

# Hale House gives help, hope to downtrodden

By Marian Wright Edelman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

An impulse acted upon. A life's direction revealed. One spring day in 1969, Dr. Lorraine Hale had an encounter with destiny.

Driving home from another frustrating day as a New York City school guidance counselor, sad because she felt she was not making much of a difference, she saw a woman on a corner, sitting on a wooden crate, falling asleep. It was not an uncommon sight.

Heroin was in its heyday in Harlem. But she noticed a tiny arm coming from the bundle that was about to slip off the woman's lap.

Hale drove on, then doubled back. She roused the woman before the fragile baby slipped

to the cement, handed her a note with Hale's mother's name and address written on it and told the woman to go to her mother for help.

Mother Clara Hale knew about children.

Along with her own children, she had raised more than 40 foster children. Then 65, Mother Hale and her daughter Lorraine were about to begin a new mission, though they didn't know it.

The woman on the street corner did go to Mother Hale's and left her baby to be cared for. Within months word spread, and with the help of Lorraine, volunteers, professional therapists and childcare specialists, Clara Hale's house was home to 22 infants born to drug-addicted

mothers.

Nursing their tiny, innocent charges who became addicted in the womb, working with them to overcome developmental and other problems, and, most of all, loving, hugging, and nurturing them became the Hales' life.

More than 3,000 babies and children have lived at Hale House in the nearly 30 years since it began. Their stories are both heartbreaking and heartwarming.

Most have been returned to family — either to mothers after they have successfully completed drug rehabilitation, or to grandparents or other relatives. Some have gone to loving adoptive homes.

Hale House can only take so many children at a time. As



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crack and AIDS came on the scene and the need and numbers of drug-addicted and desperately sick women with children grew, it became a wrenching but frequent experience at Hale House to

have to turn away babies.

Weak and fragile, the babies kept coming, from police precincts, prisons, hospitals, welfare offices, clergy, social workers, relatives and mothers who cannot care for their infants.

And all are loved and given a chance at Hale House.

In 1992, Harlem lost and heaven gained an angel when Mother Hale died.

Today, Dr. Lorraine Hale and her colleagues keep her spirit and work alive in a home filled with children too few seem to want.

Dr. Hale also founded Homeward Bound to help mothers recovering from drug and alcohol addiction re-enter society and assume their parental responsibilities.

The program provides transitional housing and relapse prevention in a supportive group environment.

Another program provides a group home for mothers and their children who are infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS. All of this is done with private contributions since the Hales decided they did not want to risk losing the special and personal nature of their work to government funding.

I have had the privilege of visiting Hale House and cuddling the children. I just wish there were as many Hale Houses as there are children who need them. Please support Hale House's work of love.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.

## Losing welfare benefits hurting nation's children

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — Most families that had been pushed off welfare because of time limits were not receiving child support to help fill the gap, congressional auditors reported Monday in a study of three states.

In Florida, just 16 percent of families were receiving child support payments when they hit the time limit and left welfare rolls, the General Accounting Office said. In Connecticut, just 28 percent were, and in Virginia, 29 percent.

And in Florida, nearly seven out of 10 families still did not have a court order established directing a parent to pay support. In Connecticut and Virginia, about half the families didn't have a court order by the time they left the rolls.

All three states implemented their programs early and have had families reach the limit.

The report suggests states cannot count on child support to support families when welfare benefits run out.

"States will need to improve their child support performance," the GAO said.

The Department of Health and Human Services said that improvements have been made to the child support collection system in the last few years and that future performance is

likely to improve.

The 1996 federal welfare overhaul limits people to five years of assistance over their lifetimes, although states may make some exceptions. Some states have shorter time limits.

When a family is on welfare, most of the child support goes to the government to offset the cost of welfare. But when a family leaves the rolls, child support goes directly to the custodial parent.

Historically, most child support owed to people on welfare has gone uncollected, partly because of trouble identifying absent fathers and partly because many fathers do not have steady incomes of their own.

In cases with established court orders, only 13 percent of the 7.4 million welfare families received at least one payment in 1996. But state performance ranged from about 4 percent in Michigan to 37 percent in Indiana and Vermont.

The GAO took a close look at Minnesota and Washington, which are both among the top 10 performing states, although neither has yet seen families hit a time limit.

It found that about two-thirds of the families who had been on welfare for five years had seen some child support collected over the past year.

## Nutrition

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USDA Food Guide Pyramid applies to all ages, but the serving sizes vary with a child's stage of growth. From the time an infant starts solids (4 to 6 months of age) until the age of 6, the recommended serving size for fruits and vegetables is one tablespoon per each year of life. After age 6, the recommended three or more servings of vegetables and two or more servings of fruit per day is based on a one-half cup serving size.

Q: What solid foods should I introduce to my child first?

A: Breast milk and iron-fortified formula provide complete and adequate nutrition for infants up to 6 months of age. Although it is a common practice to begin

solids earlier than this, nutritionists advise waiting until the child is at least 4 months old. At this age the child is developmentally ready to handle solids.

Introduce single-ingredient foods first, beginning with one-half teaspoon to a teaspoon at a time. Start by adding breast milk or formula to baby rice

cereal, making a thin gruel not much thicker than milk.

Follow cereal with pureed vegetables, fruits, and meats. Peas, carrots, squash, applesauce, bananas and pears are good first vegetables and fruits. The add important nutrients to a child's diet and babies tend to enjoy the tastes of these foods more than others.

## Financial

(Continued from Page 15)

Qwelane wrote in a weekend newspaper column.

White business leaders maintain that Stals will be a hard act to follow. He had years of experience and was known widely in world financial markets, unlike Mboweni.

However, South Africa's influential newspaper *Financial Mail* sees the appointment as strategic, even though there will be immediate pressure on the rand. A White governor of the Exchequer, the *Financial Mail* argues, would not be able to create a consensus for sound monetary policy in the new South Africa.

## Healing

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not demean or belittle anyone.

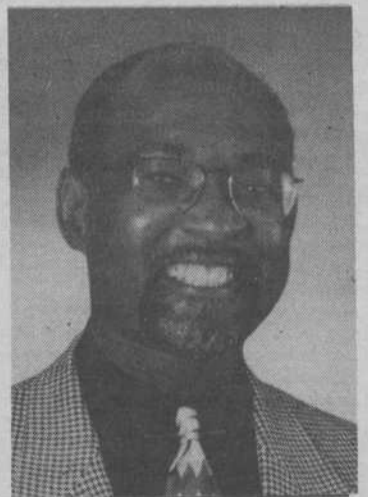
Recently I reacted inappropriately to a situation in the workplace by shooting the messenger — figuratively, that is. We were informed about a new procedure and I responded angrily towards the person relaying the policy directive. I found out later that she was hurt by my remarks. Looking back on the situation, what I said was ill-advised because she was just doing her job. Being overly critical of others hurts their feelings. The tone

I use is something I must be cognizant of also. Remember, people evaluate and respond to both what you say and how you say it.

Communication is the essence of healthy relationships in the work environment, in the community and in the home. We need to assess not only watch what we say but how we say it so that we don't unintentionally injure or alienate anyone. Not everyone will like us personally, or like the way we speak or what we say. However, it is important that we like and respect ourselves.

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