

DIVERSITY *in the* WORKPLACE

SPECIAL EDITION

Helping Ex-offenders Transition into Jobs

It's about time for PROGRESS, an acronym for People Reaching Out Getting Resources Enabling Successful Solutions. The group was created to address recidivism in our community by understanding that ex-offenders have limited ability developing strategic plans to address their job re-entry needs appropriately.

Research indicates that successful interventions should include use of community resources for meeting individual needs, family therapy, problem solving, diversion and treatment for substance abuse or sexual deviation.

With PROGRESS, these needs will be met by matching offenders with social work professionals to help connect, navigate, monitor, motivate, and prepare these individuals with the necessary tools to effectively address their criminological needs to impact successful and safe transition.

The group has teamed up with Pathfinders of Oregon to implement its offender transition program. Pathfinders contracts with Oregon Department of Corrections to provide cognitive restructuring and facilitation in all of its prisons. In addition, Pathfinders has over 12 years experience working inside institutions providing cognitive restructuring.

The joint effort will focus on helping offenders make the most of their rehabilitation in prison, by adding concrete assistance on the outside to promote community safety through successfully stabilizing the offender.

For more information contact Sherrelle Owens at 503-701-0109.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
 Sherrelle Owens (left) and Sharon Darcy lead an effort aimed at helping ex-offenders transition into the job market.

Preferential Treatment?

In the past, it wasn't uncommon for an African-American woman to be referred to as a "two-fer" — she counted twice for affirmative-action purposes: once as a woman and again as an African American.

With the current challenge to the University of Michigan's use of race as one of several factors in determining admission, affirmative-action policies have been thrust into the spotlight once again. Is there a stigma attached to affirmative action? That depends on whom you ask.

"There is no such thing as a level playing field," says Jack Winston, an HR executive for a global beverage company. "At our company, we have made a strategic decision to increase the representation of people of color in all areas of our business. We're open and up front about why we think this is good for business. We teach our managers that any employment decision involves some aspect of judgment — and our judgment is that diversity is good for our company."

So what can you do if you're viewed as an employee who has benefited from preferential treatment?

You do your job well.

One reason certain perceptions are pervasive at the workplace is because some supervisors use affirmative action to dodge the truth about an employee's prospects.

"It's easier to say 'You didn't get this job, because I had to put a minority in it' than to give honest performance feedback to someone you've known for years," speculates Ruby Anderson, a human resources manager based in Atlanta.

If someone is bold enough to imply you are less qualified because of your race, think about responding by asking: Is it possible that I'm in this position because I'm great at what I do?

Black Union Leader Honored

Activism and support for civil rights recognized

The University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center will award its first Emory F. Via Workers Education Award to Michael Howard, an African American civil rights leader from Portland.

Howard, a 22-year janitor and member of the Service Employees International Union Local 49, received the honor as a union activist who has played a significant role in organizing, education and mobilization activities at the grassroots level.

The award also recognizes Howard's significant efforts to raise awareness about injustice at the local, state and global level and his promotion of the values of solidarity, inclusion, civil rights, human rights and service to others.

"Mike Howard is a leader with great integrity," said Alice Dale, President of SEIU Local 49. "His bold and consistent leadership on workers' rights, civil and human rights and racial and economic justice makes him most deserving of this award."

Michael Howard works for ABM as the lead janitor in the Wells Fargo Building in downtown Portland. His many roles in his union include steward, chief steward, political organizer, member organizer and sergeant-at-arms. As one of the top elected officers of the union, he most recently served as a bargaining team member for Local 49's master janitorial agreement, covering 1,800 janitors in the greater Portland area.

The janitors won their strongest contract ever this summer, including fully paid health insurance for employees and incentives to raise wage and benefit standards for all janitors in Portland.



Michael Howard wins Emory F. Via Workers Education Award for his activism with immigrant's rights.

A native born U.S. citizen, Howard has personally lobbied Oregon's Congressional delegation to secure legislation favorable to immigrants. He has stood with his immigrant co-workers during

stronger, more unified union and community.

"African-Americans have been going through this struggle for a long, long time, and now immigrants are going through it,"

Howard said. "I tell people that if we just join together - Latino, African-American, Asian, Caucasian - just as God would want us to - everybody would have a better life."

The Emory F. Via Workers Award was named in honor of Emory Via, the labor center's first full-time director who did pioneering work in the southern United States in the 1950s that connected the labor movement to the emerging civil rights movement.

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— Michael Howard, Portland labor and civil rights leader

INS raids and employer threats to immigrant workers, reaching out to his union brothers and sisters of all races, ethnicities and nationalities to bring them together to build a

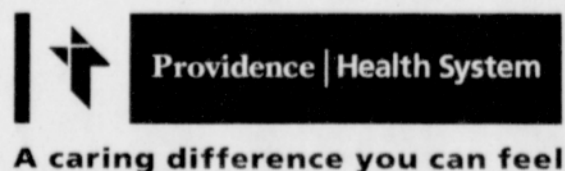
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 in the upcoming Minority Business Edition on October 8, 2003.
 We look forward to hearing from you.
Call 503-288-0033



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