

# Couple, 28 Kids — 13 Haitians Make A Very Large Family

**By Tracy Fields**  
**FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP)** - It's like any other house full of kids: toys and clothes everywhere, a Barney video on TV, little ones everywhere.  
 But this house is literally FULL of kids.  
 In all, Ed and Annie Ravish care for 28 children, many disabled,

ranging in age from 18 months to 16 years, at the Gabriel Home; nearly half have been rescued from Haiti.  
 Juliette, who's blind, and Esnel, who weighed just 10 pounds and couldn't lift his head when he came, are the latest. The 4-year-olds arrived last month.  
 "If we didn't do it, they'd die,"

Annie said. "The children here (in the United States) are at least in homes and can get medical attention." The Ravishes rely on the help of a contact at the State Department to rescue the Haitian children.  
 Doctors in the island nation must certify that the children have needs which cannot be met there, and local doctors swear they are willing to treat them without charge.  
 The couple cares for their own 10 kids - five biological and five adopted - along with the others in a Christian family, rather than institutional atmosphere.

"There's just no other home like this," Annie said. "It's a home-home." Three children sit in special chairs in the kitchen floor. Two little girls in blue dresses, one of them blind, toddle about.  
 Six cribs line the walls of the front room, where two kids are receiving physical therapy. Outside, another four or so are stringing plastic bags between trees, building a fort; others are still at school.  
 The family lives in a nine-bedroom, five-bath house which they also share with five horses, four cats, three dogs, a pair of iguanas, a bird and a goat.

"It keeps us busy," said Ed, 60, bending to lift little Michelle, who had been abandoned in Haiti. Nearly every conversation in the house is interrupted to meet the needs of the children such as batteries, band-aids, or a little attention.

Even before they moved to Florida four years ago, the Ravishes had been taking children in. Annie worked in a nursing home outside Sheffield, Mass., with youngsters who had profound medical needs and used to bring some of them home for weekends.  
 Not content with that, the couple sponsored children in other countries as well, including Nadege, a little blind girl who'd been abandoned on a garbage heap in Haiti. But two years ago, they

learned the orphanage where she lived could no longer care for her.  
 "So I said 'I'm going to get her,'" Annie said, and in September 1991 set out for Port-au-Prince. She arrived just before the coup in which President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed, and was trapped for a month.  
 "I didn't know whether she was alive or dead for the first week," said Ed, who also works with the terminally ill at a hospice.

"I think the hardest thing was being away from the family," said Annie, who's nearly 44.  
 She spent the time hiding in an orphanage and helping others.  
 "I basically became in charge of children," she said.

Trained as a midwife, Annie delivered five babies, picked up a few words of Creole and made some friends.  
 "I was never afraid of the Haitian people," she said. "I was terrified of the military." She saw soldiers shoot down a mother and child who were crossing the street in violation of curfew and narrowly missed being shot herself while sneaking to a telephone one night; she kept the spent bullet that hit a nearby wall as a souvenir.

In October 1991, Annie and Nadege returned to Fort Myers. Soon after, Ed and Annie decided to start the Gabriel Home. Helped by more than 30 volunteers - including a pair of physical therapists - they care for abandoned, displaced, and medically needy children like Marlene, another Haitian child. She has had surgery for tuberculosis of the spine.

"Where would she be if she wasn't here?" Annie asked.  
 "Most people stay with their own people," said Caroline Thao, a Sheboygan South junior. "You feel safer, more comfortable. I wish, though, we could all be one group." Several students said fights were due largely to a desire for status and usually were limited to gangs of young men formed along racial lines.  
 "Most Hmong I've seen have joined gangs," said Xia Lee, a Sheboygan North junior. "If you're in a gang, and you get hit, you go

## Area Alphas To Observe Founders Day Saturday

Alpha Phi Alpha brothers in Durham, Chapel Hill and the surrounding area will converge on the Bull City Saturday to celebrate the fraternity's 87th Founders Day.  
 Sammie Chess, Jr., an administrative law judge for the State of North Carolina and a 1958 graduate of NCCU, will serve as the keynote speaker.

Started in 1906 on the campus of Cornell University, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., is the oldest of all black Greek letter organizations.

fraternity's most prominent members are Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, W.E.B. DuBois, Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson; and locally, N.C. Central Chancellor Julius Chambers, City Councilman Howard Clement, columnist Ernie Suggs and noted writer Chuck Stone.

The convocation and reception will be held at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the N.C. Mutual Life Insurance Co., 411 W. Chapel Hill St.

Listed among some of the

The public is invited.

## Students: Status, Not Racism, Causes Conflict At High Schools

**SHEBOYGAN, Wis. (AP)** - Black, Hispanic and Asian students were involved in recent fights at North and South high schools, but some students say the skirmishes were caused by a desire for status, not by racism.

Several Sheboygan students said they did not believe racial tension was the main reason for the fighting, but they noted that racial lines did exist.

"Most people stay with their own people," said Caroline Thao, a Sheboygan South junior. "You feel safer, more comfortable. I wish, though, we could all be one group." Several students said fights were due largely to a desire for status and usually were limited to gangs of young men formed along racial lines.

"Most Hmong I've seen have joined gangs," said Xia Lee, a Sheboygan North junior. "If you're in a gang, and you get hit, you go

get your friends." Paul Ruiz, a junior at South, has friends in gangs, but he said teen gangs in Sheboygan were nothing like the gun-toting, drug-running groups in large urban areas.

In Sheboygan, gangs are made up of teens with time on their hands and a grudge against outsiders, Ruiz said.

"They want to show each other who's better," he said.

Brenda Gonzales, a former teacher's aide at Sheridan Elementary School, said children of all races in her school seemed to get along well. But there are no guarantees grade-school friends will still be pals when they hit high school, she said.

Besides school, other influences on children include the attitudes of relatives or acquaintances and pressures from the outside world, Gonzales said.

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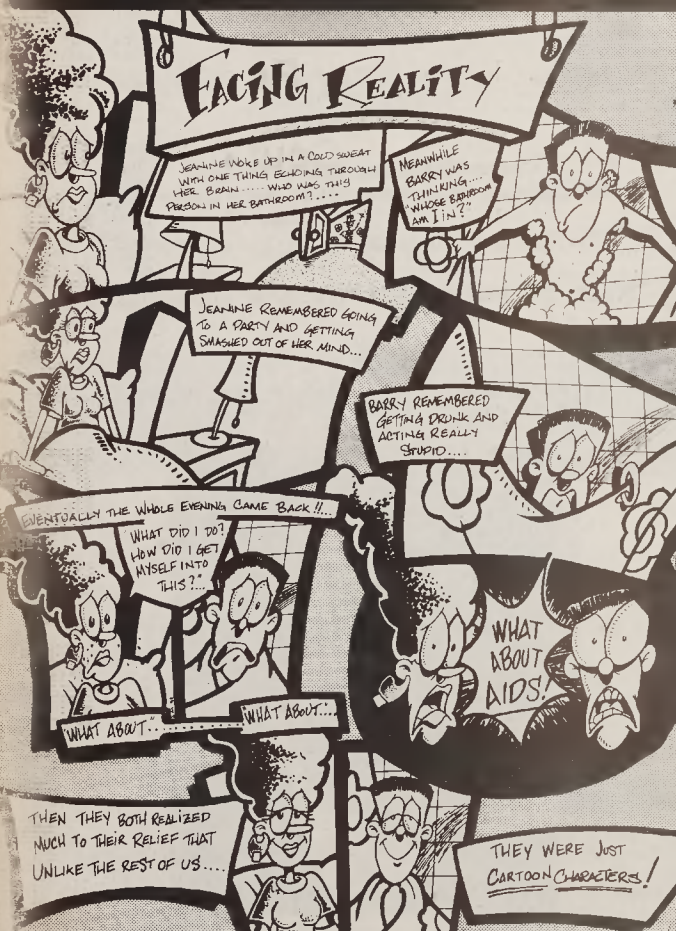
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