

YWCA Closes Northeast Center

Group can't afford to operate site because of dwindling donations



YWCA at 5630 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The YWCA will shut down its center at 5630 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and drop two programs serving kids in north and northeast Portland because of dwindling donations.

The community-based organization announced Tuesday that the cuts are part of a series of moves to reduce expenses after a sharp decline in donations after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and because of the lagging Oregon economy.

The organization is also suffering from major cutbacks in donations from United Way and reduced funding from state and local governments. The YWCA is also anticipating added cutbacks from the state in paying for services to low income seniors.

"The result of all of this is that the YWCA of Greater

"We are committed to making a difference in the lives of the people we serve, however, we cannot do that without the necessary funds."

Portland no longer has the funding to provide 11 distinct programs at 8 sites," said Jean DeMaster, YWCA executive director.

"We are committed to making a difference in the lives of the people we serve," DeMaster said. "However, we cannot do that without the necessary funds."

The two programs scheduled for elimination are the Smart Choices Program, a girls empowerment program that serves over 100 girls each year in very low-in-

come families of north and northeast Portland; and the Young Family/Familias Jovenes Program, also serving very low-income families in the same neighborhoods.

YWCA officials are hopeful that Multnomah County's Office of School and Community Partnerships will reassign funds to other agencies in north and northeast Portland to serve low-income families.

The organization is also working with other youth service agencies to continue similar programs, if possible.



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