

E d u c a t i o n

Rallying Around Education



Teach For America Week, a nationwide event that called upon successful American's from a variety of fields to spend an hour sharing their knowledge and experience with urban and rural public school students, gains support from Rep. Liois Stokes of Ohio.

Minority Enrollment Drops

The number of minorities entering U.S. medical schools dropped this year, most drastically in states affected by affirmative-action roll-backs.

The Association of American Medical Colleges released a study Saturday of the nation's 125 accredited medical schools that showed an 11 percent drop in blacks, American Indians, Mexican-Americans, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans applying to medical schools. In addition, 6.8 percent fewer of those minority students were accepted for 1997 than in 1996.

Some educators fear the figures show that actions of a federal court in Texas and the voters of California to

end educational preferences for minorities are echoing through the nation. Minorities are discouraged from applying, and administrators have become overly cautious about admissions policies, they say.

"This is an ominous sign for the medical community and our nation, which badly needs a physician work force that is both diverse and reflective of our society as a whole," the association's president, Jordan J. Cohen, said.

He said the downturn is clearly linked to Proposition 209, with which California's electorate ended affirmative action in state institutions, and the Hopwood federal court deci-

sion in Texas. Together, they ended affirmative action in four states.

According to the report, 17 percent fewer minority students applied to their state medical schools in California and in Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana, states covered by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision that affirmative action is unconstitutional.

The number accepted in the four states plunged by 27 percent.

"The threat to affirmative action in many states is sending the signal to minority students that they are unwelcome," said Hector Garza, vice president for access and equity programs at the American Council on Education.

Aid To Train Young People

Housing Secretary Andrew Cuomo Monday announced \$700,000 in assistance to the City of Portland, Oregon and to Youthbuilders Inc., of Portland, to train young high school drop-outs to build and renovate low-income housing through the Youthbuild program.

Nationwide, Cuomo said the Department of Housing and Urban Development is awarding \$27.9 million this week to 41 organizations in 22 states and the District of Columbia under Youthbuild.

High school drop-outs ages 16-

24 from low-income families participate in Youthbuild.

"This program helps young people build good careers for themselves while they build good housing for families in need," Cuomo said. "With the construction skills they learn in Youthbuilders, young people can support themselves for a lifetime."

In Portland, HUD assistance will give 32 young people on-site training in the construction trades, along with leadership development and educational opportunities.

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West Linn teacher named teacher of the Year

West Linn High School math teacher Nicki Hudson, who crusade for her vision of what math education should be, today was named 1998 Oregon Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made by State Schools Supt. Norma Paulus during a surprise visit to her school.

Hudson, who holds degrees in theater arts as well as mathematics, firmly believes students need to be players in their own education. She looks for the "inner mathematician" in each student.

"I know that if I touch their souls with the conviction that math is important and interesting," Hudson said, "they will become math ambassadors."

"There is nothing passive about Nicki's classes," said West Linn Supt. Roger Woehl. "She carries that enthusiasm to her colleagues and community."

She believes classroom discussions should begin with posing a problem to the students and hearing their ideas and their reasoning before introducing formal concepts.

"Approaching math in this way," she said, "my students begin to see the beauty of the grand math ideas while attacking the skills of nitty gritty problem solving with energy, confidence and delight."

She was nominated for the award by the West Linn faculty.

"The purpose of this program is to draw public attention to Oregon's outstanding

teachers," said Paulus. "I am pleased to see an increase in teacher recognition programs, but we need to do more to applaud teachers."

"Even little things - like cards and notes from parents or former students - can make a difference," added Paulus.

Hudson has presented at math teacher conferences in Oregon and other states. She is a finalist for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching.

In addition, she has directed four main stage musical productions at West Linn.

She joined the West Linn staff in 1989 after teaching six years at Barlow High School in Gresham.

Hudson holds bachelor's degrees in math education and theater arts from the University of Oregon and a master's degree in teaching from Lewis & Clark College.

She is eligible for National Teacher of the Year in a program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic, Inc.

She will speak at the Oregon School Boards Association's annual convention Nov. 15 at 9:15 a.m. in the Marriott Hotel.

In January she will meet with other state teachers of the year at a conference in Dallas, Texas. Other activities include a NASA Space Camp with state teacher winners and a national teacher forum next fall in Washington, D.C.

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