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15-Year-Old Serena Ross
...Active in Explorers Club

Serena Ross Is Concerned With
Mending Differences Between Races

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

Fifteen-year-old Serena Ross is a student at Piedmont Middle School. She's active in the Explorers Club and Project Aries and is a member of the girls' varsity basketball team. The Explorers Club does just what its name suggests. Serena says that she enjoys the club because they go many different places including camping out. Recently, she adds, they were also involved in collecting toys and clothes for the needy.

Project Aries, explains Serena, is concerned with mending differences between races. "We do things we hope will bring blacks, whites and other races closer together," she states.

Serena's favorite school subjects are language arts and social studies and her favorite extracurricular activity is basketball. "I do O.K.," she shyly admits about her ability on the court. Serena plays guard, and she says she was taught the game by her cousin. Though at the time of this interview, Piedmont has lost its first game, Serena remains confident that there will be victories ahead. After all, she claims, "We practice everyday."

This athletic experience may help Serena later, for her ambition is to become a policewoman. "I've wanted to be one ever since I was small," she confesses. "It can be a dangerous job. But I can handle it." Serena assures. Her plans are to complete high school and then enter a police academy.

Maybe "Beverly Hills Cop," the movie starring Eddie Murphy, influenced her. Serena relates that it is one of her favorites. Her hobbies include going to the movies and out

to eat with her friends. Also, she enjoys reading and watching television. Serena is the daughter of Teresa Williamson, and she says she and her mother share a lot with each other. "We can tell each other our real feelings without either one getting mad," she explains.

She is also the sister of twin brothers, Dendre and Dondre, who are six years old. Serena enjoys being big sister to the boys. "I get to tell them what to do," she laughs. She also has a lot of fun taking them out with her. "They attract a lot of attention," Serena notes.

One other special person in Sere-

na's life is her friend, Misti. "We've been best friends since the seventh grade," she reveals. "Misti is the kind of person I can talk my problems over with and she will not tell others. She also likes to have fun," Serena adds.

"I hope one day Misti can be in The Charlotte Post," this week's beauty remarks. That's one of Serena's wishes and another one is for a car. What kind? Nothing but the best for this young lady. "A Porsche," exclaims Serena. Of course.

Serena attends the United House of Prayer For All People.

Commitments From
Blacks Needed To
Combat Black Homicide

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

For the last two weeks this series has examined the grievous situation of black-on-black homicide that is affecting our communities in Charlotte and other cities nationwide.

We began by quoting statistics which revealed blacks killing blacks has reach epidemic proportions. They account for over 60 percent of the homicides occurring in Charlotte and up to 48 percent nationally.

Next, we discussed the victims of homicide, specifically surviving victims, the family and friends of persons who have been killed. We found that they experienced a personal crisis that is overwhelming and, consequently, destructive to the continuation of their own lives. It was found that black-on-black homicide not only claims lives but it leaves a trail of crushed lives in its wake.

Now is the time to act if the black community is ever going to try to compensate for these occurrences. It must begin to look at possible solutions to this increasing problem.

"Solutions of black-on-black homicide will require extensive black leadership," reported a national black magazine. It will take a concerted effort from all outlets of the black populace to combat the problem. Included in this report are opinions from professionals of the community who, in their work, are intricately involved in the lives of black people.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE

"We must first look at the type of people who are committing the crimes. Where do they come from? It is usually from a background of violence where hitting and hurting is used as a method of getting by," claims Balrie Long, a family therapist and minority counselor.

Long's view is reinforced by studies of social behavior which report, "certain subcultures have values that support and encourage the overt use of force in interpersonal relations and group interactions."



Officer Frank Coley



Balrie Long

Third in series

Ways in which we can correct this situation, suggests Long, will have to begin with the family and extend to include the entire community.

"Beginning with small children in the home, parents need to reward children for positive things they do. They (children) should get attention for the good they do. Plus parents have to realize how eagerly children learn the things they see in their home. Parents must become serious about their parenting."

"Grown children, if they are already exposed to what is bad, need to be retaught new skills to use. A restructure of values and morals needs to begin that will develop positive self-esteem."

Long emphasizes, "The fact that killing is wrong has to be taught to our children. Once it was the church from which we learned this doctrine but blacks have gotten away from the church. Now it is up to the parents to get this information to the children."

"The next step is to go back to the communal idea of parenting," suggests Long. "We have to act as a community," she explains. "If we are adults it is our responsibility when we see children fighting to

intervene, not stand idly by because it is not our child.

"The community as a whole must also set up programs that will teach social skills, what is appropriate or inappropriate, plus give the children an awareness of their worth, something they can feel good about. Sports and dancing have been traditional outlets, yet teaching services, organized games and clubs are necessary additions."

POLICE CONCERNS

Charlotte Police Officer Frank Coley has experienced first hand the occurrences and traumas of black-on-black homicide during his duties. "It is a hot, fast, and frightening thing," he reveals.

"The happening is caused by many factors but the key ingredient is frustration," notes Coley. "It is often frustration, along with the false bravado and machismo of young black males, mixed with alcohol and drugs and availability of cheap weapons. They all come to a head," says Coley. And the result leads to killing.

The solutions, reflect Coley, are not going to come from the police department. They will have to come from the black community itself. "We'll have to develop a hands-on method of healing rather than a hands-on method with weapons or destructive devices."

"We are going to have to put a focus on the positive aspects of our culture. Develop our educational, moral and religious fiber."

"I have a concern," continues Coley, "that religion as we know it is a religion we talk about on Sundays without a thing to go on for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc., and this contributes to black-on-black homicide."

"Solutions?" he reflects. "More religion as we are experiencing it will not work. Some people have indicated that stricter sentencing by judges will be the answer. But this is not it. Education as we are getting it, that it not it either."

"Love is the answer," offers Coley. "From love we will get truth, concern and education."

"We can't take a fragmented approach to such a serious problem. I believe in this basic approach to the solution of this problem that is going to eventually affect every American in some harmful or adverse way."

It is a problem, suggests Coley, that each and every individual must think about and look for solutions to. To illustrate he offered a poignant illustration. "Ignore a monster as it eats away at everything about you. Think. When it has destroyed and satisfied its appetite on the last object, you are next."

RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS

Statistics have revealed that most people involved in black-on-black homicide are not affiliated with a church. However, the church, particularly the black church, is continually being called on the carpet for its declining influence in the community, which, many are led to

Has Desegregation Improved The
Quality Of Education For Black Children?

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

"Tommy's not going to understand why he can't go to school," her father replied. "He's going to wonder why and how are we going to tell him we're afraid of them?" (Excerpt from "Neighbors," a short story by Charlotte writer Diane Oliver concerning a black Charlotte family's ordeal over their son being the first child to integrate an all-white school.)

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Charlotte underwent desegregation of its elementary and secondary schools. It was a time of upheaval and turmoil for both blacks and whites in this city. Yet to see white children and black children intermingling on school playgrounds and campuses was a dream for disadvantaged black parents. They felt that desegregation in education was a big step towards curing many of society's discriminations.

Blacks faced many trials to achieve desegregation of the schools especially harassment from whites. But Charlotte did succeed in desegregation. In fact this city accomplished it with exemplary form. Charlotte has subsequently been used nationally as a model city of desegregation.

However, today, grumblings of dissatisfaction can be heard from black parents who are beginning to



Dr. Herman Thomas
...CMS making fine start

worry over the consequences of desegregation. Today, over 10 years later, they're asking themselves has this option really improved the education of black children?

Many blacks of Charlotte are beginning to suspect a lack of commitment on the part of white teachers towards black students. And they're remembering with fondness the atmosphere of all-black schools. "I felt my instructors always cared about me," recalls Elaine Nichols, a lecturer in Afro-American and African Studies



Elaine Nichols
...Students feel no one cares"

at the University of North Carolina, at Charlotte. Nichols attended the all-black high school of Second Ward. "The teachers there invested the time to push students to achieve."

In her everyday dealings with students on UNCC's campus, Nichols has found certain problems which she feels may have derived from desegregation. "Students I've come in contact with now feel that no one cares," she says. She states that black students have revealed the fact that their white counterparts

are receiving in-depth counseling as to the financial and human resources that are available while they are being told nothing.

Dr. Herman Thomas, an assistant professor of Religious Studies and assistant director of Afro-American and African Studies at UNCC, expands on Nichol's assessment by using an example from his own experience. He claims, "I once heard a white teacher say, 'You can put those people (blacks) in my class but you can't make me teach them.'"

"This image becomes louder and louder in my mind," reflects Thomas when asked his views on the benefits of desegregation in schools.

Thomas at one time taught in a segregated black high school in Aberdeen, N.C., and he remembers, "There was a greater sense of commitment to excellence on the part of black teachers to the students. There was an extra sense of involvement, respect and positiveness."

Where did the commitment go? It probably left with the great number of black teachers who were forced out of the profession. Thomas explains, "A large number of blacks lost teaching positions as a result of desegregation. A number that is significantly higher than that of whites who lost their positions. And it was no accident," he aff-

See DESEGREGATION, Page 14A

TURTLE-TALK



How beautiful a day can be
when kindness touches it.