

THE QUIET VOICES OF FRED ROGERS' HEROES

It's not always a beautiful day in the neighborhood of Rockwell Gardens — a Chicago housing project — where guns are so common that kids are afraid when they walk home from school. "They shoot at gangs," says 12-year-old Derrick, "and they might hit an innocent bystander...like me."

In May, Fred Rogers and his crew were in Rockwell Gardens taping a segment of the upcoming PBS Special for adults: FRED ROGERS' HEROES, Who's Helping America's Children, which airs Tuesday, September 6, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The local hero was Olomenji O'Connor, creator of Project Peace, a program which teaches peer

mediation and conflict resolution to students at five inner-city elementary schools.

O'Connor is one of four special people whose quiet dedication to the welfare of the children in their communities brought them invitations to take part in Fred Rogers' uplifting tribute to America's unsung heroes.

"When I was a child, says Rogers, "and I heard about frightening things like floods and earthquakes and murders and fires, my parents always told me to try to look for the helpers — the people who were taking care of the ones who were in trouble. That kind of search has become a part of who I am. My greatest heroes have always been the ones who cared for the most vulnerable."

Olomenji O'Connor grew up in the projects himself and eventually dropped out of high school. He understands the fear and frustration young people feel, and he respects their courage. "All kids are not violent," he points out. "They don't like the idea of dodging bullets...nobody does." But while most children do not want to be involved in conflict, many often see no other choices.

Through Project Peace, O'Connor is helping students find safe, healthy ways to express difficult feelings and handle tough situations—the very skills Fred Rogers has nurtured in three generations of young viewers on MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD.

Segment producer Royal Kennedy describes a typical mediation session: "Two student



FRED ROGERS' HEROES, Who's Helping America's Children, a PBS primetime special, airs on Tuesday, September 6 at 8:00 p.m. ET. (Check local listings). One of FRED ROGERS' heroes is OLOMENJI O'CONNOR who supervises a conflict-resolution program in five inner-city Chicago grade schools. (Photo: Lynn Johnson).

FROM HARLEM TO SOWETO: A UNITED FRONT OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT RELEASES THEIR SECOND SINGLE



"I call on the red, and the black and the green. . . United we stand united we fall."

The lines are from "United Front" and with the release of the second single from their

JAMES BALDWIN'S "THE AMEN CORNER" COMES TO LAS VEGAS

In Ira Aldridge Theater Co. Inc. will present James Baldwin's "The Amen Corner" Sept. 2-4 and 9-11 at the Summerlin Library and Performing Arts Center in Las Vegas, 1771 Inner Circle Drive.

Performances are scheduled for 7:30 p.m., with an additional 2:00 p.m. performance on Sept. 3 and 10.

Directed and produced by accomplished screen actor, (See James Baldwin, Page 25)

acclaimed ZINGALAMADNI, ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT take their multi faceted, multi cultural vision to the next logical and soulful step.

Inspired by the continuing

struggle for justice around the globe, "United Front's" uplifting message took on an added urgency when the Grammy Award winning AD had the honor (See From Harlem, Page 23)



RON PARIS GREEN

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