

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume XVII, Number 19,

March 18, 1987

25¢

Police Aware of CRIPS in Northeast Portland

by Jerry Garner

In recent weeks, there have been persistent rumors regarding a Los Angeles street gang called the CRIPS. Residents living in Northeast Portland have alleged that CRIPS members are operating in their neighborhoods, selling drugs, and committing criminal acts. A Northeast man who was shot recently claims that his assailant told him that he was a CRIPS.

The CRIPS are a predominantly Black gang operating in South-Central Los Angeles. According to Los Angeles officials there are 100 CRIPS gangs, with some 15,000 members. CRIPS members are engaged in a variety of crimes, ranging from drug trafficking to murder. There is a gang-related murder in Los Angeles everyday.

Officer Jay Drum, public information officer for the Portland Police Bureau, said the Bureau is aware of the presence of CRIPS in Northeast Portland. However, Drum said there is no evidence that CRIPS are taking over North and Northeast Portland. "There maybe 6 to 12 CRIPS members in Portland. We are aware of the CRIPS and have been receiving information on the gang from the Los Angeles Youth Gang Task Force. From the information that has been provided to us, we know that the gang is involved in establishing drug houses in depressed areas of Los Angeles and has been linked to numerous crimes including murder."

Drum said part of the perceived CRIPS crisis can be blamed on the media and the public. He was referring to TV reports by local stations alleging that CRIPS members are actively involved in criminal activities in Northeast. Furthermore, Drum said individuals contribute to the CRIPS hysteria by claiming they're members, when in fact they're not, and when individuals report to the police that they were the victims of a crime by a CRIPS.

"For instance, during a neighborhood meeting on crime, one lady said her son was a CRIPS. Both the woman and her son are white. As you know, CRIPS are a predominantly Black gang. As far as people being victimized by CRIPS members, or their involvement in drug dealing, the Portland Police Bureau does not have any concrete evidence to substantiate the above. "When the Bureau obtains evidence indicating that CRIPS are involved in criminal activities, I can assure the public that the Portland Police Bureau will be there to enforce the law," Drum said.

Drum's views are similar to those of Chief Matt Lockett of the Portland School Police. There have been rumors that CRIPS members are causing disturbances and dealing drugs in Northeast schools. Lockett said the school police haven't encountered any problems with CRIPS members. He said the school police investigate all rumors regarding CRIPS activities.

Lockett said he has alerted school administrators, teachers, and staff personnel to be on the look out for CRIPS members. He said, "There are students in the school system and administrators who will not allow a handful of gang members to tell them what to do. I know the school police won't."

In an attempt to educate the public concerning the actual threat CRIPS



Portland police move in on an apartment alleged to be occupied by CRIPS.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

members pose to the community, Northeast officials are embarking on an ambitious public information campaign. Sharon McCormick, coordinator of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, said her office is receiving calls from parents who are concerned about the seriousness of the CRIPS problem. Some ask if it is safe for their kids to wear red to school. (Red is

the color of a rival gang called the Bloods in Los Angeles.) McCormick said there is a high level of fear in the community.

To combat fear in the community about the CRIPS and CRIPS imitators, McCormick said neighborhood officials will sponsor a symposium on CRIPS in the future.

DMAC Urges School Board To Implement Home Work Program

by Jerry Garner

The Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee (DMAC) recommended to the Portland School Board that they develop and implement a daily "home work card" that would be sent to the parents of students enrolled at Harriet Tubman Middle School so class assignments can be monitored. The recommendation was presented by DMAC to the school board during DMAC mid-year report to the board.

The report said such a system will provide information regarding the specific night's homework that had been assigned. In addition, the report called for establishing a strong homeroom setting where the emphasis will center around being a "friend to kids". Under the plan, approximately 15 to 18 students would be in a classroom setting for a 30 minute period. Teachers would primarily work to develop self-esteem with Tubman students.

DMAC praised the school district for making progress in the area of multi-ethnic/multi-cultural curriculum, for its revision of the assessment process as it relates to placement of children in special education, and for expansion of teen health centers in the school district.

DMAC said they've continued to follow the reduction of special education students in terms of the number of students entering and exiting from special education. The DMAC was supportive and impressed with the district's development of the teen health centers. The health centers offer a variety of health services to enrolled students at the schools which house the health centers.

However, the DMAC voiced their concerns about the over representation of African American students in both major and minor categories regarding suspensions. African American students comprise 15 percent of the district's student population but represent 28 percent of all minor suspensions and 45 percent of major suspensions.

Halim Rahsaan, chairman of DMAC and a member of the Black United Front, blames the high number of Black students requiring discipline on the system. "Dr. Prophet, Portland School Superintendent, said that a good education program will eliminate discipline problems."

Ronnie Herndon, co-chairman of the Black United Front, voiced his concerns to the school board regarding the huge achievement gap between students in affluent neighborhoods and those who go to school in poorer areas. Herndon told the board that African American children in Portland who attend inner-city schools, scored, on the average, lower on basic skills test in the 1985-86 academic year than they did in 1980-81. He blames the disparity on the school board for operating a two-school system, one for the rich and one for the poor.

Superintendent Prophet responded to Herndon's criticism, saying that Herndon doesn't have a monopoly when it comes to educating Black children. He said the Portland School District is aware of the achievement gap and has taken steps to reduce it.



Ron Herndon addressed the Portland School Board Thursday, Mar.

12, following the DMAC report.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

"The achievement gap is a result of the deprived background of the student and because of the failure of the schools, the community, social service agencies, and the student's family to provide excellent education and support for these children," Prophet said.

Herndon said the gap can be closed if the district employs educators who are qualified to teach children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. He also recommended that the district prevent teachers from

working in the district who believed that economically deprived students do poorly in school.

In its report to the school board, the DMAC recommended that the district use updated methods to assist special education students in making the transition to regular classrooms, seek parents advice in hiring of staff at Tubman Middle School, and provide cultural awareness training for district personnel.