

OPINION

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CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

America's most segregated institutions

Fifty years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools created an inherently unequal school system, and 40 years after the Civil Rights Act outlawed forced segregation, two of America's most important institutions are its most segregated. Our

churches and schools continue to exist in racial isolation for the most part. Houses of worship are the most sacred institutions in America, yet they are the most segregated. Public schools are the second most segregated institutions. A recent study by Scripps Howard News service indicates that segregation has increased since 1991 after years of progress in creating diverse schools throughout the country.

It appears that American ethnic groups prefer to remain separate from each other despite studies that suggest diverse institutions are stronger and better. Furthermore,

the central issue for African Americans with regard to segregation is whether we are receiving equal opportunity and equal access to resources in a segregated environment. Most Americans don't find it necessary to socialize with members of other ethnic groups. The problem is that many opportunities and resources are accessed by way of social capital. I can't count the number of times my fellow church members have inquired about job opportunities and other resources. So when those who control the resources isolate themselves from others, those who have less will

continue to be deprived until they can gain access.

The good news is that the African-American community controls over \$600 billion in purchasing power and considerable resources to share among our own community. If those of us who have empowered ourselves with significant resources would provide access to other members of our community, segregation would not be as much of a problem with regard to equal opportunity. Each one of us must be committed to empowering our families and communities with whatever resources we find available.

It is becoming clear that America's many cultures prefer to remain separate for the most part. Indeed if we refuse to come together in worshipping the same God once per week, certainly we can't count on multicultural socializing and sharing resources everyday. However, until full access to our countries' resources are available to all, and equal opportunity has truly been achieved, we must continue our struggle against segregation and racial isolation. In the meantime, we must continue to do what we can to empower our community and ourselves.



Judge Greg Mathis is Chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a National Board Member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Chronic Pain

Encouraging signs in getting doctors to treat it

By CAROL MISRACK, R.N.

Some people have trouble believing this: Thousands of Oregonians suffer from a chronic condition for which most doctors still won't prescribe medication and insurance companies often won't pay.

The condition is called chronic pain.

I remember speaking about chronic pain several years ago to a group of physicians and having one of them stand up and say to me, "This is bunk."

Although attitudes are changing, too many physicians still won't treat chronic pain even though it afflicts millions of Americans.

Recently, a 50-state University of Wisconsin report crossed my desk that rated the states on the quality of pain care. Oregon got a C+ and, to illustrate that this is a serious national issue, that put our state among the 20 "best" states. The researchers gave no state an A.

The good news for pain sufferers is that 85 percent of chronic pain

can be successfully managed in a primary care doctor's office. Probably as little as 10 to 20 percent is, however.

I understand. Although chronic pain is my job, I've also experienced it. After cancer-related chemotherapy treatments, I was in pain for a year and a half, at times so severe that I could not work. For people in such circumstances, pain is real.

It is so real, in fact, that chronic pain is every bit as much a disease as diabetes or heart disease.

If you or someone you know is experiencing chronic pain, I urge you to consider the following tips.

First, find a physician you can talk to. If she says something you disagree with, address it.

Also, work with your doctor as a team. Develop a workable treatment plan that gives both the doctor and you a role in managing your pain.

Always be factual. Be able to tell your doctor when and under what circumstances you experience pain, what medications you're taking, the

pain's 1-10 intensity.

Learn as much as you can from credible resources in magazines, Web sites and resources in your local library.

Finally, identify community resources such as local water-aerobics, low-impact exercise and nutrition classes; find out about alternative strategies such as yoga, acupuncture and massage.

There's cause for encouragement on this front. Nurses working on the front lines are on board. The Pain Society of Oregon is active. And a new state law will require all physicians to enroll in pain-related continuing medical education beginning in 2006, although the bill passed by a single vote.

The legislator who cast the deciding vote said, "I've seen too many people die in pain. I vote aye." My hope is that more medical professionals will "vote" that way, too.

Carol Misrack, a registered nurse, is pain management coordinator in the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Letters to the Editor

Jefferson Student Stands Up for Class

I am fully outraged at what the media and especially my community expects from my peers and myself. However, even the term outraged is a serious understatement as to what I really feel. It takes me by surprise that not only is the studentbody expected to be outstanding achievers academically, which isn't the problem, but the fact that we are also expected to take all the messages that are poured over our school and deal with it. This is where the problem lies. It is becoming apparent that whenever something goes bad in our surrounding neighborhood, Jefferson as a whole suffers the greatest. It is a fact that every day the students who report to this school have to deal with excessive police presence, the lack of community support, and who can forget about that dreadful stereotype that clings to our clothing like a horrible stench. Students here at Jefferson are trying hard to create a different light that Jefferson should be viewed in. This is a hard task considering how Jefferson has been viewed for so long, but it is not impossible. We are looking for a different, more positive, media interpretation, and greater community support.

Is police presence at our high school functions, (dances, games), necessary? I can't grasp the reason the police need to be contacted in order for one of the normal high school functions to take place. I guess I am expected to get used to it since there are countless times that I have witnessed what seems to be the entire police squad, (in-

cluding men riding horses), at Jefferson's basketball games. Let me tell you now, please, I beg please, don't continue to tell our studentbody that this is for our protection, especially when many claim that it is not Jefferson students who act out inappropriately. If that were the case, then there should be the same outcome at other PPS functions. I have been approached with the comment plenty of time that with the series of shootings, the protection we re-

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ceive is necessary, but it is not just Jefferson who falls danger to the problem. The community as a whole, residents, students and local businesses should all receive the same amount of proper protection until it is said that there is some sort of peace among all. However, it seems that the number of officers who come to our school and our functions is going a bit overboard.

We are fed up that despite the slander, many choose to succeed, hold their heads up high, and continuously try to shut the mouths of those who insult their intelligence. Many argue that Jefferson's test scores are below standard, yet they refuse to see that we are improving

greatly to achieve the average and exceed it. It seems that no one recognizes the fact that we are on the top of the list, number one, of Average RIT Gains by Performance Level for the years 2001-2003. We have made noticeable progress with a gain of 7.4 in reading, and 4.9 in math. It shows that more progress has been made at Jefferson than at any other school. However, let it be known that the main thing we are fed up with is how you the media, and how you, our very own community want us to remain silent about this.

It is our time to say enough is enough. It is our time for the proper recognition in which we deserve. I, on behalf of the entire studentbody at Jefferson, challenge the media and community, as they have challenged us. I challenge you to take a look at the inside of Jefferson. Don't just step inside, view few students in the hall, and come to the conclusion that we are not about business, but really look inside Jefferson. Look at all the programs, look at the many good opportunities, but most importantly look at the students and their determination to do well. Will you take the challenge?

We are ready for our time to shine like the gold that we are. I can only hope that the stereotypes that surround Jefferson haven't blinded too many from discovering the wonders that show up five days a week to Jefferson halls. Believe me, Jefferson is headed in a new direction. Everyday if we have to scream it at the top of our lungs, "We will be heard!"

Angela Gill, Jefferson High School Class of 2005

HOLDING POLICE ACCOUNTABLE

A matter of life and death

The Portland Police, our next steps, what are they? I am the president of Oregon Uniting, the community organization that recently facilitated the dialogue and discussions on race with the Portland School Board, and hosted the "Day of Acknowledgement" at our state capital in April of 1999.

A peace rally called for by the Portland Coalition of Black Men and other organization from Portland's black community was held on Sunday, April 10th. The purpose of that rally was to express outrage for the death of unarmed black man, James Jahar Perez, at the hands of a Portland police officer.

It was clear from the rally that many people, particularly blacks and Latino, believe that many police officers have little or no respect for people of color. Whether accurate or not, these perceptions must be dealt with.

Regardless of whether criminal charges are brought against the officer in question, or whether if charged and tried, he is found guilty

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or innocent, this case is exacerbating racial tensions in the Portland area. People of color and other concerned community members hope that concrete changes will be made that will assist our police force in becoming the exemplary organization that both the police and the community want.

A police assessment study made after the Kendra James shooting called for new policies to reduce the use of deadly force,

eliminate racial profiling in traffic stops, more effectively hire and retain officers of color, and ensure that police officers understand differences in race and culture. Do the citizens of Portland, its leaders and elected officials have the will and resolve to see that these recommendations are followed, some which come with a price tag? Derrick Foxworth, our police chief, cannot do it alone.

Two years ago our city found the money to help bail out the public school system. Our police department deserves the same.

We also need to talk with each other. Oregon Uniting has facilitated interracial dialogues between thousands of community members, and we would be delighted to donate our time and expertise to help bridge the widening breach between the Portland Police Department and community members concerned over Mr. Perez's death: To not do so could be a life or death matter.

Macceo Pettis, President of Oregon Uniting

AAHC African American Health Coalition, Inc.
Presents for your health,
Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar

Aerobics
Mallory Ave. Christian Church
Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7am, Pierce • 5:30-6:20pm, Granville • 6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson

Humboldt Elementary
Tue, Thu, 6-7pm, Keller

Low Impact Aerobics
Daniel's Memorial Church
Tue, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville

Water Aerobics (Contact AAHC)
Salvation Army
Matt Dishman

African Dance
Matt Dishman
Sat, 10-11am, Addo

Body Conditioning
Wild Oats Market
Sat, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson

Pilates
Matt Dishman
Mon, 12:15-1:15pm, Jenkins

Stretching/Body Sculpting
(Class courtesy of Matt Dishman)
Matt Dishman
Tue, Thu, 7-8am, Loix

Walking Group
Peninsula Park
Sat, 12:30pm, Woods

Weight Mgmt./Conditioning
U. of Portland Indoor Track
Tue, Thu, 9-10am, Hasan

Yoga
Wild Oats Market
Tue, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke

Daniel's Memorial Church, 1234 NE Killingsworth (12th & Killingsworth)
Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein
Mallory Avenue Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE Alberta

Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott
Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland
Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams
U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette
Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

**Must be 21 or older to participate. Please contact AAHC before showing up to the first class and for more information at 503-413-1850 or kdempsey@aahc-portland.org. Please receive approval from your doctor before beginning exercise class.

REACH Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Contact AAHC at 503-413-1850 or visit our web site at www.aahc-portland.org

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