

Eye With A View To The Mothers and Grandmothers--Who Still Care

By SAM PIERCE, GUEST WRITER

Most of the articles that I write are written from an emotional place of joy, passion, anger, compassion, etc. and very seldom do I have to collect myself just to get the manuscript going. But this article would be different. As I stood in the presence of a dear friend listening to her deep, deep felt pain and agony, while I knew I must convey her story to this community, the task tugged at me with great difficulty. The emotions that I felt were grief, sadness, and hurt over the pain my friend was feeling. As she tried to share with me her frustrations of the "loss" of her grandchild, what came gushing forth was her love, though coupled with the great quandary--WHY!

You see I have known this woman for ten years, in all that time I have seen her smile, heard her laughter of joy, her confidence, her leveled and grounded faith in God. But today, I would hear the whaling, burdensome and bruised pain flowing out through her relentless tears. She disclosed to me how her 13 year old grandson roams the street at the wee hours of the night getting into mischief, and edged on by older men who should be teaching him the right way. Of course, he is no renowned gangster, he doesn't have a rap sheet a mile long; his biggest victim is her--taking things that to him that may seem trivial, but gives him his first rehearsal into the life-strangling world of crime.

Because of his shenanigans he was given some tough love; but the young man would always return to the love he knew wouldn't forsake him--hers! Her tears gushed forth as she said to me, "Sam, the only way we could get help for him, was for me to turn him over to the police". She continued, "I can show you all the places (she opened up a pad with all the names--and there were many!) I've called and tried to secure a place for him, but have been tossed from program to program. I could only sit in silence as I listen to her cry for help and the love coming from the very last line of defense left in the black community--grandmothers!!! It seems to this writer many mothers, way too many fathers, uncles, aunts, neighbors, politicians, businessmen, businesswomen, bureaucratic, democrats, republicans, the church--yes, even the church--have left our children to die.

The woman I speak of is Mrs. Ora Hart! I would venture to say, that many, if not most, of you know her. She's been a successful business woman in this community for years; and in very competitive business at that. But Ora has done well so her pain does not come from a lack of ability to be successful or to take of herself, but she's broken over the "loss" of her grandson. And while it hurts to witness her hurt, the reality that there are still those who deeply agonize over the plight of our children, was a refreshing sight indeed!

She went on to ask me, where do you send those who have not gotten in trouble with the law, but are troubled. My response to her was that this is exactly our goal for the Community Wellness Center. We want to provide psychological and alcohol and drug treatment for kids in this community before they go to JDH or to MacLaren. We envision a semi-secured facility in our own community, but it will not have the stigma of a jail or add to or create a rap sheet. And with its foundation being Afrocentric and Christocentric principles. I also informed her how hard we have been working to get off the ground, but we have not gotten the help we need. Nevertheless, we hold our faith like a flint, and with God we will persevere until the vision is realized.

Let me say that I do not talk about the Wellness Center at the expense of Ora's pain, but as a response to her inquiry. I know that God will build the Wellness Center, because the God that I serve is a Big God! What I will say, if this community does stand for and behind those who genuinely love our children, there may come day to that they too, may walk away. Not because they do not care, but because the weight becomes too much, alone, to bear. If that occurs, the community will come tumbling down around all of us; of course, to the delight of those who secretly hate us and the dismay of those who care and have fought diligently with us. And God forbid, if that day happens upon us; because you haven't seen nothing yet!

Thus if the Roy Washingtons, the Robert Richardsons, the Ora Harts, the Kevin Fullers, the Bishops Wells, the Avel Gordlys, the Tony Hopsons, the Ray Learys, the Ann Sweets, the Lonnie Jacksons, the Askaris, the Becky Blacks, the Michael Mangums the Tim Holts and the others unnamed--if these peoples voices and hearts are ever silenced by the passive abuse of those who can help but don't help, then friends, our children don't have a change in hell to survive. Excuse my cussing, but I'm mad. And I will not attempt to hide it any longer!

If Sam Pierce has any anger, it is from the gross indifference, passivity and malaise by those with resources (money and clout) in our community and government who fail to see the graveness of the hour. Where in the history of any civilized world, let alone the most powerful nation on the earth, that the youth of a culture was at war with each other the way that our children are? We must find a solution to this problem. And we must surely do more than we are currently doing. Perhaps by doing so, maybe the pain, the brokenness, the weight, the hopelessness, the burden of grandmothers like Ora will be--can be lessened. For our children killing each other is serious and cannot and must not be continually viewed in the lightness which it now appears.

To African/African American, Asian, European, East Indian, Hispanics, and Native American mothers and grandmother of this community--if our children are going to be saved from the crime and senseless violence that now engulf them, then you alone will be there salvation. I have lost faith in the church and I have lost faith in the government--but I believe in you! for you have always stood in the gap and petitioned God on our behalf. Throughout the ages, you are the only force that I am aware, that no one--no man, no child, no government, no not even God, can say no to.

So I admonish you to call us back to God.; call us to prayer; call us to forgive and love one another again. For if we cannot do these things--we will never be a light or example to Ora Hart's little lost grandchild. We need you! We need you now! Happy Mother's Day!

Five hosts, many topics appear on NE Spectrum TV show



Dick Bogle

CONTINUED FROM FRONT
The other two hosts for NE Spec-

trum are Joyce Harris, an education consultant for the Northwest Regional Education Lab, and Joe Bean Keller of the Portland public schools.

Keller recently featured the African American civil war re-enactment group, the Buffalo Soldiers. He told the Portland Observer he plans to bring in more young performing artists and the producer of a fashion fair.

A back stage production veteran of area concerts, Keller was a guest

on the show 15 years ago and has been hosting for two years. "I don't deal a lot in politics," he was quick to point out.

Harris, who has been on the show almost 20 years, deals a lot with ethnic affairs and African arts. She was unavailable for an interview.

A few times a year, all five hosts will gather for a group taping in a free-for-all, lively discussion where they compare notes on various subjects.

African American Youth Held Achievement Rally Urban League And State Farm Continue "Achievement Matters" Campaign



Urban League Director Lawrence Dark, Jr. joins in the celebration of Achievement Matters.
(Photo by Larry J. Jackson Sr.)

The Youth Rally, featured live music, local celebrities and motivational speakers including students and youth who have achieved. The rally is part of a local and national campaign organized by the Urban League and State Farm Insurance. The goal is to encourage African-American and other inner city youth to value and strive for academic achievement and to combat anti-achievement peer culture. The campaign includes radio and newspaper advertising, parent involvement and school events.

The rally took place on Saturday, May 16, at the Lloyd Center Act III Theatres (outside the mall).

450 students from elementary, middle and high schools in North and Northeast Portland, along with some parents and chaperons; Urban League of Portland staff and volunteers from State Farm Insurance Companies participated.

Portland SHINES in Showing Why It Should..HOST

MAY 20 - 23 1998

"NUSA 98"

"Neighborhoods!...
Soaring To New
Heights"



George Manning (left), Sheila Holden (Right).
(Photo by Larry J. Jackson Sr.)

NUSA Mission Statement

To build stronger communities by highlighting the value of neighborhood residents and neighborhood associations. To promote the weaving of grass root assets with public and private sectors to enhance the quality of life through shared decision making.



George R. Manning (Photo by Larry J. Jackson Sr.)

"State Farm wants to recognize the talents of young people in our communities who are doing the right thing, and celebrate their spirit of accomplishment through the national campaign, Achievement Matters"

Achievement Matters



-Carmen Thompson, Agent, State Farm Insurance, Portland

"We must create a culture in our homes and our communities which sends the message loud and clear to our children that learning is one very important way to illustrate, Achievement Matters"

Achievement Matters



-Lawrence Dark, President, Urban League of Portland



Achievement MATTERS



Urban League of Portland