

# Concert transcends cultural boundaries

**By Amber Stenger  
Of the Statesman Journal**

At the beginning of the concert, Byron Davis had his work cutout for him.

It looked as though the 130 Hillcrest School students were listening to a dull biology lecture rather than a music concert.

Some of the juvenile offenders were slouched in their chairs, others daydreamed of or chatted with their peers. And one student was absorbed in combing this hair.

But during the second song, the lecture had ended and recess had begun.

Heads swayed, feet tapped, and hands clapped to the beat.

Byron Davis of Portland and eight other band members played gospel music and rhythm and blues Saturday for the Hillcrest students as the conclusion to Black History Month. His concert was part of the school's new cultural awareness program.

Of Hillcrest's 165 students, 27 are minorities, but racism is not considered a problem

"When you study about your race, it does make you feel kind of special," Willie, 16, who has been a student there for six months, said.

Hillcrest students are between 12 and 20 years old and have been sentenced by the courts to attend the school for committing crimes that range from criminal mischief to murder, Joan Dodge, the superintendent, said.

In addition to the concert, February -- Black History Month -- was observed with films, displays and class work.

Richardson also compiled information about minorities in history, science and other areas to add to textbook material for the teachers.

"History books are not all-encompassing," Richardson said. "A lot of information is left out, particularly minority contributions."

The program will focus on the Asian community in



March, the Hispanic community in April and the Native American heritage in May.

"Some minority students don't know anything about their history or heritage," Richardson said. "Some hate themselves because they are connected with a group of people. I've heard black students say, 'I hate being black,' and Hispanics students say, 'I hate being Hispanic.' They shouldn't feel to be anybody or to be anyone they have to white. It's OK to be who you are."

Marc, an 18-year-old student, said the program also would help people who have racist views.

"I think people with bad attitudes will probably get something out of it," Marc said. "I'll probably get something out of it, too. I usually get something out of everything."

Entertainment was the main thing Marc got out of the concert, few students wanted it to end.

But, then again, few students ever want recess to end.