

PHOTOS BY ISRAEL BAYER

## Bud Clark Commons grand opening

Leo Rhodes, Street Roots poet, vendor and board member, reads his poem at the opening of the Bud Clark Commons on June 2. Below, Housing Commissioner Nick Fish, former mayor Bud Clark and Doreen Binder, executive director of Transitions Projects Inc., which will operate the 90-bed shelter and drop-in center in the new building, cut the ribbon on the new seven-story building.

Poet Barry Sanders also read at the ceremony. His poem is below.

The event broke the seal on the \$47 million project that provides 130 units of low- or no-income permanent housing for people who are experiencing homelessness. It also has space for 90 shelter beds. The first residents are expected to move in at the end of the month.

The housing portion of the building will be managed by Home Forward, formerly the Housing Authority of Portland. Transition Projects, which is relocating to the building from its Glisan Street site, will manage the 90-bed shelter and day center operations.

The building, at the corner of Hoyt and Broadway, across from Union Station, is unique in combining permanent housing with a shelter and drop-in shelter. With

Transition Projects Inc. located in the building, it is hoped that people will be able to access more services through a single location.

The \$47 million project was first envisioned in the 10-year plan to end homelessness, drawn up by the city and Multnomah County in 2005. After some legal challenges on the use of urban renewal funds, the project broke ground last year and will begin housing people later this month.



## Untitled

By Barry Sanders

An African proverb says,  
When an old man dies  
A library burns to the ground.

And when an old woman dies,  
I say,  
A school burns to the ground.

And when a child dies,  
Well,  
A church, a synagogue, a mosque,  
All burn down to the ground.

And when anyone utters the truth,  
Speaks out for the poor, the powerless,  
The forgotten,  
For those too tired, too tattered, to care  
(anymore)  
It's a symphony,  
A great clap of thunder,  
A thousand voices chanting their own favorite  
word.

And when justice gets tipped into balance,  
And the sky opens,  
So that even the rain feels so cool and pure,

Then we all sigh  
Like birds of paradise,  
Our souls ablaze  
Our tongues on fire  
And no one dies.

No one ever tweets true love  
No one cries in email time -  
No one faces the facts on Facebook.  
We sing,  
We enchant.  
We touch each other.

Like waiters doing the best they know,  
We say, justice is served -  
But what?  
A good meal?  
A rich dessert?  
She is blind, after all -  
What can she taste?

We mean:  
Look - the books, they're back in the library

School's back in session  
A new mission opens its doors  
Justice can see again.

We mean:  
Look - in the deep hollow of the dark  
Night,  
Through the fires,  
Justice extends a hand  
Singed and slightly scarred,  
But a hand clearly extended;  
Through the flames and the ashes  
A hand,  
And we can do nothing  
At times,  
Nothing  
But grab,  
Grab that oh so steady,  
Oh so blinded hand.

We mean:  
Look closely - in the smallest cracks  
In the meanest streets,  
Grass roots grow.

We are all lost.  
We are all homeless.  
We all stand uncommon  
In the chat of the commons.  
We hold out hands  
To hold out hope.

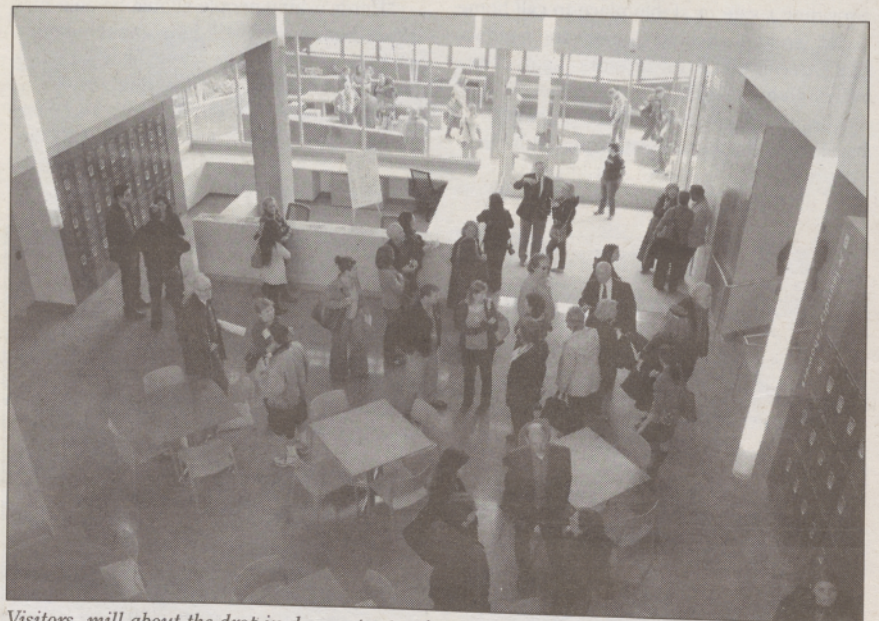
Sometimes,  
Just sometimes  
Help is not a four-letter word  
But means what it means to say:

Give  
Take  
Soul  
Gift  
Play  
Sing  
Care  
Feel  
Love  
Nick  
Fish.

## Being Human?

By Leo Rhodes

I am the voice you never hear  
If I spoke would you listen?  
I am the ugly duckling  
Visible in your pretty little world  
I am the criminal when I try to sleep  
I am the nuisance  
Trying to keep dry out of the rain  
I am the homeless person  
Looking for dignity and a safe secure place



Visitors mill about the drop-in day center portion of the new Bud Clark Commons, a multi-purpose housing, shelter and service center for people experiencing homelessness.