

# Ore. Welfare reform appears to be working

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON—With millions of people leaving welfare but little information about their fate, researchers say a Portland, Ore., program has achieved a rarity: People came off the rolls, found relatively good jobs and kept them, according to a study released Tuesday.

Caseworkers sent a strong message that the ultimate goal was to get a job.

Also, unlike other states, Oregon encouraged recipients to wait for good, full-time jobs paying above the minimum wage and offering potential for advancement and benefits such as health insurance. Other states push people to take any job they can find.

The program even helped people with the greatest barriers to self-sufficiency — those without a high school diploma, with limited work history and longer-term welfare dependence.

Researchers note that Oregon has a strong economy, making it easier to hold out for a better job. Still, the study compared

participants with other welfare recipients living in the same strong economy and found those who participated in the program did substantially better. Specifically, they:

- Earned 35 percent more money and were more likely to have a job.
- Were more likely to work full-time and have employer-provided health insurance.
- Continued earning more through two years of follow up, unlike other work-first programs in Atlanta, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Riverside, Calif., where earnings dropped off.
- Used less welfare. After two years, 41 percent of participants were receiving welfare, compared to 53 percent of others.

On the down side, the study, conducted between 1993 and 1996, noted that even those who were working did not have much more money than they would have had with welfare and food stamps. Still, it suggested that income may eventually grow enough to surpass welfare payments.

# UN: Africa's AIDS infection rate rising

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GENEVA—The lack of AIDS awareness and access to new drug therapies is fueling alarming HIV infection rates in many developing countries — up to a quarter of the population in parts of Africa — U.N. experts said in a report Tuesday.

The report provided country-by-country statistics to back up a study released in November, which estimated that 2.3 million people died of AIDS in 1997, up 50 percent from 1996. About 16,000 people a day contract HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The latest study, by the World Health Organization and UNAIDS, comes ahead of Sunday's opening of the 12th World AIDS Conference in Geneva, where 12,000 specialists and others will discuss advances in HIV research.

Limited education about the virus is a major hurdle, particularly because an effective cure may be at least 10 years away, UNAIDS Director-General Peter Piot told a news conference.

"Let's be very aware AIDS is with us to stay for a very long time," Piot said.

Poor access to new therapies for AIDS-related infections such as tuberculosis and diarrhea is the "overwhelming issue" for 90 percent of those living with the AIDS virus, the report said.

Decreasing infection rates in some countries are eclipsed by huge rates in others, like South Africa, Piot said.

Some 2.9 million South Africans had the virus at the end of 1997, 700,000 of them infected last year alone, the study said. Almost 13 percent of adults between 15 and 49 were infected. The United States figure was 0.76 percent — 820,000 people in all. It was under 1 percent across Western Europe.

Zimbabwe and Botswana, where UNAIDS estimates around one in four adults carry HIV, had the highest infection rates. North Africa and the Middle East are "the great unknown," with cultural difficulties in talking about the epidemic hampering collection of statistics, UNAIDS said.

Political courage to prevent the spread of AIDS is the key to narrowing the "AIDS gap," Piot said, praising HIV prevention efforts in Uganda, Thailand and Senegal.

## Parents

(Continued from Page 2) to take the next step, but it was coming."

She kept Kameelah involved and active in musical studies, modeling, acting, community events and talent shows, but didn't push her. At 10, Kameelah won the City of Las Vegas Search for Talent. She was in demand thereafter.

At 16, Kameelah entered a talent competition in which the audience included representatives from record companies and took first place in the solo category. During



MARY WILLIAMS

her senior year at LVA, Kameelah and two of her classmates formed the R&B/hip hop group "702" and

immediately set off to tour the country.

Being a child star's parent has been frustrating at times.

"It's stressful trying to work while keeping your children involved in activities," she said, later adding that the rewards are great. "When you're seeing your own (children) participate in an activity that makes them feel themselves, that makes them feel good, you feel good too."

And there are memories. Williams recalled one talent performance where the organizers lost Kameelah's sheet music and couldn't play back up.

"No problem," quipped Kameelah, who grabbed the microphone and sang her selection a cappella.

Kameelah has become able to help support the family; "702" put out an album that went gold last year, and two of their hits, "Steelo" and "Get It Together," have gone platinum. Motown Records, their label, is moving them to Los Angeles, where they've signed a contract with ABC to do a sitcom pilot.

Now that her daughters are grown, Williams' life is changing. She'll miss them. "We're like sisters - we try to be there one for the other, we grow together," she said. The extra time, though, allows her to focus on her career. Several years ago, after a six-year stint in property management and a road tour with her then-teenaged daughter, she decided she wanted to be her own boss.

Presently, she's studying for a real estate license exam.

"I'm not going to work for anybody anymore. That's over," she said.

She seems up to challenges.

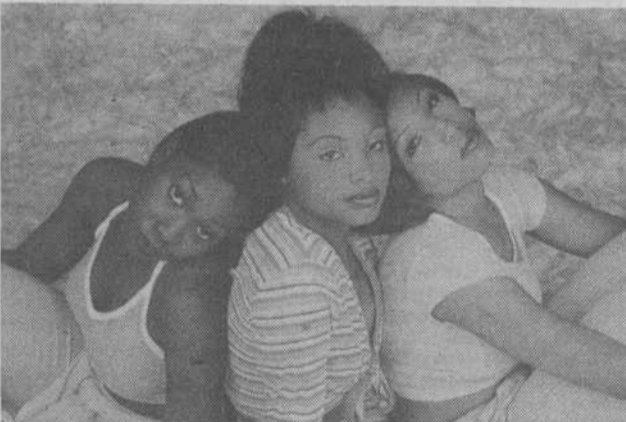


Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Herself a performer once, Mary Williams knows its hard staying in contact with parents. Kameelah, left, who along Irish and Lemisha Grinstead form 702, travel constantly.

## Goynes

(Continued from Page 1) tribute you can give to a person to show that they made a difference."

Said gubernatorial candidate Joe Neal: "Kudos goes to those individuals on the council that voted to name the park after Goynes."

Assemblyman Bob Price, District 17, who is campaigning for the 13th time and has been in the assembly since 1974, added: "I've had the pleasure of knowing Theron for over 25 years and this is wonderful."

If anyone deserves a park named after them, says North Las Vegas firefighter Emirl Williams, Goynes does. "I've never had any problems approaching him (Goynes) and telling him my views."

Goynes has lived in North Las Vegas for 34 years, 20 of

which he's spent on the city council and 12 years as Mayor Pro Tem before leaving politics last year after an unsuccessful 1997 mayoral bid.

He's a 28-year veteran of the Clark County School District, having served as a principal and in other administrative capacities. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's in elementary

education.

"An educator having a park right next to two schools — there is no better name for this park but Theron H. Goynes Park," North Las Vegas councilwoman Paula Brown said.

Goynes hasn't ruled out re-entering politics. "I'm supporting two candidates, myself," and son Byron, a county clerk candidate.

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