

METRO

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Clean Up Your 'Hood

Earth Day is on Saturday, April 23 and the north Portland community will hit the streets for litter and illegal dumpsite pick-ups. The St. John Lutheran Church, 4227 N. Lombard, will have space to collect unwanted items. Come and volunteer and do your share. For more information please contact Mary Jaron Kelly at 503-823-4099 or email mkelley@ci.portland.or.us

Fat Girl Clothing Exchange

What's old to you is new to someone else. On Sunday, April 24 from noon to 5 p.m., come exchange your clothes with other plus-sized women. This event will be held at the NE Community Center on 1630 N.E. 38 Ave., just off of 39th and Sandy Blvd. Sizes will range from 1x-6x. Proceeds go to Fat Action Troupe Portland whose focus is to promote a fun high self-esteem for the community of size. For more information, contact info@fatgirlspeaks.com or visit www.fatgirlspeaks.com/frockswap.

Remembering Memory Loss

Is memory loss normal or not? The Providence Center on Aging presents free community forums in May regarding this subject. Learn from Dr. Michael Mega how new activities like bingo or learning a new language can boost your brain. For more information visit www.providence.org/aging.

Neil Kelly Awards Luncheon

On May 6 at 11:30 a.m. four students and five businesses will be honored for their excellence in community issues. The Rotary Club of Albina and the North/Northeast Business Association sponsor this event. Tickets are \$50 and \$30 is a donation.

Be a Hospice Volunteer

Providence Hospital offers free training for volunteers at least 18 years old who can commit four hours a week for a year. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to get an application packet please call Cynthia Cohen, volunteer coordinator at 503-215-5774

Women Mentors

Women in Community Service is seeking volunteer mentors for female offenders at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Mentors provide support and encouragement to women transitioning from prison back into the community. Mentors must be female, 24 or older. Training is provided. Call 503-570-6614 for more information.

Portland Children's Museum Activities

Portland Children's Museum will hold a variety of art activities for children throughout the month, including mediums using mosaic, African arts and culture and garden stepping stones. Call 503-223-6500 or visit the web at www.portlandchildrensmuseum.org.

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.

35
years of
community service



Shannon Guthrie is a breakdancer, DJ and co-owner of the new Wax Café and break dance studio on North Interstate Avenue and Webster Street.

PHOTOS BY NICOLE HOOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

You Got Served

Breakdance studio and café opens

BY NICOLE HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Where else in Portland can you learn the "pop and lock" and get a peanut butter milkshake?

Along North Interstate Avenue, there is hotel after hotel, but on the corner of Webster Street, you can't miss the bright school bus yellow building of Wax. In only four months, break dancer and DJ Shannon Guthrie and barista Sara Moskovitz have transformed Wax (which is an "old school" term for vinyl) from an underage clubhouse to sophisticated café and break dance studio.

Both are friends from San Diego who originally met through a hip-hop portal called Urban Empire to promote hip-hop enthusiasts with underground events at locations available for rent. Now with a site of their own, the co-owners are bringing hip-hop to the local community.

On Wednesdays, break dancing class attracts kids from the age of 3, to adults 50 years old, but most guests are in their 20s and 30s. Because Wax is no longer an underage club, many high school kids have



Wax owners Shannon Guthrie and Sara Mokovitz serve up some hot moves and "cups of Joe."

drifted away.

The original plan, with partial financing from the Portland Development Commission and other loans, was to open a restaurant with nighttime events where underage dancers and music lovers could come and learn hip-hop.

But on mainstream hip-hop nights, the

demands of kids proved to be stressful not only for the owners but for the neighborhood. There were complaints about noise.

Sara and Shannon made an effort to hear the concerns at the Overlook Neighborhood Association meetings. They sent letters to the residents in the area, explaining the mission of the club and welcoming them to come

check it out.

Moskovitz describes some of the complaints as "straight up racism."

"We only get the cops calling when there is a group of black kids' waiting to get into the club, never when the crowd is mostly

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Transition to College Made Easier

Center for Student Success serves area kids

BY KATHERINE KOVACICH
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Think doing taxes is hard? Try filling out a FAFSA form.

For many high school students, tackling this paperwork for financial aid toward college is a daunting task. So much so that many students don't even bother and end up without the plethora of finances they could have had they filled it out.

This is where the Center for Student Success steps in.

Walk into Suite 135 at 1500 N.E. Irving St. and you'll find a multitude of computers, a library of books and a knowledgeable staff all waiting to help those in need of assistance with college financial aid forms. The resources include help with entrance exams and essays, and advice on making a decision on where to go after high school graduation. Workshops and campus visits are also common. And it's all free.

The center has helped Benson High School senior Andy Ngo get his college applications filled out and snag three scholarships. He'll be studying film production at UCLA in the fall.

"It's made things a lot easier. When I was beginning, I was so nervous," Ngo said.

"They helped me every step of the way."

Ngo is the first of his family to apply for a four-year college and said that when he asks for help from his parents, they don't quite see the importance. He also said that with parents who don't speak English, trying to get the necessary information for financial aid would've been difficult without the help of the center.

Ngo looks forward to college as a chance to be independent and on his own.

"You don't learn everything in high school," he said.

"We want to help low income and first generation college students. These are the people who have not had enough information in this process or have not been encouraged to apply," said Jim Eddy, manager of Portland's Center for Student Success.

Eddy explained that when high schools don't offer a course load to prepare for a four-year degree, a downward spiral of low-achievement is continued.

"Upper to middle income and wealthy parents send their students, 70 to 80 percent of the time, to a college," Eddy said. "Middle and lower income families send them at a

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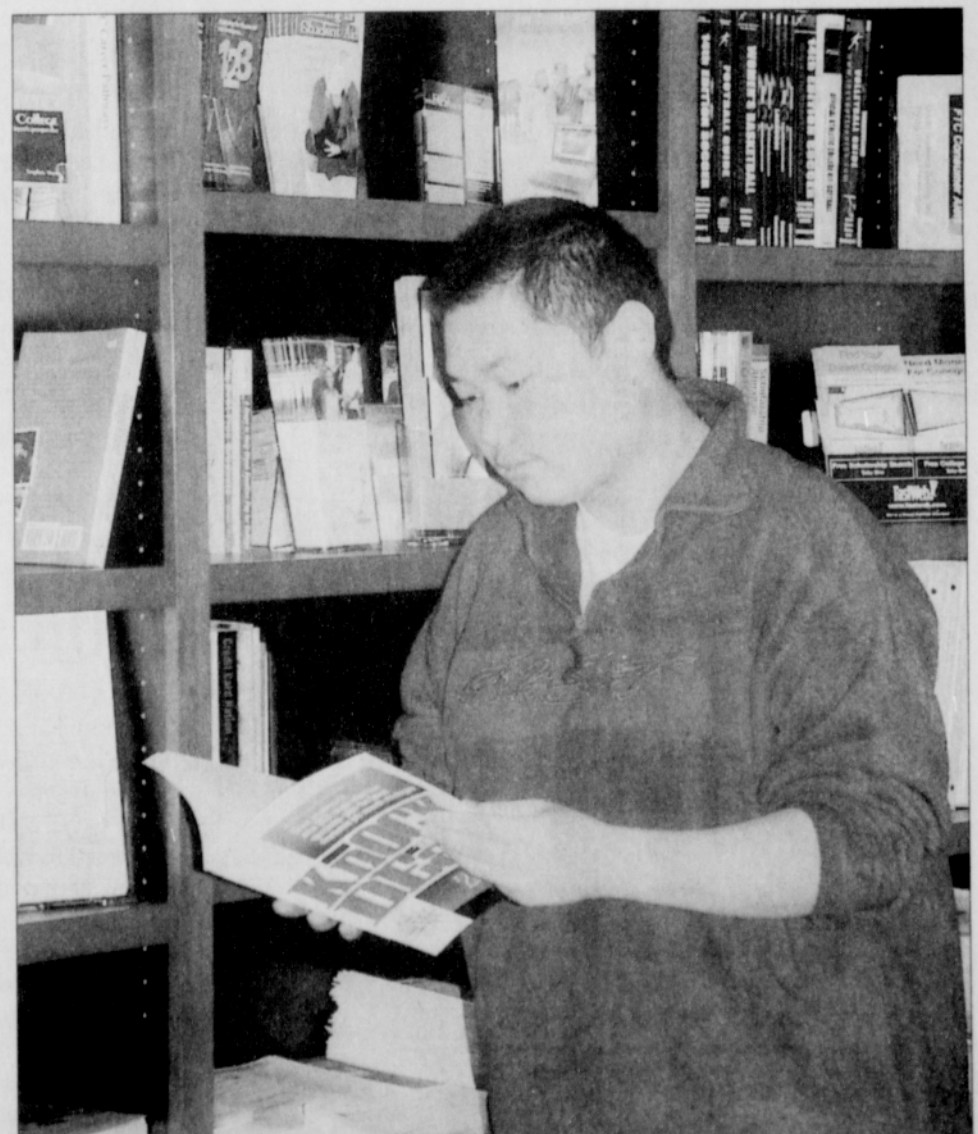


PHOTO BY KATHERINE KOVACICH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Benson High School senior Andy Ngo plows into the resources on college programs at the Center for Student Success. Ngo said the assistance is helping him make his way to UCLA.