

# Family Living

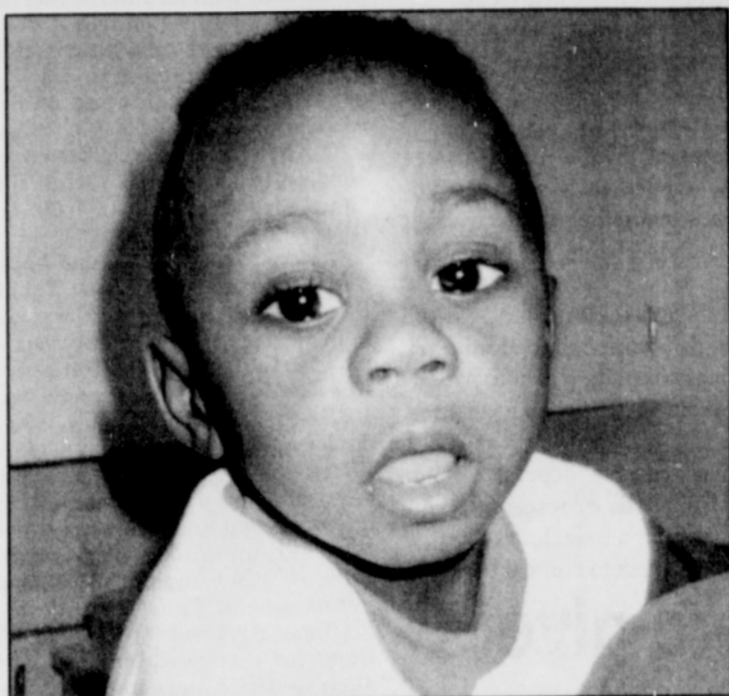
## Waiting Children

### Jordan, 18 months

"Simply adorable!" is a common description of Jordan, a dark-eyed, quick-to-smile baby in need of an adoptive family. Jordan is one of several hundred Oregon children who are right now waiting to become someone's son or daughter.

Because he was severely affected pre-natally by crack cocaine, Jordan has some needs that require special attention. He receives physical and occupational therapy to help improve his motor skills and decrease stiffness. Jordan has a weak immune system, and care must be taken to limit his exposure to illnesses. Another result of his prenatal drug exposure is his hypersensitivity. Jordan cries and whimpers quite a lot and he is behind other children in his social skills. He is just now starting to learn how to play and interact.

Jordan's new family must be able to accommodate in-home therapies and follow-up on many medical appointments. He needs a family who will take time to bond with him, ease him slowly into their home, and provide him the attention he craves.



### Mahala and Matthew, ages (just turned) 14 and 6

If you enjoy the antics of both tiny tikes and teens, you'll enjoy spending time with this lovely pair of intelligent, even-tempered, Hispanic/Caucasian children. They are two of three hundred Oregon children awaiting adoptive parents.

Fourteen year old Mahala excels at sports and outdoor activities. She also likes to draw, crochet, complete craft projects, and play with Barbie dolls. A good student, this seventh grader loves to read. Those who know Mahala say she brings energy and exuberance to all she does.

Younger brother Matthew shares his sister's sociability. He seeks nurturing from adults and plays well with other children, willingly sharing his toys. Remote control cars, Nintendo, and his bicycle top his list of favorite playthings. Matthew is also an intelligent child, functioning well in a regular first grade classroom. Matthew is independent and takes pride in doing things for himself.

Mahala and Matthew enjoy a close sibling relationship. Now they need parents to complete their family.

To learn more about adopting Oregon children, call The Special Needs Adoption Coalition at 222-9661.



## Parents are crying because their babies are still dying

BY SHAFIA M. MONROE, BOARD MEMBER OF ICTC

It's Black History month! And it's time to tell the story of healthy childbearing traditions within the African-American community.

It is not our legacy that babies of African descent should be suffering from high infant mortality. Dying, without ever having a chance to blow out the candle on their first birthday cake.

Is the high death rate among our babies due because we are genetically inferior, or is it because black mothers and fathers don't care, or because of the perpetuated myth that all black mothers are on welfare?

I am proud to share that none of the above are true.

Black infant mortality remains high in our community for a number of reasons. Some of the reasons are because a pregnant mother may have poor nutrition, late or sporadic prenatal care, may have an undetected illness, such as high blood pressure, or may be living under the daily stresses of life, which includes experiencing overt subtle racism.

Just by virtue of being black in America there is an increased likelihood of a black baby dying before its' first year birthday compared to babies of other races. Twenty-two black babies per thousand will suffer from infant mortality as compared to seven white babies per thousand.

The stresses listed above can cause premature birth or babies to be born too small which is called low-birth weight, both have been identified as leading causes of infant mortality.

"It takes a village to raise a child" but before the village can raise the child, it has to nurture the pregnant mother and father, or there will be no child for the village to raise.

Historically, our culture has traditionally supported the pregnant family, and welcomed the new born.

As a result the babies born in Africa suffer less from infant mortality compared to their American born brethren. The infant born in Africa weighs a good weight, which is any weight over 5lbs. 5ozs.

The African communities support the

breast feeding mother, they understand that breast fed babies have a stronger immune system, tend to gain weight better, and are less sickly.

If we are to help reduce infant mortality in the United States, then we must begin to re-adopt some of the traditions from our Motherland.

There are many things that we can do to help save the lives of these babies, but to save the baby we have to love the parents.

Her are some basic things that we can do to support the pregnant family. congratulate them on their miracle and their staying together. Offer food to the preg-

nant women, offer a ride to the clinic, and if possible accompany her throughout the prenatal visit.

Free pregnancy testing will be available for North and Northeast community women. If you would like further information please call 460-9324.

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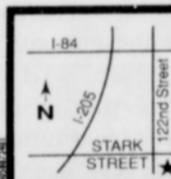
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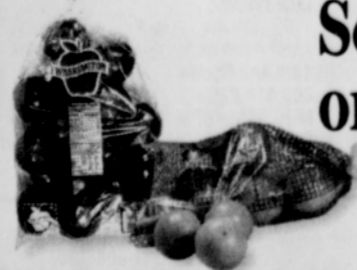
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