

IT WAS LIKE SOMEONE CARED ENOUGH TO HELP ME OUT.

Program helped 3 area women

Care workers and others in similar situations provided moral support and the commensurate benefits their self-esteem.

By FRANK ARRINGTON
1993-04-12

Shelia Jones, Tammy Williams and Mary Paris don't know one another. But each reported what she called her first welfare check that public assistance would be only a temporary solution.

Single mothers — divorced or separated from their husbands — they wanted to support their children on their own. They were on welfare at least two years or more, longer than they expected. So, when they heard of a state program that helps welfare recipients find employment, all three signed up.

"I went to all the workshops they had to keep you encouraged about finding a job," said Jones, now a diversion clerk in the Wake County Sheriff's Department. "If I had any problem, I always had the case worker to talk to. They supported me all the way through. It was like someone cared enough to help me out."

North Carolina started its job program in October 1989, responding to a federal mandate to reform the nation's welfare system. Like many across the state, the three women have benefited.

Jones, 36, has two children, ages 4 and 6. She was a dispatcher for a Raleigh security firm when her marriage broke up and she was laid off two years ago. She turned to welfare to support her family. Williams, 26, who lives in Durham with her two children — ages 1 and 6 — said public assistance was her only alternative when she and her husband separated six years ago. She has a high school diploma, but until she got involved in the job program last year, she found only dead-end work.

Paris, 47, lives in Chapel Hill. She turned to welfare as a means of supporting her two and seven children — whose range in age from 4 to 18 — after her husband left the family four years ago. She has an accounting degree, but had to hold a job in 20 years. For a year, she worked part time.

The three said they know that only through more education and work experience would they be able to land the kinds of jobs they needed, ones that paid salaries and offered benefits so they could properly care for their families.

Today, Jones and Williams have both found work and are off welfare. Williams, who has been a secretary in a Durham law firm since November, will continue to receive support from social services, such as Medicaid and help with child care costs and transportation, for a year.



Shelia Jones updates information in the property section of the Wake County Sheriff's Department, where she is a diversion clerk. Jones went through the state's job program and she is now off welfare.



Tammy Williams has been a secretary at a downtown Durham attorney's office since November. She will continue to receive support from social services for a year.

Williams said, however, receiving stinging belittlement. "I'm obtaining as many skills here. It's really worked out for me. I wouldn't have made it without the program."

She said that while she went to community college for computer training, she found only dead-end work. The agency paid her, while she paid the tuition.

"After a year all that stress and I'm on my own," Williams said. "I'm looking forward to it. Right now, I have no insurance on the job. That and it is kind of disappointing."

Paris, who has been in the program for three years, recently earned a law degree and is trying to pass the bar exam. She will rely on welfare payments and the job program until she is employed.

"The women said the job program helped them in many ways. Sometimes it was in the form of coupons to ride the city bus free."

Women living with the stigma of being on welfare.

"When people have this in their face every day it beats them down if they can't have some hope of things getting better," Paris said. "My children and I wouldn't have been able to go through it without the job program."

The three said the program offers an opportunity for many like them who yearn for self-sufficiency. And, like them who are scheduled for today to receive Clinton's welfare reform proposals should boost the program.

There is disagreement among them on the president's suggestion to limit public assistance to two years.

"That's great as long as people are given the chance to find something they could be trained in," Williams said. "If not, a lot of people will wind up on the streets."



Mary Paris, who lives in Chapel Hill and has 7 children, has been in the program for three years.

Williams and Paris have received assistance for more than two years. But Jones, who received aid for a shorter period, says two years is a good cut-off point.

"I feel like if they are limited, then they will be more encouraged about getting out and depending on themselves," she said. "It's really up to the person. You have to want something for yourself."

They want social services to advertise it more vigorously. But they also want people on welfare to accept more of the responsibility for participating in services that improve their lot.

"You have to be your own self-motivator," Paris said. "I've had to really force myself to go to the program. There are a lot of coupons not to get in there with both feet. It's an uphill struggle, always having to deal with a lack of money. But the administration of it is going to be in the when it's all over, that has helped me."

"We're hoping that funding will be increasing at any time," Harris said. "Clinton has spoken highly of this program and we believe it will be a major part of the welfare reform he is proposing to the country later this year."

Although administrators agree with Clinton that welfare should be an empowering experience and not one of lasting dependency, they say that tough talk must be backed by more money. They want the president to spell out plans for implementing reform — particularly the proposal requiring welfare recipients to find work after two years of assistance.

"When you're actually dealing with people, it's more complicated than putting large frames into place," said Gordon Price, executive director of the job program at the Orange County Social Services Department. "It depends on where the individual is in his life."

"Some people we help in the program for a year, they start up and they're out for a job. But when you start with a high school diploma, it takes longer."

Despite the doubts they face, many on AFDC seem to want to participate in the job program. Some have to be placed on waiting lists.

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Pope speaks of strife in outdoor Easter Mass

WASH. CITY — Pope John Paul II celebrated Easter Mass on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica and said "vitality" before 30,000 worshippers, but said his joy was overshadowed by war and death.

"There can be no hope today — the day of peace — before the fratricidal struggles causing confusion, before the atrocious crimes being relentlessly played out in Bosnia-Herzegovina," the pope said.

"We can consider that this tragic situation is not his affair," he said. The war "humiliates Europe and seriously compromises the future of peace."

John Paul also called attention to strife in African nations including Angola, Rwanda and Somalia. And he continued his tradition of saying Easter greetings in seven languages — in this year.

The outdoor altar for the mass was a riot of color from vast floral displays, including 11,000 tulips from the Netherlands.

In other Easter celebrations: In South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu devoted much of his service to black

activist Chris Hani, who was assassinated Saturday.

"Life is stronger than death. Right is stronger than darkness. There will be peace and there will be joy in this life when we remember that we are members of one family, black and white together," Tutu said to about 500 people at a church in Johannesburg, a mixed-race area outside Cape Town.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, the leader of the world's Anglicans and Episcopians, said the famine in Somalia and the fighting in former Yugoslavia were examples of evil which have filled people with "horror and a kind of moral pain."

He also denounced last month's bombing by the Irish Republican Army that killed two children in the northern English city of Warrington.

Pilgrims streamed through the narrow streets of Jerusalem's Old City to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, built on the spot where tradition says Jesus Christ was buried. Catholics and Orthodox both held rites in the church. Orthodox Christians observed Palm Sunday.

BOSNIA

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fighters moved anti-aircraft artillery near the airport.

As tensions continued to rise, U.N. officials convened an aid convoy scheduled for today to Muslims in Sarajevo, an eastern Bosnian town ringed by Milic's troops.

Eight people were killed and 21 wounded across Bosnia during a 24-hour period ending at midday, Bosnian officials said Sunday.

On the continuing blockade, a Bosnian government statement said military commander Gen. Sefer Halilovic would not stand talks today at Sarajevo airport with Milicic, as the Serb general had requested.

Nearly 40 Dutch, French and U.S. warplanes at an Italian base and on aircraft carriers in the Adriatic Sea are to start enforcing the flight ban today at 2 p.m. (8 a.m. EDT). The operation is the first time the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has projected military might outside alliance territory since its founding in 1949.

"What, in a weakened form from his base in Pale, east of Sarajevo, said NATO has identified Serb ground positions as potential targets."

Office of National Drug Control Policy to serve as his senior anti-drug aide, Clinton has also left more of the other federal positions in the field in the hands of acting administrators, he said, because it places eastern Bosnia under Muslim control and would not let Serbs keep a supply corridor linking conquered lands in Bosnia and Croatia.

Drugs

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Clinton will include increased spending for drug treatment.

Mark A. Kleiman, a drug expert at Harvard University, said that with less money being spent on national health care, the system being developed by Mrs. Clinton could become far more important than the anti-drug budget. "If drug treatment could get a small fraction of what the country spends on health care," he said, "that would be much better than having a big freedom of the drug budget."

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Working that way all welfare

The job program is federally funded. It operates in 25 counties. Expenses are \$1.5 billion. It is a major part of the welfare reform he is proposing to the country later this year."

County	Value
Wake	1,100
Orange	1,000
Johnston	900
Durham	800
Others	1,100

JOBS PROGRAM

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detected that when the ban is finally lifted, only 70,000 Palestinians will be permitted to work in Israel. The goal is to eliminate the ban on 50,000 day laborers who used to enter illegally and receive for less than the minimum wage.

The Clinton agreed Sunday to provide financial aid to unemployed Palestinians and said it will study ways to stimulate investment and create jobs in the territories.

But officials acknowledge that it will not be easy to wean Israeli employers from cheap Arab labor or to persuade oil-rich Arab states to take jobs that they have rejected despite an 11 percent

unemployment rate. A sign of this difficulty is the government's decision to take a temporary hike in the entry tax, leading to 1,700 Palestinian farm workers to help keep Israeli growers from losing millions of dollars.

Although Palestinian leaders say that they do want a separation from Israel, they have protested that the ban has turned the territories into "a massive collection

prison," inflating hostility by depriving people of work and making it difficult for them to move among parts of the West Bank.

Many of the 65,000 Christians in the territories, especially the Greek Orthodox, who form the largest group, also accuse Israel of interfering with their religious permits. On Sunday, the Greek

Orthodox community asked the Israeli Court of Justice to order the army to allow its members into Jerusalem for Easter Sunday. Some Christians who follow Latin rites were able to reach Jerusalem for Easter services Sunday, but many were denied permits.

Despite their objections, Palestinian leaders do not seem eager to use the ban as a reason to avoid a new round of Middle East peace talks, scheduled to begin in Washington on April 20. It appears increasingly likely that they will show up, after four months of resistance because of Israel's deportation in mid-December of some 400 accused Islamic militants from the occupied territories to Lebanon.

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