

A4 CENTRAL ILLINOIS Decatur, Illinois • Friday, November 19, 1999

SCHOOL: Jackson heads home

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strations on school property during school hours before Tuesday's hearing. The civil rights group agreed.

After the court appearance, Jackson told reporters he would be back home, but planned to return to the area for a hearing in U.S. District Court in Urbana.

"After I answer this question, we have two major stops left today. The first is Shabazz (restaurant). The second is my bed in Chicago," Jackson joked at the end of a news conference outside the Macon County Courts Facility.

While at the regional office of education, Jackson reiterated his stance that the Decatur school board should not offer the students alternative education when they were expelled in October. He called again for the board to evaluate the performance of each of the six in their alternative setting with an eye toward allowing them to return to regular school when the second semester starts in mid-January.

The school expelled for fighting in a Sept. 17 football game at Eisenhower High School.

Jackson was repeatedly questioned by reporters about why he would want to return to the area to have the students admitted to the alternative programs, rather than in their earlier after meetings with the school board. Gov. George E. Ryan and state school Superintendent Glen F. McGee

agreed Nov. 8 to reduce the expulsions to one year, and the state officials opened the door for enrollment in an alternative school for the remainder of this school year.

"The school board would be willing to accommodate [the students] when in court," Jackson said, referring to a federal court petition by Rainbow/PUSH. The court will hear arguments in the petition, which seeks a temporary restraining order against the school board to keep the students back into regular classes.

School board President Jackie Goedert was pleased with Thursday's court decision.

"I think it's wonderful that the students have finally gone to enroll in the alternative education class," she said. "I'm glad that they have gone last Tuesday, but I'm glad they are there today, given the preference for the classes in the program."

Regional Superintendent Craig Milligan said one or more of the expulsions would likely be enrolled in each of the four alternative programs based in Decatur and run by his office.

■ **Futures Unlimited**, whose students have limited severe attendance problems and have fallen below state standards.

■ **Safe School**, for disruptive students on the brink of expulsion.

■ **PACE**, for students on probation.

■ **Teen GED**, for older teens ages 16 to 21.

Jackson said the school board should have offered enrollment in the Safe School program before expelling them.

CAUCUS:

Madigan rejects request for Decatur hearing

Continued from A1

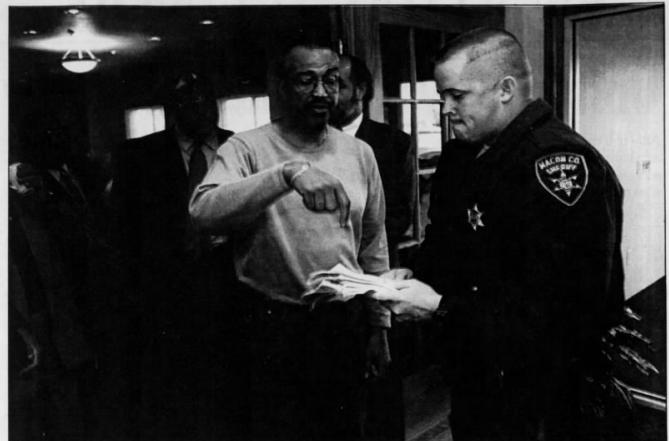
school board's actions received the support of the Ku Klux Klan, which staged a rally in Decatur last Sunday.

"I would like them to know my allies. That's who I stand with," Jackson said. "We don't want them as our allies." She said, "Who are the allies of the children? That's the community of Decatur. They are the ministers. Now who are the allies of the schools? Are they the going to the KKK?"

Davis also said the students' actions were not the only ones who may have acted in a wrongdoing. "At this point, the criminals in my opinion, are those who chose to deny education to six boys and to deny their supervision and it wasn't there for them," Davis said.

Davis is one of the most outspoken members of the Illinois House on racial and educational issues. She confirmed in an interview that she wanted legislative hearings to be held to look at how to try to ensure that the inequalities and injustices that were perpetrated over in Decatur do not happen again in the state of Illinois, Trotter said.

Davis also asked Madigan to appoint a special committee, complete with subpoena power, to look into the Decatur school board to testify.



SERVED: Macon County Sheriff's deputy Adam Walter, right, presents subpoena to Rainbow/PUSH Coalition attorney Lewis Myers Jr., the Rev. Jesse Jackson and several other members to appear in court later that day.

State Rep. Rick Winkel, R-Champaign, helped write the bill that ushered in the Safe School program throughout the state program.

Winkel said the Safe School was designed as an option for districts considering expelling a student. The student can then receive credit in the Safe School and choose to stay in a traditional program or opt to remain in the program. Either way, once a student completes the Safe School, he or she graduates with a diploma from the transferring school.

Milligan said he was not enthusiastic about the Safe School by accepting the students for placement into alternative programs.

"The only endorsement we have is from the first," Milligan said. "We have authority from Dr. McGee to give these students the opportunity."

Also on Thursday, Jackson and Hale met with Decatur Mayor Terry Howley, City Manager Steve Garman and Assistant City Manager Linda Atkinson.

Howley refused to comment after the meeting and said Jackson would be making a statement to the media on Friday.

Hale and his supporters distributed leaflets early Thursday outside Eisenhower High School, inviting the community to a rally at 5 p.m. in Nelson Park.

Beth Jackson, a former member of the church, committed suicide this summer after a two-year struggle with the group directed by police. Earlier, the group had distributed fliers to Eisenhower High School, inviting the community to a rally at the school.

Before getting into the car with the Rev. Jackson, Hale said he was not sure he was trying to support her. Jackson very much.

"I'm not here to be like the Jackson and the Aryan Nation," Reynolds said. "It's time for white men to stand up for what is right."

For every motorist who honked in support of World Church members, there was a passer-by who shouted or gestured in anger, according to Hale.

"I think it's crazy," said Kevin Brown, an Eisenhower student.

And when Reynolds shouted to student Heather Neff, asking her to attend Sunday's rally, Neff shot back that she was a Jackson supporter.

"I think they need to leave and quit bugging Jesse Jackson," Neff said. "I think he's doing a good job."

Winkler, an associate pastor at the church, said it felt like the people in the church took a deep breath, let it out and started to feel better.

"I think that's what we've

a mistake. They own up to the fact that they made a mistake by rescinding from two years to one year. But what is more obvious is that they did not do all of the things that they were supposed to do as far as putting the kids in an alternative school when they did support them."

Brown said Madigan made the judgment call, but he received the support from state Rep. Julie A. Curry, D-Mount Zion.

Davis said she would push for hearings next year. Madigan expects the bill to pass, but she said she would push for the Black Caucus to visit Decatur for its hearings.

"I think the hearings was not part of the Black Caucus agenda announced at its news conference. State Sen. Dennis E. Trotter, D-Chicago, came to the hearing."

"We've come here today to address in part what is going on in Decatur Illinois," Trotter said. "We've come here to try to ensure that the inequalities and injustices that were perpetrated over in Decatur do not happen again in the state of Illinois," Trotter said.

Still, state Rep. Mary E. Flores, D-Chicago, and several others from the Black Caucus "It's obvious that the (school board) made

a mistake," Trotter said. "I rather resent that."

Mitchell said he and Trotter

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seen from Jesse Jackson for almost two weeks now.

He said the Macon-Piatt Regional Office of Education in hopes of confronting Jackson, but to no avail. Jackson avoided him.

"I know I've seen him if I recognize him if I saw him," Jackson said.

Patricia Hilleberg of Real Life Assembly of God, which is near the education office, said he came along with gospel evangelists to give a rally in support of the community.

"We're not here to take sides. We're not simply to pray for them," he said. "I want to see this attention end. We want to see the best outcome for the boys involved and the best outcome for the community as well."

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"I think that's what we've

Fostering a sense of community

Author: Family rituals, role models provide stable foundation for kids.

By VALERIE WELLS

H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — When Paul Seitz was a child, his family ate dinner together every night — all four of them, sitting around the table, sharing their day.

"Since I left for college, my family hasn't had dinner together," said Seitz, a freshman at Millikin University. "But will carry over. There is hope for me to have dinner since it right once, if we did it again."

Seitz is an example of how a firm foundation of rituals and stability can give a child the ability to look outward, to realize he or she is part of a community, said Carol Parks, co-author of "Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Community."

Parks visited Millikin on Thursday to speak at the university's Fall Convocation. She also spoke to Nancy DeJoy's critical reading class, reading and research class.

In the research she and her colleagues at Harvard University did, said Parks, associate director of the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, Wash., they discovered three common characteristics shared by community-minded people of all cultures and ages: trust, fostered by family; strong, caring mentors and having an influential adult figure in their lives as children; a sense of power, the feeling that "I can make a difference"; and a connection with "the other" — that is, the ability to relate to common goals, fears and feelings are shared by all people.

"We live in a world gone busy," Parks said. "But we all need a sense of belonging to something larger. We must learn to transform 'us' and 'them' into 'we.'

"It's important to put the common good above one's own, and the controversy over the expulsions of six Decatur high school students is an example of that, she said.

"We're having the dialogue of the community and it's full of tension and pain and hurt. We have justice, that more people have access to what is good and nourishing, and at the same time, we have the protections we need in society for whenever anything happens. If you have zero disrupted schools are more disrupted by school administrators on school property."

As Jackson talked to a smaller contingent of reporters and television cameras, he appeared short-tempered. He appeared short-tempered, according to Trotter, who was an Eisenhower student.

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