

# METROPOLITAN

## PPIC launches "Think Young" campaign

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — With a beautiful spring day as their springboard, city, school and business officials introduced a "Think Young" campaign to combat youth unemployment with tax credits and wage reimbursements for area businesses who hire Portland's youth.

Administered by Portland Private Industry Council (PPIC), the "Think Young" campaign will funnel 2.5 million into providing jobs for up to 2,000 youths.

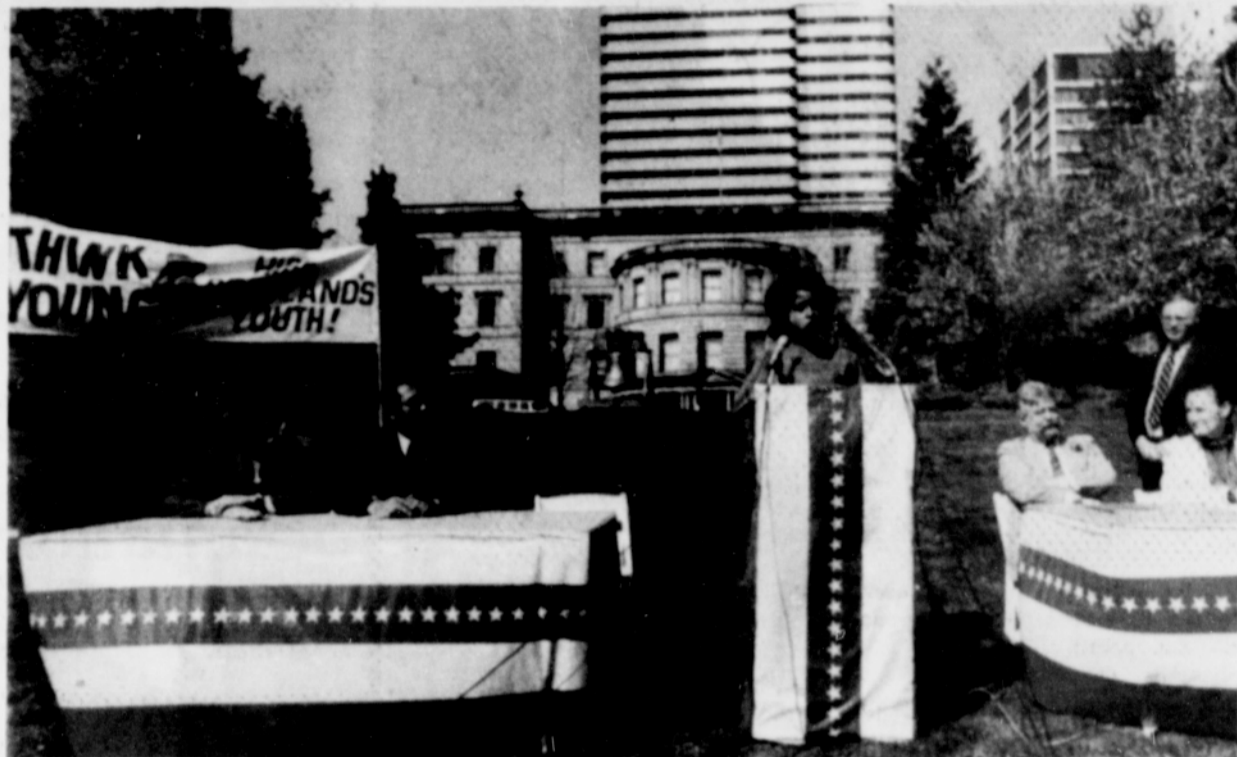
The "Think Young" campaign is an agenda item of the Leaders' Roundtable, an informal group of government, business and educational leaders, who combined existing youth resources to coordinate employment, training and educational services.

"By providing a comprehensive group of services to Portland's youth, the program will be able to address some of the major barriers to employment. These barriers include attitude/motivation, basic skill training, labor market orientation and racial prejudice."

Under the heading of comprehensive services, PPIC said youths will spend one-half day in class and the other at work. For high school dropouts, a GED course will be offered.

Vern Ryles, chair of the PPIC board, said, "It's a dollar and cents approach offering Portland's youth a larger variety of employment, training and educational opportunities."

Roger Breezley, chair of the Business Youth Exchange of the Chamber of Commerce, added, "Employers don't have the time to train a young person lacking basic educational skills. For that reason, the comprehensive approach makes sense from the employer's point of view."



Laleiha Thomson addresses the audience at ceremony to kick off PPIC's new youth employment

program. Seated are (l-r) Vern Ryles, Matthew Prophet, Bud Clark and Margaret Strachan.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Matthew Prophet, Superintendent of the Portland Public Schools, said society's transformation from an industrial society to an informational one, eliminated jobs. "And since Ronald Reagan took office, many resources targeted to assist young people were eliminated. We are still faced with cuts, but we are very optimistic about our "Think Young" campaign," he added.

Laleiha Thomson, a 17-year-old Jefferson High School student, was the M.C. for the campaign.

"I can still remember how hard it was for me to find my first job. I know other youths will appreciate their first job the way I did," Thomson said.



Song Vang, middle, translates for Muang Chang See Chao and nurse Practitioner, Mike Chewning.

## Translator aids patient

Imagine yourself new in this country. You are still getting accustomed to the area and only speak Laos or Hmong. Suddenly you develop a bad sore throat and call a local hospital's outpatient clinic. But the person at the other end of the telephone does not understand you — until he or she hands the telephone to someone who can: Song Vang.

Fortunately, you can set up an appointment because you have called Emanuel Hospital's Outpatient Clinic. Song Vang, the interpreter for the outpatient clinic, has just picked up the telephone.

Vang arrived from Laos in 1976, realizing that one year of English classes would not be sufficient to get by in this country, she studied English several more years while in California. She has worked at Emanuel since 1983 and is the only translator in the outpatient clinic. She speaks two languages, Laos and Hmong. The hospital employs her because the outpatient clinic sees between 130 and 160 Southeast Asian refugees a month, more than any other ethnic group.

"These patients can't talk to the doctors so I'm glad to help them,"

Vang said.

All the patients who need Vang's assistance are scheduled between 10 a.m. and 2:20 p.m. She sees an average of five patients a day.

"Some days there are a lot of patients. I have to work late, sometimes until 3 or 3:30 p.m. If they are sick and I go home no one else can help them while they see a doctor. . .so I wait until they are done before I go home," Vang said.

If another section of the hospital needs help with a patient, it calls her. "Sometimes someone in pediatrics or surgery needs my help. But most of the time I stay here because I have to be available to talk to patients on the phones," she said. When she isn't translating she helps pull charts or puts together new charts.

If a patient speaks a language other than Laos or Hmong, there are two alternatives. The hospital keeps a list of employees who speak second languages and can help. Or they often bring their own translator.

"If they cannot understand English, they usually bring their own translator. If they speak Laos or Hmong, I'm glad to help them," Vang said.

## Business basics class offered

The basics of business will be offered in a five week Saturday class at Portland Community College Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth, starting April 6.

Introduction to Business will be taught by Joe Markunas. The four credit hour class includes topics such as business environment, management, organization, marketing, fi-

nance, accounting and data processing.

Class meets from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each Saturday. Registration should be completed at the Cascade business office, or any other PCC registration area, prior to the start of class.

Registration hours at Cascade are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., April 1 - April 4, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., April 5.

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