

Grants available for community action

By Paul McCoy

What organization is made up of Red, Yellow, Black and white people, has as diverse a social, cultural (sub-cultural), and ethnic mixture, as one might find in this region of the country? Add the fact that as of their spring "gathering" (hint), they awarded 60 grants totalling \$54,980.000 to Pacific Northwest social change organizations. If you haven't guessed yet, let me spoil your fun. The name of this organization is the McKenzie River Gathering or MRG.

The MRG was formed when a group of Northwest activists gathered on the banks of the McKenzie River in 1976. With an endowment of \$500,000.00 dollars, the group's main goal was insight; to create a public fund for social change.

Their funding philosophy is

simple. The MRG's primary purpose is to distribute money to groups and organizations involved with issues concerning society. "We help in any way we can to promote a more democratic, non-violent, and ecologically sound society."

Bridging gaps and linking organizations and groups with similar motives and who are addressing similar issues, are also goals the MRG strive to achieve. It is the group's consensus that by bridging these gaps between various organizations that knowledge can be shared and perspectives broadened. They also lend a hand in helping groups write proposals, in finding additional funds, and evaluate the effectiveness of the various programs.

The MRG particularly supports projects which: 1) promote grass root organizing of women, minorities and low income ex-

ploitation; 2) work against violence, racism, sexism, anti-gay attitudes, and economic exploitation; 3) support the self-determination of Third World people; 4) present cultural and artistic work with social change impact; 6) conduct social change research. These and more are targets for MRG funds.

Portland, Eugene and Seattle each contain branches or caucuses for this resource organization. They are a public foundation under 501.03 of the Oregon code.

Grants to N.E. Portland organizations totalled \$4,200.00 for this funding cycle. The MRG is constantly in search of organizations that fit their criteria and are in search of funds. If you would like to know more about the McKenzie River Gathering and/or how to apply for funds, contact Bonnie Tinker - MRG 19 N.E. Morris, Portland, Ore. 97212 or Phone 249-7229 or 281-4847.



The Urban 4-H Choral Ensemble, under the direction of Ira Mumford, sings at Community Rally

sponsored by The Black United Front. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Government debars Prudential

The Prudential Insurance Co., of America has been debarred from doing business with the federal government or with other companies that have federal contracts, in an order issued by Labor Secretary Ray Marshall.

The debarment is based on Prudential's refusal to provide employee data vital to determining possible race and sex discrimination at its New Jersey headquarters and other facilities.

The order requires that Prudential's current contracts be terminated or suspended, but specifies that this process be carried out in an orderly way to assure protection for persons covered, directly or indirectly, by Prudential insurance policies.

Employment Standards Donald Elisburg said the order removes the company from contract eligibility until it submits employment records, most of them computerized, for its Newark, N. J. corporate office and 99 other facilities in New York and New Jersey.

Elisburg said that the order affirms an earlier ruling by an administrative law judge requiring Prudential to submit all computer tapes containing detailed information on employee and applicant history and payroll records.

In addition, Marshall's order requires Prudential to supply other employment records pre-dating 1976, also needed by the department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), to evaluate the firm's equal job opportunity record.

Elisburg said that Prudential's refusal to submit tapes and related materials has held up -- for over one year -- a review of its employment practices.

He added that the tapes were "the most complete, accurate and economical tool for making a fair judgment of the company's job practices."

Elisburg noted that the other federal contractors routinely supply OFCCP with these types of basic employment records, including actual computer tapes.

He emphasized that OFCCP makes every effort to protect personal employee information from unwarranted disclosure.

As a federal contractor, the company is required not to discriminate because of race, sex, color, religion, national origin and to take positive steps to employ and advance qualified women and minorities.

These requirements are enforced by OFCCP under a 1965 presidential mandate, Executive Order 11246.

According to Elisburg, Prudential provides insurance coverage, particularly health benefits, to employee groups in such agencies as the Justice and Treasury Departments, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

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