

# Girl X fundraiser surviving lawsuit

**By Karen Shields**  
*Special to Sentinel Voice*  
CHICAGO, Ill. — Though mired in a lawsuit filed against her in November by Illinois Attorney General James Ryan, Girl X fund-raiser Beverly Reed told *The Defender* that she remains hopeful that the truth will come out soon and in her favor.

The complaint filed by Ryan, in the Chancery Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County, asked that Reed be removed as trustee of the Girl X Trust Fund. It charged that Reed misappropriated thousands of dollars intended to help pay Girl X's mounting medical costs and provide assistance to her family as they care for her.

In the lawsuit, Ryan stated

that of the \$310,000 that Reed raised \$52,000 was unaccounted for and that only \$1,225 had been given to Girl X, who was brutally raped and poisoned in a Chicago housing project in January 1997.

Lori Corral, a spokesperson for the Attorney General's Office said "the lawsuit is moving forward and is in the discovery stage."

In response to the lawsuit, Reed said, "If I was who they paraded me to be, why haven't I been incarcerated?"

Despite the shortcomings she sees in the lawsuit, she said that the best solution is to "move from within as you're guided and directed and not from without as someone labels you."

Because the lawsuit is still

pending and with the advice of her attorney Ralph Bernstein, Reed said that she wasn't at liberty to say anything specific about the case.

She did, however, say that were it not for this legal gag she would have gone through their charges point for point and provided evidence that would refute all the accusations made against her.

She said she has turned over the receipts that Ryan's office asked for last year. In addition, a new trustee has been appointed to manage the fund.

Corral was unable to provide the name of the newly appointed trustee nor could she disclose the status of the receipts, which are still being reviewed. A court date has not been set and it is unclear

whether or not the case will make it to trial.

Reed said she has distanced herself from the negativity of the trial and focused on the good she tried to do.

"Whatever the outcome is, it's none of my business. I have done what I was guided and directed to do," she said.

Reed said she took on the plight of Girl X not only because she was concerned with the child's well-being but also because she wanted to help the community.

She thinks the lawsuit nearly destroyed all the good that had been done on Girl X's behalf. But, she said, "In spite of the portrait that is being painted of me, I'm still making a difference in the lives of others."

## Powell: More Americans are volunteering time

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
WASHINGTON — Saying his year-old campaign to inspire Americans to volunteerism is gaining a foothold, Retired Gen. Colin Powell this week renewed his pledge to civic outreach.



COLIN POWELL

"We've accomplished a lot. And it is not just a matter of getting more volunteers to clean up cities," Powell, chairman of the America's Promise organization and former chairman of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Sunday on CNN's "Late Edition."

Powell, who was in Las Vegas last week touting the positive impact of the Boys & Girls Clubs program, planned to issue a report today on progress made since President Clinton and past presidents met in Philadelphia a year ago for a summit on volunteerism that gave birth to America's Promise.

Powell, who considered a bid for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination, said his core problem was how to restore a sense of values and structure in America.

It's also necessary, Powell said, to combat what he called the "Jerry Springerization" of the nation, referring to the television talk show famed for its focus on the bizarre and fighting among guests.

# Minority-owned consulting firm sues USDA

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. — A minority-owned consulting firm is suing the Agriculture Department's Farm Service Agency (FSA) for interfering with its investigation of federal racism against Black farmers.

D.J. Miller and Associates, of Atlanta, filed the lawsuit in federal court in March. Black farmers have charged the Department of Agriculture with racial discrimination.

The lawsuit claims that the FSA worked to "undercut, limit, dilute and cripple" the results of the firm's probe.

Alan Malasky, one of D.J. Miller's lawyers, said, "This report was going to call it as it saw it, and it did, ultimately, but it was a lot of heartache to get it out."

The FSA extends thousands

of operating loans to U.S. farmers. Its denial of operating loans to Black farmers is the major cause for them going out of business, the D.J. Miller report said. The report was commissioned in December 1994 during the tenure of former USDA secretary Mike Espy. The report was submitted in March 1996 and confirmed that systemic racism existed at USDA, especially in the case of Black farmers, minority employees and women.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has admitted longstanding and widespread racism against Black farmers and USDA employees.

"This report was so damaging to USDA from the beginning that the agency tried to withhold payments to the firm," said Lawrence Lucas,

president of the USDA Minority Employment Coalition. "What Miller was finding out was what we already knew and were saying."

Many believe that Espy's legal problems, which led to his resignation, were partially caused by his attempts to address racism at USDA.

A former staffer who declined to be identified said, "There is no question that Mike's involvement in the Black farmer issue contributed to his demise at Agriculture."

Sources reported that President Clinton asked Espy to step aside, promising him another position in the administration, but then distanced himself from the former Secretary.

The D.J. Miller report

documents case after case of employees and farmers relating their experiences at the agency. The reorganization of USDA's equal opportunity office, begun by Espy, created havoc at USDA. The office was originally dismantled by the Reagan-Bush administrations.

Despite its intent to create an equitable work environment, the report concludes the reorganized office reinforced the same racist network.

According to the Miller report, a Black male veteran employee at FSA "believes that the reorganization has had a negative impact on the climate." Two units headed by blacks have been eliminated. The result: all unit heads and senior management are White (See *Lawsuit*, Page 14)

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**Poll says Black, Jewish relations getting better**

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. — Blacks and Jews believe the relationship between their respective communities has improved in the past year, according to a national poll.

The poll, being presented at the second annual Conference on Black/Jewish relations at Yeshiva University earlier this week, also said a majority of blacks and Jews believe they should form a partnership to work on civil rights issues.

According to the survey, 43 percent of Jews feel the relationship between the two communities has gotten better in the past 12 months. For blacks, 54 percent said the relationship has improved.

On the question of partnering to further the nation's civil rights agenda, 69 percent of Jews and 59 percent of blacks favored the suggestion.

The poll, conducted by telephone April 13-20 by Kieran Mahoney and Associates and National Market Share Inc., has a 4 percentage point margin of error. The companies interviewed 563 blacks and 556 Jews.

"The poll challenges the notion that conflict is the dominant element in black-Jewish relations," said Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, which sponsored the conference.

Martin Luther King III, the new head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, delivered the keynote address.

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