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tion of achievement that more than 90 percent of the students earn in some top New York schools. "Taft was near the top of every negative list the city produced," Principal Warren remembered. "It had one of the highest drop-out rates, just about the lowest attendance and achievement rates, nearly the highest suspension rate. The school had a very bad reputation. I had kids coming into my office with tears in their eyes, saying, 'We don't think we're that bad.' I said, 'Let's prove it.'"

They did-and Warren is proud of the fact that he never used bullhorns or baseball bats or any of the other flamboyant devices that have been glorified in the media in recent years. "you can't intimidate people into learning," he said. "you can't use a baseball bat and say, 'Hey, you:Learn.' you have to serve as a positive role model."

There are few better role models than Jimmie Warren, who lives north of the Bronx with his wife, Freda, and their two sons. He was raised in Harlem. He worked his way through college-acquiring a bachelor's degree from Long Island University and a master's from City College of New York.(He is now earning a doctorate at Columbia.) By his own account, he was the only kid in his neighborhood to make it to college-and many of his friends ended up dead or in jail. Still, kids at Taft had life rougher than he ever knew.

"I was shocked," he said. "I had a teacher complain to me about one student who was not doing his homework.I said, 'Bring him in. I'll read him the riot act.' They brought him in, and I said, 'James, I want you to bring your mother in.' He said, 'I can't. She's a drug addict. The courts took me away from her.' I said, 'Okay, bring your father.' He said, 'My father's a fugitive. I haven't seen him in four years.' I said, 'Who are you living with?' He said, 'I was living with my aunt. She threw me out.' Warren worked with a social worker to find the boy a foster home, and the new principal realized the kind of challenge he was facing.

Instead of a quick, glitzy solution, Warren developed a series of answers to Taft's many problems. A child in danger of dropping out would be enrolled in the Adopt-a-Student

program, in which faculty members-Warren included-invited kids to their homes, called them on weekends and during vacation, and constantly encouraged them to keep trying. There was a program for pregnant girls, another for kids with low reading scores. Older students who had amassed a few credits entered an in-school GED diploma program. Kids with high absenteeism rates were enrolled in special after-school makeup classes that enabled them to get back in step with their classmates. Warren added extra periods of biology, math and chemistry to help his students do better on standardized tests-and teachers at Taft willingly volunteered their time. "I wanted those teachers to think that their middle name was Taft," Warren recalled with a smile.

The results were startling. The school now has a parents' association and active community support. Eleven percent of the graduates now get Regents diplomas, and 80 percent go on to some form of higher education. "Don't get me wrong," Warren said. "We didn't solve all the problems at Taft. The dropout rate is still too high; the attendance rate is still too low. But we made some dents in the problems." with Taft on the road to recovery, New York City decided it needed Warren in another tough school.

Out in the front hall at Monroe, the kids scurried past in a class change. You could spot every type you ever knew in high school-the dreamers, the intellectuals, the wise guys, the jocks. They passed by a display of photographs of famous Monroe graduates: Regina Resnik, the Metropolitan Opera star, is there; so is Leon Lederman, who last year won the Nobel Prize in Physics. But nobody has updated the list of 20 years or so since the school's demographics changed and the students' faces became largely black and brown. Jimmie Warren says he plans to make that honor roll current, finding distinguished recent alumni to recognize.

"When I see a kid walk through the door at Monroe," this principal says, he sees the makings of another Nobel Prize-winner. "These kids have the potential. All they need is proper encouragement." Jimmie Warren is going to make sure they get it.

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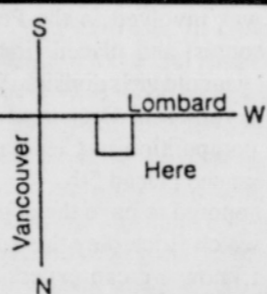
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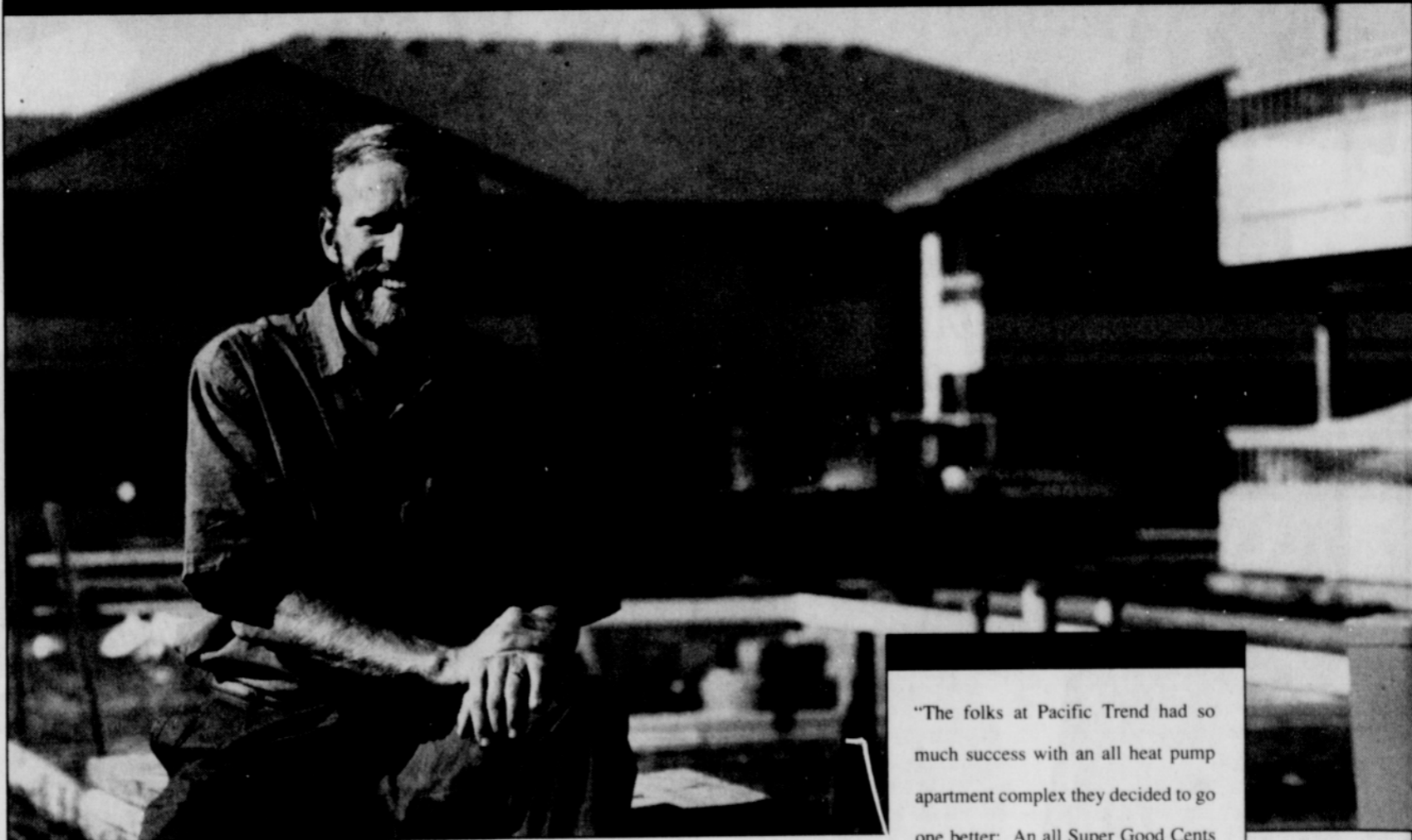
The Portland Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, 3833 N.E. Killingsworth Street, Portland, OR 97211, needs volunteers for September WALKATHON. Please sign up before 9/22/89. The Walkathon will take place at Whitaker Middle School Track from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. Contact Rochelle McElroy at 646-2159 or Cynthia Smith at the office 249-1366. Lend a Helping Hand... JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST SICKLE CELL ANEMIA!

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