

We need family . . .

*Making me and making you
All the world could be filled with
real Unity
If we learn to believe that we're
Family
So let's care about friends
They mean more in the end
'Cause happiness depends on people
We need family*

Grassroot News, N.W.—Hubert and Debra Laws filled the commercial airwaves singing about one of the most important structures of the Black child—The Family.

Jasper Ormond, a community mental health specialist, gave Grassroot News a conceptional framework. "To put the Black family in perspective we would have to go back to a point before coming to America. The Family unit was a very significant part of the African structure and after coming to America that part of our culture was totally disrupted. This disruption of the family left us in a precarious position. However, being the creative people that we are, we tended to improvise and we came up with some innovative functional structure to function as a family and provide us with the support that we needed. The extended family became a significant element of our family structure." The extended family is grandparents, parents, relatives and in some instances, the community as a whole.

Dr. Wade W. Nobles, a research scientist for children at the Westside Community Mental Health Center in California, says the predicament facing the Black family is one of surviving in two worlds, one Black and one white. "The dilemma that the Black family is really faced with is the cultivation or preparation of its children by ensuring the growth and development of their sense of humanness, while simultaneously preparing them to "succeed" in the society."

Lurlene Shamsud-Din, a wife and mother in an extended family, teaches her children to live in the reality of America. "Kids see or hear about a brand name product and want you to buy it. I try to teach my family how commercialized the system is that is making that product. After you buy those Calvin Klein jeans they aren't going to care whether you have anything to eat or not. My children just see the reality of the situation."

"Families with teen-agers have special problems because some of those teen-agers have no respect. I remember getting on the bus and listening to some of these kids talk ignorant. It's got to the point where whenever they saw me coming on the bus they would say to one another, 'Say man, be cool. She will tell our mothers.' I believe if you demand a certain behavior for children, you will get that behavior. The problem I see is that some parents aren't demanding that. The permissiveness and the lack of time is eating away at the family. It's a lot of work raising a family."

Patricia Ryan, principal at Humboldt School, notices an increase in parental involvement in the educational system. "I'm constantly amazed at how astute parents are becoming. They are becoming a lot more aware of how the school runs and are a lot more vocal about whether the decisions are affecting them. They are a lot more prepared now to help their kids and they have



These happy children reflect the security provided by the care and attention of an extended family.



JASPER ORMAND
(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

to be—they better be."

Dr. Darrell Millner, Associate Professor of Black Studies at Portland State University, adds that the economic struggle of the Black family could chip away at this concern. "Because of the struggle to survive the concern over public education could become neglected. Public education has to have something at home to counter-act some of the negative images that are received by the child. There are many things that have to be corrected and this neglect wouldn't be intentional."

Among the conceptional problems in looking at the Black family of the '80s as they relate to the child is utilizing Euro-American standards. Ormond explains: "When we compare a Black family to a European family, specifically as stated in the Moynihan report, it's not a fair point of assessment because of our historical condition. We are uniquely different. So we cannot be compared and the things that are different to be considered negative. As a family unit we had to be our own creative selves to meet the social demands in very oppressive conditions that we have been forced to live under." The Moynihan report perpetuated the basic stereotype of the Black family as a broken one and a matriarchal one (woman rules family). This view is just blaming the victim.

Ormond concludes, "We are still in the position where we are not allowed the opportunity economically, socially and politically to assert our full potential. And that's a very frustrating pressure. Young families

are having to face extreme economic pressure and that creates extreme frustration. This makes it very difficult at times to provide the nutrients and the support that we need to provide our children, because in many cases both mother and father have to work—sometimes a job-and-a-half and that is necessary for survival. At the same time the children aren't provided with a lot of intimate nutrients that they need. If our family network is in a different part of the country or we have put grand-

ma away, we are in a very critical position as far as our children are concerned.

"If those pressures are such then we have to make sure that we look into those natural networks in our community to fill those voids. This network is school, church, and community. We have to maintain an awareness that the extended family is a natural part of our history."

If our children are to survive we as adults must provide them with a family for backbone, knowledge and comfort.

Welcome Home Concert Peggy Houston Shivers

Peggy Houston Shivers, (soprano), in concert, Sunday, October 18, 1981, at 4 pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 N.E. Hancock.

If you or your organization would like your name to appear as a patron in the concert program or purchase tickets, please contact Mrs. L. Cash Anderson (Mrs. Shivers' mother) at 281-9327, or Mrs. Lenora C. Morris at 281-7139. The cost for businesses or organizations is \$5.00. The cost for single name listings is \$2.00. Deadline for patrons list is September 30, 1981.

To order your tickets or submit patrons ad and payment by mail, write L. C. Morris, Morris Enterprises, P.O. Box 11234, Portland, OR 97211. Please make all checks payable to Morris Enterprises. Tickets on sale at G.I. Joe's, 8900 N. Vancouver; Stevens & Son Jewelers, Lloyd Center. Ticket cost: \$10 per person.

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