

METRO

The Portland Observer



Beijing Modern Dance

Upcoming performance rooted in Chinese culture and thirst for freedom

See story, page B3

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Career Fair
Mt. Hood Community College will host a career fair on Thursday, Feb. 24, offering students and community members the chance to receive advice, resources and networking opportunities with local businesses. The fair is from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the MHCC College Center, 26000 S.E. Stark St. For more information, call 503-491-7432.

Eating Disorder Awareness
"A Decade of Awareness, Prevention and Treatment," the ninth annual professional conference on eating disorders, will be held on Friday, Feb. 25 at Washington State University in Vancouver. For more information, call 503-295-7890.

Boy Scout Collection
Local Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts will be participating in a door-to-door donation drive on Saturday, March 5. More than 90 cents of every dollar received from the sale of these items will go toward training and employment of people with disabilities and special needs. For more information, call 503-225-5767.

Preschool Open House
Tillamook Cooperative Preschools holds its open house on Saturday, March 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 935 N.E. 33 Ave. Financial aid is available. For more information, call 503-234-1691.

Used Bookstore Sale
The Multnomah County Library's Title Wave Used Bookstore at 216 N.E. Knott St. will hold its 17th anniversary sale during the month of March. Sales will change daily. Hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 503-988-5021.

Get Fit, 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.

Love the Pooch
Problem pooch classes are a must take for anyone who may be new to the world of pet parenthood or is interested in considering adopting a new friend. Come to the Oregon Humane Society to find out why your dog does those silly little things. Meetings are every first and third Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. For more information, call 503-285-7722.

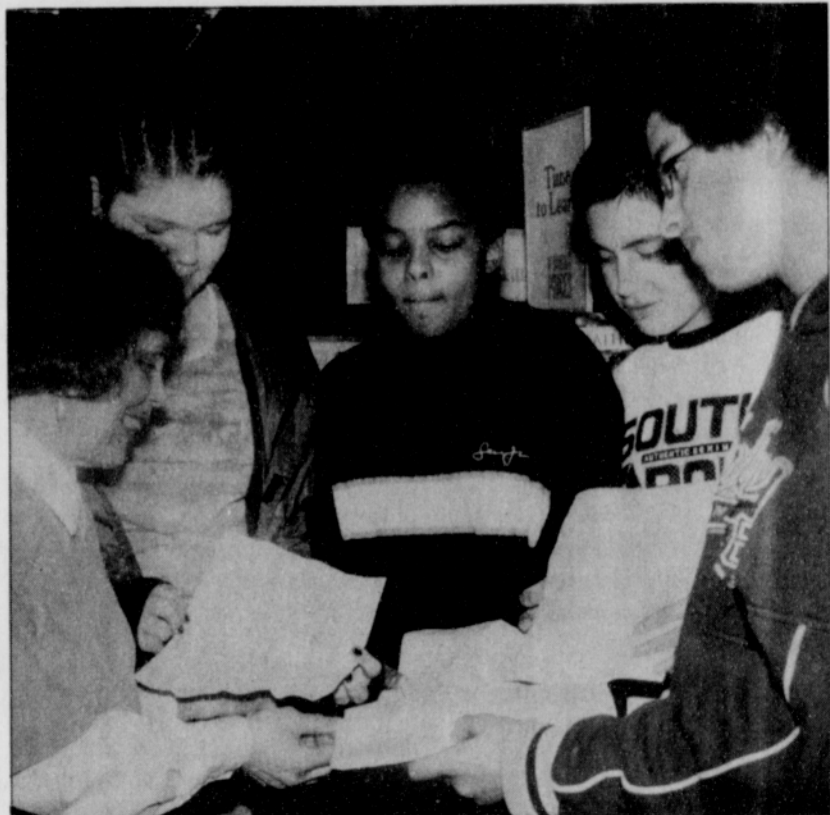
Women in NAACP
Women in NAACP meets from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month at the American Red Cross Building, 3131 N. Vancouver. For questions, call 503-249-6263.

AIDS Awareness
Albina Ministerial Alliance sponsors a bi-monthly support and education group for African Americans living with HIV/AIDS at Maranatha Church at 4222 NE 12th St. The group will meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month. For more information, call Elnathan Hudson at 503-285-0493 ext. 217.

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

Birth Ready
Whether you need childbirth preparation classes, or just a refresher, Providence Health Systems has a workshop for you. Visit www.providence.org/classes or call 503-574-6595.

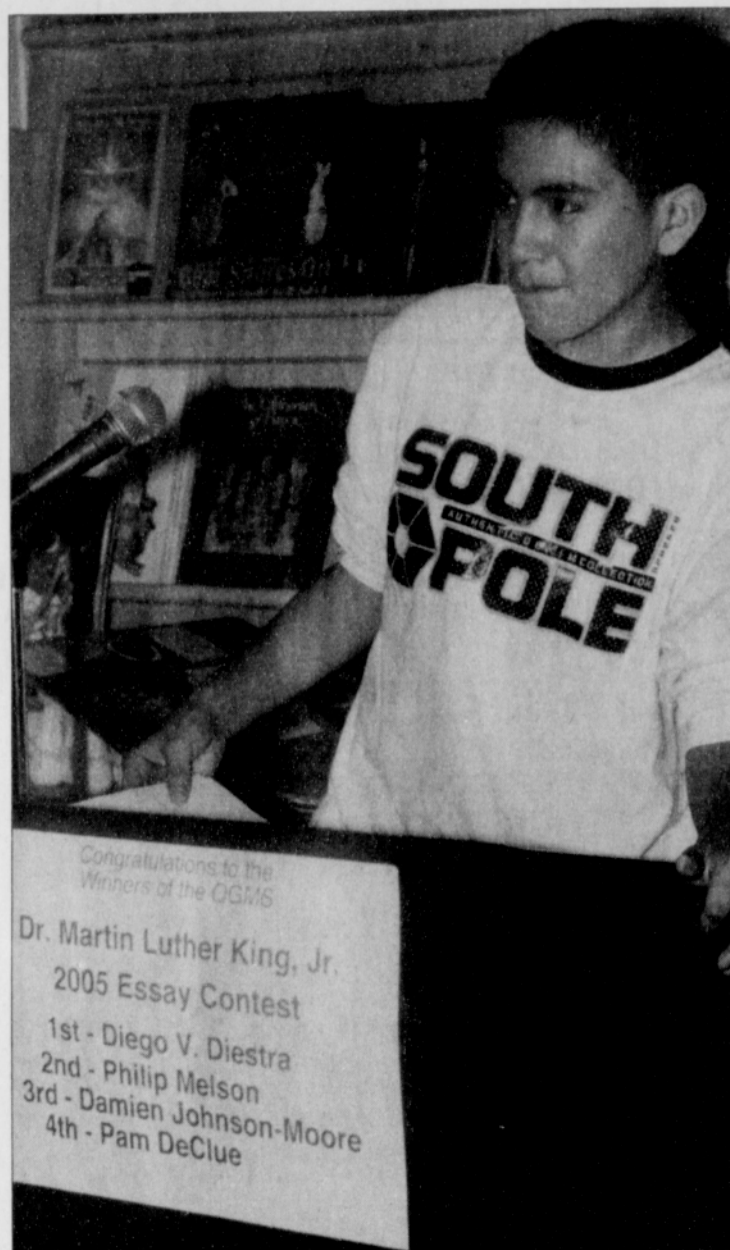
Students Look Through the Eyes of MLK, Jr. with Essays



Ockley Green Middle School Librarian Jane Morgan meets with the four students who won the Martin Luther King, Jr. essay contest.

PHOTOS BY NEIL HEILPERN/ FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Ockley Green Middle School 7th grade student Diego V. Diestra reads his essay on Martin Luther King, Jr., which won first place in the school's annual essay contest.



Congratulations to the Winners of the OGMSS
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
2005 Essay Contest
1st - Diego V. Diestra
2nd - Philip Melson
3rd - Damien Johnson-Moore
4th - Pam DeClue

BY NEIL HEILPERN
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
"We have many races in our school and we get along well," said Ockley Green Middle School student Diego V. Diestra. "This is what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wanted." Diestra was the first place winner in his school's essay Black History Month con-

test honoring the slain civil rights leader. He depicted a visit to his school by Dr. King and the image he would leave with students of different races studying and playing together. Second place winner Philip Melson imagined Dr. King visiting the school, seeing "a rainbow of races" and thinking that "race

relations are way better than they were in the past." He also noted that King would probably teach the students to be aware of racist language that may slip out of their mouths in everyday conversation. Damien Johnson-Moore, whose essay won third place, noted that King "dreamed we could share things and not have to hate

each other." He said King "helped bring the entire world together in friendship." "This school is wonderful!" fourth place winner Pam DeClue quoted King in an imaginary newspaper-style interview. "There is hardly any racism and people

continued ▼ on page B6

Ockley Green Winning Essays

Ockley Green Middle School students wrote from one of the following two topics for Black History Month: "If Martin Luther King Jr. were to visit your school today and look around, what would he say about race relations?" and "Is African American History month and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday only important to African Americans, why or why not?"

'Dr. King, Jr. would be proud of how our school is, and even though we have a few race problems we're trying to make it better. We have many races in our school and we get along well. This is what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wanted. He wanted

us all to be good friends.'
—Diego V. Diestra - 7th Grade
1st Place Winner

'Martin Luther King Jr. would smile if he saw the diversity of races at Ockley Green. We have black, white, Asian, European and Mexican-Americans here; it's a rainbow of races. But Dr. King would be very disappointed if he heard the words we use here. Blacks are still called niggers, whites are still called crackers and new racist words come daily. It is sad that words like that are still used.'
—Philip Melson - 7th Grade
2nd Place Winner

'Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that black and white people could get along with each other. He also wanted us to be friends. He dreamed we could share things and not have to hate each other.'
—Damien Johnson-Moore - 7th Grade
3rd Place Winner

'When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visited our school, Ockley Green, he said it was a great school. So what do you think about everyone's behavior?' I asked happily. "It's between good and bad, some people are fine, but others need to calm down."
—Pam DeClue - 7th Grade
4th Place Winner

Kaiser Permanente Giving Kids a Healthy Chance

Virtually free health care offered

BY KATHERINE KOVACICH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
When your child comes to you crying with the flu, the chicken pox or a broken arm, will you be able to take them to the doctor without worrying about how much it's going to cost because the rent is due, the bills need to be paid and the food needs to be in their bellies?

Every day, children grow up without proper medical attention simply because their family doesn't have health insurance. This is why Kaiser Permanente is offering 2000 children, grades K-6, the chance at a zero-premium health plan to make sure Portland's kids are in tip-top shape. This can ensure a child is developing with the positive attention their bodies and minds need.

"I've been a school nurse for 16 years and I have seen a lot of kids without insurance," said Bill Tomlinson, of the Multnomah Education Service District. "To me, one of the biggest issues is the attitude and ability of family to be able to readily access health care for their kids. It's kind of an attitude that if there's something wrong with your kid, and you have the insurance, you don't really hesitate to take care of your kid. If you don't have the insurance and it's going to cost you 30 bucks minimum to get in the door, you hesitate. The longer you put it off, the more problems that occur."

Making sure everything is functioning correctly with a young one is vital in their learning process. Just as a person with a cold is distracted from work, so is a child if the focus is on



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARK SKOLNICK
Enrique Azcorra, 41, is the father of 9-year-old Jaime Azcorra Aragon. Aragon needed an eye exam and was able to get assistance through Kaiser's new program.

the pain in their body and not the lessons taught at school.

"If a child is not going to be as attentive in class, they're going to be absent more. If they're worried about not getting into see the doctor or worried about the family in general, they're not going to be attentive in school because they're not feeling well or worrying about siblings. Kids who are healthy are ready to learn," Tomlinson said.

An alarming amount of students without insurance rely solely on a school nurse for care. "A lot of ones we do see, the kids get injured over the weekend and they wait until Monday when the nurse is there," Tomlinson said.

Beyond stress, physical ailments can actually prohibit a child from hearing, seeing or concentrating if not dealt with.

"I can remember one example of a kid who had hearing concerns and I wasn't really sure what was going on, but the kid was having a lot of learning problems at school," Tomlinson said. "As it turns out, this kid had had hearing problems for a really long time and they were not being dealt with at all by the parents because they didn't have access to and didn't know how to access health insurance. We got the ball rolling and got some care for the child."

Realizing that being healthy and being able to take care of yourself is a learned habit.

"There's learning about what's important as a child, what're their priorities. Health is a number one priority. If you learn that you can go right in and take care of any problem right away, there's an attitude you take in house and in school. Those attitudes are shaped by the ability of the family to access health care. They may learn that you worry about those kinds of things

continued ▼ on page B6