

# Family Living

## James Kent Named Director Of Youth & Family Services At Urban League

James Kent has been named Director of Youth and Family Services at the Urban League of Portland. He previously worked at the agency between 1990 - 1992 as director of the male Responsibility Program.



James Kent

Prior to returning to the Urban League, Mr. Kent was senior case manager for Liberty Northwest Corp. in Portland, and a claims adjuster with SAIF Corp. in Salem. He is a Portland native who graduated from Jefferson High School and earned a psychology degree from Warner Pacific College. His volunteer activities include participation in the Northeast Neighborhood Crime Prevention Team, the National Council of African-American Men, and the American Friends Service Committee's Education program.

At the Urban League, Mr. Kent will direct a Family Center that provides the following services to the Northeast Portland community: Big Brother/Big Sister program, counseling, diversion for juvenile offenders, youth employment services, and individual, family and group counseling.

"We are extremely pleased to have a person of James' talents join our team," said Urban League President Lawrence J. Dark. "His professional-

ism and knowledge of our community's needs will help us accomplish our goal of creating self-reliant families."

Mr. Dark also announced the promotion of Tanya Perimon from Director of Finance and Human Resources to Vice President of Finance and Human Resources. Ms. Perimon joined the agency in 1996 and holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Oregon State University and a Master of Management from

Atkinson Graduate School of Management at Willamette University.

The Urban League of Portland is a non-profit, community-based human service, economic and social justice agency serving families, students, job seekers, and seniors. The Urban League is home to Multnomah County's Northeast Family Center and Northeast Senior Service Center and the Northeast One Stop Career Center.

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## Helping Boys Reach Manhood

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

Geoffrey Canada was only a boy when it happened, but he still remembers the pain. He was playing football with a bunch of other boys on a beautiful fall day when he went out for a long pass. Looking up to catch the ball, Geoff ran full-speed into the metal bar of a barbecue pit sitting at one end of the churchyard where the boys were playing.

At first, he tried not to cry. Like most boys, Geoff had already learned that the world expects boys to suffer in silence. But when the pain proved overwhelming, he howled in agony.

To this day Geoff says he can feel the indentation in his shinbone where the metal bar gouged a hole in the flesh of his leg. Although Geoff played football after the accident, he was more cautious and never again as a receiver did he run with the abandon he once had.

Today, Geoff's a long way from the tough streets of the South Bronx where he grew up but he still believes that how we deal with pain -- our own and others' -- is critical to our survival as a society.

As president of New York City's Rheedlen Centers for children and Families and a steering committee member of the black Community Crusade for children (BCCC), Geoff sees pain consuming too many boys. More than 1.3 million boys under 18 were arrested in 1995, more of our male youth are dying young from violence, dropping out of school, and becoming absent fathers.

In his new book "Reaching Up For Manhood," published by Beacon Press, Geoff offers some compelling thoughts about how we can help.

"We have to fundamentally shift the way we think about boys. We don't want the end product to be a promiscuous, tough, hard, little thing who's willing to kill or die over slights that, if they ever got to be my age, they would find funny. We want to raise young men who are caring, hardworking, thoughtful, and creative. To do that, we have to treat them differently."

We can start, he says, by teaching boys that it's all right to acknowledge pain -- whether that pain is physical or emotional -- and by working to see that boys are reared with love and compassion so they grow up to be loving, compassionate adults.

Congress would do well to listen to Geoff as it considers a

harsh new proposal called Senate Bill 10. S.10 which will allow more children to be thrown into adult jails, even for nonviolent offenses like skipping school and running away from home. They will be vulnerable to unspeakable acts of cruelty at the hands of adult convicts and prison employees. Children in adult jails are five times more likely to be sexually assaulted and twice as likely to be beaten by prison staff than children in juvenile facilities.

S.10 will treat children who skip school or run away as crimi-

nals instead of as children in need of help. It will offer incentives for schools to expel students caught with cigarettes, beer, or marijuana without providing alternative education or substance-abuse counseling.

It also will allow arrest records that now remain sealed to follow a child through adulthood, robbing him of job prospects, higher education, and citizenship opportunities.

Call your Senators today at the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and urge them to vote against S.10.

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