

Locals with HIV to get mental health support with grant

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem foundation has awarded AIDS Care Service a grant of \$51,183 to begin mental health support groups for HIV+ individuals and their families. The grant is made possible by the Harriet Taylor Flynt Fund of The Winston-Salem Foundations.

"AIDS Care Service (ACS) has always sought to add to the quality of life of those in our community living with HIV/AIDS," says Christine Jolly, ACS President. "We are grateful to The Winston-Salem Foundation for this generous support."

The mental health service has been created in response to a community needs assessment. The ACS board, staff, clients as well as other local service providers and community leaders identified the need for mental health support directly focused on the needs of HIV+ individuals. The support groups will provide safe and confidential meetings to share information, experience, and knowledge and to build mutually supportive emotional and social networks. All groups will emphasize sharing and well being with possible topics such as "Why is Disclosure (telling family and friends about being HIV+) So Difficult?" or "Coping Skills: Depression and HIV". Groups will be led by certified, licensed therapists with experience concerning the many complicated factors for those infected with HIV, their families, caregivers. Transportation will be provided by the ACS van.



Jolly

Seale

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before the founding of the Panthers, during which Seale discovered he was a good public orator. The protest, however, ended in a fight with police, and a sentence of one-year of probation for Seale and Newton.

The two men together would conceive the Black Panther Party as a way to push for social change in a turbulent time. They wrote a ten-point program, demanding things for "black and oppressed" people such as free health care, access to education and an end to police brutality.

In an attempt to stop police abusing their authority in minority communities, the Panthers would observe police. They carried a law book, tape recorder and visible firearms with them. Seale described the great lengths the Panthers went to follow every firearm law on the books. They carried their rifles in the open because to conceal them was illegal. They kept the rifles pointed up because it was against the law for the barrel to ever point at anyone.

This controversial patrolling by the Panthers brought them into conflict with police and even the FBI. Then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared them "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

Seale said many of the Panthers' activities were distorted by the media and law enforcement officials. He said the widely-held notions that the organization aimed to kill all white people and harbored weapons such as bazookas and grenades, were pure myth. "I get people that say 'You know, in the 1960s, Mr. Seale, you scared a lot of people.' I said 'Actually, the FBI with their press releases and distortions really did the scaring.'" Seale told the audience.

Seale said the Panthers' knowledge of the law often unraveled police officers. He



Photo by Todd Luck

Bobby Seale signs books for students.

talked about a confrontation that Newton once had with an officer during in which Newton explained all the U.S. Supreme rulings that made it illegal for police to monitor him.

Seale proudly described a time in 1967 when he led a small group of armed Panthers into the California Legislature to state their opposition to a proposed gun law that would've prevented members from patrolling the streets. Their action was condemned by the state's governor at the time, Ronald Reagan.

"Ronald Reagan, J. Edgar Hoover, everybody who was racist and an idiot would call us hoodlums and thugs," said Seale.

Seale said word spread about the Panthers standing up to police. After the death of Martin Luther King in 1968, he said the the national membership of the party exploded and chapters sprung up in cities and towns throughout the nation.

But as the Party grew, so did opposition. Not all of the organization's conflicts with the authorities were wars of words. By 1969, Seale said fights with law enforcement officials had resulted in the death of 29 Panthers and 14 police officers. Many charges were brought against members of the party. Seale, himself, was famously tried for inciting a riot at the 1968

Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He and his co-defendants became known as the "Chicago Eight." Seale was cited with contempt for his frequent outbursts during the trial. At one point, the judge even had Seale bound and gagged to keep him quiet.

In 1970, Seale faced even more serious charges when he and other Panthers were tried for the murder of Alex Rackley, a member of the Panthers, in New Haven, Conn. The charges were seen as bogus by many, and the defendants received a groundswell of support from Yale University students and even the schools president at the time. The trial ended with a hung jury. Seale boasted that the Panthers won 95 percent of their court cases.

Clashes with police and the legal system are but a small part of the Panther legacy, Seale insisted. Black Panther chapters were required to implement social programs to help improve black communities throughout the nation. To that end, chapters started sickle cell anemia testing initiatives and free breakfast for children. The Winston-Salem Panther Chapter, one of the nation's most prolific, even started a free ambulance service to transport poor residents to city hospitals. Seale said offering a free breakfast to poor children was so successful that it was eventually adopted by the government and has become a staple at

chairs, however, remained practically constant; there were a total of 115 chairs in 1989 and 116 by '99. Of that total, 19 at one time or another chaired committees that dealt mostly with social services "because it was likely in the best interests of their constituents," Overby said.

He said the lack of additional chair appointments, despite overall election gains, resulted from a nearly simultaneous increase in Republican control of state

legislatures during the '90s. Few African-American legislators are members of the GOP, Overby said, which is a "reminder that we still have a polarized party system and that black Americans continue to be heavily Democratic at both the mass and elite levels."

The study, "African-American Committee Chairs in American State Legislatures," is being published in the September issue of Social Science Quarterly.

their majority status. That pride was instilled in everything from the community's political activism to the rich music scene, which included hometown artists like Chuck Brown, the godfather of funk-based go-go.

"A lot of blacks saw D.C. as sort of the mecca," said Carroll, who is black. "You came here for education, to get a good job."

It was in those years, however, that many black neighborhoods fell into decline. Businesses and residents fled when rioting broke out in 1968 after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. That was followed by the cocaine epidemic of the 1980s. Buildings also were razed to make way for a subway line.

Many neighborhoods are now booming. In Columbia

Heights, cranes dot the skyline as workers finish construction on a massive retail complex. Condos nearby are advertised at \$300,000 and up.

There are indications of growing frustration. Some new residents have complained about unsupervised youths targeting them by throwing rocks. And a local blog has posted complaints about graffiti that reads: "Go Home Rich White People."

Meanwhile, at Ben's Chili Bowl, Ali said she is pleased to see much of the city recovering after years of decline. And Ali and her sons, who now oversee the restaurant, welcome both newcomers and loyal customers alike. She is nostalgic, though, for the way things were when U Street felt like one big family.

While diversity is good and is change inevitable, she said, "you lose the closeness of an ethnic community."

Smiley's HBCU Tour is coming to A&T tomorrow

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Nationally-known talk show host and commentator Tavis Smiley will be on the campus of N.C. A&T State University tomorrow, Sept. 21, presenting the Talented Tenth HBCU Tour.

On the tour, which is being sponsored by the U.S. Navy, Smiley pushes the importance of future of Black leadership and aims to inspire new leaders from five of the nation's universities. The tour kicks off this evening in Tallahassee, Fla., at Florida A&M University. Stops are also planned at Tennessee State University, Morehouse and Prairie View A&M University in Texas.

At each of the campuses, Smiley will lead a two-hour interactive discussion on the characteristics of successful role models in the areas of business, public service, religion and academia. And, he will challenge the students to develop their leadership guiding principles. The Navy will host a special session to examine how leadership skills developed within its organization has helped many achieve a lifetime of success. The special session will be open to students on each campus.

"I created this tour to enlighten, encourage, and empower students to think about what their own leadership legacy will be," said Smiley, who was influenced by the teachings W.E.B. DuBois while planning the tour. "That is what they can do today that will echo throughout their communities, careers, and ultimately throughout history."

The event, which will be from 7 - 9 p.m. in the Harrison Auditorium, is free and open to the public, however, attendees must register for the event by going on-line to www.tavistalks.com. Registrants should print the confirmation page and bring it with them to the event.

"I'm convinced that the students who attend these institutions of higher learning are the scholars, the exceptional - the leaders of the future. They possess the courage and talent to set the standard for the next generation of leadership for our country," said Smiley, a best-selling author who also hosts "Tavis Smiley" on PBS and "The Tavis Smiley Show" on PRI.



NPR Photo

Tavis Smiley will tour schools throughout the country.



Huey P. Newton

Study

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from the late '80s, just prior to the most extensive round of redistricting that resulted in large numbers of African-American officeholders, to the late '90s, the end of major redistricting overhauls. During that period, the total number of African-American state legislators increased almost 31 percent, from 438 to 573. The number of African-American committee

D.C.

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Cropp, who once worked for former Mayor Marion Barry and now teaches public policy at George Washington University.

Cropp said such an election would be significant - Washington hasn't had a white mayor since Congress passed legislation in 1973 allowing D.C. residents to choose their own mayor and city council.

Kenneth Carroll, 47, a writer who has lived in Washington his entire life, said the changes mean the loss of what he believes once defined D.C. - a sense of self-determination and self-confidence among black residents that stemmed from



Fenty

schools today.

Seale has penned several books and is popular on the speaking circuit. He is determined to keep the Panther legacy alive and to not let it be dictated by other people. In many ways, he is the last person who knows the complete legacy of the organization. Newton died in 1989, shot and killed by a 24-year-old suspected drug dealer. Seale says the Panthers are an important part of American history.

"We were about constitutional, democratic, civil, human rights," he said. "It's a profound piece of history."

Seale was introduced last week by Larry Little, a WSSU professor and lawyer, who led the Winston-Salem Panther chapter in its heyday. Little traveled to California when he was 19 to be trained as a Panther in order for the city's chapter to become an official part of the organization. Little met Seale while he was behind bars in connection with the Rackley murder. Little said, even in jail, Seale took the time to mentor him.

For more information on Seale, or to order his books, go to www.bobbyseale.com.

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