

**The class**

Multnomah County commissioner, District 1

**MARISHA CHILDS**



*Childs grew up in Troutdale in the early 1980s and has lived in District 1 for the past 11*

*years. She attended Oregon Institute of Technology and graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law. She is a mom, a lawyer, a runner and a small-business owner.*

*Childs is a four-year member of the Reed Neighborhood Association, serving as chair for the past two years. She is the legislative advocate for the Cultural Enrichment Committee for the Winterhaven Parent-Teacher-Student Association and is a board member of the Oregon National Organization for Women.*

*As an attorney, Childs has worked with youths in dependency and truancy proceedings and seniors seeking care and housing solutions.*

**BRIAN WILSON**



*Wilson is an active community leader and volunteer, and is a partner in a small*

*multifamily housing and medical clinic development company. He is known for helping get the Sellwood Bridge project on track and leading a multiyear effort to secure stable and dedicated funding for the Multnomah County Library.*

*He is active on several community boards, including Our House of Portland and Portland Center Stage. As the former Portland Housing Bureau commissioner, he says housing and homelessness are key policy areas he has worked on for decades.*

*He lives in Southwest Portland with his cat, Ava, and when not working or volunteering, he enjoys time remodeling his home and gardening.*

**SHARON MEIERAN**



*Meieran is an emergency physician, a former lawyer, a community and public health*

*advocate and a mother. She is also the medical director for the Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health. She sits on the Community Oversight Advisory Board and is a board member of the Unity Behavioral Health Center.*

**ERIC ZIMMERMAN**



*After graduating from the University of Portland, Zimmerman entered the Army and*

*Oregon Army National Guard as a second lieutenant. In 2009, he was deployed to Iraq, serving as a platoon leader with distinction, earning the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Action Badge.*

*After serving overseas, Eric returned to Multnomah County – first working to expand job opportunities for returning veterans, then working for County Commissioner Diane McKeel, rising to chief of staff. Their office has led the county's efforts on economic development, anti-human-trafficking, veterans housing and improving services for those experiencing mental health crises.*

*Continuing to serve in the National Guard, holding the rank of captain, he led the effort to make his unit a national leader in preparing for the lifting of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the restriction on women serving in combat units.*

**MEL RADER**



*Rader is a strong progressive dedicated to social justice and defending the environment.*

*He has a decade of experience as a political advocate championing public health and economic opportunity, and he runs Upstream Public Health, a nonprofit that researches and advocates best practices to address climate change, health equity and food access.*

\* District 1 candidates Wes Soderback and Ken Stokes did not respond to Street Roots' pop quiz.

\* District 3 candidate Jessica Vega Pederson is running unopposed.

\* District 4 candidates Lori Stegmann and Amanda Schroeder declined to participate in Street Roots' pop quiz. Stanley Dirks did not respond.

# Pop Quiz!

It's the Multnomah County Commission candidates' turn to go back to school with Street Roots. Five candidates from District 1 took our pop quiz.

Previously, Street Roots featured the Portland mayoral and City Council candidates' responses to our pop quiz. Read them at [news.streetroots.org](http://news.streetroots.org).

**1.** What area of the county government are you most interested in working with and why? (100 words or less)

**MARISHA CHILDS**

Addressing and eliminating the significant racial disparities that exist in the justice system. There is a culture of tolerance that exists, not only in Multnomah County, but in society generally. Further, there is a culture of placating the one experiencing inequities ("No, I'm sure that's not what s/he meant").

I am also very interested in the County Food Action Plan, although I am concerned about recent events rendering many ineligible for SNAP. The county must ensure seasonal fruits and vegetables are grown around our community (at county buildings) for those who have recently lost SNAP benefits as well as others.

**SHARON MEIERAN**

Mental health care. As an ER doctor, I see how our system fails those most in need, and the way we provide "crisis care" often is more traumatizing than healing. I recently saw a youth brought to the ER because he was in serious mental health crisis. He was placed in a typical ER room, with no windows, no school, minimal exercise – and remained there for almost four weeks because there was no place for him to get appropriate treatment. This is unacceptable. Improving our mental health care system is one of the main reasons I am running for County Commission.

**MEL RADER**

I am interested in working with the health system. I have run a public health nonprofit for 10 years, and I serve on the board of Health Share, which serves 230,000 Medicaid members in the region. My background is uniquely suited to promote a health system that is more equitable, focused on prevention and able to achieve better results for lower costs. I will prioritize filling the funding gap for mental health and addictions. I will also champion a more community-focused approach to provide services to people on the street and through community organizations in a culturally responsive manner.

**BRIAN WILSON**

I have identified three areas where my skill set will be of most value and meet the most pressing needs of the county: working to get an immediate handle on the homeless crisis by opening more temporary shelters, especially those safe for families; working with other local land use and permitting agencies to expedite additions to housing stock at all levels of affordability; and expanding programs with Department of Community Justice and Sheriff's Office that address some of the highest negative impacts on our streets: methamphetamines and human trafficking.

**ERIC ZIMMERMAN**

The county has a key role to play in many issues, and I believe the three most important we face are the following: 1. Developing policies that create economic opportunity and support families struggling today. 2. Addressing the current housing crisis, by supporting permanent housing for homeless individuals and expanding affordable housing development across the community. 3. Increasing our shelter inventory and capacity to provide necessary and vital off-the-street shelter for safety and health while working on an ongoing basis to increase access to services for housing, treatment and employment.

**2.** What is one solid step you will take to expand affordable housing countywide? (150 words)

**MARISHA CHILDS**

I would try to negotiate with property owners of vacant buildings (or partially vacant buildings), to at least temporarily allow homeless people to stay there while permanent housing is being built. I understand that one property developer (Menashe) has been open to this kind of idea. This is not a permanent solution, but at least a temporary fix until the county can develop something more robust.

**SHARON MEIERAN**

As we all know, the homeless and housing crisis is complex, and will not be resolved with a simple fix. Therefore, the process itself is crucially important. One of my greatest strengths is my ability to collaborate with groups and individuals from many diverse backgrounds and experiences to work effectively toward common goals. I applaud the county's efforts with the A Home for Everyone program. I also support the city and county's commitment to break down silos that make it difficult to navigate services and create artificial barriers. I strongly support up-front investments in affordable-housing units, and ensuring people have the support they need to stay in their housing once they get it.

**MEL RADER**

The root of our housing crisis is income inequality. While large developers make windfall profits off real estate, our home shortage deepens. Solving the problem means moving forward policies that promote rent and income equality. The first thing that needs to be done is to greatly expand the public investment in affordable housing. I support a significant investment in housing aimed at low-income families, paid for through general obligation bonds by the county. As part of the Welcome Home Coalition, I've been proud to