

METRO

The Portland Observer

Golf Challenge

Tournament raises donations for SEI

See story in Sports, page B2



SECTION B

Community Calendar

Community Care Day

Help to beautify the grounds of local Portland Public Schools on Saturday, Aug. 21. It may involve picking up litter, cutting brush, pulling weeds, planting flowers and other outdoor projects. To volunteer, call 503-614-1531.

Gallery of Visual Arts

View art from talented local artists of all ages throughout the month of August at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate Ave., from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., free.

Woman in Community Service

In celebration of its 40 years of operation, the Negro Council of Negro Women is holding a special concert on Sunday, August 22 at Bethel AME Church at 4 p.m. Several area churches will be represented.

Ready for School

Back to the Future School Supplies Give-A-Way is from 1 to 5 p.m. on Aug. 29 at the Chevron Gas Station parking lot at 3435 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. Get supplies while they last. Call 503-890-0070.

Stay Healthy

Sankofaa 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.

Voter Registration

Register to vote and learn how to register your friends, family and others in the community Saturday, Aug. 18, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Hollywood Library, 4040 NE Tillamook St. Refreshment will be provided. To learn more, visit online at <http://www.multicolib.org>.

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.

Work For Change

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists 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.

Aquatic Fitness

Providence has a full schedule of fitness classes including water exercising at the Providence Aquatic Center, 4805 N.E. Glisan. For schedule, call 503-215-6301.

Women in NAACP

Women in NAACP, a new women's group, meets from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month at the American Red Cross Building, 3131 N. Vancouver. For questions, call 503-249-6263.

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.

Touching People Changing Lives

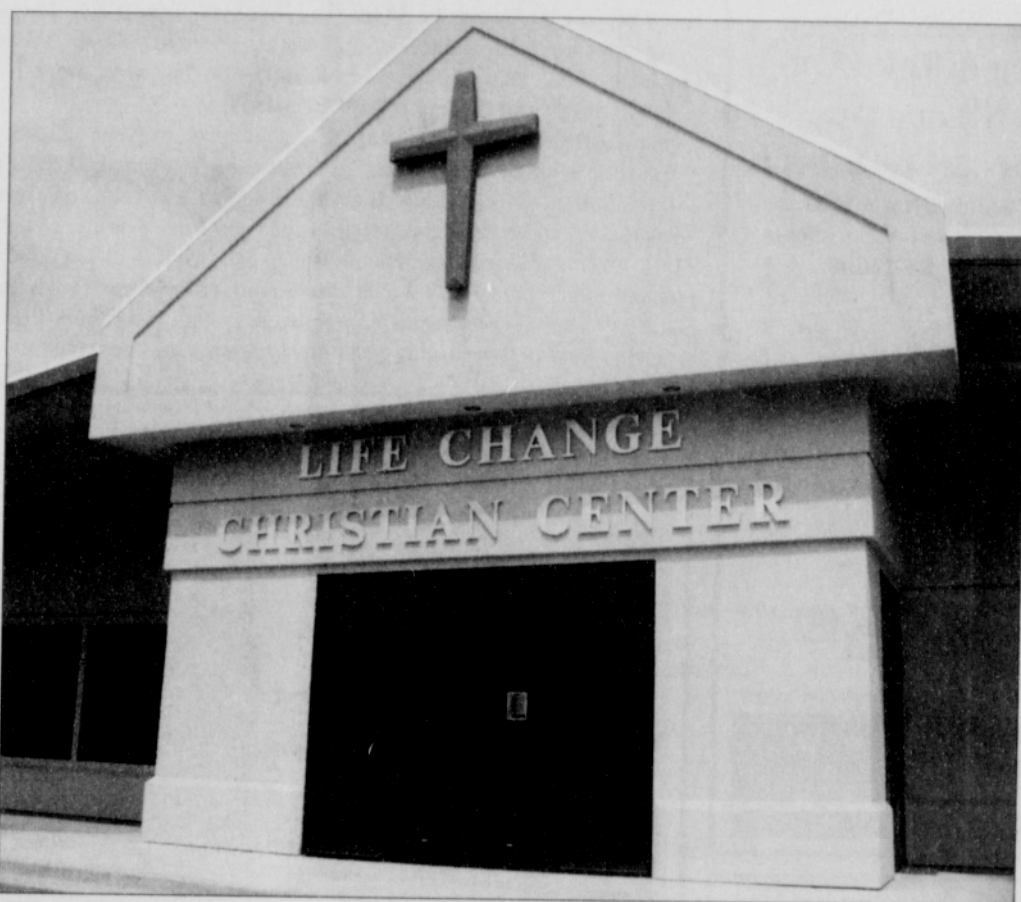
Church testifies to faith after years of struggle

BY JOHANNA S. KING
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Once a church with a congregation no larger than a handful of people made up of mostly immediate family members, Life Change Christian Center, 3635 N. Williams Ave., now operates in a state-of-the-art building and supports nearly 500 members.

After an arson fire in June of 1996 struck its North Ivy Street location, the former Immanuel Free Methodist Church was left gutted and broken, but not hopeless.

"We had a dream as a congregation of one day buying the old Craig's supermarket property and making it our church," said Senior Pastor Mark Strong, referring to an abandoned grocery store just a few blocks away. "Back then it was an area covered in violent



▲ The new Life Change Christian Center replaces property once blighted by crime just down from North Beech Street between Williams and Vancouver avenues.



◀ An old photo of Craig's market before it was abandoned.

crime with drug dealers on just about every street corner. Our vision was to bring the hope of Christ back into our dying community and see change take place."

The transition did not come easily.

There was disappointment after repeated attempts of trying to secure the money to purchase the storefront property. Without a building, committed members had to follow a nomadic pattern, attending worship services practically everywhere from King Elementary School's cafeteria to a tent in a parking lot to Jefferson High School's football field.

"Our big joke to visitors was if you can find us, you can worship with us," recalls Strong.

But the congregation persevered, intensified by a maturing faith.

"We simply had the word of God to stand on," said Odessa Mangum, a founding member. "After giving all we had in our finances and on our knees it was time to wait on the Lord and watch him come through on our behalf."

Donations to rebuild poured in from across the country as a result of the fire though double of what was given by individuals and organizations was confiscated by the greater Free Methodist denomination. Soon thereafter, the congregation decided to break away from their mother church and change to non-denominational status.

After years of waiting for a miracle, it came when an anonymous man sent a check to the church for \$165,000 that enabled the congregation to finally purchase the forsaken prop-

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Raising Girls with Confidence

Girl Scouts reach out to area residents



Young women from north Portland build life skills by participating in Girl Scouts.

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Some local families living in public housing and struggling to make ends meet have one less thing to worry about. Their daughters are being taught self-respect and empowerment and given opportunities their families may not have been able to afford through Girl Scouts.

The Portland Housing Authority has teamed up with the Girl Scouts' Columbia River Council to serve girls in several public housing buildings.

More than 40 girls from grades one through nine from the St. John's neighborhood of north Portland and the Rockwood neighborhood of Gresham are earning recognition badges and selling cookies, as well as learning real-life skills.

Some of the highlights of the summer's scouting events included a self-defense workshop, poetry writing seminars and a building and construction session with the Oregon

Girl Scouts is so awesome because it's about girls and adult partnerships.

-Samantha Keeley, Girl Scouts membership manager

Tradeswomen Association, where girls used tools to make picture frames. They also learned about conflict-resolution strategies with Renee Davis, owner of "Where I'm

From," a production company, with an emphasis on diversity and tolerance.

"Girl Scouts is so awesome because it's about girls and adult partnerships," said Samantha Keeley, the membership manager for the Girl Scouts, Columbia River Council. "A lot of the homes we serve are led by single parents who don't necessarily have a lot of extra money to do extra things like maybe band lessons or violence prevention programs."

Keeley is seeking donations of time and funds to support Girl Scouts activities and field trips. She is also looking for anyone in the community with a skill to teach and share with the troop. For more information, call 503-598-6531.

Tap Dancin' on My Last Nerve

Mental health forum for black women

Local African-American leaders and national experts in health will destigmatize mental illness and help black women learn ways to keep themselves mentally healthy during Tap Dancin' on My Last Nerve: A Symposium on Mental Health & the African American Woman.

The Thursday, Aug. 19 and Friday, Aug. 20 conference at the Portland Downtown Hilton is co-chaired by State Sens. Margaret Carter, Avel Gordly, and Jackie Winters, and will feature health experts Dr. Marilyn Martin and Dr. Carolyn West.

Martin is author of the widely praised book, "Saving Our Last Nerve: The Black Woman's Path to Mental Health." She specializes in psychiatry and public health as the medical director and vice president for medical services for Maryland Health Partners.

West is currently working on "Stereotypes of Black Women: The Psychological Effects" and is the editor of "Violence in the Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black and Blue." Her doctorate is in clinical psychology from the University of Missouri (St. Louis).

Other featured speakers include Dr. Ann Beckett of Oregon Health and Sciences University and Dr. Patrice Harris, president-elect of the Black Psychiatrists of America.

To register and for more information, call 503-282-6846.