

Wild Abandon Supports Community

The **Wild Abandon 1997 Community Report** shows thousands of dollars raised for community services and causes. Wild Abandon set a high standard for a responsible small business contributing toward the enhancement of our community.

Wild Abandon, a restaurant with a small staff of under ten employees for most of the year, began providing regular employees with Kaiser Medical coverage for those working over 30 hours a week.

The Wild Abandon benefits raised \$5,581.00 donated to the following organizations:

- Our House of Portland, Cascade AIDS Project, Phoenix Rising, Not in My Pipes, PAC, Outside-In, KBOO Community Radio, Bradley-Angle House, Portland Police Association, Oregon Wildlife Federation, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, Basic Rights Oregon, KOPB Public Radio, Oregon Natural Resource Council, Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition, PCUN (farm workers union), Portland Central America Solidarity Committee, and Oregon Health Action Campaign. (listed in order of amount donated).

Besides direct cash contributions, Wild Abandon donated gift certificates to many benefit auctions, fundraisers and volunteer appreciation programs, including Bradley-Angle House, Buckman School's PTA, Democratic Party, KBOO, Lesbian Community Project, Metropolitan Community Church, and Our House of Portland.

Wild Abandon showed support in program books and schedules for the Metropolitan Community Church Shepherd's Award, Right to Pride Dinner, Dick Celsi Dinner of the Multnomah County Democrats, and the Eggplant Fairy Players at the Clinton St. Theater.

Wild Abandon donated food for Christmas at Outside-In, KBOO volunteers, Oregon Trout, Portland Area Business Association, and joined with eastside restaurants to produce **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** which raised over \$30,000 for Eastside Portland Schools.

■ **WILD ABANDON** is located at 2411 SE Belmont. Dinner is served nightly beginning at 5:30 p.m. Sunday breakfast is served from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For reservations call 232-4458

Visit the Website for more information
www.citysearch.com/pdx/wildabandon

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LOCAL news

WATERED DOWN WORDS

The women of SPIRIT find that sometimes PR gets in the way of raising awareness by Inga Sorensen

This young woman has a knack for shattering a sluggish drone.

"Hello," her voice booms through the microphone, "My name is Lakita Logan."

Before her sit gray- and beige-suited men and women, 20, 30, 40 years her senior. Most stare back expressionless.

Logan, 18, plows on. "We're from SPIRIT."

For those not in the know, SPIRIT stands for Sisters in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together, a nonprofit group based in North Portland whose primary focus is "supporting and developing leadership of low-income women and women and girls of color through collectively identifying and taking on issues and institutions that impact our lives."

The institution being tackled on this particular day is Tri-Met, provider of the area's public transport via its extensive bus and MAX train system.

Logan, SPIRIT's youth organizer, and more than a dozen others, mostly girls and young women—have streamed into a Feb. 25 Tri-Met board meeting to put the agency's head honcho on notice.

For more than an hour, they wait quietly as the board, ensconced in a Portland Building hearing room, ponders other agenda items.

Thus far, the lulling hum of monotone voices has been the order of the day, until finally, SPIRIT gets the opportunity to step up to state its case.

"During the past seven months, promises have been made to us by [Tri-Met general manager] Tom Walsh and his staff," testifies Logan, flanked on both sides by other SPIRIT members eager to offer their own thoughts on the matter. Behind them sit two rows of supporters.

Logan, at a comparatively thunderous volume, goes on to inform the board that Walsh has reneged on his pledge and that, quite frankly, SPIRIT isn't going to stand for it.

I've had friends who have been bothered, like someone saying something about their race or touching them," says Alexis Downing, a 13-year-old who attends Tubman Middle School.

Like many girls, she uses Tri-Met to get around.

"We don't feel safe," she says softly but firmly.

And that's the issue at hand. SPIRIT is concerned about the lack of safety involving women and girls who travel on Tri-Met buses and trains.

The group began conducting a local survey this past summer and found "hundreds of women and girls said they often felt uncomfortable waiting at bus stops, riding the buses and MAX, and walking home from stops."

What makes them uncomfortable? Many of the girls say they've been harassed by adult men as they've made their way to and from school. Men often approach women asking for their phone numbers. Sometimes men purposely

move to a seat closer to a girl or woman.

Violence, the women of SPIRIT stress, is not only about gangs and guns. They say the most common types of dangerous conduct on public transportation revolve around dating violence, sexual harassment, and racist and homophobic attacks.

"We as young women think that we should feel safe," says Shaneva Jackson, 12, a SPIRIT youth member. "Gang violence happens, and it's scary, but it's not the only type of violence I see on the bus going to school."

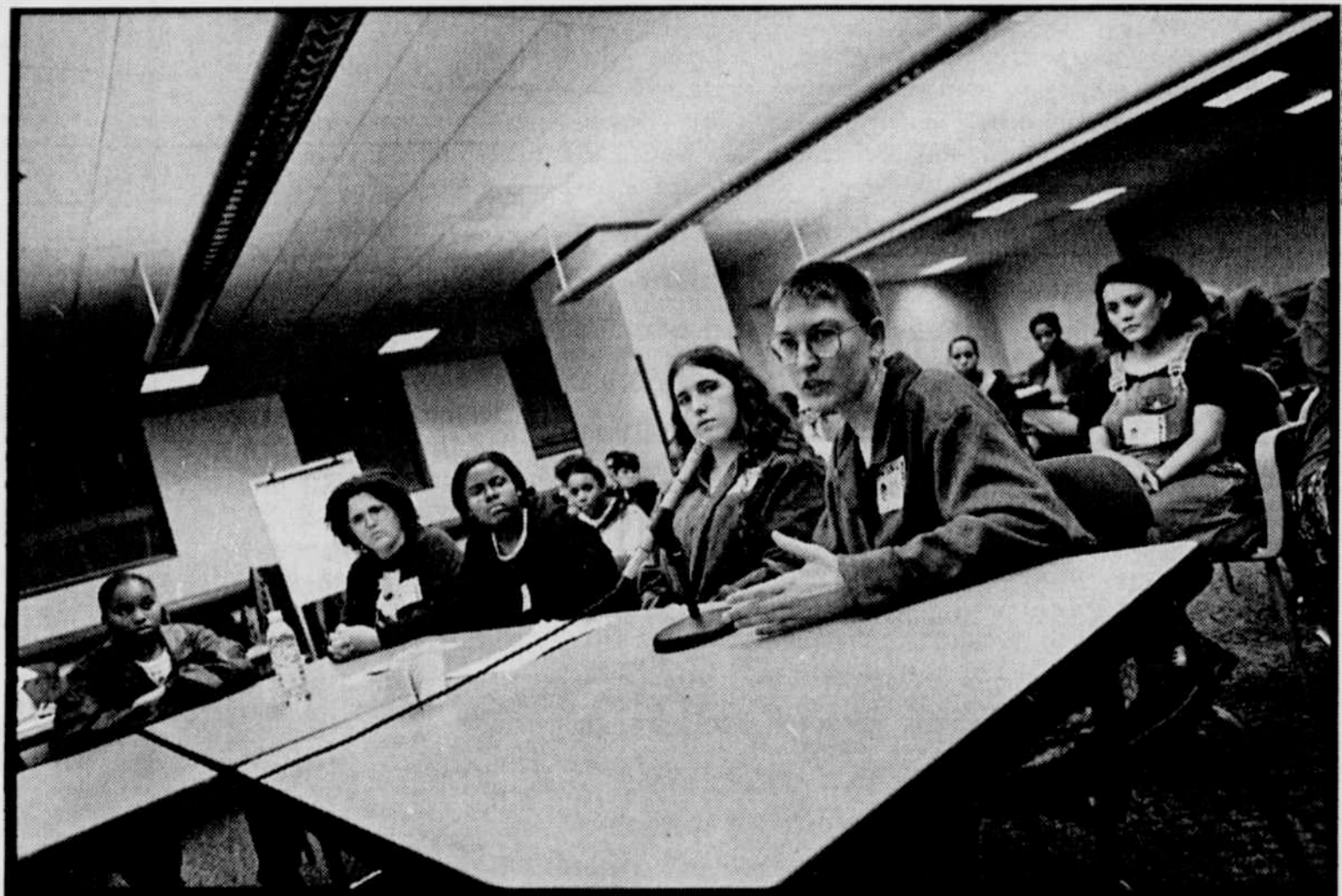
SPIRIT says following a community meet-

ing that he not follow through on safety plans for women and girls, people of color, gays and lesbians."

Margie Harris, Tri-Met's executive director of marketing and customer service, says Walsh, while personally supportive of the group's request, delegated the decision-making responsibility regarding this issue to her.

Harris tells *Just Out* that Tri-Met recently conducted two focus group sessions of riders and nonriders, mostly from North and Northeast Portland, who overall responded negatively to the version of the brochure that SPIRIT supported, saying it was too wordy.

A Jan. 29 Tri-Met interoffice memorandum summarizing the focus-group findings also says "the frequent references to 'violence' or 'violent incidents' on Tri-Met vehicles was considered alarming and would cause riders and nonriders



Young women of SPIRIT testify at Tri-Met: (from left) Terenie Faison, Lakita Logan, Julia Alexander, Karyn Brownson and Susan Frances

ing this fall at its North Portland headquarters, Walsh promised to help promote safer transportation by, in part, posting signs on Tri-Met vehicles that state the agency "does not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic and domestic violence."

Logan says Tri-Met staff also agreed to work on creating a safety brochure that addresses "these specific types of violence on public transit."

SPIRIT provided input on the pamphlet's wording, suggesting in part the following: "Violence based on sexism, racism and homophobia and domestic violence can take many forms. For example, verbal harassment, such as name calling or abusive or discriminatory language can definitely be threatening. Public transportation is just one more place where these things might happen. But there are things you can do to help decrease, and hopefully end, these situations."

However, the version of the brochure, as well as placards, slated to be on all Tri-Met buses and trains by mid-March says nothing about sexism, racism, homophobia or domestic violence.

The wording is very general, though the brochure does list contact numbers for, among others, SPIRIT, Bradley-Angle House, which runs a domestic-violence shelter and 24-hour hot line, and Roots and Branches, which provides services to many queer youth.

But that doesn't cut it, says SPIRIT, which criticizes Walsh, claiming he is "going back on

alike to reconsider riding Tri-Met if things were 'really that bad.'"

Harris adds, "Many men in the group felt negative about it because they felt it excluded them."

The safety brochure that will soon appear on public transit, she says, "applies to everyone, not just girls."

More than half of Tri-Met's ridership is female.

Which brings us back to the late-February Tri-Met board meeting, where four young women took to the podium to ask Walsh to "keep his word" and let him know the suggested language "was important for people to feel safe."

Walsh didn't say much, but what he did say was that he was open to future discussions with SPIRIT.

That was essentially it.

Amara Pérez, 27, SPIRIT's lead organizer, says, "I felt like they avoided the whole issue." She later adds, "How can they talk about [the problem] without talking about it?"

Julia Alexander, a frequent Tri-Met rider, says, "We believe that supporting the bus system is good for the community and the environment, but we can't keep supporting a system that's not safe for us. We have the right to freedom rides—freedom from harassment, attack and abuse."

■ To learn more, contact SPIRIT at 283-5340.

PHOTO BY LINDA KLEWER