

OUR VIEW

Donation Nation

Monday, August 1st is National Minority Donor Awareness Day. Here's why you should care: African-Americans comprise nearly 25 percent of the 83,000 people waiting for organ donations, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing. Some more statistics for you: Blacks represent more than one third of Americans on the waiting list for kidney transplants; Blacks typically donate organs at a rate commensurate with their U.S. population density (12 percent and 12 percent, respectively) but well below the threshold needed to make up for having higher incidences of diabetes, high blood pressure and other ailments; the number of organs donated by Blacks is outpaced by growth in people awaiting transplants; nine out of 10 Blacks who undergo transplants receive organs from a Caucasian donor.

Ready to donate, yet?

Black America must make a concerted effort to step up organ donation. It's time to reject the myopic thinking that has hindered us for years: How do I know if my organs will go to a Black person? You don't. The waiting lists reflect a rainbow coalition of ethnicities. So your organs may go to a non-Black, which shouldn't matter—a life saved is a life saved. But since Blacks comprise a higher proportion of people awaiting transplants, there's a high likelihood your organ(s) will go to a Black patient.

But what if my organs are unfit? Let your doctor decide that. But I can't afford organ donation? There's no charge. But I'm not dead yet. You can donate while you're alive. You get the picture: let's nix the excuses.

For every person who doesn't donate, Black America loses a grandparent, a mother, a father, a sister, a brother, a son, a daughter, an aunt, an uncle, a niece, a nephew, a cousin, an in-law, all because we aren't stepping up and donating organs in larger numbers. Some of these people have a short window of opportunity—every day, 15 Americans die waiting for an organ transplant. With new organs, these people would have a new lease on life. Think about this: singer Barry White died awaiting a kidney; football great Walter Payton died awaiting a liver.

"It is absolutely essential to educate the community on the continuing need for organ/tissue donors, living and cadaveric, the donation process and the diseases and behaviors which lead to the need for transplantation," Dr. Clive Callender, founder of the Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program, told *Ebony* magazine last year. That same article noted that in 2003, Blacks accounted for 35 percent of the people waiting for kidney transplants, but received about 20 percent of all available kidneys, and waited twice as long as Whites for transplants. Whites, comprising 64 percent of the kidney transplants recipients, were more likely to find an appropriate match, or receive a kidney from a relative.

This has got to change; our lives depend on it.

Lesson in Charity

Last weekend, former star UNLV and NFL quarterback Randall Cunningham, along with his wife, Felicity, hosted the fourth annual Unity Festival, a day of fun, friendship and fellowship in the religious spirit. The festival is put on by Remnant Ministries, a nonprofit organization founded and led by Randall Cunningham that works to improve the lives of families in need in the Las Vegas Valley. Though the Cunninghams aren't the type of people to broadcast their good works, they nonetheless deserve kudos for helping make a difference.

With so much madness going on in the sports world today—steroid use, egomaniacal behavior, mega-rich athletes holding out for even more expensive contracts, lack of front-office diversity, etc.—it's refreshing to see someone like Randall Cunningham, a bonafide All-Star and one of the most gifted athletes to man the quarterback position, give so selflessly.

His is a story of a local boy done good, a celebrity athlete who not only didn't let the trappings of wealth and notoriety maraud his morals, but who became a model for what professional athletes should aspire to be. Throwing a 91-yard touchdown pass is indeed miraculous, but giving back to the community, when you don't have to, now that's a miracle.



Action key to stopping child abuse

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

Childhood sexual abuse is far too prevalent within our society. Child abuse in general, as well as sexual abuse, is growing every year. There were 879,000 cases of child abuse last year, according to a national clearinghouse for information on child abuse.

Statically, 1 in 3 girls in the U.S. are sexually abused, and 1 in 5 boys have been sexually abused. Last year the The Bureau of Justice Statistics within the U.S. Department of Justice reports that 185,000 cases of child sexual abuse were considered "substantiated" or "indicated". That means that today there are tens of thousands of little children in the U.S. being victimized by thousands of sexual predators. Such crimes demand immediate and greater attention from society.

A few other critical statistics about child sexual abuse reveal that 93 percent of juvenile victims know who abused them; 34.2 percent of the children's abusers were family members; 58.7 percent were individuals that the child was very familiar with; and, even more highly alarming, is that 85 percent of sexual abuse occurs within children's own home.

As we rear our children, we teach them to look out for adults who might hurt them. We tell them don't talk to strangers, and don't get in the car with anyone you don't know and so on. But while



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

we're cautioning them against strangers, we must be neglecting to tell them to beware of those people that even we believe should be their protectors—teachers in the classroom and pastors at the churches.

How sick, disgusted and morally bankrupt have we become when we can't even trust our kids with those individuals who are supposed to be the pillars of our society? What kind of society have we become when we can't send our children to school or to church and know that they are safe?

While we are not mandated to send our children to church, although we should be, we are mandated by law to send them to school. And, by God, schools better be mandated to keep them safe.

Sexual misconduct by educators and clergy is a volatile, sensitive subject that's been whispered about in school hallways, sanctuaries and behind closed office doors as long as there have been schools and churches. But a lack of public acknowledgment, especially the lack of outrage and action, has helped the problem to spread and allows the bad teachers and bad clergy to circulate and feel freer to conduct the

most egregious of acts with our children—molestation.

Over the past few years, we have observed the way the Catholic Church is dealing with and continuing to wrestle with the ramifications of decades of sexual misconduct by some priests. It has become painfully clear that the church is not willing to take a hard stance and excommunicate those priests from the church.

Last week, Pastor Billy Eckstine McCurdy was charged by North Las Vegas police with two counts of lewdness with a male child who was visiting his home. The church leadership, in public statements, has taken a position to suspend the accused pastor pending the outcome of the matter; however,

many of the parishioners at Revival Temple Church of God in Christ appear to be taking the same stance that the Catholic Church took with its priests. The parishioners, are staunchly defending the pastor. Albeit innocent until proven guilty, are they even allowing for the possibility that the boy could be telling the truth?

During the past year, it has been alleged that 19 teachers in the Clark County School District have engaged in some form of sexual misconduct with students. While some of them have been charged, instead of pursuing criminal charges against others who admit to sexual misconduct, school officials often allow some teachers to resign. Could this result in allowing the teachers to find jobs in other schools? This is known as "passing the trash."

It stands to reason that child molesters are logically attracted to or seek employment where they would be in
(See LaGrande, Page 11)



Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
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Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association