

# METRO

The Portland Observer

## 'Through the Fire'

Film tells Sebastian Telfair success story

See page B6, inside



35  
years of  
community service

SECTION B

### Community Calendar

#### Media's Impact on Children

A Portland Children's Museum lecture on Friday, April 29 will discuss issues surrounding media exposure and methods to reduce media influence on children. The panel will include child therapist Pam Crow.

#### Screamers Needed

Scream At The Beach needs extras for a promotional movie being filmed on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the back area of Jantzen Beach Mall close to Michael's and Toys R Us. This is a volunteer opportunity to raise funds for the American Red Cross. All ages are welcome to come scream your guts out for a good cause and have some fun. RSVP and get information by visiting casting@screamatthebeach.com.

#### Sexual Purification Conference

On April 30, Irvington Covenant Church will host this conference that will teach community children about alternatives to sex. The goal is to have open discussion in a non-judgemental environment. This event is for males and females with separate workshops and a special performance by GNC (God In Charge). There will also be giving away a DVD Player along with other door prizes. Irvington Covenant Church is located at 4008 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd and starts at 5:30 p.m. For more information please call Stephanie McKelvey at 503-312-8817.

#### Teacher Appreciation Week

May 1-7 is Teacher Appreciation Week. Don't forget to bring an apple for your favorite one.

#### Health and Safety Fair

On Saturday, May 7, King Neighborhood Association along with King SUN School is sponsoring a health and safety fair. There will be music, food prizes and fun. This even takes place at the King Elementary School Cafeteria 4906 N.E. 6th Ave. from 1-4 p.m. For more information, call Kristen McKee at 503-335-2717

#### LIFE Center Farewell

On Saturday, May 7, the LIFE Center Board of Directors has invited all volunteers, past employees, community leaders, partner agencies and supporters to a farewell celebration at the center located at 2746 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. from noon to 4 p.m.

#### Neil Kelly Awards

On Friday, May 6 at 11:30 a.m. four students and five businesses will be honored for their excellence in community issues at a Neil Kelly Awards luncheon. The Rotary Club of Albina and the North/Northeast Business Association sponsor this event.

#### 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, 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 information.

#### 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.

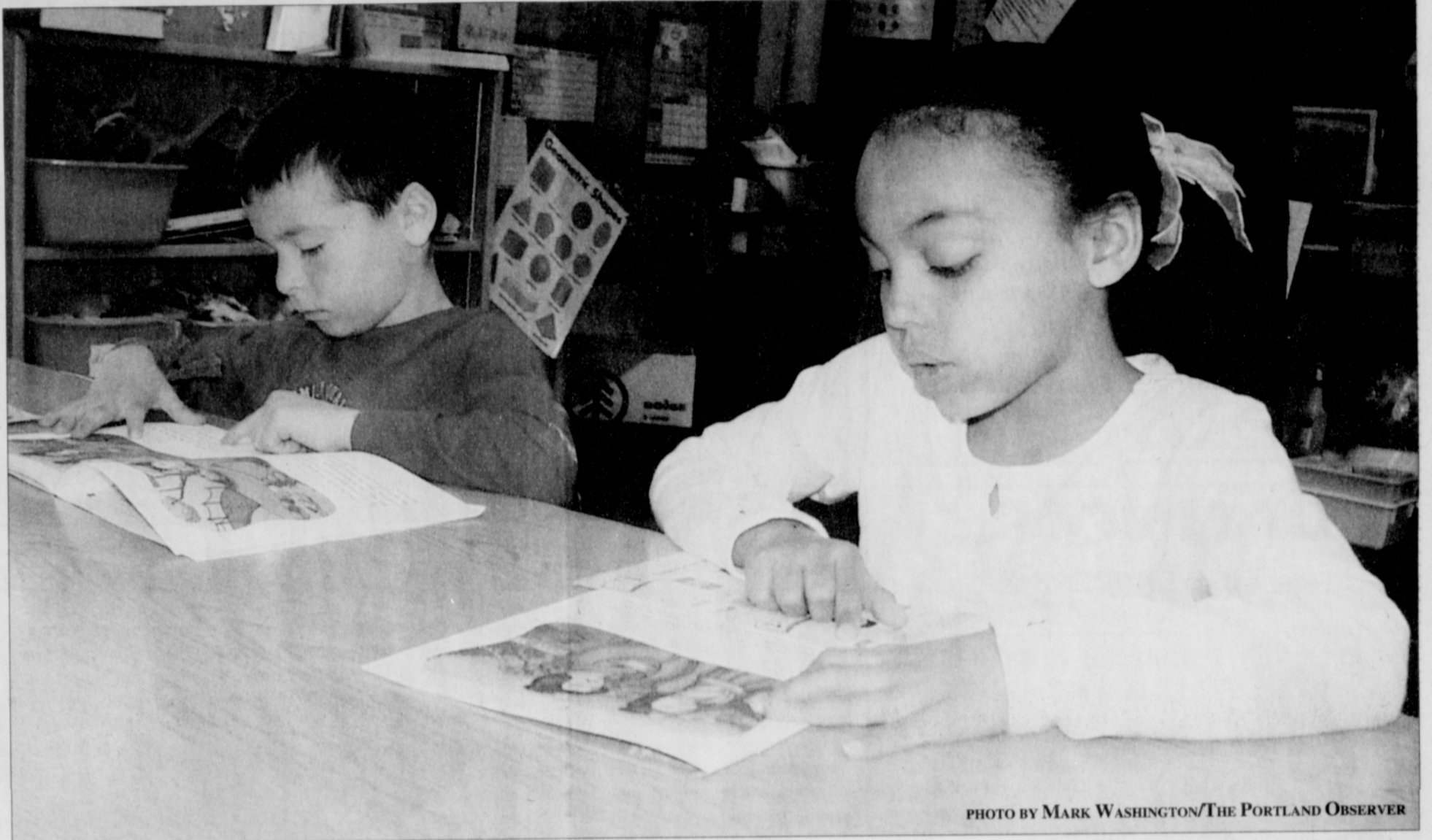


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Vernon first graders Neftali Claudio (from left) and Viktoria White concentrate on their reading skills during Charlotte Frederick's class. The northeast elementary is making progress in closing the achievement gap.

## Vernon Celebrates Turnaround

### School honored for minority student progress

BY CRYSTAL WEBER  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Not long ago, Vernon Elementary ranked as one of the most underachieving schools in Oregon — a symbol of the frustrating failures of inner city public education.

However, this year Vernon has been se-

lected as a recipient of the 2005 Celebrating Student Success Award created by State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo to honor schools that have made significant progress toward closing the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students.

Across Oregon, teachers, parents and administrators are striving to provide all students with the resources, support and extra help they need to succeed. And succeed they do.

The predominantly African American students at Vernon Elementary in northeast Portland are a shining example of this suc-

cess. "My goal was to reach out with clear, inspiring examples of what is being accomplished in our public schools and send a very important message to all of Oregon about helping all children achieve," Castillo said. "Vernon is just such an inspiring example of student success."

About 85 percent of the student population at Vernon comes from low income families—a challenge that statistically does not point toward success. But the predominately African-American population has surpassed the state average in math by six percent and is close to the state average in reading. The

students at Vernon score at least 10 percent above other schools with similar minority and low-income populations.

This has not always been the case.

A decade ago, Vernon students were failing in large numbers. The percentage of students meeting grade level expectations could be as low as single digits. Teachers worked hard, but their efforts felt futile. Every year, the staff faced huge turnover as teachers literally fled the school.

Portland district and community leaders targeted Vernon as a "crisis" school.

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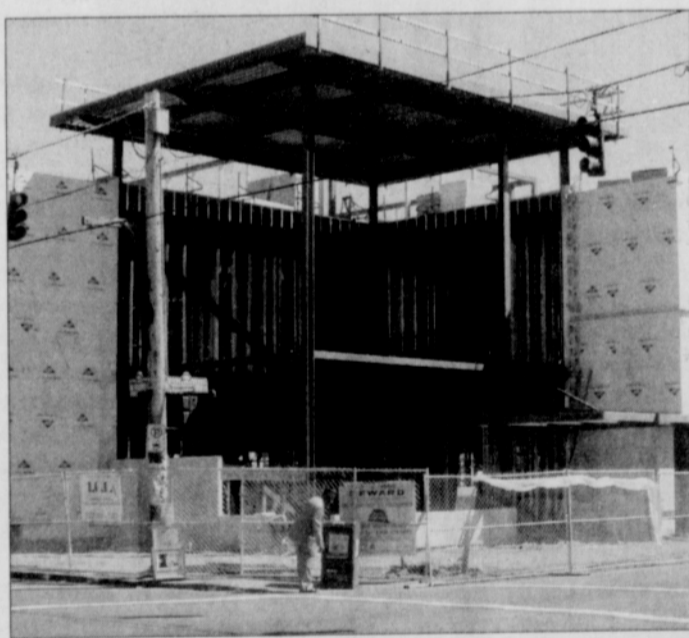


PHOTO BY ISAIAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Construction of the new Moriarty Arts and Humanities building on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College proceeds on the intersection of North Albina and Killingsworth.

### Arts, Humanities Hall Rises at PCC Cascade

Construction has reached the 35 percent mark at Portland Community College's \$7.5 million Daniel F. Moriarty Arts and Humanities Building on the Cascade Campus in north Portland.

The 42,200 square foot building is scheduled to open in the fall, housing the professional music, multimedia, distance education and arts programs.

"This brings together several related disciplines," said Algje Gatewood, Cascade Campus president. "Formerly, the programs were spread across the campus with no opportunity for a synergy to develop."

The new building incorporates sustainable design features to reduce energy usage

and promote a healthy indoor environment. Naturally ventilated corridors will use exterior motorized louvers and windows to minimize heat gain and maximize light. Classroom windows will open for fresh air.

Contractors recently erected the building's structural steel while the metal framing installation continues.

The project is the last major element to a \$57 million renovation and expansion of the campus, part of a voter-approved \$144 million bond measure for PCC in November 2000. With completion of this facility, the campus will have four new buildings, a new science building wing and a remodel of an existing building.

### Youth Check In With the Mayor



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mayor Tom Potter (from left) gets a reality check from Jefferson High School student leaders Mario Lampkin, Chemar Martin and Tareq Temple at the start of a City Council Meeting.

### Mayor Potter opens council process to kids

For Portland Mayor Tom Potter, the city's children are top priority. At the beginning of each City Council meeting since taking office this January, Potter has instituted a new practice of welcoming Portland youth at the start of each City Council meeting.

The young visitors are encour-

aged to share their thoughts and life experiences with the mayor for a few minutes. They come prepared to answer questions on where they live and what their neighborhoods are like; to describe the issues that affect them, their friends, family or neighbors; and offer advice on what would make their schools more successful and their neighborhoods safer.

Last week, student leaders from Jefferson High School were introduced to the mayor under the mentorship of Harold C. Williams II,

a local African American businessman.

Potter is looking for other articulate youth from all neighborhoods and backgrounds who are comfortable seeking in a public setting and who are able to obtain permission from parents or guardians and their schools.

They must also be able to meet with the Mayor's staff before the scheduled meeting.

If you know a young candidate suited for this, call Carmen Rubio at 503-823-3578.