

Family Living

A Modern-Day Plague

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

On the fifth page of the fourth section of my morning newspaper the other day, a child's death from a dreadful disease was briefly noted. This disease is devastating our country as surely as the Plague halved the population of Europe and Asia in the 14th century. Now as then, death is everywhere...in our streets, our homes, our institutions.

Can you imagine? Thousands are dying. Casualties are everywhere; suffering is rampant. Are our greatest thinkers working on the problem? Is our government funding possible cures? No. In fact, some in our government consider putting child victims into adult prisons a solution.

The disease is violence. It is a cancer growing in our country and it is killing our children.

Last month, for a couple of days we read on the front pages of our newspapers about a youth in Springfield, Oregon who killed a classmate wounded 24 others at this high school.

Before that, we saw such madness in Jonesboro, Arkansas, in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, in Paducah, Kentucky, and in Pearl, Mississippi. But these are not isolated occurrences. I just mentioned the story buried in my newspaper of the boy killed in street violence in the city I live in. Circumstances may differ from city to city, from death to death. But make no mistake: violence and death are everywhere, every day. Fourteen year-old children

are killed in America every day in gun violence. We must find a cure for this terrible disease. We must stop the killing of children by children and adults.

One thing the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC) is doing is trying to connect children to caring adults: mentors who model and reinforce positive behavior, pastors who lend an ear to a child; summer employers who teach new skills and reward hard work. The BCCC's Freedom Schools provide havens to help keep over 2,500 children and 300 college-age young adults on track and engaged in activities that nurture their minds, bodies, and spirits.

Reach out to a child who is not yours this summer. Be a mentor, a friend, a refuge for a child before he or she becomes another victim of the violence that permeates our society. For too many children in America are now facing an unsupervised, idle summer. Parents work. There is a child care crisis in our country. In the annual Stand for Children on June 1 this year, parents, families, and those who care about children called for quality, affordable child care. One solution being considered in Congress is funding for an important program that works: the Child Care and Development Block Grant that enables states to make quality child care more affordable for working parents and supports improvements in the quality of child care and after-school programs.

But another measure being considered in Congress would be a big step backward. Congress is considering S.10, the Violent and Repeat Juvenile Offender Act, which would further weaken protections of our children by allowing juveniles not tried as adults to be held in adult jails and prisons with adult prisoners. Most of the children it would affect are neither violent nor repeat offenders. The last thing they need to stay out of trouble is adult criminal mentoring. S.10 fails to ensure that any of the \$500 million in new money it allocates for purposes related to juvenile crime is spent on prevention. It would indiscriminately open up juvenile arrest records to employers and higher education institutions. This would stop cold the chances of future educational and employment opportunities. And S.10 would do nothing to break the deadly link between children and guns. If we are truly serious about decreasing violent youth crime, as we must be, we must control guns and take them out of the hands of children.

You can make a difference by contacting your Congressional representatives about child care and S.10. Write them a letter or, better yet, call them.

Do something about the cancer of violence before it kills any more of our children. And help give our children positive alternatives to the street with adult supervision during this summer vacation.

What can you do about diabetes?



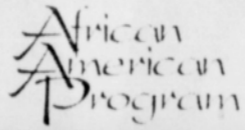
Gospel Recording Artists, The Clark Sisters
Honorary Spokespersons, "Diabetes Sunday"

Diabetes is devastating African American families. Heart attacks. Blindness. Foot and leg amputations. Kidney problems. Strokes. Early death. All caused by this serious disease. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Diabetes can be controlled, even prevented.

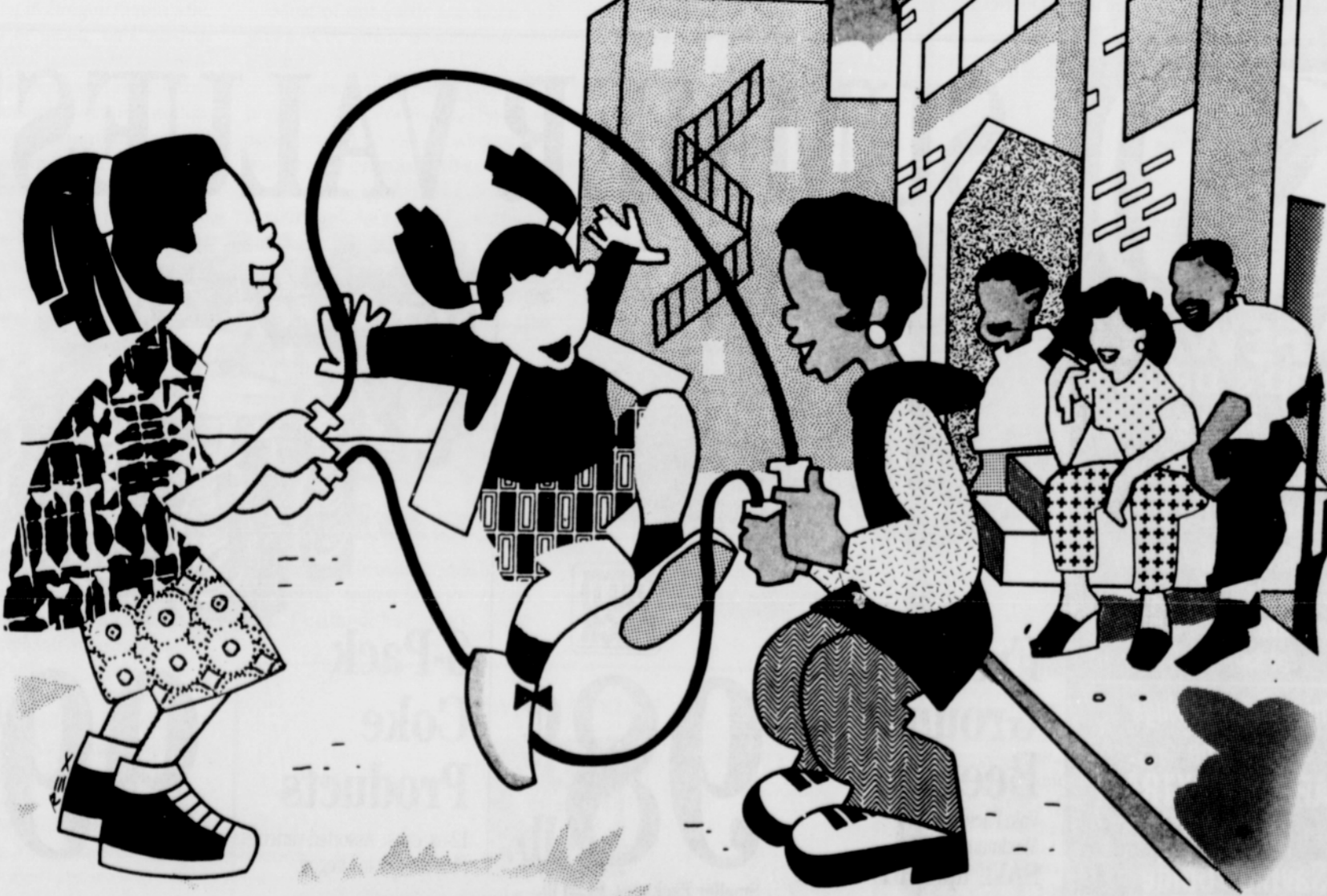
Because we lost our mother to diabetes, we're raising our voices to spread the gospel of prevention. Join us. Learn what you can do. For yourself. For your loved ones. Be part of the congregation on "Diabetes Sunday."

Call the American Diabetes Association at 1-888-DIABETES (342-2383) for more information.



a program of
American Diabetes Association

Think Of Us As The Family Down The Block



Neighborhoods all over Portland and across the nation have some great things in common — jumprope, basketball, front porch conversation, backyard cookouts and family.

American Family Insurance. We've been a trusted name in family coverage since 1927.

Today you can find our helpful, friendly agents in 15 states, thousands of neighborhoods and right in the heart of your community.

Call us today at (503) 968-5800 and find out why nobody looks out for Portland like family.

All Your Protection Under One Roof.

American Family Mutual Insurance Company and Subsidiaries, Madison, Wisconsin 53783-0001 www.amfam.com

