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Child Care Extraordinaire

by Leon Harris

"We have a 4 year old that has Sickle Cell Anemia. Sometimes she comes to my desk and just wants me to hold her. Sometimes she gets to feeling better and wants to go back to her class. Other times I just cuddle and rock her to sleep in my desk chair."

These are the words of Evelyn Collins, owner/operator of the Grace Collins Memorial Child Care Center, who has devoted much of her life to caring for kids and has a special place reserved for them in her heart.

The Center, located at 128 N.E. Russell in N.E. Portland, is named after Evelyn's mother, Grace, also a lover of children, who left a small legacy enabling the building to be purchased some 30 years ago.

Evelyn and her mother moved to Portland from Washington, D.C., some 30 years ago due to her mother's failing health. They began conducting bible classes in their home in Portland, and, as a result of babysitting-related attendance problems, got started in the day care business.

The beehive of activity exhibited by both staff and children lends credence to a much-publicized community endorsement of the Center's operation.

"This is my family," claims Mrs. Collins as she surveys the lunch period crowd of 46 toddlers. "I love what I am doing and am inspired by my belief and trust in God."

The Center caters to infants as young as 6 weeks to youth up to 11 years old, mostly from the Latch Key Program, before and after school year round.

The Center's activities range from infant care to a well-planned curriculum focusing primarily on child development. For instance, 3 year olds are taught to write the entire alphabet and numbers up to 50; 4 year olds are taught addition and subtraction.

Open 5 days weekly (Monday through Friday) from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Grace Memorial Center accepts children of unemployed parents on an interim basis until parents find employment.

The 86 capacity Center assesses fees based upon income



Evelyn Collins — Founder, Grace Collins Memorial Center.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

and caters mostly to low-income families due to the area.

"When my mother passed in 1970 at the age of 90, she left a small legacy which helped to secure this site. I don't look at the profit motive, which is absolutely minimal. I look at the

much needed service that is being provided, and it is from that I get my rewards," she states.

This week, the Center will commemorate 35 years in the day care business. The community is rooting for 35 more.

Social Security Discriminates Against Blacks

The Social Security system is causing a massive transfer of wealth from blacks to whites, according to a study by the National Center for Policy Analysis.

The study says black and white workers who earn the same wages pay identical Social Security taxes. Yet black workers will receive far less in Social Security benefits. For example:

- A white male entering the labor market today can expect to receive 74 percent more in Social Security retirement benefits and 47 percent more in Medicare benefits than a black male earning the same wage.
- A white working couple can expect to receive about 35 percent more in retirement and Medicare benefits than a black working couple.

The reason for these differences is that blacks have shorter lifespans than whites. "In any given year a black male worker is about twice as likely to die as a white male worker," said John Goodman, President of the NCPA. "Among children born today, only 58 percent of black males and only 75 percent of black females are expected to reach the age of 65," he said.

The Social Security payroll tax currently is 14.3 percent of workers' incomes. It finances Social Security retirement, survivors and disability benefits and Medicare benefits. According to the study,

- A single black male, earning the median income, can expect to receive \$27,743 in total benefits, measured in 1986 prices.
- By contrast, a white male with identical wages can expect



Ray Leary (L) addresses questions at a press conference held last week. Leary will act as interim president of the Urban League of Portland while a search is conducted. Herb Cawthorne, present president, has taken the challenge of leading the Urban League of

San Diego starting in August. (L-R) Leary; Cawthorne; Avel Gordly, who will head the search committee; and Linda Rasmussen, Chairperson of the board of the Portland Urban League.

Photo by Richard J. Brown

\$40,610 in benefits—about 50 percent more than his black counterpart.

- Among working couples earning the median incomes for male and female workers, white families can expect \$81,955 in benefits compared to only \$67,729 for black families.

"Blacks are over-represented among those of taxpaying age and underrepresented among Social Security beneficiaries," said Goodman. According to the study,

- More than 70 percent of all black families pay more in Social Security taxes than they do in income taxes.
- Although about 12 percent of the population is black, only 8 percent of the elderly are black.

According to Goodman, "Social Security combined with the

federal welfare system is hitting low-income, black families with a double whammy. To the degree that the welfare system succeeds in encouraging black couples with children not to get married, they will lose between \$27,000 and \$37,000 in reduced Social Security benefits," he said.

"The effects of the welfare state are devastating for blacks in terms of the loss of Social Security benefits," said Goodman. "In fact, the treatment of the two races by Social Security is so different, the very constitutionality of the system may be questioned," he said.

The NCPA study was based on mortality tables prepared by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics and on forecasts prepared by the Social Security Administration.