



Lakita Logan

'Roots! Binds African Americans

BY NICOLE HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The gentrification of north and northeast is a current concern for many, including Lakita Logan who founded 'Roots! out of feelings of isolation when long-time residents moved out of the neighborhood.

Supporting an African-American community that is self-sufficient economically and culturally is the goal of her organization.

Community awareness of the gentrification issue when be discussed when 'Roots! hosts an Interpreting History Workshop, Tuesday, June 28. The correlation of displacement of Portland's black community and urban renewal will be discussed. The event will begin at 6 p.m. at the King Neighborhood Facility, 4817 N.E. Seventh Ave.

Logan believes that "so called revitalization" is affecting black Portland culture in a negative manner and she is continually seeing businesses that do not embrace the African-American culture.

"There aren't a lot of places to go for social networking with in our community," Logan said. "We are small and I sometimes feel segregated."

For more information, call 'Roots! at 503-288-4021 or visit www.rootspdx.org.

Surprising Results on Gentrification

continued ▲ from Front

highly segregated by race and by class. This is a very unique time where we have neighborhoods that exist that are socially and economically diverse," he said. "In terms of people's opinions, it seems to be the case that most people, black and white, seem to like the way the neighborhood is changing and are optimistic that the neighborhood will get better."

The study was conducted via census data that showed how the demographics bounded by Northeast 15th and 33rd Avenues to the west and east and northeast Killingsworth and Prescott Streets to the north and south has shifted between 1990 and 2000. Randomly chosen, 243 residents were surveyed, with a response by 76 percent.

It found that a majority of Alberta residents enjoy their neighborhood and feel it's gotten better over the last five years.

But those with characteristics associated with gentrification, white, college-educated homeowners, were the people who found the change most favorable. Equally, these were also the people who saw the most problems: lack of affordable housing, poor quality schools and drug dealing. Those who have lived in Alberta for less than a year or more than 20 years found the least amount of problems.

"If you bring in middle class, they tend to demand a lot more from the city," Sullivan said. "They usually call the police more, complain to the city more. Crime



A mural decorates the side of a taqueria building on Alberta Street, accenting the Hispanic culture in the area.

goes down and city services usually get better."

The results in response to the overhaul were a surprise for Sullivan.

"I thought there would be more people who wouldn't like the change," he said. "I would think that renters would be very concerned about rising rents and there is some evidence that they are concerned that they would be displaced. I thought that more people of color would say that they don't like the changes because this is an area that has had a large concentration of minorities and cultural institutions."

Displacement is a worry among 25 per-

cent of the community and lack of affordable housing was a concern among 59 percent, 17 percent being homeowners.

Homeowners also were found to interact with neighbors, participate in local organizations and send their children to private or non-local schools more than renters.

Sullivan says that despite being part of the problem, most of those associated with gentrification weren't happy about the changes taking place concerning displacement of African Americans.

"I don't think most of them are happy

lacks leaving the neighborhood. A lot of them move to the neighborhood for the diversity and feel like the neighborhood is changing and they don't have control over it," he said. "I do sense frustration and helplessness on their part."

Beyond owning or renting is the boom of local business in the area, with New Seasons Market and the Alberta Co-op Grocery store.

"One of the things you find in neighborhoods that are poor is an absence of basic retail like grocery stores," Sullivan said. "One of the potential benefits is that it bring in retail everybody in the neighborhood can use."

The study found that many of its participants used these stores but that those associated with gentrification were the primary shoppers.

Like the Pearl District and Mississippi Street, Alberta has its very own art walk every "Last Thursday" of the month to get people outside, enjoy music, art pieces and food, and to enjoy each other's company.

Ironically, residents in the area for more than 10 years were least likely to attend Last Thursday, whereas whites with college degrees and outsiders were more likely to visit. Almost half of minority residents had attended at least once.

The report can be found at www.pdx.edu/media/1/Alberta_Survey_1104.pdf.

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Jerel Betz, Science Teacher, Leslie Middle School

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