

Reclaiming The Dream

From page 3

whose philosophy led the anti-civil rights movement of the 1960's. Sharpton concluded, "While they are down there, they ought to have Abe Lincoln tell them why he fought against state's rights and held the union together. they ought to read Dr. King's speech. And then they need to talk to some of us who came up the rough side of the mountain. That's why we are marching. Ain't no trouble. We wouldn't disgrace today by allowing you to provoke us. No matter what you do, we are going

President's Plan

Continue from page 1

to celebrate those who laid down their lives to give us a chance. Obama as a tax and spend president. This criticism seems questionable in light of the fact that President George W. Bush spent hundreds of billions of dollars on the Iraq war and gave quite a few tax cuts to the wealthy that ended up increasing our national debt a great deal. It appears unlikely that President Obama will get any of his measures passed any time soon. Additional spending by Democrats is likely to be perceived unfavorably by voters with elections coming up this fall. Even his fellow party members are hesitant to commit to spending additional funds.

Black unemployment has risen to The president's plan is a very good idea. America's infrastructure is falling apart, and there are thousands of roads and bridges in serious disrepair.

Preventable Blindness:

What You Should Know, and How to Be Part of the Solution

Mechanically speaking, the human eye is a paradox — simple to understand but (so far at least) impossible to replace. As the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) puts it, we have "One Pair, No Spare."

We also have regular chances to help prevent unnecessary vision loss, every time we apply for an original or renewal driver's license or state-issued I.D. card. Just check a box on the application form — online, by mail or in a Texas Department of Public Safety office — to contribute one dollar to DARS' Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment (BEST) program.

"A dollar every six years isn't much, but BEST has helped thousands of Texans get vision screenings and treatment they otherwise couldn't have afforded," DARS program support specialist Kathleen Wolfington said of the legislatively authorized donation program. "These services wouldn't exist without voluntary contributions. They're the only funding source we have."

Early Detection is Best What does that buck pay for? According to Wolfington, BEST promotes better understanding of vision loss and its causes, supports early detection through regular vision screening and helps Texans who lack insurance or other financial resources cover the sometimes steep cost of medical treatments, including eye surgery. BEST targets the major causes of permanent vision loss and blindness: diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and detached retina. Detached retina often leads quickly to vision loss but retinopathy and glaucoma can lurk for years before causing obvious effects.

"Retinopathy basically is a result of bleeding inside the eye," Wolfington said. "It's a frequent component of diabetes and

everyone who has diabetes is at risk. It's a sneaky condition because you can have it for quite a while without realizing it. But detecting it early through screening gives you a much better shot at prevention."

Glaucoma, a result of optical nerve damage caused by inner-eye pressure, also can go undetected for long periods and has a better prognosis when detected early, Wolfington said.

"That's why we also pay for non-diagnostic vision screening and encourage annual exams. They're painless and non-invasive. Your physician can spot many potential vision problems with just a quick look and the 'puff of air' [non-contact tonometry] test." Sometimes, vision loss can be headed off through indirect means such as managing diabetes through lifestyle changes.

BEST also can help when acute problems require prompt intervention through surgery, drug-based therapy or other medical means. These treatments aren't cheap, and many Texans couldn't afford them without BEST's help. "Even if we can't cover the whole cost of treatment we often can make it more do-able for them," Wolfington said. But only if enough Texans continue to check the box on drivers license and state ID forms — an option that once came up every four years but now happens only at six-year intervals. "Keep BEST in mind when you're filling out your application and remind your friends, family members and co-workers," Wolfington said. "And if you do choose to support us, please write out our full name: the Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment program." To learn more about BEST, go to www.dars.state.tx.us and click first on Blind Services, then on Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment program.

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Comments to: **Russell Smith, (512) 424-6966.**



THANK YOU

to the Pierce family:

Maxine, Jerry Don and Jeremy

The volunteer hours you spent and the motivation you inspired in others to volunteer touched the lives of so many people who came through the church doors this summer. We will forever be thankful to God and to you for the many kind deeds you performed. The finishing touches you put on the annex are a true work of art. It is our prayer that God continues to bless you and give you the strength to continue making the world a better place.

Mt. Pleasant CME Church Pastor & Members
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