

11 Graduate From Oakland Community School

"WE WANT TO SET EXAMPLES FOR THE LITTLE CHILDREN"

(Oakland, Calif.) — It was a time for beautiful memories as well as anticipation of the future at the Oakland Community School (OCS) graduation ceremonies here last Wednesday. In the beautifully simple language of children, the 11 graduates—seven girls and four boys—of the model elementary level school paid tribute to the unique, quality education they received.

Following their processional into the crowded auditorium of the Oakland Community Learning Center (OCLC), the graduating class began their last program as OCS students. The 11 children made a striking picture as they took the stage, with the girls attired in lovely white dresses and the boys in sharp beige suits.

The 1977 OCS Graduating Class included Elizabeth Baker; Lorene Banks; Mary Banks; Walter Butler; Sean Carter; Alisha Keyes; Lasonja Means; Steven Smith; Glen Thornton; Louise Williams; and Billie Jo Wright.

The graduates began by reciting a poem they wrote reflecting on how the spirit of love and concern that pervades the OCS contributed to their individual and collective growth and development.

Perhaps they best summed up their feelings in the statement, "We want to make things better for the little children we will leave behind."

The children then did an excellent pantomime of remembrances from the past year. As one student explained aloud the different activities which the children were involved in, other children acted these activities out. Included among the highlights of the 1976-77 school year were the School Spelling Bee; the Black Engineers Conference last fall at which the OCS was the only school to put on an exhibit; a field trip to the Afro-American Cultural and Historical Society in San Francisco; and the unforgettable baseball games played with the staff.

Next, the graduates were joined by all of the children of the School in singing "There's A Little Wheel A' turning In My Heart" and "Love Is The Answer."

Children have dreams of the future, of what they will be when they become adults, of what they would like the world to be. In the next portion of the program, the graduates shared their dreams with their parents, teachers and friends. Among the lives which the graduates aspire to pursue are those of a nurse, doctor, social science, science, mathematics and language teachers, and professional basketball and football players.



Following the singing of the inspiring "We Can Do Anything," the graduates received their beautiful school rings.

Next on the program was the presentation of the Parent of the Year Award. Elaine Brown, executive director of Educational Opportunities Corporation (EOC), the community-based, nonprofit organization which administers the OCS, announced that Mrs. Mary Means, mother of graduate Lasonja Means, had been selected as this year's winner of the coveted award. Mrs. Means, who headed the Parent Advisory Board during the past year, received a lovely bouquet of red roses and a necklace in appreciation for her tireless efforts on behalf of the School.

The program concluded with Ericka Hugins, director of the OCS, presenting the certificates of graduation to the 11 proud and happy children. □



(A) 1977 OCS graduates, (B) ERICKA HUGGINS hands graduation certificate to MARY BANKS, (C) Graduates doing pantomime on remembrances of past year, (D) OCS student body, (E) ELAINE BROWN with OCS Parent of the Year, Mrs. MARY MEANS.