

Working to Save Lives

Ambassadors spread message of hope for African Americans needing organ, tissue and marrow donations

A group of local ambassadors are educating African-Americans on decisions about organ, tissue and marrow donations, as well as encouraging them to pay closer attention to their overall health.

The effort follows a short training session at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, hosted by Family of One, a coalition that includes the National Kidney Foundation and the American Red Cross Marrow Donor Program.

Over 78,000 Americans currently wait for life-saving organ transplants, of which 25-percent are African American.

"The efforts of Family of One are very vital to addressing health issues in the African American community," said Family of One Co-Chair, Baruti Artharee. "Traditionally, African-Americans don't talk about organ and tissue donations, but it's critical to our community for individuals and families to make time to discuss these issues."

Artharee said his wife received a much needed kidney transplant two years ago.

"We are both involved in increasing awareness for organ donation and kidney disease prevention because it allows us to give something back to our community," Artharee added.

Family of One was formed over a year ago to address the increased need for awareness among African Americans, especially males, about the high incidence of kidney disease and the vital need for organ, tissue and marrow donation.

It is critical that those who want to be organ and tissue do-

nors have the "D" included on their driver's license and, more importantly, discuss this decision with family members.

Religious beliefs, mistrust of the medical community and lack of education on the process of organ and tissue donation are the leading causes for a lower number of donors from the African-American community.

African-Americans wait twice as long as Caucasians to receive a kidney transplant because of the shortage of donor organs within their race.

African-Americans also comprise over 30-percent of those requiring dialysis treatments or waiting for a transplant due to irreversible kidney failure due to high blood pressure and diabetes.

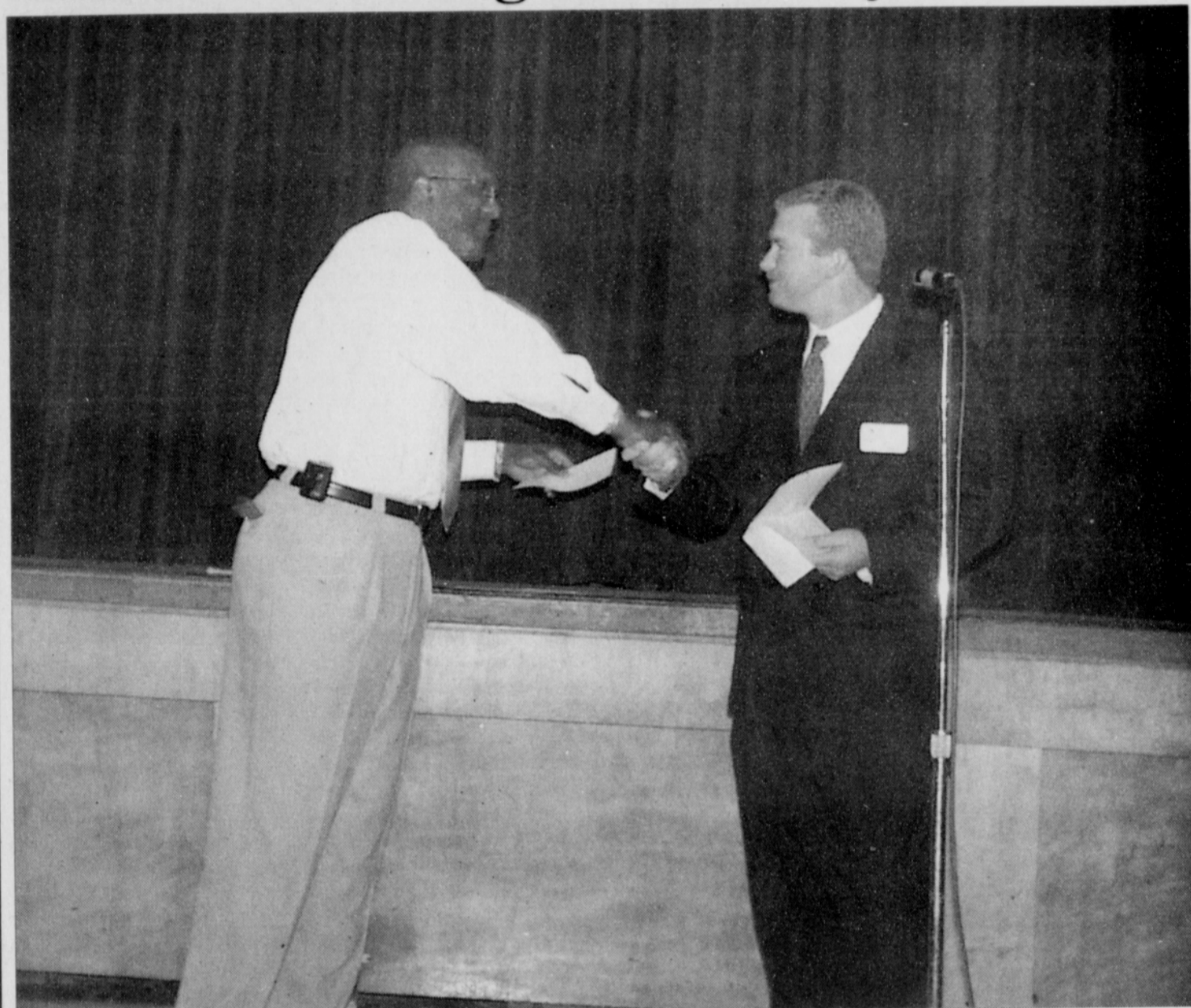
Each year, over 30,000 people are diagnosed with a blood disease which could be cured with a marrow, blood stem cell or cord blood donation, and nearly 75 percent of them will need an unrelated volunteer donor for their transplant.

Because certain tissue traits are unique to people of specific ancestry, the most likely donor match is from the patient's same racial or ethnic group.

Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz said she supports the work of Family of One.

"In fact, Multnomah County recognized the coalition this past year with a public health hero award for the important work the group is doing to insure that members of the African American community understand the issues and importance involved in organ donation and kidney disease prevention," Cruz said.

Alliance for King Elementary School



Joseph Malone (left), principal of King Elementary School, receives a donation Thursday for his northeast Portland school from Troy Steele, store manager for the Safeway Food and Drug Store on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Ainsworth. The \$4,068.53 check represents the money students and store representatives raised during a series of store fundraisers such as bread sales and barbecues. It will purchase computers for the school and build a covered area for the playground. City commissioner Jim Francesconi and Safeway President Lyle Waterman, attended the school ceremony, and both talked briefly about the importance of forming and maintaining partnerships to benefit children.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Memory Walk Fights Alzheimer's Disease

The Alzheimer's Association is working to create a world without Alzheimer's disease by joining together thousands of Oregonians for Memory Walk 2001.

In the Portland area, a Sunday, Oct. 7 walk is scheduled at the World Trade Center downtown with Darrell Grant serving as honorary celebrity chair. Grant is a jazz pianist and Portland State University professor.

The Alzheimer's Association

is the premier source of information and support for those families, friends, and caregivers who suffer from the effects of Alzheimer's disease.

The association is also involved with Alzheimer-related issues before governmental agencies and with health and long-term care providers.

The largest private funder of Alzheimer's research, the association has committed more than \$100

million toward research into the causes, treatment, prevention, and cure of Alzheimer's disease.

The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are not always recognizable. They might begin with simple forgetfulness; perhaps the car keys, common nouns or new acquaintances. Then it might become difficult to drive or to remember a phone number long enough to dial the phone. The disease does not stop there and the lapses in memory increase over time.

Soon it becomes difficult to dress, eat or bathe oneself. Eventually control of the limbs, bowel and bladder are gone and the person drifts into a silent stupor. After a year or two of painful bedsores and diaper rash, the person is no longer able to swallow food and then the inevitable death.

To register for Memory Walk or for more information on walks throughout Oregon, please call Andrea L. Moyna at 503-413-6471.

Home Loan Program Expands

(AP) - Veterans who served after the Vietnam War now are eligible for state home loans under an expansion of the program funded by a planned Monday bond sale.

State Treasurer Randall Edwards said the state was to sell \$60 million in bonds, \$15 million of which will finance an expansion of the state GI loan program that was approved by voters last November.

Previously, only veterans who served before 1977 could qualify for the loans. The expansion will cover Gulf War veterans as well as those who served during some other conflicts.

As many as 20,000 additional veterans are newly eligible for loans, said Jon Mangis, director of the state Department of Veterans' Affairs. The loans currently carry a fixed interest rate of 5.95 percent and are available for up to \$275,000.



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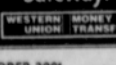
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