

Program teaches job skills to young men

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—For many inner-city pre-teen males, summertime means idle time. The Christian Brotherhood Association decided last summer to transfer this idle time into productive time by forming the Youth Development Enterprise.

John Olive, coordinator of YDE, defined the program as a non-profit educational organization to help young males earn extra money by assisting businesses and homeowners throughout Northeast Portland.

This assistance takes on many forms. The youth utilizes elbow grease and energy performing yard work for senior citizens, cleaning lots and doing on-the-spot auto wax and detail services.

"We also have an educational component to the YDE. We market and sell nutritious drinks—Nutri-Whey Cocoa drink. It's different from candy because we emphasize health while teaching simple business principles," he explained.

Olive said these principles teach basic responsibilities such as showing up on time for a job and learning to help others. Their clients include Farmer John Fast Food, a number of auto body shops and senior citizens.

"We clean lots, mow lawns, clean gutters and paint," Olive added.

Currently, there are between 7 to 10 youth employed in YDE. Their income fluctuates from week to week. The least amount was two dollars per youth; the most was twenty.

Olive stated that personal finance is also taught. "They each have set up a savings account and most times, they beat me to the bank to make their deposits."

He sees YDE as serving many roles in the young men's lives. "At that age, they cannot find a job. We

create one for them. Also, we are actively putting a dent in the juvenile delinquency rate by providing them with proper motivation which leads to positive things."

Another role is the "Big Brother" image. "We have men helping younger men by providing a role model to counteract the negative ones in the street. We are building our youth of today and instilling within them hope and encouragement that they will need to meet tomorrow's challenges."

YDE is located at the Northeast Business Center and Olive welcomes inquiries at 249-0648.



Members of Youth Development Enterprise clean up the lot at Farmer John's Fast Food. The program teaches job skills while helping the community. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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Helping for health

by Robert Lothian

"Client 'F': Evicted from apartment. No where to live. Medical problems prevent her from keeping a job. Cut from welfare when son was institutionalized for behavior problems. Was victim of domestic violence."

This woman desperately needed professional counseling, but she couldn't afford the up to \$70-an-hour which those services often cost. She came, instead, to the quaint little counseling center in a house near St. Andrew's Catholic Church—the Health Help Family Services Unit at 4846 N.E. 8th.

Health Help draws from a list of 60 professional counselors who volunteer to counsel indigent clients many of whom have emotional problems linked with poverty.

Clients contribute what they can for the counseling, or they donate services like mowing the lawn or fixing the gutters.

Simeon, 32, said that over 400 clients were counseled at Health Help in 1983. The waiting list is now three months long. "We have more clients than we are able to deal with," she said.

Most clients are on "the survival end of the scale," said Simeon. Feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem are common. "They have been downtrodden. The control is everywhere else but where they are," she said.

Counseling the client "to take responsibility for the things that occur in their lives," and "just being supportive" are two of the most valuable things a counselor can do, she said. "What we try and do is help their emotional state catch up to where their intellect says they should be."

With the assistance of Health Help counselors, Client 'F' has "stabilized," said Simeon. Her welfare has been reinstated and she now has a home, but she still needs long term counseling to "help clear the fog," as Simeon puts it.

Simeon received an M.A. in psychology from Pepperdine University. She leaves Health Help in August for a job as a developmental disabilities counselor in Los Angeles. Her accomplishments at Health Help include starting a women's group and coordinating with Project Luck to "hit the streets" and counsel teenage prostitutes. About 80% of female counseling clients at Health Help have emotional problems stemming from physical abuse by men, she said.

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