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City Club of Portland

BULLETIN

Portland, Oregon

Vol. 66, No. 7

Westin Benson, Mayfair Room

Noon

Friday, July 19, 1985

JENNIFER JAMES, Ph.D.

Cultural Anthropologist, Commentator and Columnist

“KIDS ON THE STREET: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY ARE THEY?”

Street youths are increasingly visible in Portland. What is happening to juveniles to cause them to end up on the street? Who are they? What is the impact on the downtown business community? Can a street youth be salvaged? Whose responsibility is it to address the problems of street youths?

Our speaker this Friday is a foremost authority on homeless juveniles. *Dr. James*, who has a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, was a full time member of the faculty of the University of Washington Medical School from 1970-82. Her 1981 study of 138 juvenile female prostitutes demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of them had been victims of physical and/or sexual abuse. She is one of the founders of the Committee for Children (now called the Seattle Institute for Child Advocacy), a group which is devoted to the prevention of physical and sexual abuse of children.

Dr. James is now a regular commentator on Seattle KIRO television and radio news and is noted as an excellent speaker. She also writes the “most read” column in the Sunday “YOU” section of the *Seattle-Times/Post Intelligencer* and lectures throughout the United States.

This program augments the City Club follow-up to the 1984 “Report on Adult Prostitution in Portland”, which recognized but did not address the special problems of juvenile prostitution. Included as part of the follow-up is the information report published herein on street youth, prepared by the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, Law and Public Safety and Human Services Standing Committees. In addition, a longer term City Club study of the Juvenile Services System is underway. That study committee, chaired by *Patrick Borunda*, is charged to look at the treatment and handling of troubled juveniles who may be a danger to themselves and the community, and to recommend policies for improvements in juvenile services. Publication of that report is expected this fall.

RESERVATIONS AND CANCELLATIONS: Call 222-2582 by 2:00 p.m. Thursday, July 18. Tickets: \$8.00 members, \$10.00 guests. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. (seating in back of Mayfair Room on space-available basis)

“To inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligation of citizenship.”

NEXT FRIDAY, JULY 26: *Congressman Les AuCoin* will appear before the City Club, Westin Benson, Mayfair Room, noon.

SALES TAX BALLOT MEASURE COMMITTEE AT WORK

The Committee studying the 1985 Tax Reform and Sales Tax Package has nearly completed interviews and has begun preparation of the committee report, now scheduled for a vote of the membership on August 30, 1985. The sales tax plan will be before the voters on September 17.

Members include: *Charlie Hinkle*, Attorney, Stoel, Rives et al, Chairman; *Chuck Williams*, Media Relations Coordinator, Good Samaritan Hospital, Vice-Chairman; *Rex Armstrong*, Attorney; *John Bauman*, Management Analyst, Metropolitan Hospitals, Inc.; *Curt Gleaves*, Attorney, Schwabe, Williamson et al; *Helen Lee*, Commercial Loan Officer, First Interstate Bank of Oregon; *Pamela Rapp*, Attorney, Garvey, Schubert et al; *Lloyd Williams*, retired Professor of Mathematics, Reed College.

Rhona Friedman, Attorney, City Attorney's Office, serves as the Committee's Research Advisor.

1985-86 PROGRAM COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS MADE

Gail L. Achterman, member of the Board of Governors, is chair of the Program Committee this year. *John Frohn-mayer*, Board Member, will serve as Vice Chair. The following new members of the Program Committee have been appointed: *Kandis Brewer*, Vice President, Pihas Schmidt Westerdahl; *Ellen Lanier Frerichs*, Development Director, Washington Park Zoo; *Bill Lesh*, Principal, Brian Gard William Lesh, Inc.; *Isaac Regenstreif*, Assistant to the President, Orbanco Financial Services Corp.

Continuing on the Program Committee are: *Charlie Allcock*, Board member and Senior Planner/Supervisor, Energy Planning Services, PGE; *Bruce Bishop*, Administrator, House Human Services Committee; *Jack Brown*, Regional Director, Public Affairs and Communications, Crown Zellerbach; *Mary Cramer*, President, Mary Cramer Agency; *Dan Goldy*, Consultant; *Corky Kirkpatrick*, Information Director, Portland Community College; *Sid Lezak*, Attorney, Newcomb, Sabin, Meyer; *Jonathan Nicholas*, Daily Columnist, *The Oregonian*; *Joan Smith*, Consultant; *Marilyn Smith*, Manager, Corporate Communications, Good Samaritan Hospital; and *Robert L. Weil*, Retail Management Consultant.

NEW MEMBERS

The following individuals have applied to the Board of Governors for membership in the City Club of Portland, effective July 26, 1985:

Keith Borman, Attorney, Law Dept., Union Pacific Railroad, sponsored by John Weisser.

John A. Crowell, Attorney, Dunn Carney et al, sponsored by George Cooper III.

Judith Heath, Assistant Director of Marketing Research, Metropolitan Hospitals, sponsored by Orcilia Forbes.

Marcie J. Merritt, Research Associate, Oregon Health Sciences University, sponsored by Joan Smith.

Beverly A. Oberst, Office Manager, Law Dept., Union Pacific Railroad, sponsored by John Weisser.

Sharon L. Rupert, Marketing Representative, Aetna, sponsored by Lloyd Anderson.

Jo Zettler, Management Analyst, City of Portland, sponsored by Pauline Anderson.

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Information Report On

KIDS ON THE STREET: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY ARE THEY?

Introduction

The 1984 City Club study of "Adult Prostitution in Portland" recognized that juvenile prostitution is a complex and pressing problem deserving further study. In November, 1984, the Board of Governors asked a group composed of representatives of the Law & Public Safety and the Human Services standing committees to review the conditions and problems of homeless juveniles in Portland and the related issue of juvenile prostitution. The Board requested the review because of the increasing visibility of youths on the street, increasing crime and drug abuse problems, and their effects on downtown Portland.

This review will define the problem, discuss diversion and treatment programs, and describe current attempts to address the problem.

The Dimension of the Problem

Every year across America some one million youths between the ages of seven and seventeen run away from home. For some, leaving home is the healthiest response to intractable family problems, most often involving sexual, physical and psychological abuse. But national statistics indicate that a disturbing 25 to 35% are "throwaways," youths who have been ejected from their homes by their families. Many of this latter group turn to prostitution for a consistent source of income and for the perceived affection and shelter provided by customers and pimps.

A 1981 study of the backgrounds of 138 juvenile female prostitutes by Jennifer James of the University of Washington found 37% had been molested, 51% raped, and 63% physically abused, with sexual abuse occurring primarily during childhood. Similarly, agencies serving street youth in Portland report a background of incest in 80-90% of their clients.

In Multnomah County, about 3700 youths run away annually; about 80% will return home or be otherwise accounted for. At any given time, there is a cumulative countywide roster of 500 missing youths. A large group of youths, at least 2,000 or more, described as "weekend warriors" by Captain Robert Brooks, head of the Portland Police Bureau's new Juvenile Services Division, tend to congregate in the downtown area for recreation and socializing. Some are chronic runaways, but unlike the "throwaways," they have homes to return to. Many get involved in substance abuse and crime. Brooks and others believe these youths can be helped if contact is made with them soon enough.

Homeless youths (hereafter referred to as "street youths") -- in contrast to the "weekend warriors" -- live in a street culture. Their street friends have become their families. The mores and values of street culture dominate their relationships.

At any one time, according to police and youth service agencies, there are between 300 and 500 homeless youths in the downtown area, relying on

(parents, school, court) or to appropriate services. Only time will speak to the effectiveness and impact of this new policy on existing resources.

These activities -- legislative, funding, and operational -- are closely interdependent. While money is a critical ingredient, access to services and a need for a coordinated system to route youth through transitional services and off the street also have been identified as necessary by service providers, law enforcement agencies and juvenile court counselors.

Respectfully submitted,

Kent E. Clark
Tom Hogan
Tamara Kelley

Charlotte Kennedy
Marcia Mulvey
Carolyn Neimeyer

Ann Paxton
Morton T. Rosenblum
Muriel Goldman, Chair

JUVENILE JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE, LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND
HUMAN SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEES

Approved by the Research Board on July 3, 1985 and the Board of Governors on July 8, 1985 for publication and distribution to the membership. Because this report carries no conclusions or recommendations, no official action is required of the membership.

NEWSPAPER SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON

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themselves and their street peers for survival and support. At least two-thirds subsist wholly or partly through prostitution. They are also involved in crime and drugs. Most are between the ages 14 to 20, although 12 and 13 year olds are seen increasingly. While more girls than boys are reported as runaways, approximately equal numbers engage in juvenile prostitution. Although most of these youths live and congregate in the downtown area, juvenile prostitutes are known to be located in pockets throughout the county, and an increasing number of homeless youth are gravitating to the Burnside area and are alleged by Portland police to commit a high number of crimes in that area. They are also victims of theft and abuse.

A recent Salvation Army survey of 385 street youths served at its Greenhouse Center at SW 4th and Yamhill revealed that 73% were Oregonians, with 63% coming from the immediate tri-county area. Fifty percent were school dropouts; many could not read or write. Over 50% of the youth served at the Greenhouse Center have lived on the street for at least one year.

Current Services Provided for Youths in Multnomah County

Services for youths in Portland and the county basically fall into three categories:

1. Preventive, educational, character-building, recreational. (School programs, Scouts, Camp Fire, Boys Club).
2. Diversion or short-term crisis intervention. The five Portland Youth Service Centers and agencies such as Harry's Mother (shelter), Mainstream (alcohol) and CODA (drugs) are examples of diversion programs.
3. Long-Term or Intensive Treatment. By adolescence, youths needing such long-term assistance usually have been served by the Children's Services Division (CSD) and the Juvenile Court and have frequently been in substitute care. They have a long history of problems ranging from abuse and neglect to criminal behavior and may exhibit serious emotional disturbance and/or chemical dependency. Street youths generally have this history and need long-term treatment, although some may benefit from short-term intervention if reached early.

All of the programs listed as diversion, except the Youth Service Centers, also accept youth who have been processed (adjudicated) through the Juvenile Court. CSD does provide a continuum of substitute care for close to 1,000 youths of all ages. Nevertheless, few of the street youths are able to form the necessary attachments to be maintained in the available placements. Greatly distrustful of the adult world, street youths have multiple, overlapping and long-term physical and psychological needs. They frequently fall between the cracks of existing services, as few agencies presently are geared up to work with them.

Youth services are funded mainly by public monies and are supplemented by private sources such as United Way, foundation grants, and donations.

The available dollars are not sufficient to meet the needs. Examples of programs specifically geared to street youths include Salvation Army's Greenhouse. The Greenhouse Project is the only completely privately-funded program exclusively serving street youths and recently indicated a need for additional funds in order to continue operating. Greenhouse serves approximately 100 youths per day with walk-in counseling, one meal a day, referral to medical and other services, and a warm, dry place to spend an evening.

Project LUCK, a coordinating mechanism for a group of 15 public and private agencies serving juvenile prostitutes, operates on a shoestring budget of public and private dollars and in-kind services. In 1984, Project LUCK made 1,725 street contacts and provided emergency services to 261 youths, 33 of whom entered a long-term program to leave prostitution. The Juvenile Court's Options Program, which serves female prostitutes, operates without access to essential community support services such as long-term residential care.

In spite of the diversity and commitment of agencies working with street youth, the overall impact has been limited. Over half of the street youth are dependent for their survival upon adults or older, more experienced youth who exploit them as sexual objects.

Solutions Currently Under Consideration

Currently, Portland lacks a consistent policy for dealing with street youths and with the problems they are perceived to generate for downtown residents, workers and shoppers. There are few viable alternatives to street life. Some suggested resources have included a downtown youth assistance center, long-term housing, vocational and independent living skills training, job opportunities, detoxification, and increased alcohol and drug treatment services.

Some attempts to address the problem are underway. The Oregon Legislature recently passed SB 300, which both amended the current law to allow short-term holding of dangerous youth and appropriated \$750,000 (the initial proposal was for \$3.6 million) to the State Juvenile Services Commission to fund alternatives to detention and programs for status offenders. The money will be distributed through county Juvenile Services Commissions for funding local projects. Emergency shelter funds for the homeless also were appropriated. It is not yet clear whether this money is intended only for adults or also for youths. Legislation lowering to 14 the age for obtaining mental health and substance abuse treatment without parental consent will facilitate access to such services for those street youth seeking and qualifying for such assistance.

Establishment of a downtown youth assistance center project is currently being discussed by officials representing city, county, state, federal and private funding agencies. The Portland Police Department activated a new Juvenile Division on April 15, 1985. Hoping to reduce both burglaries and juvenile prostitution, the police are picking up truants and runaways during the daytime and curfew violators and alcohol and drug users at night. The intent is to refer the youths to appropriate supervision