



Family

Collins Center Reunion To Remember Founder

By Stan Peterson

Local leaders want to sustain the vision of a woman who dedicated her life to helping children by helping keep the community center she helped found viable for many years to come.

All past and present participants in the Grace and Evelyn Collins Community Center, formerly the Christian Community Center, at 128 N.E. Russell St., are being urged to help in this vision.

Evelyn Collins or Miss Collins, as those who frequented the center fondly knew her, was a special gift of love who devoted decades of her life to the community center. She died in March 1999.

Now to celebrate and re-



Evelyn Collins was a role model who challenged kids to be their best.

member her contributions, a "Collins Kids and Friends Alumni Reunion" will be held in August to coincide with her birthday.

If you are a "Collins Kid" reading this article, the fol-

lowing song may bring a big smile to your face as you remember some special times: "We are the center children...children... children... we are the center children and we love Jesus, too!"

Our teacher is Miss Collins... Miss Collins... she is more than two. Our teacher is Miss Collins and she loves Jesus too."

In his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of a "world" where his children would be judged by the "content of their character, not the color of their skin."

Miss Collins lived by those words.

She was a role model who challenged us to be our best, not limit ourselves based on circumstances such as color or the way we dressed or the way we talked. She saw deep into our potential, as children of God.

Miss Collins was an amazing storyteller. In rapt attention from the children, she told Bible stories each day. She helped us to learn, recite and understand scripture, and how those stories and verses applied to our lives.

It is time for us to return home to the center where we shared a special experience and bond, to make certain that the dream which was Miss Collins, that of a special place where anyone could come and

feel welcomed, safe, and accepted, continue for generations to come.

Perhaps more than ever, our community needs that kind of place now.

We need to prepare for our own children and to leave them a legacy of love to pass on to their children. Such a place requires commitment, time, and resources.

Can you assist in helping to create an endowment that would generate a \$500,000 annually for programs at the center? Or perhaps your special gift and passion for children could come in the form of donated skills to help us work on the center's structural remodeling and maintenance?

We estimate that "Collins Kids" number in the several thousands.

The first step is for the Collins Board of Directors to know who you are and how we can contact you.

Please call the center at 503-281-6930. You are also welcome to write or visit the center and let us know who you are, your connection with Miss Collins, and how you would like to celebrate her life with your own gift in memory of the center she so selflessly devoted her life to.

Whatever you give, time, talent, or treasure will live and provide others a little of what you had in Miss Collins.

Study Finds More Kids with Alcohol and Guns

An increasing number of Oregon children mark their middle school years by drinking alcohol and carrying weapons, according to a new study.

The study, released by Children First for Oregon, also found that nearly 900 seventh- and eighth-graders dropped out of school in 1999. One in four eighth-graders drink alcohol on a monthly basis and 15 percent of Oregon's pre-teens carry weapons, the study shows.

"A lot of kids tend to lose their way between 8 and 13," said Marie Hoeven, executive director of the advocacy and research group.

Children First publishes an annual report on Oregon's children as part of the national Kids Count survey. Reports of soaring drop-outs among Oregon's high school students made researchers focus on the "forgotten kids in the middle" in a search for answers.

The group analyzed data on juvenile arrests, child abuse and neglect and Oregon Health Division surveys across the state in

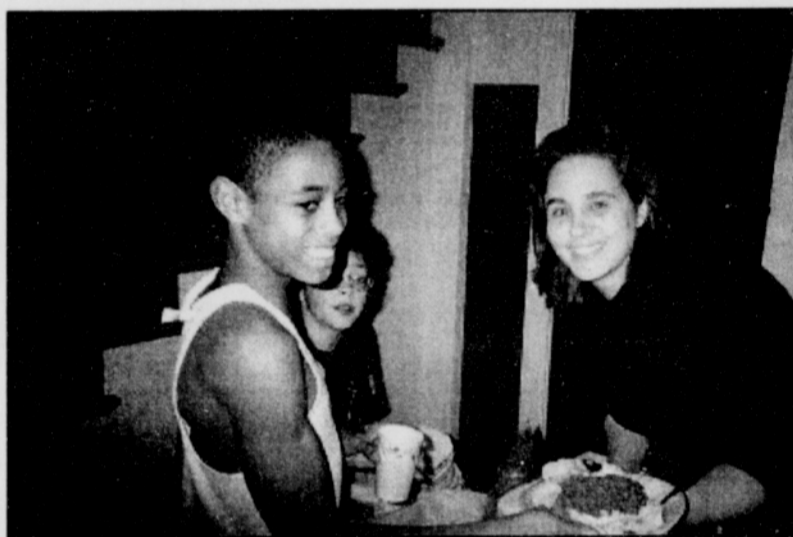
1999 of more than 18,400 sixth- and eighth-graders' behavior and safety.

Smoking among eighth-graders dropped to 13 percent, the lowest since 1990. Drug use dropped as well, with marijuana use returning to 1994 levels of about 9 percent.

But alcohol abuse among middle schoolers remained unchanged since 1992, something that some youth advocates blame on parents' attitudes about drinking.

"I don't think we have to accept this as a rite of passage," said Tonia Hunt, a researcher and policy analyst for Children First. "Kids today have a lot less support than 20 years ago, and there is a lot of difference between going to a drinking party as a junior in high school and as a seventh-grader and the place that leads to over time."

Also among the findings: At least 879 students — or about 1 percent of the 90,000 seventh- and eighth-graders statewide — drop out before high school and about 3,400 middle school students were known victims of abuse and neglect, up from 2,800 in 1997.



Visiting guests from the Rolling Hills Church enjoy the festivities at a recent gathering in northeast Portland's Grace and Evelyn Collins Memorial Community Center.



Grace Collins Memorial Community Center



We invite you to become involved or more involved- in this precious community vision.

Please call us to find out about the center's programs.

Learn how you can support or become involved in presentations (in-person) to your group or organization.

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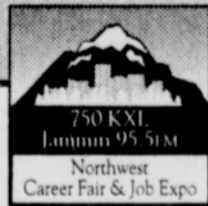
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