Ministers Bid to Stop Violence

By Helen Silvis
Of *The Skanner News*

An increase in violence this year, has brought community leaders and grassroots activists together in an attempt to strengthen community networks and support minority youth. African American ministers called a meeting Friday at Life Change Christian Center on N. Williams St. to coordinate that effort.

The ministers said they wanted 100 people to make a commitment of 45 minutes, once a week for a year. But many more people responded to that call, packing the church and signing up to be trained to help.

Dr. Mark Strong, speaking for the church leaders outlined a four-point plan. THERE "A visible presence," SHARE: "A connecting presence," CARE: "A supporting presence" and Prayer: "an interceding presence."

"If we can just do a little something, we have an opportunity to make a great difference," said Dr. Strong introducing the plan. We will show our young people that we love them, we care about them, and we are there for them. We want everyone to take part, because violence doesn't discriminate."

Adults were asked to commit to one of the actions. Those who choose to be THERE, will create a caring visible presence on the street and everywhere adults encounter youth. 'Connected', the group of men and women brought together by outreach specialist John Canda, is leading this effort.

Those who choose to SHARE will work through the nonprofit mentoring agency Big Brothers, Big Sisters to mentor youth who lack support. Some are young people who have been in trouble with the law. Evidence shows that mentoring is a powerful way to support young people.

Those who commit to CARE will work with community agencies Self Enhancement Inc. and Cascadia Behavioral Health to support families and children. George Merriweather, support and aftercare pastor, and Serena Stoudamire Wesley are coordinating the CARE group.

Those who commit to PRAYER will do just that, offering a spiritual uplift to the community, through focused, concentrated and consistent group prayers. Bishop Steven Holt will lead the prayer group.

Antoinette Edwards, the mayor's public safety advocate helped plan and organize the meeting. She introduced Mayor Sam Adams, who turned out to support the effort and detail the anti-violence strategy he had unveiled earlier in the day at the Gang Violence Task Force. The strategy includes:

Promoting volunteer community efforts, such as the Restore the Village campaign, Connected, and the church leaders initiative; Adding six officers and a sergeant to a reactivated gang enforcement team; Longer federal sentences for more gang crimes; Direct outreach to gang members (No mention of any change to the number of the city's outreach workers — 10 for the entire city); Tougher gun and sex trafficking laws; Safety summits; Activities for youth through the Parks Bureau and the Summer Youth Connect program, which works with targeted youth (1,650 students last year)

"If I never have to see another victim of the violence sweeping through our community it would be too soon," Adams told the crowd assembled in the church.

"It is a tragedy that is avoidable and preventable."

That was the message too from Russ Corno, a longtime gang enforcement officer with Portland Police Bureau. Despite more than 40 gang-related shootings this year, the problem is nowhere near the level of the mid-90s, Corno said. In 1997, for example, 13 people were killed by gang-related violence. Portland is equipped to deal with the problem.

"I can tell you we know how to solve the problem," he said. "I can tell you we can't

See MINISTERS on page 10

Unthank Park Dedication

His mother died when he was just nine years old. His father was a poor cook who couldn't afford to feed him and his seven brothers and sisters. Sent to to live with his aunt and uncle he worked hard to earn a path to university and a career as a doctor. But that wasn't the end of his struggles. Why? This doctor was Black at a time when the color of your skin was way more important than the content of your character.

Yet he was not deterred. He became a civil rights warrior, and a legend. His name now honors one of 's most-used parks: in .

"Many of the African American leaders in this community were delivered by Dr. Unthank and live by his example," said Art Hendrix, security manager for the Parks department.

If you haven't heard the story of Dr. DeNorval Unthank, you're not alone. Many Portlanders have no idea where the park got its name. That's just one reason why and Recreation is inviting you to a rededication celebration in the park from 5 pm to 8 pm on Friday June 17.

The park has had a facelift and new lighting, and much more is planned. Five recreation workers, hired from the Northeast community have been hired to organize events in the park this summer from 4pm to 7 p.m. Along with fun activities, free meals for youth will be offered at 5 p.m. A movie night and other events also are in the works.

Mooney

continued from page 7

said, "If you scrutinize Jay Leno and David Letterman the same way you scrutinize me, then I'll agree with you, but if you don't touch them white folks don't touch me. They say whatever they want to say every night."

But don't get it twisted; it's not all about race. At least that's not the only topic there is to debate, even though it may have been the one that got him into the most trouble (along with cracking jokes about Diana Ross' DUI arrest, oh and of course that one about Mom Bush…). Even Negrodamus is willing to admit his own premonitions might be off occasionally. And after his public battle with Michael Richards from Seinfeld about the use of the n-word, Mooney had this to say: "I am no longer going to use the n-word. Instead of saying 'What's up my n——,' say 'What's up my Michael Richards.'" At a summit with Jesse Jackson, Reverend Al Sharpton, and Richards, Mooney forgave Michael. In his first "n-word free" show after his proclamation, he made it about an hour, and then…

See Paul Mooney June 15-18 at Helium Comedy Club-1510 SE 9th. www.helium-comedy.com.

Caldwell's, Hennessey, Goetsch & McGee Funeral Home

Von D. Bailey
Funeral Director
20 NE 14th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232
503-232-4111
Fax 503-231-1586
von.bailey@sci-us.com

Dignity

FGPA
JUNE CONVENTION CONFERENCE
June 23, 24, 25 2011

THEME
"The Faith Jesus Seeks On The Earth At His Return"
Luke 18:1-14
Presiding Bishop A.A. Wells

- June 23rd, Evangelistic Service @ 7:00pm
- June 24th, Evangelistic Service, Women @ 7:00pm
- June 25th, Christian Education, Organization @ 10:00 – 2:00pm
- June 25th, Official Night @ 7:00pm

Vancouver Full Gospel Church
311 W. Evergreen Bv
Vancouver, Wa 98660 (360) 694-5236