

Ed Letter-Spring 2006

Each one, reach one

February 16, 2006 By Hilary Beard

Last fall, I read a newspaper story about seniors behind on paying their gas bills. They were never told that they were eligible for low-income assistance, and now the utility company was threatening to shut off their service just prior to winter. I imagined how I would feel if after a lifetime of dedicated child rearing and work, my own parents were forced to live buried under blankets, yet still bone cold during their retirement years. I burst into tears and anonymously paid a portion of one family's balance. My forbears' struggles, sacrifice and faith in God helped make my gift possible.

During this debacle surrounding the rollout of Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage, I feel for our most vulnerable citizens—people who are perhaps ill, illiterate or incapacitated. I think of my own father, who after his stroke, struggled to dress himself and sign his own name. Who will help the weakest among us? As Shawn Rhea reports, many seniors need their children's assistance in selecting their Part D benefits so that they can obtain the lifesaving prescriptions they need at a price they can afford.

Speaking of saving lives, our nation has now experienced its first HIV outbreak among students on college campuses. Where was ground zero? Among black students and historically black colleges in North Carolina. Andrea King Collier tells us what university administrators are doing to protect our best and brightest.

As we observe black history and women's history months, let's all draw on the courage our forbears demonstrated in the face of adversity and overcome these formidable challenges. Given the advantages many of us currently enjoy, I know I ain't no ways tired.

In unity,

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