

# METRO

The Portland Obs

## Community Calendar

### Two Wheelin'

Learn Portland's bikeway network with rides throughout the city with tours every Tuesday and Wednesday through Aug. 25. For information about a full schedule of rides, call 503-823-5266

### You're Right

The next volunteer training for the Renter's Rights Hotline is Tuesday, July 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information, call 503-460-9702.

### Of the People

The Alpha and Omega Ministries presents "The People's Conference" about Renewing Your Mind at 7 p.m., July 16-18 at Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott. For more information, call 503-823-3186.

### Writing Frees

Free your writing spirit with a free writing workshop by Write Around Portland through Aug. 12 at locations in and around north Portland. To register or contribute, call 503-796-9224.

### Interest in Adoption?

A free information meeting for prospective adoptive parents is held the third Wednesday of every month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Belmont Public Library, 1038 S.E. 39th Ave. For more information, call 503-226-4870 or visit [www.openadopt.com](http://www.openadopt.com).

### A Healing Song

Sankofa Health Institute offers a free diabetes support group from 6 to 7:30 p.m. every third Thursday at Alberta Simmons Plaza, 6707 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

### Work For Change

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artist or office support team member. For more information, call 503-280-1388.

### Home Improvement

The Community Energy Project holds free workshops on water conservation and weatherization. For more information, call 503-284-4962.

### Government Powers Reviewed

An open discussion about freedom and the Patriot Act put on by Radical Women will be held Wednesday, July 14 at 7 p.m. with a \$6 buffet at 6:30 p.m. at the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth. For questions regarding childcare or rides, call 503-240-4462.

### Eat Right, Stay Healthy

Join a Heart Wise Living Class of Exercise and Nutrition, where experts give exercise and healthy eating tips to people battling heart disease. Class will be offered at Providence Portland Medical Center from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on July 7. For more information, call 503-215-8039.

### Ya Gotta Regatta

You gotta go to the 10th annual Columbia Slough Regatta small crafts show and paddling event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, July 26 at the lower Columbia Slough in northeast Portland.

### NAACP Meetings

The Portland Branch of the NAACP holds two monthly executive committee meetings, on the second Thursday of the month and the Thursday before the fourth Saturday of the month. General membership meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. For more information, call 503-284-7722.



Gov. Ted Kulongoski shares his goals regarding health care for children with Jefferson graduates Jerald White (left) and Jantaé Grace, along with Julie Jacobs at Roosevelt High School's Student Health Clinic.

## Roosevelt is BACKDROP for Health Initiative

### Governor announces insurance plan for kids

BY JOHANNA S. KING  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Gov. Ted Kulongoski paid a visit to Roosevelt High School in north Portland to advance his health care agenda for children, arguing that regardless of a hard-hit economy and tight state budgets, health care for the young is a top priority.

As part of a two-fold strategy to expand

health care for kids and decrease the number of uninsured children in Oregon, the governor announced a new employer-sponsored, Children's Health Insurance Group Plan that will begin in January.

Offered by Oregon's Insurance Pool Governing Board, the goal is to boost the number of medically insured children by providing an incentive to employers who currently do not provide health coverage for their employees.

The plan will encourage employers to offer a low cost health care plan for employ-

ees to purchase for themselves and their families. Low-income working families with incomes of up to 85 percent above the federal poverty level may also be eligible for a subsidy to purchase the Children's Group Plan through their employer.

It's estimated that the public-private partnership would benefit 80,000 children under 18.

Kulongoski said he has directed the Dept. of Human Services to also develop a program aimed at improving and enhancing public outreach efforts so parents and

guardians who are eligible for the health benefits know about them.

"One of my utmost priorities as governor is for all children in Oregon to have access to basic physical and mental health care. The health of Oregon's young people is vital to their success in life and our success as a state," said Kulongoski.

He spoke confidently of the steps that Oregon is taking to maximize health care coverage for currently uninsured children by

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## County Health Clinic Shuts Its Doors

### Closure to impact 8,000 residents

An estimated 8,500 public health clinic patients will have to transfer their medical care to alternative sites when Multnomah County closes its Southeast Health Center at 3653 S.E. 34th Ave.

The county health department announced last week that medical services at the clinic will close July 29, leaving only dental and optometry services continuing at that location.

Medical records of affected clients will be transferred to one of the following other county health care clinics: East County Health Center in Gresham, 600 N.E. 8th Ave.; Mid County Health Center, 12710 S.E. Division; North Portland Health Center, 9000 N. Lombard St.; and Westside Health Center, 426 S.W. Stark.

Officials said they are committed to providing quality health care within current budget constraints.

"We understand this may create challenges for the clients who are currently getting care in their neighborhood. We are doing everything we can to make the transi-

tion as smooth as possible," said Vanetta Abdellatif, a health department administrator.

The changes are expected to put more demands on the community social service system and immigrant advocates.

Approximately 60 percent of the visits at Southeast Health Center require a translator, with clients representing many countries and speaking over 30 languages.

The burden is in addition to changes in the Oregon Health Plan Standard Package that included mandatory premiums and copays that led to increasing numbers of low-

income individuals losing their insurance coverage.

Uninsured medical visits have increased 7 percent in the last year at Multnomah County clinics, and only 5 to 7 percent of costs are reimbursed for these self-pay visits. At the same time, Medicaid visits have decreased 10 percent, also due to decreasing budgets.

"This represents a marked increase in uncompensated care that cannot be sustained given current funding levels," said Abdellatif. "We have to make a rapid change in our health care delivery model to meet the growing need."

## Students Build Bridges to Muslim Countries



Exchange students Meiza Suratin (from left), Nevin Oztop and Sarah El-Bakatousky win roaring applause after their performances at Arts and Communications Magnet Academy.

A home away from home for students from overseas, Portland had the unique opportunity of hosting girls from Egypt and Turkey and a boy from Indonesia this past school year.

Created by the U.S. State Department in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 the YES program (Youth Exchange and Study) brings high school students from predominantly Muslim countries to live and study in the U.S. for a year.

The program's goal is to promote mutual understanding by building on the personal and cultural values held in common between both American and Muslim societies.

Gerry Simson, host mother to Sarah El-Bakatousky from Egypt, gives the program high praise.

"When you haven't had the experience of knowing someone from another culture, you don't realize how narrow your opinions and knowledge are," Simson said. "Shaking things up once in a while is a good thing. Barriers are definitely breaking down because of this program."

Because of the success of this year's initiative, the YES program is planning to expand next year.

Anyone interested in promoting international understanding by hosting a YES scholar should contact Maranee Sanders at 503-293-6195 or [www.pax.org](http://www.pax.org).