

Bridging the Gap in Health Disparities

Health director sees progress

BY KHAYA DARKO
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Local officials are working to end the uneven distribution of health care in the Portland area and the resulting suffering from illness and disease.

According to Lillian Shirley, Multnomah County Health Department director, social and economic differences have led to the health disparities for groups of people, mostly along economic and racial lines.

But Shirley sees progress since Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called for equality for all Americans in a fight for justice that included medical care.

Shirley said the success of two prominent medical doctors on the national stage would not have been possible without King and others in the civil rights movement.

She pointed to Dr. David Satcher and Dr. Joshlyn Elders, two physicians of color who both became Surgeon General of the United States.

Their achievements in medicine helped mainstream



Lillian Shirley (right) draws on a supporting staff to complete her work as Multnomah County Health Department Director, including (from left) Latricia Tillman, Steve Bullock, and Sen. Avel Gordly.

America see the positive contributions that black Americans are making in our country.

"Dr. Satcher is a hero of my public health commu-

nity," Shirley said, citing him for leading the fight against tobacco and ending the need for a rising number of lung cancer clinics.

As Surgeon General, Sat-

cher was willing to go after the tobacco industry for health damages. He fought the cancer deaths that the tobacco industry brought upon people all over the world.

"Dr. Satcher brought attention to tobacco issues, and due to that, today there are tougher laws against the tobacco industry," she said.

The success in people like



Dr. David Satcher



Dr. Jocelyn Elders

Satcher, Elders and King comes from their leadership, Shirley said.

"You need a Dr. King or a Malcolm X to get to a place of trust," she said.



Rosa Parks (right) and other African American citizens of Montgomery, Ala. take their first bus without concern for racism following desegregation.

November 19, 1956
INTEGRATED BUS SUGGESTIONS

This is a historic week because segregation on buses has now been declared unconstitutional. Within a few days the Supreme Court mandate will reach Montgomery and you will be re-boarding integrated buses. This places upon us all a tremendous responsibility of maintaining, in face of what could be some unpleasantness, a calm and loving dignity befitting good citizens and members of our Race. If there is violence in word or deed it must not be our people who commit it.

For your help and convenience the following suggestions are made. Will you read, study and memorize them so that our non-violent determination may not be endangered. First, some general suggestions:

1. Not all white people are opposed to integrated buses. Accept goodwill on the part of many.
2. The whole bus is now for the use of all people. Take a vacant seat.
3. Pray for guidance and commit yourself to complete non-violence in word and action as you enter the bus.
4. Demonstrate the calm dignity of our Montgomery people in your actions.
5. In all things observe ordinary rules of courtesy and good behavior.
6. Remember that this is not a victory for Negroes alone, but for all Montgomery and the South. Do not boast! Do not brag!
7. Be quiet but friendly; proud, but not arrogant; joyous, but not boisterous.
8. Be loving enough to absorb evil and understanding enough to turn an enemy into a friend.

Now for some specific suggestions:

1. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and has been instructed to obey the law. Assume that he will cooperate in helping you occupy any vacant seat.
2. Do not deliberately sit by a white person, unless there is no other seat.
3. In sitting down by a person, white or colored, say "May I" or "Pardon me" as you sit. This is a common courtesy.
4. If cursed, do not curse back. If pushed, do not push back.
5. If struck, do not strike back, but evidence love and goodwill at all times!
6. In case of an incident, talk as little as possible, and always in a quiet tone. Do not get up from your seat! Report all serious incidents to the bus driver.
7. For the first few days try to get on the bus with a friend in whose non-violence you have confidence. You can uphold one another by a glance or a prayer.
8. If another person is being mistreated, do not arise to go to his defense, but pray for the oppressor and use moral and spiritual force to carry on the struggle for justice.
9. According to your own ability and personality, do not be afraid to experiment with new and creative techniques for achieving reconciliation and social change.
10. If you feel you cannot take it, walk for another week or two. We have confidence in our people. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

THE MONTGOMERY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
THE REV. M. L. KING, JR., PRESIDENT
THE REV. W. J. POWELL, SECRETARY

Flier Used to Avoid Conflict: The Montgomery Improvement Association circulated this flier to help black Americans in Montgomery, Ala. make the integration of public buses as peaceful and smooth as possible.

Dr. King's 'Beloved Community'

Local leader embraces the message

BY KHAYA DARKO
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Sen. Avel Gordly reflected recently upon the passing of civil rights icon Rosa Parks as

well as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy for civil rights and the world at large.

She deeply noted Dr. King's message for a "Beloved Community" and urged everyone that we need to do more to take care of each other.

"Beloved Community" is the simple notion that what is important is that all people need

embracing and their basic needs met.

Gordly has modeled herself around this notion and puts forth an endless effort to serve her Portland community. Recently, she took a temporary assignment with the Multnomah County Health Department.

continued ▼ on page B12

"EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT BECAUSE ANYBODY CAN SERVE"
Martin Luther King Junior

For Job Information:
Call our 24-hour job hotline at (503) 823-1343
or
Call our Recruitment Officer, Erwin Warren at (503) 823-3811
or
Visit our website at www.portlandonline.com/fire

WE RESPOND
Always Ready
Always There