

METROPOLITAN



Health-Help Center staff: Mary Lou Miller, Cybel Campbell, Mary Anderson, Caroline Moore, Anya Spielberg and Billie Huntworth provide free health service to community residents. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Providing health for the people

Grassroot News, N.W.—The economics of unemployment have left many families in Portland without medical coverage. What are they to do if a medical concern arises? The answer is found on 4842 N.E. 8th. This house contains the Health Help Center. Counseling coordinator Billie Huntworth explains: "Health Help Center has a family service unit that provides counselling services and advocacy for people who have a variety of problems and stresses in their lives." The center started six years ago with a handful of volunteers who operated the center only in the evenings. It expanded to 5 days a week with a volunteer staff of two hundred. "Referrals come from all over. Word of mouth, medical clinics and other agencies who are unable to help a patient at little or no cost."

According to Ms. Huntworth stress is the major ailment affecting many of their patients. "This stress is related to the uncertainty of the times. Many of the people who come to us are marginally employed or unemployed. If they are having difficulties with their jobs many are unable to quit because the chances of finding a new job are remote. People call up and say that things are really getting tough in our family. The breadwinner is unemployed and we don't know how to handle it. Our answer is a very practical one. We not only help in handling stress but in finding employment."

Mrs. Huntworth says that the fear of family violence is spreading.

"Also people are afraid of what they may have to do to survive. We worked with people who have held up stores and who have had run-ins with the law because they were trying to provide for their families. There is a desperation about the present and uncertainty about the future."

Anya Spielberg, the medical services coordinator, elaborates on the physical problems of clients who come to the Health Help Center. "We provide emergency treatment and if it's a chronic case we work on more long-term treatment. We see a lot of stress-related problems such as hypertension. This increase in blood pressure can lead to all sorts of physical disorders. There are also people who have malnutrition because they don't have the resources for a balanced diet. Child abuse is on the rise along with sleeplessness and body aches. The greatest thing that I see with the recession is that people are waiting longer before they approach a health care service because of the fear it would cost money. When they realize that their illness has gotten so bad where they may not be around next week. The illnesses that people come in with are a lot more severe."

The people most vulnerable to the effects of the recession are the low-income senior citizens. Mary Anderson of the Health Help Center talks about their solution. "We developed a network of programs to identify and help those seniors in

times of crisis. There's a project called 'Cold Connection' which matches a vulnerable senior with a volunteer."

The director, Mary Lou Miller, says that the Center can handle some of the caseload from other agencies which are folding. "In the last six months our health patients have doubled and our counselling has tripled." The bulk of the Health Help Center resources is from volunteer doctors, nurse practitioners and counselors. The Center is a member of the St. Andrews Family of Community Services.

"I'm angry," says Mary Anderson about the cutbacks in health programs that would impact the Health Help Center disproportionately. "We're dealing with people who have nowhere else to turn. We see our whole society failing. I grew up when the government said it provided for the common good. We're seeing that whole thing change. It makes me mad and I say that I'm going to stick in here."

Anya Spielberg sees the other side of the coin. "We also see the spirit of over 200 volunteers. We have doctors who have been with the center for eight years. They want an outlet for community service. It's real high energy living around all this spirit."

Billie Huntworth receives a gift from the people they serve. "It is very meaningful to see people want to make their life work. It's a reward in itself."

Students earn service awards

Chai Vang and Ana Borrell, Roosevelt students who came to the United States as refugees with their parents, have been chosen Student Volunteers of the Year by Bess Kaiser Hospital. Chosen Adult Volunteer of the Year was Cora Lou DiPietro of Northeast Portland, who has given 4,700 hours of volunteer service to the hospital.

Chai, from Laos, and Ana, from Cuba, received awards from Betty Perkins, director of volunteers, at a recent ceremony. Attending the ceremony were Andy Pienovi, career education coordinator, and George Galati, vice-principal of Roosevelt High School.

The two student award-winners were chosen from Portland-area students who work as volunteers after school or on weekends, receiving credit from their schools.

Chai and Ana, in addition to routine duties performed by volunteers, have been helpful in interpreting in Laotian and Spanish for hospital patients.

Long-service pins for 4,000 volunteer hours were given to Claire Inglesby, North Portland, and Cora Lou DiPietro of Northeast Portland. Lois Hughes of Cedar Hills and Jean Rider of Overlook neighborhood received 3,000-hour pins.

Police complaints increase

by Harris Levon McRae

There has been quite an increase over the last few weeks of people complaining about harassment from the police.

Lorraine Olive was stopped in her car by Portland police while driving some friends home, and a short time later found herself regaining consciousness in a Portland jail cell.

She was driving north on Union Avenue when she pulled over to let a friend who was riding with her out of the car. Ms. Olive then drove on and was stopped by the Portland police just past Union Avenue and Prescott.

Ms. Olive said that when she asked the officers why they had stopped her they said, "Because we felt like it." Ms. Olive went on to say that the police then searched her car for weapons. "I got out of the car protesting that my rights were being violated and I was told to get back in the car."

The officers then issued Ms. Olive a traffic citation for not having liability insurance. "By this time I was so mad I just tore the ticket up."

Olive was ordered out of the car by police and told that she was under arrest for littering.

"I was dragged from the car," Ms. Olive said. "They roughed me up and took me downtown. I blacked out before I got upstairs to jail. I woke up in a jail cell."

Ms. Olive called a girlfriend to tell her what was happening to her, and her ordeal continued.

"I was on the phone when the officer who arrested me came in and snatched the phone. He then threw me against a wall, splitting my head open."

A while later Ms. Olive was taken to Portland Adventist Hospital where the attending physician refused to take pictures or X-rays of the bruises. "He just stitched up my head and refused to give me any pain medication," Ms. Olive said.

She was then taken back to jail and subsequently released.

According to the Portland Police report Ms. Olive refused to get out of her car when she was told that she was under arrest for mutilation of a traffic citation and offensive littering. The officer started pulling Ms. Olive from the car and she resisted arrest kneeling him in the groin.

By the time the officer got Ms. Olive out of the car she was kicking and screaming for help. The door of the police car was opened and Ms. Olive started to get in but got back up complaining of mistreatment. After advising her to be seated three or four times, the officer placed his left hand in Ms. Olive's stomach, applying pressure where she bent forward into the car. She continued to verbally abuse the officers, the police report said.

Lonnie Nettles is another person who tells of a gruesome run-in with the police. She was riding to work last month in a car driven by her friend Jeffrey Ca-sin. They had just come off of Interstate 405, just south of downtown Portland, when they were stopped by Beaverton police.

Ca-sin pulled over and suddenly there were five other police cars on the scene. They were ordered out of the car by gun point. "One of them was pointing a gun right at the windshield of the car. I got out screaming in fear for my life. One of the officers re-aimed his gun and told me to 'shut up,'" Ms. Nettles said.

Ms. Nettles and Ca-sin were made to lie face down in the snow with their hands cuffed behind their backs.

"I lifted my head up and one of the officers ordered me to 'get your face back down in the snow,'" Ms. Nettles added. "Then my hand was hurt badly as one of them tried to pick me up out of the snow by the handcuffs."

It was only after Nettles and Ca-sin were placed inside of separate police cars that they were told they were suspected of riding in a stolen car.

"Jeffrey's former girlfriend had

reported the car stolen, even though he had purchased the car," Ms. Nettles said.

Eye-witnesses confirmed Ms. Nettles' story.

Ms. Nettles and Ca-sin were taken downtown to a "holding room" in the detective division of the Portland Police Bureau. Ms. Nettles tried to convince police officers that she was hurt and alleges that she spent two hours in a cell dripping wet with the handcuffs still on. Eventually both Ms. Nettles and Ca-sin were allowed to leave. Neither was charged with a crime at the time.

The Portland police report does not go into great detail about the stopping of Ms. Nettles and Ca-sin. It says only that they stopped a stolen vehicle and ordered the driver and passenger out of the vehicle. Both were handcuffed and transported to the Portland Police Department, the police report said.

In another incident that is hard to understand, Frank Gaston Jr. and his friend Larry Jones were stopped for speeding by Portland police officers at NE 23rd and Alberta. Gaston was found to be driving with a suspended license.

As the police were issuing Gaston his citation, passing drivers were blowing their horns and yelling out of windows.

"The officers were yelling back at the cars. A car would go by honking and they would yell, 'Go screw yourself,'" Gaston said.

After Gaston was given the citation, the police told him it was all right if Larry Jones drove his car home for him.

"Instead of checking Larry's license before he started driving, they waited until he got two blocks away and then they stopped him," Gaston said. "Then they gave him a ticket for driving without a license."

The Portland Police report says that Gaston was stopped for speeding and was found to be driving with a suspended license. Jones was not (Please turn to page 5 column 3)



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