



## Grassroots Action on Violence

*Coalition intends to show how peace is possible*

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## Help with Parenting

*Community-based healing program offers support*

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# The Portland Observer

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'City of Roses'

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Committed to Cultural Diversity



Capt. Derrick Peterson is running to become Multnomah County sheriff.

## Experienced Deputy Enters Sheriff's Race

Candidate speaks out on gun violence, other issues

BY BEVERLY CORBELL  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Capt. Derrick Peterson is pointing to extensive experience in law enforcement and corrections in a campaign to become the next sheriff for Multnomah County, replacing Dan Reese who is retiring next year because of term limits.

Peterson announced his candidacy for the position last week in an election that will be held in May. He is the first Black person to run for the office and his opponent, Undersheriff Nicole Morrissey O'Donnell, with 25 years in the department, is the first woman to run.

Peterson told the Portland Observer he was counting on his 32 years of experience in the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office to help him navigate the responsibilities of the job, along with his ability to build community coalitions to help bring peace to impacted neighborhoods.

Peterson has headed up the county jail system for the past three years, a department that he wants to

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## Effort to Save Black Landmark



Louis McLemore, exalted ruler of the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, surveys the damage from a Sept. 11 fire that started outside the building and spread to the walls and roof of the landmark building. A gofundme.com campaign is gathering donations to make repairs. Photo courtesy Restore Oregon, Saving Historic Places.

## Billy Webb Elks Lodge damaged by suspect fire

A gofundme.com campaign is underway to help raise donations to make repairs to the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, a landmark structure serving the Black community that was extensively damaged by fire on Sept. 11.

Neighbors first reported the fire which broke out during the early morning hours on the lodge's outdoor deck and spread, burning up through the roof.

The lodge and nonprofit Restore Oregon believe the fire was started by trespassers who were cooking or had some sort of fire that spread out of control.

Thankfully, the fire was reported quickly enough that

it was contained in time to save much of the building, organizers for the fundraiser said. Unfortunately, the blaze left gaping holes in the building's roof, and burnt rafters throughout.

Restore Oregon also reported that the water used to fight the fire destroyed the walls and floor of the lodge's ballroom, as well as the basement below, and the entire interior has been damaged by smoke.

The landmark building has been associated with the

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# The Week in Review

## Suspended for Blackface

In a statement condemning all expressions of racism, Newberg Public Schools placed one of its elementary school teacher aides on administrative leave Friday after showing up for work in Blackface. The employee was protesting a vaccine mandate for all school district staff, calling herself Rosa Parks in disguise.

## No Show for School Buses

A shortage of school bus drivers caused Portland Public Schools Monday to cancel 13 bus routes to Benson and Lincoln High schools and 16 routes with different pick-up or drop-off times for the foreseeable future. The district said it will offer financial help to families whose routes are canceled.

## Thefts Ground Reynolds Buses

Someone stole about 20 catalytic converters from school buses in the Reynolds School District transportation lot just as the school year began, causing roughly \$70,000 in damage. The district said it would make adjustments to meet transportation needs while repairs are made.

## Police Surveillance Illegal

A Multnomah County Circuit Court judge Monday held that the Portland Police Bureau violat-

ed Oregon law by livestreaming protests. A representative of the American Civil Liberties Union called the decision a victory, "Protest is fundamental to democracy. Protest is not a crime. Period."

## Nabisco Strike Settled

Against the will of Portland Nabisco workers who voted otherwise, co-striking union members across the country voted to accept a new four-year collective bargaining agreement Saturday with Mondelez International. The ratification ends a walkout that began last month.

## Worst COVID-19 Surge

Oregon was in the midst of its worst COVID-19 surge since the start of the pandemic last week — which health officials say is fueled by unvaccinated people and the highly transmissible delta variant. The new forecast predicts that hospitals across the state will remain under severe strain for the next two to three months.

## Rabid Bats Discovered

A rabid bat was discovered last week in northeast Portland, marking the first time an animal has tested positive for the disease in Multnomah County since 2014. Another rabid bat was found in Beaverton a few days earlier.



Annette Majekodunmi, a parent and community engagement supervisor at POIC + Rosemary Anderson High School works side by side with parents in a Community Healing Initiative.

# Help with Parenting

## Community healing program offers support

Raising and caring for young lives can be complicated and require steadfast patience and resolve. Parenting, even during the best of times, is tough. But factor in financial, emotional and general uncertainty, as well as the strains of the COVID-19 pandemic — and the layers of challenges grow and grow.

Tamika, a single mother of two, also has to account for gun violence that might unfold near her north Portland home. Or worse, gunfire that may claim the lives of her children.

"My son's best friend was shot and killed in front of his mother's house last March," she shares. "And it was devastating. My son could have also been right next to his friend."

Parenting for Tamika has never been a walk in the park. At a young age, she was a single, hard-working mom raising two kids. Her son, in particular, struggled.

"There was myself, my daughter and my son," she said. "There was no male figure in my household. My son missed out on a whole lot."

From preschool through his first two years in elementary school, a school administrator called her nearly every day with concerns. Also troubling, she found people telling her she would never get help for her son until he was the juvenile justice system.

Fast forward to today, and Tamika's son is now unfortunately involved in the justice system. He also struggles with a disability. The past 18 months have been a rollercoaster of emotion and stress as the family, as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19, violence and the court system.

Tamika is not alone. She finds solace among other parents through POIC + Rosemary Anderson High School's Community Healing Initiative parent group. The group offers support and resources to parents whose children may be involved in the

justice system, as well as parents whose lives have been impacted by community violence that has harmed, or even killed, their children. The program works in partnership with Multnomah County and the County's Department of Community Justice.

"I have been struggling with my son ever since he got into public school," said Tamika. "The work and the help that the Community Healing Initiative is giving us today is work I wish I would have had when we started out on this journey."

Since the beginning of the year through August, preliminary data show that there were more than 800 incidents of gunfire in Portland alone. More than 260 people have been hurt by gun violence — a number that does not account for other types of violence that can wound, seriously injure or kill in some other way.

Many communities across the country experiencing sharp increases in violence are looking for ways not just to curtail the harm, but also to lift up struggling community members who have been, or are most at risk of being, affected.

In Multnomah County, the Board of County Commissioners allocated funding to bolster programs like the Community Healing Initiative and its companion Elevate program to provide support systems for youth and parents impacted by gangs, like Tamika and her son.

Annette Majekodunmi, a parent and community engagement supervisor at POIC + Rosemary Anderson High School who works side by side with Tamika and other parents participating in the healing initiative.

How quickly the community moves on from instances of violence is troubling, said Majekodunmi.

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### The Portland Observer

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Candidate Sees Neglected Needs

### Ashton Simpson files for Metro Council

Ashton Simpson, a community leader, non-profit executive, and Veteran, is running for an open Metro Council seat representing east Portland and the communities of Gresham, Fairview and Troutdale.

If elected, he would become the first Black man to represent the diverse area for Metro and the second to serve on the regional government.

"I'm running for Metro because I want to help move our community forward – for everyone," Simpson said in prepared remarks announcing his candidacy last week.

"I have a proven track record of bringing people together, solving pressing issues all with a focus on equity," he said. "As East County is growing larger and more diverse, I will ensure we invest and lift up this community, especially for underserved residents."

Simpson has a record as a community leader. As executive director of Oregon Walks, he was part of a coalition of transportation advocates that helped secure \$185 million to transform 82nd Avenue into a safer corridor. He has also served on several key committees that direct policy and dollars to the community, including Metro's Local Investment Team and Portland's Fixing Our Streets Oversight Committee.

Advocates credit him with having a keen understanding of how government works, especially Metro programs, policies and funding mechanisms, and for having a commitment to delivering for East County, as well as throughout the region.

Raised in Houston, Simpson is a retired Air Force Civil Engineer Technician. Most recently, he saw firsthand the consequences of underinvestment and poorly planned growth with the devastation of Hurricane Harvey that wiped out whole communities.

"My lived experience truly drives my passion to invest and give back to my community," said Simpson. "In the Air Force, I learned the value of service, teamwork and never leaving anyone behind. We must help others, so no one is left behind. I will continue to pay it forward."

Simpson said his priorities include improving access to affordable housing, jobs, education and transportation options with smart urban planning,



*Community leader, nonprofit executive and Veteran Ashton Simpson runs for a seat on the Metro Council representing east Portland and the communities of Gresham, Fairview and Troutdale.*

addressing housing affordability and racial and economic disparities, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and investing in renewable energy and green transportation options to help slow climate change and create healthier neighborhoods.

He supports expanding family-wage construction job access for women and people of color through Metro's Construction Career Pathways program and ensuring that Community Development Agreements are in place for all major projects.

His endorsements to date include Rep. Khanh Pham, Sen. Kayse Jama, Former Rep. Carla Piluso, Former Sen. Margaret Carter, Gresham City Councilor Vince Jones-Dixon and advocate/community leaders Duncan Hwang, Winta Yohannes and Arlene Kimura.

Simpson earned a Bachelor's Degree in Community Development from Portland State University. He is a proud father to his son, AJ, and enjoys cooking, yoga, traveling, walking and biking.

## Grassroots Action on Violence

### Coalition intends to show how peace is possible

A coalition of representatives from Portland's African American community, including faith leaders and retired Black police officers are kicking off a new initiative responding to an increase in community gun violence to show how peace is possible.

The Interfaith Peace and Action J. W. Matt Hennessee



Collaborative (IPAC) on Tuesday embraced the observance of International Peace Day to announce the Portland Peace Initiative, a series of community listening sessions to develop a practical, lasting framework for inclusive community engagement that reimagines public safety in Portland, paying particular attention to communities of color and other historically underrepresented groups.

The purpose will be the creation

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# Help with Parenting

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Once a week on Thursdays, Majekodunmi leads a parent group for 12 to 15 people on average who come together to share stories and get information.

The initiative also offers other kinds of support, including home buying seminars, financial literacy sessions, information on how to prepare for COVID-19, and guidance for ensuring that your household is well. Parents may also receive food baskets or help with back-to-school supplies.

The one-on-one and group support, however, is what's most central to the public outreach, Majekodunmi said, because it lets families know they are not

alone, that other folks have gone through the journey.

"It's more or less about making sure that parents have the mental and emotional support they need," she said.

The CHI team also provides support for parents as they interact with the juvenile justice and adult criminal legal system and works to ensure they receive comprehensive, well-rounded information.

Making and keeping connections — and, for parents, using their voice to advocate for the support they need — are all essential in navigating a life touched by violence, Majekodunmi says. There are success stories: Youth complete programs and go to college, while others come back

and become mentors themselves.

"Our program works hard to show that there's another path that your kid can take, but we have to work together to make it happen so younger kids don't have to deal with the loss of a big brother," said Majekodunmi.

"It's sort of like counseling. The topics are different each week, and that usually opens up the floodgates," said Tamika. "I thought it was just me and my son going through this. We have the platform to say that and also talk about whatever is on the agenda.

"There were times when I was so tired from work and arguing with my son, but I still logged on. And each and every time I logged on, I felt better."

Tamika works with CHI Family Care Manager Babak Zolfaghari-Azar, who has been able to connect particularly

well with her son.

"I need that kind of support and that's what they give," she said. "When I can't talk to my son because of the mental part, Babak will jump in and he can connect. And not just because he's a male, but he's knowledgeable enough to know how to speak to someone like my son."

CHI will remain an essential part of her weekly routine.

"They continue to do things to help build self-esteem," Tamika says. "I want to really stress that as many times as I wanted to forget them, they never forgot me."

For more resources on the Community Healing Initiative and other programs, visit [portlandoic.org/resources](http://portlandoic.org/resources).

*Thank you to the Multnomah County Communications team for sharing this story.*

# Experienced Deputy Enters Sheriff's Race

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

increase its efficiency.

"I would like to find redundancies in the system and try to streamline for efficiency purposes," he said. "We're throwing a lot of money at a lot of issues, but a lot of times they overlap, so I want to see if we can find commonality to ad-

dress issues in a more efficient manner."

Peterson is president of the local chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, describing the "blue collar path into leadership," he has taken over the years.

He is nationally recognized as an expert in diversity train-

ing, which he has taught at county law enforcement academies for the last two years.

He has also held panels on police reform to help shape community involvement in policing and worked on supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) law enforcement personnel as they faced challenges following last year's murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Peterson also serves on the boards of the Social Sciences Department at Portland Community College and the Collins Grace Foundation.

He's held a "multitude of positions" over the years, including as a sergeant and chief deputy before being promoted to lieutenant as commander of the Corrections Emergency Response Team and has also as commander of hostage negotiations.

Peterson was promoted to captain three years ago to oversee Multnomah County Department of Corrections including the county's two jails, the Multnomah County Detention Center, inside the Justice Center in Downtown Portland, and Inverness Jail in northeast Portland.

"I've gotten to the point in my career where I've gained enough skill sets and tools while also being able to successfully garner support from various community leaders," he said.

Peterson has won endorsements in his campaign from state Rep. Janelle Bynum of Happy Valley and southeast Portland and Herman Greene of north Portland who was recently elected to the Portland School Board.

His experience running the

county jails has given him a unique perspective to the needs of inmates and staff, and he proposed several changes, he said.

"We need to look at how we are integrating or addressing adults in custody, and preparing them to go out in the community through halfway houses," he said.

And because the prison population is mostly male, women's issues haven't received as much attention as they deserve, he said.

"A lot of time they have children and don't have contact with them anymore. It's similar to males', but it's more prevalent among females. We are trying to find ways to keep that family bond. It's always been male-oriented in the jail atmosphere, but there needs to be more focus on females in custody."

Peterson said he'd also like to see a vitamin regimen adopted to help keep inmates stay healthy.

"It's proven to keep down colds and flu and balancing that would be advantageous to the system itself," he said.

Multnomah County deputies and other jail staff need more attention to their needs from in terms of their physical welfare and mental health, he said.

"If they are not healthy and well, we are not getting the most out of production that we would if they were not being attended to," he said. "Especially in this day and age, there needs to be emphasis on our line staff."

While he's sensitive to the needs of deputies, Peterson said he also knows what it's like to be a member of the Black community improperly pulled over because of their race, which gives him perspective not only

in teaching future deputies at the training academy, but overseeing the entire department.

"I've had to deal with that kind of discrimination in the past, just like a lot of Black men growing up having to be fearful of driving and being in different areas," he said.

Homelessness is also a huge concern, Peterson said.

He supports giving more weight to Multnomah County's Homeless Outreach and Programs Engagement, or HOPE program.

The HOPE team goes out in the community to work with houseless people, referring them to service providers and staying engaged with them to build trust, he said, and is "community policing at its best."

The sheriff's department covers a huge area, Peterson said, from Multnomah County's eastern border with Hood River County to Columbia County on the west, including all unincorporated parts of the county and both the Columbia and Willamette rivers, where it heads up rescue operations.

Peterson said his family has been residents of Portland for more than 70 years "since Vanport" and his wife, Leslie has been a leading influence in his life.

"She's was very instrumental in taking care of our son Trey, who had a traumatic brain injury, and is still suffering some effects, but graduated this year from George Fox University with an economic degree," he said.

Peterson said he's looking forward to leading the sheriff's department through the police reforms that people are asking for.

"I want to be part of that. I want to establish community trust," he said.




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# Effort to Save Black Landmark

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

historic African-American community for generations.

Lodge Exalted Ruler Louis McLemore said that between maintenance, general overhead, and insurance premiums, it costs roughly \$100,000 a year to keep the beloved lodge at 6 N. Tillamook Street open and operational.

Restore Oregon reported that McLemore and others are working tirelessly to save and plan for the rehabilitation of the structure, which serves as headquarters for Portland's only remaining African American fraternal organization, but they need help from the community.

Although Billy Webb Elks Lodge has insurance coverage, it is estimated that full repairs and mitigation could take at least a year to complete.

While the lodge does collect fees from its members, the vast majority of its operating budget comes from rental of its ballroom, kitchen and bar for events, classes, meetings, and shows, all of which are impossible for the foreseeable future, officials said.

The fire hit just as the lodge was starting to bounce back from public health restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic.

The lodge first served as the African American branch of the Portland YWCA and was part of a larger historical context of "Colored Women's Clubs" in early 20th-century Oregon, Restore Oregon said.

For a four-year period during WWII, the lodge was loaned to the United Service Organization (USO) for use as a recreation center for African American servicemen. In 1948, the building was used as an emergen-



The ballroom of the Billy Webb Elks Lodge ballroom is damaged by a fire believed to have been started by trespassers cooking outside. A gofundme.com campaign is helping raise donations to make repairs.

cy shelter during the Vanport Flood disaster providing shelter to the African American community, which was disproportionately impacted.

In 1956, the Portland Branch of the NAACP established its first official headquarters in the basement of the lodge, focusing on African American community issues like the value of organized opposition, state support for education, housing accessibility, discrimination in labor unions, and displacement by urban renewal programs in inner northeast Portland.

During the 1950s and 60s the site became a meeting place for Black community groups like the Urban

League of Portland and the Congress of Racial Equality. In 1959 it was sold by the YWCA to the Improved Benevolent & Protective Order of the Elks (IBPOEW) who own and occupy it today.

For many more years, Billy Webb Elks hopes to continue its legacy of uplifting the surrounding African American community through fellowship, benevolence, charity, citizenship programs, economic, and business objectives.

To contribute to the rebuilding fund, visit [gofundme.com/f/historic-billy-webb-elks-lodge-devastated-by-fire/](https://gofundme.com/f/historic-billy-webb-elks-lodge-devastated-by-fire/).

## Supporting Oregonians COPING WITH PROBLEM GAMBLING

### Times Are Changing

Summer. The season so many of us have waited for, with its promise of cheerful weather, camping, daytrips, and street fairs — so much to do! And, this year, we're able to make summer plans with fewer cares around social distancing and masks. As vaccination levels increase, our worries start to lessen. Dare we say it? Life feels like it's getting back to normal this summer.

But right on the heels of those comforting thoughts, some of us still have doubts. We're encouraged to continue taking precautions for public health. Many of our favorite summer gatherings are still holding off. Even the sunny skies and warm weather sometimes turn into too much of a good thing. Coping with all the change can feel like a bit of a roller coaster. For some of us, issues like problem gambling can be harder to control when life still feels so uncertain.

### Help is Available

Luckily, here in Oregon, help is available. Through the Oregon Problem Gambling Resource (OPGR), gamblers and those who love them can get support from trained addiction counselors, often right from home. Treatment is effective. People are ready and waiting to provide mechanisms to cope and to heal. And, best of all, it's free.

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For more information, visit →

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OREGON PROBLEM GAMBLING RESOURCE





On the set of *Animal Control*, the recently completed music video by homeless and marginalized youth enrolled in *Outside the Frame*, and starring Mic Crenshaw, Noah, JProdigy, the Oregon Symphony, Friends of Noise and participants from Portland Public Schools.

# Riders in the Storm

## Young filmmakers showcase work

While fires burned and a new virus raged, *Outside the Frame*, a Portland nonprofit which trains homeless and marginalized youth to make films, were working to capture stories about racial justice, mental health, wildfires and healthcare.

*Riders in the Storm*, good films about a bad year will premiere Thursday, Sept. 30 at the Hollywood Theatre in northeast Portland, stories told by unhoused people who trust their experiences with *Outside the Frame* to showcase a grassroots response to the epidemic and how the houseless community has influenced Portland city policy.

The films include *Rose City Rising* which highlights the group's work with Portland Public high school students, veteran activist and musician Mic Crenshaw, *Friends of Noise*

and the Oregon Symphony to create five powerful music videos about the youth-led movement for racial justice.

Another film, *Masks*, reveals what living with schizophrenia really feels like and the humble dreams of the protagonist - to have a place to live and a caring roommate. "To give more of an understanding of psychosis and why their reality is different because a lot of the time it's very invalidated, and I think it will help people understand what the other side of it is like."

*Riders on the Storm* highlights Metro's public servants, their evacuation efforts of houseless people, and working against all odds to help our homeless neighbors during COVID and Oregon's wildfires.

*Becoming Raven* is a story of transformation from a houseless street

newspaper vendor to the creator of a COVID taskforce to the establishment of a city sanctioned encampment.

*Health Clinic Heroes*, produced for the Coalition of Community Health Clinics, features frontline staff at health clinics, from a nurse who treats a single mom with COVID to the rapid opening of a childcare center for health clinic workers who needed to continue treating patients.

During the gala ceremony, a lifetime of achievement award will be given to local hero, Casey Culley, a community health outreach worker at Central City Concern who has worked within unsanctioned homeless camps in the Portland Metro area.

"Going through my addiction and my homelessness, which ultimately all led me to coming out of it and being restored and getting opportunities and

a chance to be a human being again, I wanted to be one of those few people I had in my journey that were just rock stars, super passionate about their work," said Culley. "One of the things that really keeps me constantly motivated is having been there in my life and then having an incredible organization like Central City Concern be a part of restoring my hope, and helping me get a chance to unlock a life I never had even as a possibility in my mind. I'm super passionate and on fire for helping people to see that there is hope for them too."

To attend the screenings, a proof of vaccination or negative COVID test and masks are required. Kids under 12 with a vaccinated adult are welcome. The theatre will be at 75 percent capacity under public health requirements during the coronavirus pandemic.



# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

## Ending Summer with Live Music

### Outdoor venue set up for safety

Portland outdoor events are wrapping up for summer-- but there are five great music shows still happening between now and the end of the month at The Lot at Zidell Yard, downtown.

The lineup includes Waterfront Blues Festival presents The Dip on Thursday, Sept. 23; Quasi + Opening Set by Slang on Friday, Sept. 24; Swatkins & The Positive Agenda on Sunday, Sept. 26; Blue Cranes + Opening Set by Edna Vazquez on Monday, Sept. 27; and the season closer, Joseph, Ural Thomas & the Pain, and Stephanie Anne Johnson on Thursday, Sept. 30. All shows are held between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.

The Lot at Zidell Yards is a

unique outdoor venue on Portland's waterfront created earlier this year to bring economic relief to the local music scene, arts and event industry, and rejuvenate the creative spirit of Portland -- while also maintaining the highest level of health and safety standards during the coronavirus pandemic.

The venue uses private, cozy, socially distanced seating pod patios - complete with lounge chairs and turf grass - for groups of 2, 4 or 6, all with fabulous views of the stage so every guest can safely enjoy the show...and still have room to get up and dance.

For tickets and more information, visit [thelotatzidellyards.com](http://thelotatzidellyards.com).



Socially distanced seating pod patios for a concert series at The Lot at Zidell Yard in southwest Portland maintains the highest level of health and safety during the coronavirus pandemic. Photo courtesy The Lot at Zidell Yard.

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- Wear your mask.
- Keep 6 feet of distance from people who do not live with you in your home.



# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



Former Trail Blazer Channing Frye (left) with Jesse Conner at the Maurice Lucas Foundation golf tournament, a fundraising event to support youth programs in Portland.

## Lucas Foundation Grows Support

*Golf tourney brings donations for youth programs*

A summer golf tournament by the Maurice Lucas Foundation raised \$189,000 for youth academic and athletic programs in the Portland area, representatives recently announced.

The 17th annual Celebrity Golf Invitational tournament on July 29 in Aloha drew a field of 270 golfers and 54 participating celebrities, including Trail Blazer broadcaster Bill Schonely, former Trail Blazer players Bobby Gross, Channing Frye and Brian Grant, Oregon State basketball coach Wayne Tinkle and his son, Tres, actress Debbe Dunning, actor William H. Bryant Jr., comedian Joe Torry and KOIN-TV newscaster Ken Boddie.

The tourney organizers includ-

ed many fun elements to the day to make it memorable for the participants. Mike Phillips, for example, performed the national anthem on the saxophone and DeeJay Jupiter (aka Travis Jones) supplied the music.

"This tournament is an important fundraising event for us," said David Lucas, executive director of the foundations. "It continues a tradition started by my dad, the late Maurice Lucas, who loved this community. Thank you so much to all our sponsors, golfers and volunteers who made this year's tournament possible."

Maurice Lucas (1952-2010) was the leading scorer on the 1977 NBA champion Trail Blazers team.

## PLANS CHANGE. DREAMS DON'T.

Josh Griffie knows the difference. He was a teenager with big plans. Then he was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder. His soccer career? Over. His other plans? Rearranged. But when one path closes off, Josh sees two more in its place. "One of my biggest strengths is my ability to adapt, dream and persevere," he says.

Despite chronic health issues, he started a photography business in Portland, then landed an internship and a job at Nike. Soon he'll finish his business administration degree online through Oregon State Ecampus. And he's ready for whatever comes next.

[ecampus.oregonstate.edu/josh](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/josh)



A new plaque honoring A.H. Francis, a Black pioneer and abolitionist who lived in Portland in the 1800s when Black exclusion laws ruled the Oregon Territory.

## Plaque Honors Black Pioneer

**A.H. Francis thwarted exclusion law**

On Saturday, a plaque honoring Black pioneer merchant and abolitionist A.H. Francis was dedicated in downtown Portland courtesy of the Oregon Black Pioneers and the Lang Syne Society.

Located at the site of Francis's former mercantile at Southwest Front Avenue and Stark Street (now Naito Parkway and Harvey Milk Street), the plaque was affixed to a concrete guardrail stan-

chion where the Morrison Bridge off-ramp curves through the site.

Francis moved west in 1851, soon after Portland was incorporated, with his brother, Isaac B. Francis. Although they were threatened with expulsion from the Oregon Territory due to the Black exclusion laws, a petition signed by 216 Portlanders, a large portion of the population at that time, helped to thwart their eviction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

TOP-RANKED DEGREES ONLINE



Oregon State University



Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to [news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com).

## Making My Child's Life Better

### What the expanded Child Tax Credit means to me

BY LA'SHON MARSHALL

I remember finding out I was about to become a mother. I felt the fear taking hold of me. My brain stopped. I remember crying but had no tears. I remember trying to run, but I couldn't move.

No one had prepared me for motherhood — my own mother abandoned me when I wasn't even two years old. My child's father was violently abusive. My life was unstable and I was terrified of having another human being depend on me.

Things are so much better now. My son Caleb is starting kindergarten, and he's the light of my life. We've been through so much together, but we're making it.

One thing that's helping more than words can express is the new, expanded Child Tax Credit. Passed as part of the Biden administration's COVID-19 relief package, it puts money into our bank account — and the bank account of nearly every parent in this country — every month.

That credit is on track to lift half of all kids living in poverty out of it, including mine. That will help them lead safer, happier lives well into adulthood.

My own early childhood was filled with trauma.

After our mother left us, my father had to take care of all of us



children. He did his best, but he didn't know how to access social services for us. When he got sick, we lost everything. We ended up living in a tent "village" under a bridge, where I had to cook for 50 people for the next seven years.

I was just a child.

I was afraid of people on the street, students at school, even of being around others where I lived. When I acted out and skipped school, I was incarcerated in juvenile detention for truancy. The years that followed saw cycle after cycle of abuse, instability, and trauma.

But eventually, I found help. At age 18 and on the run, I got a job at a homeless shelter called Covenant House and moved in there. They helped me get an ID and taught me about social services and how to get them.

I never knew help existed for someone like me. I became a team leader there and my life started to change. Now I'm an advocate with a nonprofit called RESULTS, which trains and supports people to fight for policies that help families like mine survive and thrive.

Along the way I've learned something really important: Many of us who grew up in abusive situations simply don't have access to mental health services, so we find

ourselves in abusive relationships as adults. And many others who experience the trauma of poverty simply don't know how to get help.

Before the COVID-19 relief package, I would never have been able to access the Child Tax Credit — I was simply too poor. And complex paperwork and bureaucratic requirements put other help out of reach, too.

But now families like mine, and every other family with kids, get life-changing help deposited directly into their bank accounts. I can't tell you how much of a difference this makes.

Thanks to the Child Tax Credit, Caleb won't suffer the tremendous trauma that I did as a child. His life will be better. He'll have the love and economic support he needs to thrive.

We are the wealthiest nation on earth, but too often we've abandoned our poorest children like my mother abandoned me. But if we have the political will, we can make more smart economic choices like these to give all children a safe and secure childhood.

Not only will Caleb thrive, but we as a whole society will.

La'Shon Marshall lives in Detroit and is an advocate and Expert on Poverty at RESULTS Educational Fund. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.

## OPINION

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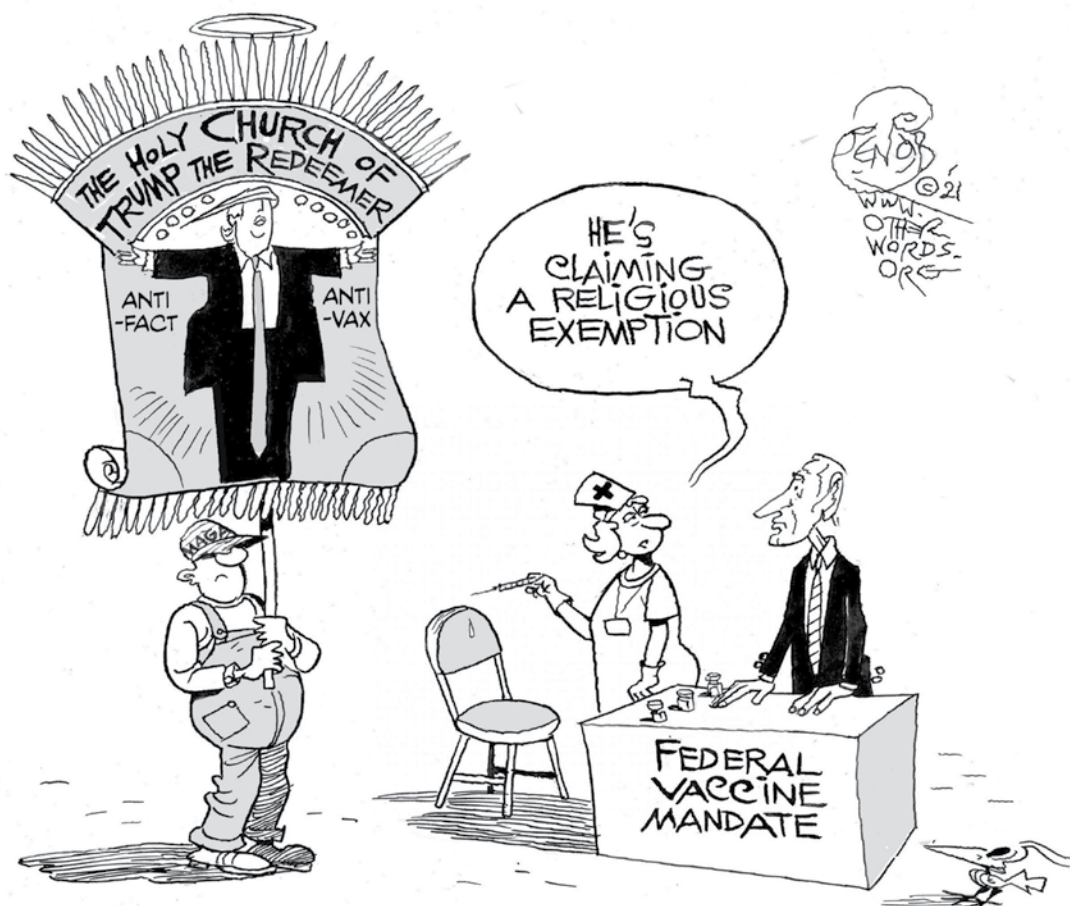
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## REQUEST FOR BIDS

### Tiller Apartments Portland, OR

A 94k s.f., mixed use multifamily project located in the Goose Hollow neighborhood. 203 units, 5 over 2 podium project. R&H will be seeking proposals on all scopes of work. Private wage rates apply to this project (no BOLI or Davis Bacon).

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## EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

### Wait List Openings

**Notice is hereby given that Vancouver Housing Authority will open the following waitlists on Friday September 24, 2021:**

**Forest Ridge** located at 207 N Lieser Rd, Vancouver WA  
**Highland Park** located at 5015 NE 66th Avenue, Vancouver WA  
**Walnut Grove** located at 7213 NE 58th Street, Vancouver WA  
**Arbor Ridge** located at 9503 NE Hazel Dell Ave, Vancouver WA  
**Crown Villa** located at 1529 Division Street, Camas, WA  
**St. Helen's Manor** located at 309 NE 1st Avenue, Battle Ground, WA

These 1 bedroom units are in non-smoking buildings that are designated for person(s) age 62 and older. Income limit qualifications range from \$33,850 for a family of one to \$38,700 for a family of two.

**Columbia House** located at 130 W 24th St, Vancouver WA. These 1 bedroom units are in a non-smoking building designated for person(s) age 55 and older. Income limit qualifications range from \$40,620 for a family of one to \$46,440 for a family of two.

**Applications will be available for download online from 9:00 am on Friday, September 24, 2021 through 4:30 pm on Wednesday, December 22, 2021.** To obtain an application visit our website at [www.vhousa.com](http://www.vhousa.com) and you may drop completed application off at the drop box located at our office located at 2500 Main St, Vancouver, WA 98660. Units are offered to qualified applicants based on the date and time of application. For more information visit our website at [www.vhousa.com](http://www.vhousa.com) or call (360) 694-2501.

Vancouver Housing Authority welcomes qualified individuals/families of diverse backgrounds and, in accordance with various Federal and State laws or regulations, does not discriminate against anyone based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, familial status, creed, veteran's or military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Vancouver Housing Authority will make reasonable accommodations to individuals whose disabilities require accommodation in order to enjoy full and equal access to our programs and services. This includes the application process, the informal hearing process and the residency period. Please contact a staff member if you need a reasonable accommodation.

# Grassroots Action on Violence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

of recognized problem-solvers from all backgrounds who seek to unite and elevate as many local efforts of individuals, groups, and organizations that want to participate in building bridges of understanding and healing in Portland, organizers said.

Leading the initiative are Pastor Matt Hennessee, Robert King, Kevin Modica, Deniel Banks and Lisa Broderick, executive director of the community group Police-2Peace.

"What a perfect day to reset our goals for healing in the community," said Pastor Hennessee in prepared remarks announcing the initiative. "Our goal is to go beyond merely addressing the problems at hand and invest in long term solutions to heal our community."

Added Nike Greene, director of the Office of Violence Prevention, "More than ever we need to deeply examine how we can bring peace to the community, after everything that we have seen and experienced. Strong people stand up for others and with others. Take a big gulp of hope as we lean in harder. We are called to action."

Professional moderators will oversee the first conversations, with training to be conducted in the future so that local community members may serve as moderators.

The coalition is planning the first of these conversations to take place this month on the dedicated virtual platform developed for the Portland Peace Initiative: [my-junto.app/home/junto/portland-2-peace/](http://my-junto.app/home/junto/portland-2-peace/).

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# Plaque Honors Black Pioneer

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Francis and his brother became successful clothing merchants, operating a prosperous store until 1861, when Francis and his wife Synda Francis moved to Victoria, British Columbia.

Throughout the mid-1800s, Francis was an active abolitionist,

using his position to fight for Black people from western New York to the Pacific Coast. He wrote letters to his friend Frederick Douglass about the conditions for Black people in Oregon and California, and about his resistance to Oregon's Black exclusion laws, and Douglass published the letters in his abolitionist newspaper.

Kimberly Stowers Moreland, vice president of the Oregon Black Pioneers and author of *Images of America: African Americans of Portland*, says "the A.H. Francis Building is one of the most significant contributions of African Americans to early Portland and represents an amazing story of resilience."

## FOOD Coconut & Squash Dhansak



### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 500g butternut squash (about 1 small squash), peeled and chopped into bite-sized chunks
- 100g frozen chopped onions
- 4 heaped tbsp mild curry paste
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 400g can light coconut milk
- mini naan bread, to serve
- 400g can lentils, drained
- 200g bag baby spinach
- 150ml coconut yogurt, plus extra to serve

### Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large pan. Put the squash in a bowl with a splash of water. Cover with cling film and microwave on High for 10 mins or until tender. Meanwhile, add the onions to the hot oil and cook for a few mins until soft. Add the curry paste, tomatoes and coconut milk, and simmer for 10 mins until thickened to a rich sauce.
2. Warm the naan breads in a low oven or in the toaster. Drain any liquid from the squash, then add to the sauce with the lentils, spinach and some seasoning. Simmer for a further 2-3 mins to wilt the spinach, then stir in the coconut yogurt. Serve with the warm naan and a dollop of extra yogurt.

## Obituary

### In Loving Memory

Mary Ann McLaurin

Sunrise: Sept. 6, 1945

Sunset: Aug. 31, 2021

It is with profound sadness the family of Mary Ann McLaurin announce her Homegoing.

Memorial donations may be made in honor of Mary Ann McLaurin's name to the Alzheimer's Association.



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# Cap for I-5 Expansion Approved

Addresses historic harms by original freeway

The Oregon Transportation Commission has granted conditional approval to a plan to expand Interstate 5 through Portland's Rose Quarter as well as build a cap over the freeway to allow for the redevelopment of a Black community destroyed when the interstate was first built.

The commission's unanimous decision earlier this month follows the recommendation of Gov. Kate Brown that the Oregon Department of Transportation pursue "hybrid option 3."

That plan would essentially tunnel the freeway and provide economic opportunity for the region's Black community in an effort to reclaim the Albina

district.

Supporters, including members of the African-American led organization Albina Vision say the idea is to remediate historic harm caused by the freeway's original construction and displacement of community members.

Approval of the hybrid 3 model is contingent upon ODOT providing a thorough analysis of the project's cost structure and funding sources by December. It also requires ODOT and its contractors to update its diversity and subcontracting plans, and reevaluate the project's initial environmental impact study.

The project's cost has risen significantly from its initial



The Oregon Department of Transportation has fulfilled a promise to elevate Black voices to shape the controversial I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project.

price tag of between \$715-795 million to upwards of \$1.18 billion. The project could top \$1.4 billion if a more robust

cap over the freeway was pursued to allow heavier development.

Questions remain over

where the state will find money to close the funding gap created by this iteration of the project.

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