent Charles a warning and had made no effort to inform themselves of his personal circumstances. They did not know of his communication with an officer in his unit and of his arrangements to return to his base.

Mrs. James stated that FBI agents who testified in court misrepresented what had occurred during the arrests. According to their testimony, Charles hit one of them with a lamp and one had been hit with a bottle. On the second occasion they said Martha has assaulted them when they came in the door.

Said Mrs. James, "I sat and heard them and it made me sick when I heard it. I didn't know that they would do that under oath . . . tell things they knew were absolutely false. They're good liars."

The case against Cheryl has been criticized on a number of points. Joe Morehead, a Portland attorney who represented Martha, maintained that without doubt Cheryl should have been tried in juvenile court. "Even murder cases are tried in state juvenile courts," he said.

Mr. and Mrs. James feel that Cheryl's court-appointed attorney did not provide an adequate defense and that he weakened her case when he persuaded her to waive a preliminary hearing. He withdrew from the case after the trial. The second attorney appointed by the court, Mr. and Mrs. James discovered, was a longtime personal friend of FBI agent Phelps, whom Cheryl was accused of assaulting. When the James es objected, he admitted the friendship and withdrew from the case.

And so, three weeks after her 18th birthday and two weeks after her graduation from high school, Cheryl James began serving an 18-month sentence at the Terminal Island Correctional Institution in San Pedro, Calif. Martha was placed on a three-year probation, but her probation has since been revoked.

Community support has been forthcoming for the young people. A biracial Cheryl James Fund Committee formed by interested citizens, has expressed concern over the "racist, conflict-provoking manner" of the FBI agents and has questioned whether similar tactics would have been used in dealing with a white middle class family.

Mrs. James, who teaches a weekly Bible class and who has participated in church activities in the Albina area of Portland for many years, had this to say:

"I had taught my children to love everybody and to judge people on the merits of who they are and their character and personality. I wanted my children to know that I'm not with people that do wrong. And so I said to the man that was standing there, "You're white people and you have the power, so you can come into our home and do anything you like.' And he said, 'You say such a thing as that in front of your children!' And I said, 'Well, my children are standing here looking at what you're doing in our home.'

"They didn't have respect for me. I was just nobody. They just barged in here and took over. And they talk about communism, but I've read that they do this. They just come in and take a place... I don't have respect for that. We might be black, but we're still people. And we're not dumb. I can't understand how people expect you to have respect for them if they don't have respect for you."

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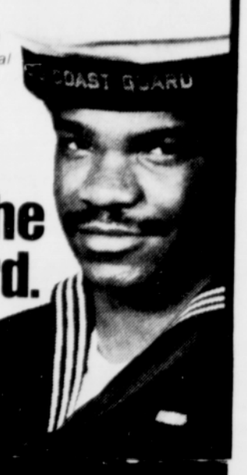

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