

PROBLEM IS THE 'BOYS ON THE HILL'

Holistic solution prescribed for inner cities:

But speaker says it will cost \$300 billion

By Margo Huston of the Journal Sentinel staff

Few would say America's inner cities are not broken.

Lynn Curtis, who grew up on Milwaukee's southwest side and now serves as president of the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation in Washington, D.C., proposes a fix: \$30 billion a year over at least 10 years.

"The problem may not so much be the boys in the 'hod as the boys on the Hill," Curtis said. "Given the way Congress works, it does not seem able to create multiple solutions for multiple problems."

Curtis, former executive director of the Urban Policy Group for President Jimmy Carter, outlined what he called a holistic solution Thursday to members of the Greater Milwaukee Committee and other community leaders and activists at a luncheon at the Italian Community Center. The event was sponsored by Family Service America Inc. and the Helen Bader Foundation Inc.

The Bader Foundation also paid for a study Curtis completed earlier this year - "The State of Families: Family, Employment and Reconstruction - Policy Based on What Works."

The total \$30 billion price tag includes current spending plus an additional \$15 billion in new or expanded programs. The increases would provide:

- Adequate prenatal care among poor, inner city mothers.
- Adequate developmental care of infants and toddlers.
- Three years of Head Start for all eligible children ages 3 to 5.
- After-school day care programs.
- High school apprenticeship programs.

- A new job-training and placement system based on successful pilot programs.
- Comprehensive communities, such as the New Community Corp. in Newark, N.J., that would include permanent and temporary housing, health care, job training, day care and good restaurants and supermarkets.

Curtis' Eisenhower Foundation, which is the private-sector continuation of the Kerner Commission formed in the aftermath of the 1967 riots, and the 1968 National Violence Commission, released a 25-year update of the Kerner report.

Drawing on that, Curtis said: "The prophecy of the Kerner Commission of two societies, black and white, increasingly separate and less equal, has come to pass." Curtis said he looks to the "common people" to create the political will for the major changes he proposes.

"It is the common people who must remind us of the difference between what we are told and what we see," he said. "It is the common people who must remind us that for too long the dream has been deferred for the poor and now for the newly anxious middle class."

Of a dream deferred, he paraphrased African-American poet Langston Hughes: "Does it sag like a heavy load? Or, does it explode?"