—Drug war

(Continued from Page 1A)

ed as an adult) all of the 2400 block of East Chase Street, were among those arrested.

Others were Timothy Morgan, 32, of the 2300 block of East Chase Street, Duric Lightner, 22, of the 2400 block of E. Eager Street, Curtis Lassiter, 32, of the 1200 block of Kitmore Road, James Williams, 33, of the 2200 block of Prentiss Place, and Harry Thames, Jr. of the 5900 block of Radecke Avenue.

Forty-five bags of heroin, 10 bags of cocaine, and one .25 caliber automatic handgun were seized in the raid.

At about 2 p.m. the same day, the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Southern District Police observed a 1979 Pontiac pull to the curb of the 1800 block of West Pratt Street.

The driver handed something to pedestrians, some money exchanged hands, and police detained everyone involved, believing there was a drug transaction.

Police seized 169 pieces of cocaine and heroin, approximately valued at $17,000 and the Pontiac. Police also recovered $1,201 in cash.

Those arrested in the Pratt Street drug bust were, Ronald Joseph Schaefer, 30, of the 10000 block of Davis Avenue, Andrew D. Marion, 29, of the 1900 block of Wilhelm Street, Constance Newman, 36, of the 100 block of N. Carlton Street and Keith E. Griffith of the 1800 block of McHenry St.

Others were Gary W. Griffith, 27, of the 1800 block of McHenry Street and a juvenile aged 14, whose name was not released.

Another juvenile, was arrested in the 100 block of Aisquith St. when he was observed making a drug transaction. The boy, who had a bag of capsules in his hand was seen handing a capsule to another person.

When the 15-year old spotted the police, he yelled, "Five O," dropped the bag, and attempted to escape.

Police recovered 125 capsules of cocaine with street value of about $1,230 and $27 cash.

Police confirmed yesterday that all the people arrested, have already been charged.

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Bedding (D.060). King sizes sold only in 3-pc. sets and queen sizes sold only in 2-pc. sets. Bedding sale in progress. Sale ends July 9, 1988. Ask your salesperson about delivery/handling charge and warranty information. Sealy Testimonial is shown. †Bed frames are valued at $50 to $100.

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The Afro-American Section B

METRO PROFILE

■ Community Calendar 2B
■ Sports 3B

AIDS:

A comprehensive look at attitudes and opinions

THE MURPHY HOMES — AIDS outreach workers said the high rises in the Murphy Homes and other housing projects are havens for drug dealers.

PREVENTING THE DISEASE FROM SPREADING — HERO's AIDS outreach workers distribute bleach and instructions on how to use it to clean needles.

LISTEN WHILE I TEACH — Myron Johnson, a National Institute on Drug Abuse AIDS outreach worker for HERO, talks with Murphy Homes resident, Debra Bernard, about how she can protect herself from catching AIDS.

EDUCATING THE BLACK COMMUNITY — Tony Allen, co-director of EarthTide, said his AIDS organization is not receiving a fair share of the AIDS funding in the city.

AFRO Photos by Paris Gray

A MESSAGE TO KEEP FOLKS ALIVE — Outreach worker Patricia "Pepper" Brager gives AIDS pamphlets to Murphy Homes resident, Ories "Crickett" Corbin.

By Alicia Benjamin
and
Alisa Samuels

It is one o'clock in the afternoon and Myron Johnson and Vanessa Murphy are assertively spreading the word about AIDS.

Johnson and Murphy, former drug addicts, walk the streets of the Murphy Homes and other projects in Baltimore, fighting the deadly disease the only way they know how, through education.

So far, 65,780 Americans have been diagnosed with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, reported the Center for Disease Control in Rockville, Md. Thousands have died.

AIDS, a mysterious and incurable disease, is expected to have serious ramifications for everyone, ranging from economics to politics to education.

Minorities, particularly blacks, are expected to feel the consequences of AIDS.

Five days a week, the Health Education and Resources Organization AIDS outreach workers educate project residents and those at high risk for contracting AIDS, including prostitutes and drug abusers.

HERO employees, such as Johnson and Murphy are dedicated to reaching people on a one-to-one basis.

Johnson works specifically for HERO's two-year-old Street Outreach AIDS Prevention Project and Murphy serves HERO's National Institute for Drug Abuse AIDS Outreach program.

Members of SOAPP and NIDA, eight in all, sometimes work together but each group usually covers different sections of the city.

They work in areas such as Murphy Homes, Lexington Terrace and Cherry Hill, distributing AIDS pamphlets, condoms and bleach to stop the disease from spreading further.

But some citizens are not always willing to listen. They walk away, choosing to remain ignorant about the facts that may save their lives.

"I don't have it," one woman said firmly to Johnson as he attempted to hand her some AIDS brochures.

"I don't need this information. I've been tested. I don't have it. The man I'm with is only with me!" she said.

Her attitude illustrates what the workers and other AIDS educators must battle to decrease the growing numbers of blacks contracting the disease.

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"It's sink or swim time," said Lenett Allen, concerned about the growing numbers of blacks with AIDS. Allen is co-director of EarthTide, Inc., formed in 1987 to educate the black community about AIDS.

Since January 1981, when the disease was first reported, 596 blacks have contracted AIDS in Maryland, said the Maryland Department of Mental Health and Hygiene. Blacks comprise 59.3 percent of all AIDS cases in the state.

In Baltimore, 257 blacks have been reported to have AIDS, the Baltimore City Health Department said.

When first diagnosed, many thought AIDS was a homosexual disease, but many heterosexuals and children have contracted AIDS.

The number of homosexuals with AIDS in Maryland total 68.8 percent of all AIDS cases, the MDHMH reported. Thirty-eight percent of the homosexuals were white and 29.3 percent were blacks.

AIDS is a disease which is transmitted through blood or semen during intravenous drug use or sexual intercourse.

There is presently no cure for AIDS, although, the drug azidothymidine (AZT) has been used to delay death for some people with AIDS.

The cost of AZT treatment averages $800 to $1,000 a month, despite its inability to cure AIDS.

"Nobody can afford to pay for this, not even whites, said Mankekolo Mahlangu-Ngcobo of the City Health Department. It's too expensive," said Mahlangu-Ngcobo.

Dr. Moses B. Tounds, an assistant professor of behavioral science and health at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, said it is "doubtful" that a cure will be found soon, therefore, people should modify their behavior.

Programs such as EarthTide, Continuing Love, and the Black Mental Health Alliance have attempted to persuade blacks to change their behaviors to avoid contracting the immune system attacking virus.

Each organization offers counseling, workshops, lectures and support services to people who have AIDS or are at risk for contracting the disease.

"Men Aware," an on-going project developed a year ago, examines the sexual behavior of Afro-American men and attempts to persuade black men to recognize risks, to change their sexual behaviors and to take action to avoid exposure, said Tounds.

The project was started because experts knew little about Americans' sexual behaviors and "we know even less in Afro-America," Dr. Tounds said.

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Black churches in Baltimore have also joined in the fight against AIDS. Many have adopted the role of educating the community about the disease.

For example, Bethel AME Church, Druid Hill Avenue; Heritage United Church of Christ, Liberty Heights Avenue and the New Psalmist Baptist Church, West Franklin Street, have implemented drug and AIDS education programs.

Bethel's "Freedom Now Ministry," which originally began as a drug rehabilitation program, now includes AIDS prevention information because the ministry realizes many IV drug users have AIDS.

Across the United States, there are 12,189 intravenous drug abusers with AIDS, said Anna R. Irby, of the Rockville CDC. Black intravenous drug abusers with AIDS total 6,175, since June 27 of this year, Irby said.

"The Black Church Response to AIDS," a conference held in early March, marked the first major attempt by local black clergy to discuss their role in the fight against AIDS.

"We have to dispel the myth that folks who go to church won't get AIDS," said Mahlangu-Ngcobo, a steward for Bethel AME.

"It's your behavior outside of church that can give you AIDS," she said. "The whole issue isn't who you are (a church-goer or non church-goer), but what you are doing that puts you at risk."

EarthTide's Allen agreed.

"For the most part, ministers have kind of resolved their theological arguments and now are looking for ways to get involved," Allen said. She and her husband, Tony Allen, developed EarthTide.

Rev. Mamie Williams, of Centennial Baptist Church, said members of the clergy are gaining interest and want to learn more about AIDS. "But some still believe (AIDS) is an abomination from God."

"I do not," said Williams.

Williams visits and counsels "persons with AIDS" and their families at Johns Hopkins Hospital, as part of the AIDS Interface Network pastoral committee.

Some members of the religious community believe those who have AIDS are being punished by God for their sins.

"AIDS exists because of sins,' said Rev. Montague Brackett of the Central Baptist Church. "Man brought it on himself," he continued.

Brackett said homosexuality and drug abuse are "things God tells man not to do. When you go against God's will, sin will happen . . .," Brackett said.

Churches are reluctant to address AIDS, and they do not want to educate their congregation, Mr. Allen said.

"They do not want to admit that some people in their congregation may be gay," said Allen.

"They don't let us talk about condoms," he added. "But we have to go with the times. This is a life and death situation."

Although Brackett believes homosexuality and premarital sex are sins, he advises his congregation to use "protective measures" when having sex, if they can't say "no."

Condoms, nonoxynol-9 spermicides and clean needles appear to stop the spread of AIDS, while abstinance from sex is the only way to protect from contracting the disease, educators say.

Despite these facts, people continue to put themselves at risk.

Drug abusers who share needles, women who have sex with bisexual men and IV drug users endanger their lives and their unborn children. Homosexuals, who practice unsafe sex, and promiscuous teenagers and adults who fail to use protection are at risk for contracting AIDS.

"I wish our brothers and sisters would wake up and see the light before they see the darkness," said Mr. Allen.

Minorities who have AIDS are placed with a "double whammy," said Tounds. "Blacks, Hispanics and Asians are already minorities. This is a disease that marginalizes you if you are a minority in the mainstream."

There is a lack of support for persons with AIDS in the United States.

The country needs to say, "this is a problem that's OK to talk about and it's OK to help someone with it," Tounds said.

In fiscal year 1988, the BCHD received over $1.4 million in funds to distribute to AIDS-related organizations and services to educate, test and counsel Baltimoreans.

Del. Tony D. Fulton, D-40, member of the Environmental Matters Committee and member of the Black Mental Health Alliance, said minority AIDS programs are often overlooked when funds are distributed.

Traditionally, black organizations have received less money to provide health services to the black community, the delegate said.

"Very seldom, if ever, do we get the kinds of money we need," Fulton said. "It's because of racism."

The money goes to white organizations like Johns Hopkins and HERO, said Fulton.

But city and state officials said racism never is a factor in deciding which organization receives money.

Dr. David Glasser, assistant commissioner for preventive medicine and epidemiology at BCHD, said the allocation of funds is based on the availability of funds and services provided.

Organizations that provide AIDS counseling and testing are given priority, Glasser said.

"Racism doesn't play a part," said Dr. Keith Rawlings, BCHD AIDS coordinator.

The BCHD gave the Gay and Lesbian Community Center $102,000, EarthTide $96,000, HERO $300,00 and the AIDS Interfaith Network $7,000, last year. Many of the funds come from federal and state governments, often earmarked for specific use.

A joint hearing on AIDS between the Baltimore City Council and the Maryland House of Delegates is scheduled in the fall, said Baltimore City Councilman Carl Stokes. The hearing will give legislators and citizens an opportunity to discuss their concerns about the disease, the Second District councilman said.

The City Council has no pending AIDS legislation, said Stokes. He chairs the Council's subcommittee on health.

Tounds said the larger black organizations, like the NAACP, and fraternities and sororities, need to take "some kind of stand on AIDS."

"Pure education will not do it," Tounds said. "People have been warned smoking is bad for their health, but they continue to smoke," he continued.

"Education is necessary, but insufficient," the physician said.

People need to be honest and frank about their sex lives, although it may be an "infringement of their privacy," Tounds said.

"Just like people don't like to be told how to cook in their own kitchen, people don't like to be told what should go on in their bedrooms," said Dr. Tounds.

Baltimore and the entire country needs a comprehensive approach to combine various services such as networking, outreach programs and one-on-one contact, said Mrs. Allen.

One activity alone can not solve the problem, she said. For example, "street outreach alone has not and will not stop the spread of AIDS in the black community," Mrs. Allen said.

"It's not about one activity; it's about a number of activities."