

# Health/Education

## Vancouver Women Joins Diet Study Decides to get serious about her health

Ella Anderson, a longtime Portland resident who now lives in Vancouver, recently decided to get serious about taking care of her health.

"My blood pressure had been going up and down for quite awhile," says Mrs. Anderson.

"There's history of high blood pressure in my family, so I was starting to get concerned. Then I got a postcard from Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research in Portland inviting me to join their research study about reducing blood pressure. When I saw the study involved changing my diet and exercising more, and didn't involve taking drugs, I just knew I had to give it a serious try."

Like hundreds of other people across the United States, Mrs. Anderson volunteered to participate in PREMIER, a new research program studying the effects of a healthy diet and exercise on blood pressure.

High blood pressure (also known as hypertension) affects nearly one

in four Americans. While high blood pressure can occur in anyone at any age, it is particularly common in older people and African Americans.

People with high blood pressure have a greater risk of heart attacks, strokes and kidney disease.

Past research has shown that weight loss, exercise and a healthy diet can each reduce blood pressure and help control hypertension. PREMIER is the first research program to study the combined effect of these three ways to lower blood pressure.

Taking blood pressure medication is also an effective way to control hypertension but can be costly, difficult to use, and have negative side effects.

"I joined PREMIER for myself and for others, especially for other African Americans," says Mrs. Anderson.

son. I want to feel better, and I want my quality of life to be better. I want to be here for my family and my grandkids. As an African American, I also think it's very important to join a study like this. High blood pressure is a major problem in our community, but I'm not sure we take it seriously enough. We need to be more conscious of what we eat, especially fat and sodium, and we need to get more exercise."

People who join PREMIER are involved in the study for 18 months. "I don't think about the 18 months," Mrs. Anderson says. "I take it one day at a time and, after three months, eating healthier foods and getting more exercise are becoming my new way of life."

Eating the foods they recommend was pretty easy for me because I love vegetables, but exercising more was harder. Now it's fun and exciting. I see differences in my energy, my weight and my shape."

Mrs. Anderson attends group and individual classes at the Center for Health

Research, which is located at 3800 North Interstate Avenue Portland. "I felt very comfortable going to classes," says Mrs. Anderson. "The PREMIER staff and the other people in the study are very supportive."



Ella Anderson

## Freedom Summer 2000

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

As this summer winds to a close, I wanted to take another opportunity to write about one of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC)'s signature programs: our Summer and After-School Freedom Schools.

At the beginning of the season, I shared what our Freedom School children were reading this summer.

This time I want to tell you about the Freedom School day and what students learn from the Freedom School experience.

Freedom schools were first established in Mississippi as part of the voter registration and community mobilization efforts during the legendary Freedom Summer of 1964.

In 1993 the Children's Defense Fund and the Black Community Crusade for Children began coordinating a new Freedom School movement as a means of bringing parents, college-aged young adult, and community leaders together to serve and mentor children, strengthen parent and community involvement in children's education and achievement, and train a successor generation of young leaders.

Religious, local school groups, and other community-based organizations sponsor Freedom Schools in their communities, coordinating the fund-raising and overall management. Each site is run by a project director and site coordinator.

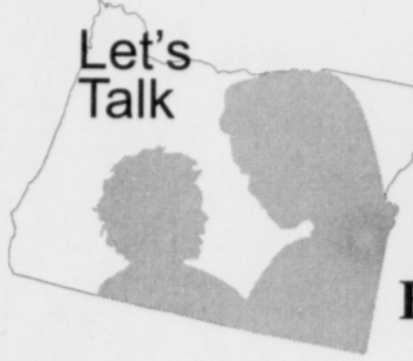
Children are taught by college-aged servant-leaders and mentors who are trained at Haley Farm, CD's center for intergenerational spiritual renewal, leadership development, and community capacity building.

Identifying and training these servant-leaders is a key part of the freedom School experience and allows us to develop a new generation of young people committed to serving children. Parents are required to attend parenting workshops in order for their children to participate.

Many parents leave the workshops feeling as if they have learned just as much as their children from the Freedom School experience.

The Summer Freedom School day begins with breakfast. The nutritious meals and snacks students and staff share together are an important part of the program and are subsidized by the Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program.

### Let's Talk



## Tips for Parents: Help Kids Use Brains to Battle Bullies

Sooner or later, your child may encounter a bully. How will your child handle that encounter? How might you help?

There was a time when it was thought that bullies didn't intend to be malicious—underneath was a lovable sweetheart suffering from low self-esteem. Researchers are rethinking that point of view, says Maggie Greene, a safe-schools trainer with the National Resource Center for Safe Schools at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

"Bullies seem to have pretty strong self-esteem," Maggie reports. "Their behavior is learned, it's learned early, and it needs to be remedied early, before the age of eight, in order to prevent chronic bullying behavior."

Bullying, she explains, is when one child or a group intentionally hurts another child over and over again, and over a prolonged period. It's beyond good-natured occasional joking or teasing. Hurt is inflicted

through assaults that can range from words, such as name calling or taunting, to physical aggression—kicking, shoving, fighting. And a subtler, but just as damaging form, says Maggie, is shunning or socially isolating a child.

Maggie suggests that parental antennae be attuned to signs that could suggest that their child might be having trouble with a bully. Here are just some of the signs to watch for. If your child:

- Comes home from school with cuts and bruises, damaged school materials, and/or clothes dirty and/or torn
- Frequently loses possessions
- Appears afraid, or depressed, or moody
- Often cries before going to sleep
- Feels ill in the morning to avoid

going to school

- Loses interest in school work
- Becomes quiet, passive, or anxious

Kids often hesitate to reveal they are being bullied. If you suspect something is amiss, take the direct approach and ask if there's a problem. Although kids typically will deny it initially, encourage him or her to share their feelings by assuring that you'll help and support them in solving any problems.

Maggie advises, however, not to promise that you won't tell. Instead, reiterate and reassure of your support and assistance in helping the child to work out the problem. The best strategy, says Maggie, is to teach your kids ways of avoiding encounters with a bully. Some parents worry that they're teaching their kids to be cowards, and that socking the bully will solve the problem once and for all. On the contrary, contends Maggie. Returning aggression with aggression escalates and inflames a situation.

Instead, help develop strategies to solve the problem. Here are a few:

- Avoid the bully. Don't be alone where the bully can pick on you.
- Enlist a friend to help. Bullies have a harder time picking on one person if someone else is around.
- Try not to show a reaction; bullies like reactions.

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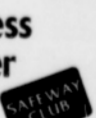


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