

METROPOLITAN

Project links elderly, volunteers

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—Assimilation into Anglo-American life has created problems for the Black extended family.

There was a time once when the elder family members could depend on the younger family members for assistance in their golden years. But urban life has chipped away at this tradition.

The crisis in urban Black family life has created the need for volunteers to help keep the elderly out of nursing homes. Nancy Young, director of Project Linkage, is sending out an S.O.S. for volunteers who live in inner N.E. Portland.

Project Linkage is an organization which provides direct services to senior citizens in the Portland area. Young said, "The idea is neighbor helping neighbor."

"A person living next door is not going to tell you that they are having a hard time. We had a woman who had not had garbage services in two years. She did not want her landlord, who was living next door, to find out that she couldn't afford it."

Project Linkage not only provides services to those who call their office, but they also provide volunteers to other public and private agencies. Young said, "There may be times when an agency has a delay in their services or the senior citizen cannot afford it."

The elderly are between a rock and a hard place in terms of paying

for services like housekeeping medical care and yardwork. Many may need some form of services but they are reluctant to apply for welfare because they could lose their homes.

One of the problems encountered by the elderly is isolation. Young said, "I had a call from a 92-year-old woman who said the notion of living to 100 is overrated. Her children, husband and friends had all died." Young also said that poor health sometimes causes the elderly to lose their mobility, thus increasing isolation.

Another problem for the urban elderly can be their own family members. An example of this hidden abuse is tying your grandmother to her bed during the day while you are at work so she won't roam around. Another example is stealing social security checks. Project Linkage is trying to solve these problems by providing volunteers who will visit with the elderly and provide transportation to the bank.

"We need to become more aware of our neighbors. We need to interconnect the Northeast area. We are an example of people working together to help people."

One-third of their clients are Black, yet Project Linkage has only one Black volunteer. Young strongly urges concerned citizens of inner Northeast to call 249-8215 and volunteer. After all, if you are lucky you are going to get old someday, too.



Project Linkage, located at 2728 N.E. 34th, provides volunteers to aid elderly Portland residents. (Photo: Ricahrd J. Brown)

Paul Knauls, sales representative, stands between a 1929 model-A replica (not for sale) and a 1984 Thunderbird (for sale now at Lynn Kirby Coliseum Ford).

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Kids enjoy a variety of pre-school activities at the Portland Community College Sylvania cooperative. A similar center will open at the PCC Cascade Campus January 3rd.

PCC childcare opens

A cooperative child care center for three- to six-year-olds opens Tuesday, January 3, in the basement of Piedmont Friends Church, 5736 N. Albina, to accommodate Portland Community College students with children.

The center provides four hours of care each day for parents willing to work four hours per week and attend a monthly parent meeting. Cost beyond the time involvement is \$15 per family per month.

"This center will have a dual purpose," said Stephanie Sussman, the college's cooperative day care specialist. We will not only provide preschool curriculum for the children, but we'll educate parents in ways to work with children."

Instructor at the center will be Ginny Zeller who has used her elementary education degree from the State University of New York in Cortland teaching kindergarten in New York and for preschool/head-start programs in Portland.

Zeller has been preparing the church basement for the school site and indicated there will be an indoor recreational area, building block corner, art activities, music, drama, mathematics, science exploration and cooking. "Part of the time the activities are structured and part of the time the children choose what they want to do," she explained.

The experience for parents, according to Zeller, will provide opportunities to observe their own child interacting with others as well as strengthening communication skills with their own children.

As a side benefit Zeller said the parents will learn about child development and nutrition.

The cooperative, designed to accommodate students at the PCC Cascade Campus, exchanged the space availability at the church for three of the children's slots. Zeller said applications are being taken from nonstudents, but student applicants will have preference.

The quarters in the church will accommodate 15 children per hour and Sussman said that means a total of 35 students in the hours from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center will be open only when the college is in session.

"The most unique thing about this arrangement," Sussman said, "is the use of the church." She indicated they have a strong background in this arrangement, because they already run a program called "Friends for Kids," which is an after-school care center.

Model for the cooperative venture is one started at the PCC Sylvania Campus four years ago. Other community colleges across the nation have already duplicated the program offered at Sylvania, according to Sussman.

Registrations are now being taken by either Zeller at 283-2541 ext. 372 or Sussman at 244-6111 ext 473.

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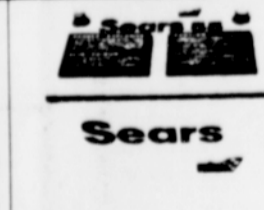
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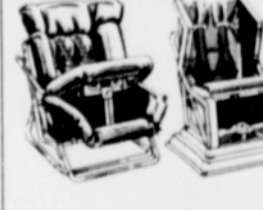
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