

The Portland Observer 2003

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

special edition

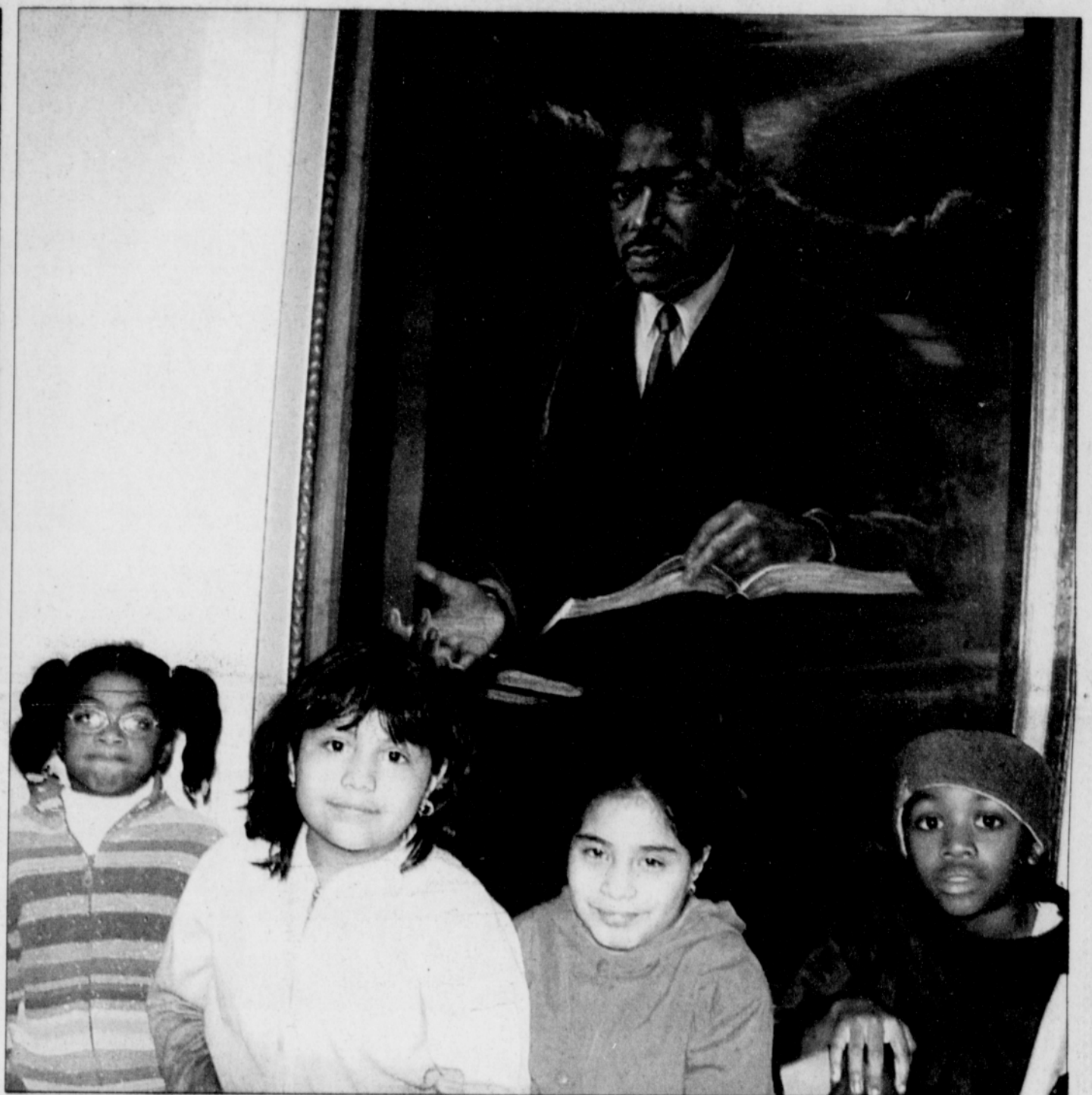
January 15, 2003



King Elementary students (above) head for classes at the landmark northeast Portland school.

A portrait of Martin Luther King (right) hangs inside King school where students Mykelle Jordan (from left), Gisela Reza-Calva, Lizbet Cedillo, and Marjay Taylor proudly gather. The school was named after the civil rights leaders shortly following his assassination.

PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



Living the Dream

Civil Rights Leader's Vision Shines at King School

BY JAYMEE R. CURTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

From the moment she stepped into the aged building on Northeast 6th Avenue, home to Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Principal Ronda Craemer said she felt something special.

"The (school's) name has some impact because it gives you a really clear vision to work towards," Craemer said.

Formerly Highland Elementary, the school was renamed after the slain civil

rights leader shortly following his assassination.

The school's location in inner northeast Portland has a very long tradition of education, housing schools such as Albina Homestead in 1891 and Highland Elementary in 1926.

"King is an interesting school. It tends to reflect the neighborhood and the changes taking place on MLK Boulevard," said Lew Frederick, director of public information for Portland Public Schools. "It

has seen different waves of immigrant populations. At one time, it was primarily a German school. Then it had a large Jewish population."

As 90 percent of King Elementary is comprised of minority students, the school continues to reflect the neighborhood.

"In 1992, I counted 100 crack house buildings (in the neighborhood). The Police Bureau is here now. Alberta Street has gone from shuttered storefronts to boutiques. People are rebuilding homes that

are affordable to middle-income folks," Frederick said.

Four years ago, King Elementary made the district's "Targeted for Success" list, as one of 20 low-achieving schools. Failing at their mission to prepare each young person for success, King adopted a stringent reading curriculum called "Success For All," as well as carefully regulated math and science programs, more resources from the district and intensive involvement from parents.

Since King has received special attention from the district and the community, 65 to 69 percent of 3rd-graders and 60 percent of 5th-graders are reading at state levels. King Elementary will continue following district-imposed action plans and evaluations for the next five years.

While this is Craemer's first school year at King, she has worked in the education industry for 30 years, focusing on

continued ▼ on page B14



King Brings Message of Hope
Resident remembers 1961 visit to Vancouver Avenue Baptist Church

page B2



Success on the Boulevard
Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. sees economic renaissance

See Page B5

Greater Good Cited in Name Change
Union Avenue becomes Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. after much debate



See Page B11

Three White Presidents and One Black Man
See Page B15

King's 'I Have a Dream' Speech
See Page B16

MLK Embraces World Harmony
See Page B4

King Follows Path of Peace in India
See Page B12