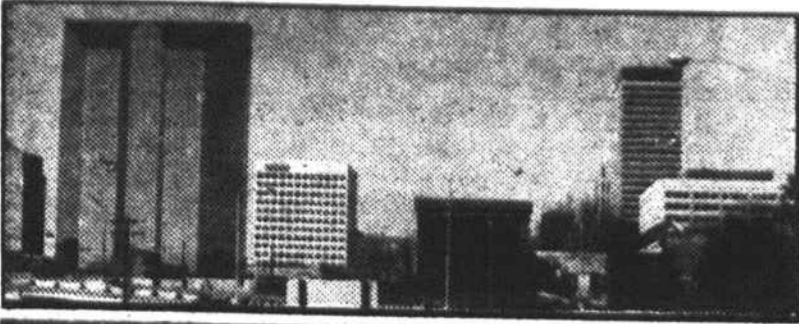


Community News B



LER program helps steer area's youth from crime

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Community News Editor

There's a sign in one of the back rooms at the Housing Authority's Piedmont Circle office suggesting that youngsters do their homework, help their parents out at home and respect themselves and others. Actually it is more a requirement than a suggestion. It has become the rule of the land at a new program for at-risk community young people.

Working under the Liberty East Restoration program, several community leaders are lending their time and energy to help keep children away from crime and steer them into positive activities. LER falls under the

Any program like this is just a band-aid. Until we stop dealing with '80s situations with a '50s mentality, any program that comes out will be just that. But if we can just get one or two kids to turn around and go the other way, I think that it's worth everything we've put into it.

-- Jason Hawkins

umbrella of the Community and Police Against Crime program. Armed with the determination that youngsters surrounded by negative influences can still grow up to become productive members of their communities, LER staff members have taken to the streets to keep young people safe and out of the legal system.

"The program was started to change the living patterns of our youngsters who are surrounded by different kinds of negative things," said Jason Hawkins, LER's coordinator/director. "We're helping them academically,

culturally and with recreational activities. Our main objective is to channel their energies in a positive way and to give them a more positive feeling about law enforcement officers."

The program, open to youth between the ages of 10 and 15, was awarded a federal grant to carry out its programs. But the staff faced the challenge of convincing both children and their parents that LER is not just another run-of-the-mill program. So Hawkins and police officer D.L. Page began a door-to-door recruitment campaign to find youngsters and to determine the amount of interest parents had in the service.

Hawkins said that participants in LER will take field trips to local spots of interest. They also will be involved in civic activities and Hawkins is confident that the experience will expose them to things they may otherwise have missed.

"Our children need positive role models in the community," said Hawkins. "Usually what they see comes through negative images. We want to offer them a variety of positive experiences."

But youngsters in the program must abide by a set of rules. For instance, the staff does not tolerate profanity, smoking, fighting or drugs. Hawkins said that any youngster that violates any one of the rules is dismissed from the program on the spot.

Page said that the guidelines enable the staff to help keep youngsters out of trouble.

"We are looking for innovative ways to offer things to youth who have never been in trouble," said Page, who wrote the grant proposal for the program. "Hopefully, we will be able to keep them out of trouble. We want to educate the young to spend their energies in positive ways. Hopefully, we can keep them off the

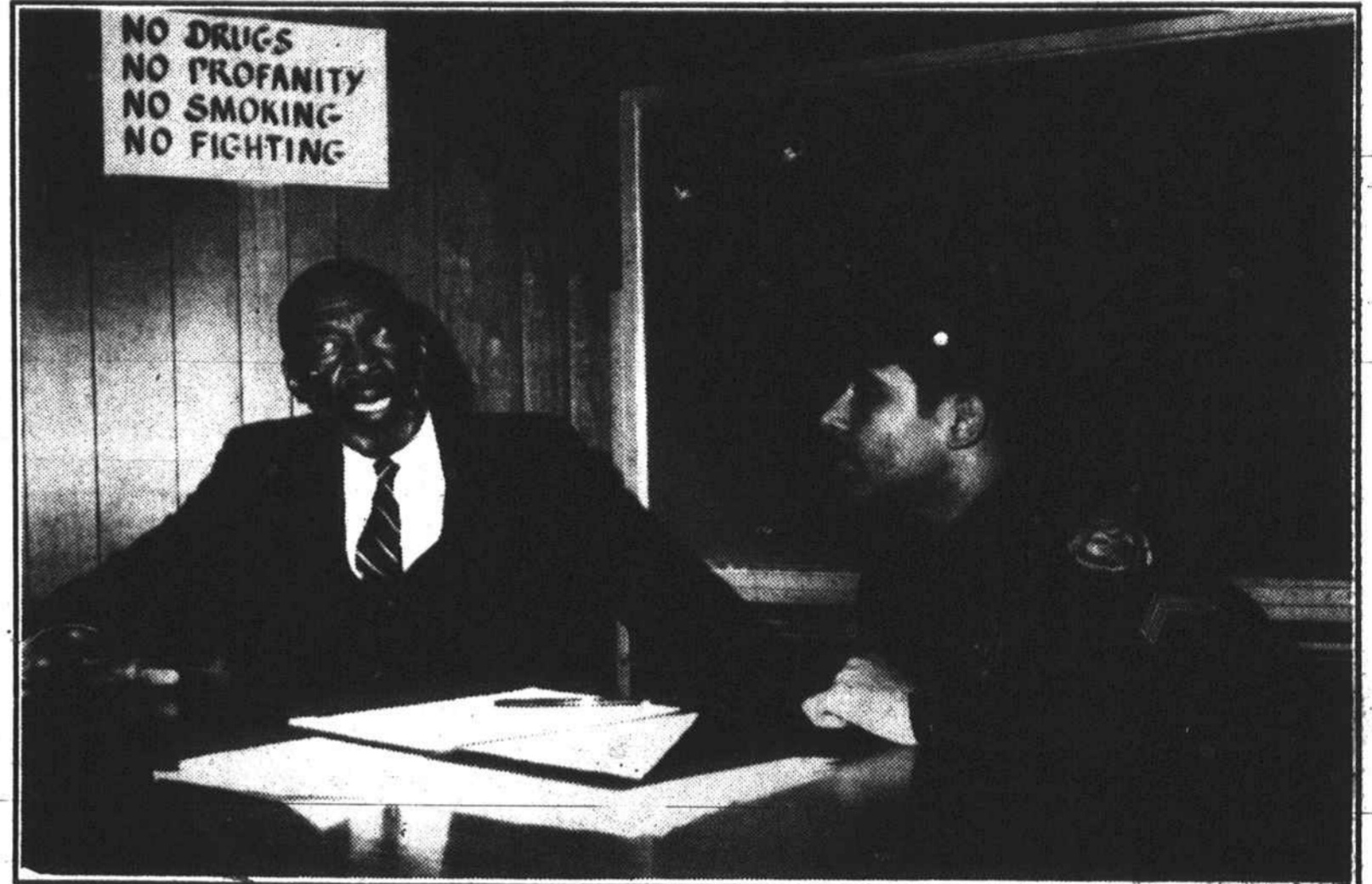


photo by Charmane Delaverson

Jason Hawkins, left, and officer D.L. Page map out a plan of activity for young participants in the Liberty East Restoration program.

street and out of trouble."

But Hawkins admitted that despite the program's good intentions, it is not a cure-all for the problems facing today's young people who grow up in areas heavily influenced by crime and other negative factors. A 27-year veteran of the New York school system, Hawkins said that service organizations are trying to solve new problems with outdated approaches.

"We have not changed with the institutions. We're trying to use a '50s mentality to cope with '80s situations and institutions. We haven't kept up," said

Hawkins, a former assistant principal who came out of retirement to work with the LER group. "The key to helping children is helping the family. You can't be stand-offish and you can't be afraid. This program went door-to-door to see the families of some of these children who will be in the program. Any program like this is just a band-aid. Until we stop dealing with '80s situations with a '50s mentality, any program that comes out will be just that. But if we can just get one or two kids to turn around and go the other way, I think that it's worth everything we've put into it."

SCLC head calls on Afro-Americans to adopt 'liberation lifestyles'

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

While the ceremonies surrounding Martin Luther King's birthday are nice, one of his closest friends said that it's time to add some sacrament to the occasions.

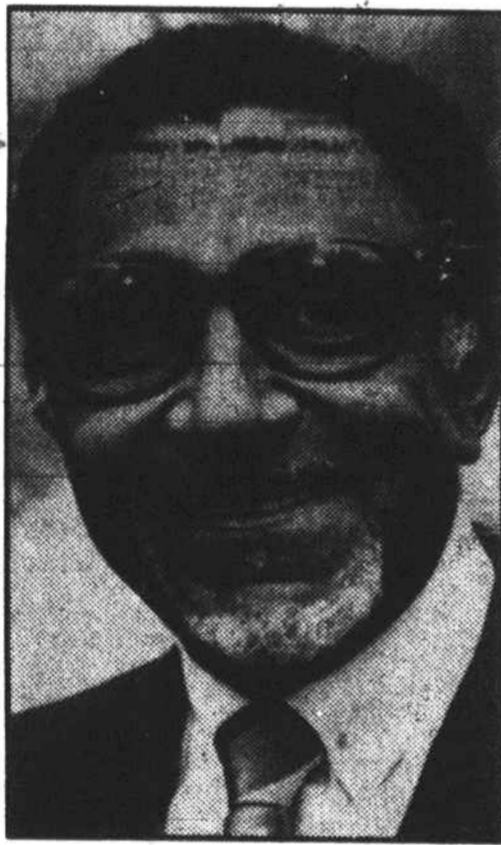
The Rev. Joseph Lowery, co-founder with King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and its current president, said that the King holiday is an opportunity to go beyond ceremonial tributes and cut to the real ideology of Martin Luther King Jr.

"He (King) would be the first to say that it (the King holiday) doesn't stop with him. It honors a people whose hearts and souls burned for freedom," said Lowery, pastor of Atlanta's Cascade United Methodist Church. "It also honors a nation. America honored itself when it made Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday. It showed that America has sensitivity to that fire."

Citing what he called "Kingian

Theology," Lowery said that those who celebrate King's birthday should push to combine the ceremonial with the sacramental. He likened the ceremonial to waving a flag on the Fourth of July to symbolize patriotism and said that the sacramental is "loving your country so much that you refuse to leave it alone until it straightens up and flies right. We won't let America rest on how far it has come. We have to keep prodding it to do more. We must not let tokenism substitute for equality."

During his address, Lowery spoke of King's "unfinished task" concerning making Americans realize the oneness of the human family. The task remains unfinished, Lowery said, because there are still states within the country that refuse to honor King on his birthday, yet foreign nations have established facilities in his honor. He said also that America will continue to be divided until it embraces all of its citizens.



Lowery

"We must realize that our oneness is accentuated by our common hope for a bright tomorrow. There is an inextricability of our relation-

ships," said Lowery.

In his address, which he sprinkled with humor as well as serious overtones and challenges, Lowery scoffed at the concept of "going back to Africa." Lowery said too that he likes the "way Mr. Bush is talking, but we must keep a fire under the bush" and make sure that Bush's "kinder, gentler nation" is available to all Americans and not just the rich and powerful.

"Our brains and our brawn helped make America. We aren't going back to Africa. Most of us haven't even been to Africa. How are we going to go back?" he asked.

But in order to stay and help make America work, Lowery said that Afro-Americans must begin to practice what he has termed "liberation lifestyles" that will affect all levels of their lives. With respect to politics, Lowery said that he would like to see Afro-Americans become loyal to candidates and not to any one political party. "Black folks," he said, "ought not be in the pocket

of any political party. I'm tired of one party taking us for granted and the other just taking us."

A "liberated lifestyle", under Lowery's plan, also calls for economic empowerment. In 1957, when King and Lowery help found the SCLC, the median income of Afro-Americans was 58 percent of the median white income. Today, 32 years later, the median Afro-American income is 56 percent of the median white income. "We've painted poverty black. That means it's easier to put on the back burner," Lowery said.

As the country celebrates King's legacy, Lowery said that it should concentrate on eliminating the threat of war that exists around the world. He said King "speaks to us today to tolerate war no more" and reminded his audience that countries spend a trillion dollars on "instruments of death" while 40,000 children die each day.

Drug traffic is growing, Lowery said, because it represents the

frustration and despair of young people. He said that drugs also have been used as a weapon against minorities and have distracted them from their true potential. But Lowery challenged the audience to keep King's dream alive by committing to the plan of a "liberated lifestyle."

"Drugs are a trick that they're playing on us. They know where the drug traffic is, but they don't intend to do anything about it. As long as you scramble your brains you can't compete in the marketplace. In terms of knowing the heart and soul of the black experience, black people don't need any alien substances to make us feel good. All you have to do is look at your history and how far you've come. That'll make you high. That's an authentic good feeling that the black experience offers. It's liberated lifestyles that will make us free, at last, not in death, but in this life. I don't want us to fall victim to the assault from without by our fault from within."

Top Ladies sponsor project

The Winston-Salem chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction recently broke ground flower beds at the Bowen Park Par Course.

One of the club's purposes is the beautification of the physical and psychological environment of the community. By spring, par course visitors will find the flowers in full bloom. Alderman Vivian Burke, a member of the organization, was responsible for establishing the park in 1983.

Joe Jackson, landscape planner with the Department of Recreation, was on hand to assist the group. Lords Jack Davis and Jakay Ervin will assist with the project.

Minnie Ervin is chairwoman of the beautification committee. Other members are Brenda Hodge, co-chair; Sandra Armstrong, Inez Davis, Maria Ferguson, Glennie



photo by Charmane Delaverson

Beautification participants, from left, were Jack Davis, Dorothy Ross, Maria Ferguson, Thelma Small, Jakay Ervin, Minnie Ervin, Joe Jackson, Sandra Armstrong and Inez Davis.

Hall and Velma Friende.

The local chapter recently inducted Maria Ferguson into the organization.

Ferguson is a retired reading coordinator with the school system. She is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Phi Delta Kappa and the

National Association of University Women.

Ernestine Cathcart is membership chairwoman.

The Lewis' host Flower Niche Garden Club members for monthly meeting

The Flower Niche Garden Club recently held its regular monthly meeting.

The meeting was held at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry Lewis. Gwendolyn Greene was the hostess for the occasion.

Edythe Williams presided at the club's meeting and opened with the Collect.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The agenda consisted of the Fourth District Garden Council meeting

report and a discussion of the humidity of flowers in the winter, planting soil and the cleaning of clay pots.

Vivienne Conley talked about weeding, how to preserve water

hoses an destroying grass and weeds growing up in cement cracks.

Other members attending were: Leola Sadler, Louise McGhee, Grace Lowery, Carolyn Boyd, Elsie McKoy, Lois Hauser, Bessye Dobson and Bernice Davenport.



photo by Charmane Delaverson

Sharing Customs

Kathembi Micheu displays traditional dress from her native Africa. She was a guest at a first grade class at Mineral Springs Elementary School. Hazel Dawson is the class' teacher.