

by Marcy Morgan

The Southern Africa Summer Project in Chicago has been a great success. During the summer, we have contacted about 50 community organizations and church groups and had personal contact by either film, slide show, play or lecture to approximately 1,000 people. We have participated in two talk shows, demonstrated against First National of Chicago and marched in the Bud Billikin Parade (a Black-oriented parade and Chicago's largest) with our Southern Africa banners.

When the program began on June 26th, we did not believe that we would accomplish so much. Initially, there was confusion with the CETA summer program from which most of our workers came. All of our pre-selected people had been dropped from the program and the students assigned to us had absolutely no interest in or knowledge of Southern Africa. To make matters worse, we even lost our supervisors because of the low pay. But in a couple of weeks, the same group of students that groaned because they were 'sick' of school and 'sick of learning' were anxious to begin educating the community and participating in protest demonstrations around Southern Africa.

The development of our program was in three phases. We had 20 students from ages 15 to 18 from high schools throughout the city. Our first task was to educate the participants about Southern Africa. We did this by first familiarizing ourselves with all of Southern Africa and then focusing on Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Michael Simmons and Harry Amana conducted intensive sessions on the struggles in these countries which provided us with valuable insight into the problem. We also studied Torment to Triumph in Southern Africa and everyone received a copy of Section 2 and 4 of the organizers notebook and a copy of "The Rhodesian Settlement: Sell Out or Solution?" from the Washington Office on Africa and "A White Defector Speaks on Atrocities in Southern Africa". These readings were also in preparation for the visit from the South African Quakers.

Our second phase involved actual community contact along with continued internal education. We began showing Last Grave at Dimbaza and South Africa: Freedom Rising. The response was very encouraging, but the participants in the program began to think that they weren't accomplishing enough and did not feel any personal involvement. This represented a crisis point in the program. After several group discussions and supervisor meetings, we decided to alter our format so that the work that we did would increase our level of consciousness as well as raise the consciousness of those we contacted.

Our third phase introduced our new format - a play entitled "From Soweto to Chicago" about the struggle in South Africa and how we in the U.S. can help. The play, written by staff and participants added new insight and life into the program. It is a series of events leading up to the Soweto demonstrations. Our opening scene was dedicated to the African woman and featured a tribute to Mothers of Chicago and Soweto, a Zimbabwe freedom fighter, the Mother of Soweto, the traditional woman and Steve Biko's wife. The play then traces the impact of the oppressive system of Southern Africa on the lives of its people from the migrant gold miner and house maid to the Soweto classroom and demonstrations. The play then moves to Chicago where high school students are asked to demonstrate against

banks selling the krugerrand and are shown South Africa: Freedom Rising. The final scene is a challenge to everyone to get involved in the Southern Africa issue and to remember 'you can't understand Chicago unless you understand Soweto'. Then the question is asked: "What's the word?" and everyone responds, "Johannesburg" and with that everyone is warned, "Now you know that you too have a responsibility in the struggle, pass the word, help in any of the ways we've laid out or however you can - don't let this issue pass you by".

The Southern Africa Summer Project has touched the lives of every participant and we are positive that many of those who worked with us will continue to take up the Southern Africa issue in their schools, communities and dail life.

SOUTHERN AFRICA SUMMER CONTACTS

Abraham Lincoln Center
Better Boys Foundation
Blessed Agnes Church
Black Feminist Press
Camp Henry Horner
Cavalry Baptist Church
College Age Youth Survives
Chelsea House
Chicago Alliance Against Racism
Chicago Conference for Brotherhood
Chicago Housing Authority
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Youth Center
Deborah Woman's Club
Ebenezer Church
Evanston Meeting
Fernwood United Methodist Church
First Union Church
Grace Cavalry Church
Gresham Church
Holy Family Lutheran
Holy Name of Mary
Howard Area Community Center
Latino Institute
Loyola Upward Bound Program
Manor Community Church
Mount Carmel Baptist Church
Mount Calvary Church
Our Lady of Lourdes
Salem House
Sheridan Center
Senior Citizens Day Care
Senior Citizens Work Center
Social Services to the Black Community
South Shore Community Center
South Shore YMCA
St. Adrews Temple
St. James Church
Tabernacle Baptist Church
Unity Fellowship Baptist Church

Valentine Chicago Girls
We Unite For Peace
Woodlawn United Methodist Church
YMCA Center
YMCA Northside Urban Program
Youth Community Inc.
Trinity Church