

# METRO

The Portland Observer



## Scenic Ainsworth to Grow Greener

Friends of Trees launch linear arboretum

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SECTION B

### Community Calendar

#### Learn to Swim

Fall Swimming Lessons are available at Columbia Pool, 7701 N. Chautauqua Blvd. and Matt Dishman Pool, 77 N.E. Knott. For information, call the Portland Parks Aquatic Division at 503-823-5130.

#### Women in NAACP

Women in NAACP 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.

#### Africa AIDS Response

The Portland-Mutare Sister City Association Africa AIDS Response presents World Aids Day, Hope is Vital, Rhythms for Life with performances by Maya Soleil and MarchFourth on Wednesday, Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Crystal Ballroom, 1132 W. Burnside. All ages. \$25 advance, \$30 at the door. For more information, visit [www.africaaidsresponse.org](http://www.africaaidsresponse.org) or call 503-224-4400 for tickets.

#### Lobby for the Better

Train to be a citizen lobbyist on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40<sup>th</sup>. Free and sponsored by the Multnomah County Democratic Party.

#### Forces of Nature

OMSI presents Forces of Nature, National Geographic Chases Mother Nature's Dark Side, at Omnimax through March. For more information, call 503-797-4000.

#### Get Schooled

Learn how to help to improve schools and jobs at a forum with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo and President of Oregon's AFL-CIO Tim Nesbitt at 7 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40<sup>th</sup>. Free and sponsored by the Multnomah County Democratic Party.

#### Sense of Pride

Now that the votes have been cast and counted (sort of), what do you think the theme of Pride 2005 should represent? Righteous anger? Committed determination? Thoughtful reflection? Pride Northwest, the non-profit organization that produces the annual gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender festival and parade, seeks a theme which will express the community's wide-ranging feelings and actions over the coming year. Submit your ideas to [media@pridenw.org](mailto:media@pridenw.org) or call 503-295-9788 by Dec. 3. A brunch or dinner cruise for two on the Portland Spirit will be awarded to the person who submits the chosen suggestion.

#### Gallery of Visual Arts

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

#### Get Fit, Stay Healthy!

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.

#### Creative Space For Dance

Aurora dance studio, 5433 N.E. 30th (& Killingsworth), offers an array of classes for children, teens and adults at all levels of ability. Call 503-249-0201 or visit online at [www.hevanet.com/auroradance](http://www.hevanet.com/auroradance) for additional information.

# The Beat They Wrote



Dancers strut their stuff at an Ethos breakdancing competition.

## Hip-hop inspires Urban Music Project kids

Ethos lets youth guide their music education with the inception of the Urban Music Project.

"Ethos started the Urban Music Project two years ago in direct response to student input," said Charles Lewis, executive director of Ethos, Inc., a music education non-profit headquartered near Jefferson High School in north Portland. "We found that a number of students were particularly interested in making their own rap and hip hop songs."

Ethos added classes such as "turntablism," also known as scratching, beatboxing, and digital recording to its music education curriculum.

"We have since added breakdancing and hip hop fundamentals," he said.

The classes, designed for kids 12 and older, teach the components of building and creating songs in a lyricism class, an introduction to the drum machine and sampler in the beat making class and more importantly, offer a wider palate of opportunity to those who may not have been otherwise interested in learning about music.

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Ethos' Urban Music Project students count out beats on a computer as part of learning to read and write hip hop lyrics.

## Achievement Gap Challenge Met Before

### Superintendent confident of improving schools

BY JAYMEE R. CUTI  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland's new superintendent of public schools says she knows how to close the achievement gap afflicting children of color. Her plan relies on education fundamentals.

Vicki Phillips has a record of making major gains before in districts largely serving Latino and African-American populations with stagnantly low test scores and a high percentage of low-income students.

"Having been an urban superintendent before, I've had two experiences of getting struggling schools on the right track and staying on the right track," she said in a recent interview with the Portland Observer.

Phillips comes to Portland from Pennsylvania, as the state secretary of education and formerly school superintendent in Lancaster, Penn.

The fundamentals she wants for our schools are an investment in early education and a standardized curriculum at every school.

"Part of our job in the district is to make sure kids get the same high quality of core education no matter where they live in the city," she said.

Phillips says she fought against low expectations in her own upbringing, which gave her intimate knowledge of the struggles some of her students face.

"I grew up in an environment where the expectations for me were little or none and

even though I was a good student, I didn't get any encouragement for college from my school counselor or my family," Phillips said.

"I got to college by luck and I think kids should get there by design."

Phillips says she's not naive enough to think she alone can make necessary changes to Portland Public Schools.

"One of the reasons I took this job is I thought there were ingredients you look for if you want to be an urban superintendent," she said. "I was looking for a courageous and visionary board; not a group that has the same perspective but

can come together on behalf of children. I was looking for a supportive community and some percentage of staff that was will-

ing and able to make the change. I think we have a large percentage of teachers, support staff and principals who are really ready to move past expectation and go in the direction that we want to see our schools go."

Phillips says she admires the pledge Multnomah County voters made when the temporary income tax was passed as a Band-Aid to ailing schools.

Phillips says she is prepared to work with state legislators to secure stable funding.

"I'm no stranger to that battle," said Phillips. She has been on both sides of the funding dilemma, representing schools as superintendent and the state, as secretary of education. "It will take a coalition working with the legislature and the governor."

She added, "I'm somebody who believes that when confronted with a sound proposal and an expectation, that we're willing to be held accountable for results."

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Vicki Phillips