

Consensus: Black Parents Are Not Part Of The Educational Partnership

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Black parents are not a part of the educational partnership that should take place between the school and the home. That is the firm conviction of recently appointed School Board member Arthur Griffin.

He is not alone in that belief. Both board member Sarah Stevenson and Spauld Middle School principal Bob Davis agree with Griffin's contention that black parents need to become more involved in the education of their children.

Remarks Griffin, "Teachers are doing as much as they possibly can do in a short time. For those children who need more, they're not getting it."

He continues, "Historically, education has been a priority for the black community as a way to get out of poverty. Today's parents were educated in segregated schools. Their teachers knew what students would be facing and took on the role of mentors. This worked well."

"Today, parents still feel the teacher will be a surrogate parent, but that's not the case," Griffin says. Teachers now just don't have the time to give that special attention. The solution, he believes, is for parents to be "educational part-



Sarah Stevenson
....."Not enough involvement"



Arthur Griffin
.....Appointed in February



Bob Davis
.....Open-door policy

Whatever the reasons, Griffin wants to see something done about the problem. Although the black community may place a high value on education, education has not been a "number one priority in a practical way," he emphasizes.

Despite the implementation of the "Education Is A Family Affair" project, which the School System feels has been very effective in increasing overall parent involvement, Griffin maintains that "in the area of black children and black parents involvement, not enough has been done to let the parents know the importance of their children's educational experience."

Besides increasing awareness, Griffin wants to see a plan of action. "We need to identify the programs currently going on that might help, such as the Minority Achievement Program," he declares. "We need to get the people involved through the normal cultural institutions, especially the churches." Churches and other institutions, he says, can raise the level of the community's awareness about education, and can provide information about how to get more involved.

"If we don't intervene," he warns, "we'll be in real trouble." Griffin points to the fact that only 1.3

percent of black students are in the schools' academically gifted program, compared to 16 percent of white students. "Even children from two-parent professional black families can't get over the hump to get into the program," he adds.

Davis agrees. He refers to the frustration of black students who find themselves "in an island of whiteness" in some schools. "They feel isolated and alone," he explains. "There aren't many in the Gifted and Talented program, and I know we have some smart black children out there."

At Spauld, Davis has an orientation for new parents before school starts. Then, throughout the year, he emphasizes an "open-door policy." Despite his encouragement to parents to get involved, "they seem content to leave it in my hands."

Stevenson has long been actively attempting to increase parent participation, especially through organizations like the Black Women's Caucus. Although still a long way from the ideal, she has seen an improvement in parent attendance at school functions. From her experience, she attests, "For the most part, if parents are asked and encouraged, they will go."

In Lucille Cato's Class

Learning Has Become "Just As Much Fun" As It Is Hard Work For Students

Learning has become just as much fun as it is hard work for students in Lucille Cato's class at Barringer Elementary School.

The sixth graders participated in a Book Museum. Emphasizing the theme, "Nation of Readers," the students first had to read the books before they could assume the character.

For instance, Ena King portrayed Cinderella from the book of the same name. Her task was to tell the story from Cinderella's point of view. She presented the facts in script form

before the class.

The idea was Ms. Cato's, a language arts teacher who has been named "Teacher of the Year" twice at Barringer.

"When the characters talk about their books I believe this makes it more meaningful to the students," Ms. Cato commented. The characterizations also increased interest in reading and gave each student a balanced participation in class activity.

Mentally, students were stimu-

lated to learn; physically, they appeared dressed as a certain character. They also posed as figures in a wax museum for effect and were highlighted during the School Library's Media Day. Grace L. Wyche and Teresa Alford are the media specialists.

Students, their characters, and books included: Ena King, Cinderella from "Cinderella"; Diane Archer, Sara Crewe from "A Little Princess"; Sarah Johnson, Meg March from "The Little Women"; Rusty Conrad, Tom Sawyer from "Tom Sawyer";



The sixth grade students in Lucille Cato's class portray characters from their favorite books.

Job Training Proposed For Vietnam Veterans

Special To The Post

New York City's proposed Vietnam veterans job training and placement center will not reach many of the neediest black and Hispanic veterans unless it has a strong "grassroots outreach element to seek out the vets on the streets."

This warning, sounded by the leaders of the Black Veterans for Social Justice (BVSJ), was echoed during recent interviews with several other veterans of the War in Vietnam.

"The normal programs only reach vets with a certain consciousness level," declared Job Mashiriki, president of the BVSJ, during an interview in the organization's storefront office at 1119 Fulton St., Brooklyn. "Many black and Hispanic veterans have given up a long time ago because of too many disappointments."

And Anival Barrett, a specialist in veterans' benefits at BVSJ said, "Many of the 'reachable' vets have already been reached. For the others, you are going to have to go into the streets, into the men's shelters and into the prisons to find them in order to service them."

The jobs training and placement center, as well as a monument to veterans of the war in Vietnam in lower Manhattan, are scheduled to be paid for by a \$2 million fund raising effort headed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission (VVMC), established by Mayor Koch in the fall of 1982.

Philip Morris USA, the cigarette manufacturer, recently pledged a \$250,000 "matching grant" toward the fund raising effort to encourage contributions from city residents and businesses before May 7, 1985.

The company opened a special account for contributions at the Freedom National Bank recently. It has put more than 10,000 displays in stores and newsstands advising that contributions for the memorial and the jobs center be sent to New York Vietnam Memorial, c/o Philip Morris, 120 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Frank E. Resnik, president and chief executive officer of Philip

Morris USA, said recently that a study by the VVMC had revealed that black and Hispanic veterans, and former servicemen who had seen heavy combat in Vietnam, were among the most significantly affected by unemployment and underemployment in New York City.

The report said that unemployment among black Vietnam veterans was 17 percent compared to 16 percent among Hispanics and six percent among whites.

Founded seven years ago, the Black Veterans for Social Justice provides a variety of services for black and Hispanic veterans in the New York area. These services have included assistance with employment, housing, draft, and military counseling, veteran benefits, counseling on claims related to agent orange and also assistance to veterans in prison. While most of the BVSJ clients are Vietnam-era veterans, some others served in the American military during the First World War.

Aneesh Singla, Tara in "The High King"; Ty Crawford as Buccaneer from "The Golden Blood of Buccaneers"; Lara Brooks as Rapunzel from "Rapunzel"; and Chad Pelfrey, Black Beard, "Prates and Privateers."

Susan Schneck, Akki, "Dragon's Blood"; Stefanie Rehn, Jo March in "Little Women"; Jason Lonta, Captain Nemo, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea"; Steven Ramsey as Tom Bann; Reginald Westbrook as Turbo and Brett Welborn as Ozma from the book "Breakdancing"; Mike Miranda, Huckleberry Finn, "Huckleberry Finn"; Vonneta Mickens, Angie Rogers, "Hello... Wrong Number"; Matthew Everett, Johnny Bench, "The Greatest in Baseball"; and Kristi Strupinsky as Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz."

Other students included Lawanda Harris as Harriet Tubman in "Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad"; Tommy Brame as Scrooge in "Christmas Carol"; Brian Stebbins, Pinocchio from "Pinocchio"; John Sharp, Tom Sawyer from "Tom Sawyer"; Dwayne Glover as Huckleberry Finn from "Huckleberry Finn"; and Jim Hawkins, Chuck Briggs, "Treasure Island."

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