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INSIDE:
Southwest elementary
school students get
increased arts funding
– Page 3

OHSU students share community needs assessment of Multnomah

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Oregon Health Sciences University nursing students spent this past summer conducting a needs assessment in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Multnomah area.

Utilizing U.S. Census data, along with interviews of local leaders and community stakeholders, the students- Marcus Benton, Samantha Leeds, Heather Peterson, and Aubrey Spring- participated in a number of community activities to witness, experience, listen, and take notes.

With a population of 5,000, Multnomah is often overlooked as an area impacted by social and environmental health issues despite a higher median income and education level than most other areas of the city.

Prior OHSU students have focused on medication management with seniors, but no overall

community assessment was ever produced.

“This is Phase I,” said Benton. “Our project will provide a basis from which future OHSU students can begin partnering with community agencies to generate interventions.”

The four main themes found were limited healthcare access; nutrition and food insecurity; transportation issues; and social isolation.

Healthcare access

Multnomah has only one safety-net clinic where the uninsured can receive basic care. The Southwest Community Health Clinic, however, has limited hours, and is also at maximum capacity.

Many choose to not seek health care because of costs. As well, the Multnomah County Westside Clinic closed and moved to Southeast causing more travel time for Southwest residents.



OHSU nursing students featured on the 2012-13 catalog. (Photo courtesy OHSU)

Additionally, many older minority adults, Hispanic, Somalia, and Russian individuals are not comfortable or aware of how to navigate the complex medical system.

Nutrition and food insecurity

Most residents are unaware of the needs for those at greater risk of food issues. Food insecurity is

(Continued on Page 7)

Grants would help pay for new bridge, boardwalk for April Hill Park

MAPLEWOOD NOTEBOOK

By Melinda Hasting
Special to The Southwest Portland Post

April Hill Park, located on the corner of Southwest 58th Avenue and Miles Street, is poised to receive a much-needed upgrade to integrate local species (amphibians, birds, and humans alike) due to a recent grant awarded by the Metro Council in May.

The project will also allow stu-

dents of Maplewood Elementary School to use the space as an outdoor science classroom.

The park remains a mystery to most visitors who don’t wade through mud and muck to reach Wood Creek, which flows west toward Beaverton.

The unique area located to the south of the park features chorus frogs, long-toed salamanders, rough-skinned newts, and a host of bird species.

The park is ripe for observation and enjoyment by students and

grown-ups alike, yet it lacks general access due to the danger of trampling its sensitive inhabitants.

The Maplewood Neighborhood Association expects that Maplewood Elementary students will be able to access the park and its vast array of species as early as fall 2014.

Friends of April Hill Park, a collaborative that includes The Maplewood Neighborhood Association, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc., and Southwest Watershed Resource Center, convinced Metro Council to approve a grant of \$83,059.

The grant would help create a boardwalk, observation deck, and bridge for the popular park, but the race is on to raise \$33,000 in local matching funds by Nov. 1 in order to meet permitting deadlines for the dry season construction period in 2014.

Though Metro’s matching grant will not be rescinded if the November 1 deadline passes, the need to achieve local support is pressing due to bureaucratic constraints.

Permitting for the project could take six months, according to experts involved in the project’s design. The construction schedule will be contingent upon weather; the park’s marshy section where the boardwalk and bridge will be erected requires mild weather conditions for builders to gain access.

The project’s total cost is \$250,000. In-kind contributions for engineering, architecture, and project management have been secured for \$134,000. Construction is slated to begin next summer. Metro’s release of the grant is contingent upon the community’s matching contribution of \$33,000.

(Continued on Page 7)



(Post photo by Melinda Hasting)

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