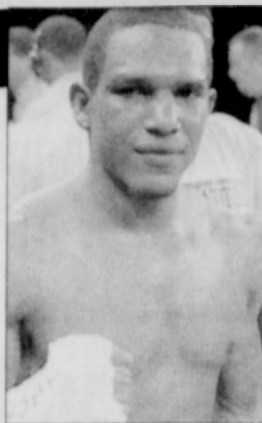


METRO

The Portland Observer



Championship Fight Rumored for Portland

Boxing match would be biggest in three years

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SECTION B

Community Calendar

Free CPR Training

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in north Portland is able to offer free training and certification in CPR to 15 area residents. Nic Granum, a volunteer firefighter and exceptional teacher, will lead the class with equipment donated by the Portland Fire Bureau. Call 503-823-4322 to register or send an email to office@ifcc-arts.org.

Women in Community Service Seek Mentors

Volunteer mentors are being sought by Women in Community Service to work with incarcerated women at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Mentors provide support and encouragement for women transitioning from prison back into the community. Volunteers must be females, age 24 and up. Training will be provided. For more information, call 503-570-6614.

Preemie Reunion

Providence St. Vincent Hospital will celebrate the lives of its tiniest patients, with the premature babies and their parents as guests of honor, on Sunday, Oct. 16 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the medical center on 9205 S.W. Barnes Rd. in the East Pavilion Lobby. The event offers face painting, a ring toss, a bean bag toss and fishing.

Homeownership Fair

The African American Alliance for Homeownership will hold its 6th annual Home Buying Fair on Saturday, Oct. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Emanuel Hospital Atrium on 501 N. Gresham St. The fair is free and open to the public. For more information, call 971-506-8565.

NAACP Meeting

The October general meeting of the NAACP will be held at Terrell Hall on the PCC Cascade Campus at 705 N. Killingsworth Ave. on Saturday, Oct. 29 from 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, call 503-288-3710 or send an email to naacp1120@aol.com.

Boxes for Babies

The Parcel Place, located on Fremont and 15th Streets, is collecting diapers and other baby supplies for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The supplies will be shipped to the Bethany World Prayer Center in Baton Rouge, which is housing approximately 650 hurricane victims. For more information, call 503-282-3172.

Swimming Lessons

Portland Parks and Recreation will offer swimming lessons year round at the Columbia, Dishman, MLC, Mt. Scott and Southwest Community Center pools. Registration is now open and lessons are available for swimmers of all skill levels from ages 6 months to adults in group, semi private and private settings. For rates and information, call 503-823-5130.

Sewing for YWCA

YWCA's Women Offenders Rehabilitation, Training and Help Program is accepting donations of fabric and sewing machines in good working condition for the Clark County Jail's work center. The inmates are learning sewing skills by making nightgowns and donating them to the women and girls living in the YWCA's SafeChoice Domestic Violence Shelter. Donations can be dropped off at the YWCA Clark County on 3609 Main St. in Vancouver. For more information, call 360-906-9153.

35 years of community service

Youth League Brings Positive Interaction

Police serve as coaches, mentors

BY ERIKA-LEIGH GOODWIN FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Local youth and law enforcement professionals are building positive relationships through football and the Police Activities League.

PAL is a recreational, athletic and educational program designed to encourage and develop good citizenship, improving the quality of life in the Portland metropolitan area.

PAL community liaison Damon Miller, a local African American resident, understands that police do not always have the community on their side.

"The police get a bad rap so we get a bad rap sometimes," Miller said. "We just want to educate people that that's not what we're about; we're trying to facilitate positive activities for the kids."

Miller said it would not be possible without the police involvement. There are 50-60 officers who volunteer as coaches with PAL. The organization also has programs to assist young people with reading, math computers. The program requires students complete homework assignments and seek tutoring assistance if necessary.

PAL is home to approximately 800 youth football players from the Portland, Gresham and Troutdale area. The league is made up of 22 squads for youth aged nine through 14 and has been around in one form or another for more than 40 years, according to Miller.

"We originally got the league from the Portland Parks and Recreation, they were unable to sustain the program," Miller said. "PAL took it on; the city issued permits, schools donated fields and PAL hired and trained referees."

Miller has been working for the league since 1999, but first encountered PAL as a young participant.



PHOTO BY ERIKA-LEIGH GOODWIN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A Police Activities League football contest between the Tech Warriors and Cleveland Warriors takes place at Roosevelt High School in north Portland.

"I was actually involved with the program when I was a kid and out of high school I started working with a PAL program called the National Youth Sports Program," said Miller. "That summer time job turned into a full time job and that was five years ago—it's really cool and I work with some good people."

PAL's program boasts one of the lowest participation fees for activities for local youth and is a non-profit public benefit corporation. Community involvement, volunteer efforts and fundraising make it all possible.

The success is obvious by the attendance during PAL's Saturday football games.

"We usually have about 400 people

throughout a Saturday come to check the kids out," said Miller.

The league's coaches put in hours of volunteer time each week. They are city workers, pastors, school district coaches and other members of the community who take time to teach the fundamentals of football as well as the importance of being productive members of their community.

"Not only are they coaching, but they are fundraising; from borrowing equipment and giving scholarships out of their own pockets — it's a great group that I have," Miller said.

Despite all of the organization efforts,

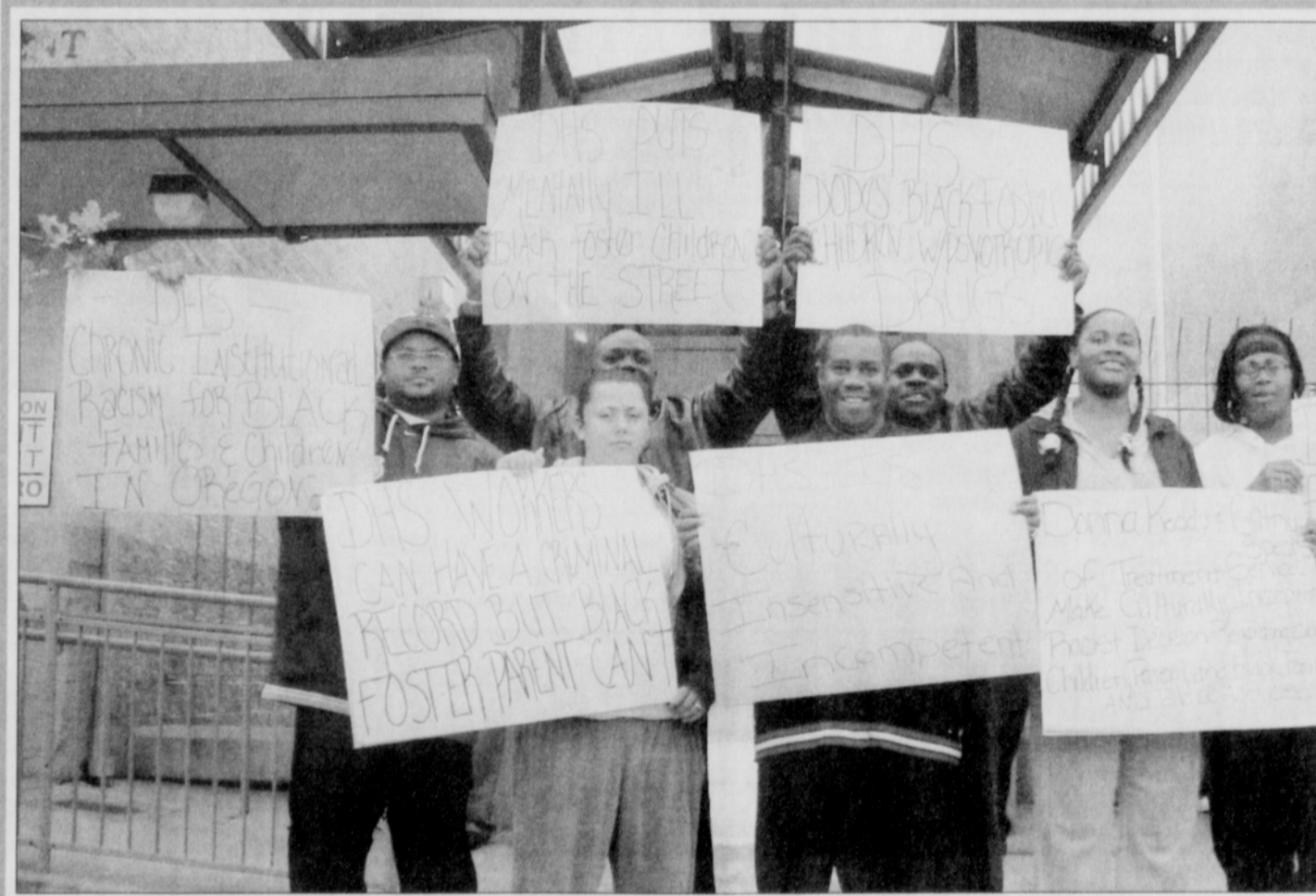
there remains a great need for more volunteer coaches.

Field time is donated by Reynolds Middle School and Jefferson, Franklin, Roosevelt, Cleveland, Marshall and Madison High Schools.

Volunteers for PAL's undersized cheerleading program are also needed.

While there are four young ladies whose interest was on the field, there are several girls who want to keep things going on the sidelines. There are currently 25 cheerleaders involved this season which means that out of 22 teams, only two have a cheer squad.

Anyone interested in coaching or volunteer efforts should contact Miller at 503-823-5785.



Families Picket Human Services

A group of local parents charge the Oregon Department of Human Services with unfair treatment of African Americans in child placement, foster parenting and background checks. The picketers alleging cultural incompetence, racism and discrimination are outside the DHS offices on North Vancouver Avenue. DHS officials told the Portland Observer they had no specifics to respond to the charges, but that they are taken seriously.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Wellness Village Offers Free Care

The 10th Annual Wellness Village will take place Saturday, Oct. 15, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at The Blazers Boys & Girls Club, 5250 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

More than 40 health screeners and exhibitors will provide services to the community, free of charge.

Services and activities will include: an African drumming performance by Chatta Addy; cooking demonstrations and tastings; massage therapy; fire safety training by Portland Fire & Rescue; children's activities; flu shots; dental, vision, hearing, and diabetes screenings; and much more.

Since 1996, the AAHC has celebrated African American Wellness Week by hosting Wellness Village in October.

Wellness Village is a family event that brings together health care organizations, exhibitors, and community members for a day of free health services, demonstrations, information sharing, and fun.

Racial Health Disparities Addressed

Public health expert to share insights

In an effort to reduce racial health disparities, health care professionals and community members will come together at the 10th Annual African American Wellness Village for a health conference on Friday, Oct. 14 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the downtown Portland Embassy Suites Hotel.

Dr. Brian Gibbs, director of the Program to Eliminate Health Disparities in the Division of Public Health Practice at the Harvard School of Public Health, will deliver the keynote address.

Racial health disparities continue to be a major concern for health professionals and the public health community. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office of Minority Health has stated that, "The future health of the nation will be determined to a large extent by how effectively we work with communities to reduce and eliminate health disparities between non-minority and minority populations experiencing disproportionate burdens of disease, disability, and premature death."



Dr. Brian Gibbs

"African Americans die at higher rates than white Americans from 13 of the 15 leading causes of death," said Corliss McKeever, African American Health Coalition president and chief executive officer. "There is a strong need for dialogue between African Americans and health care providers on issues related to our community's health."

In 2001, the rate of death from diabetes was 218 percent higher among blacks than among whites, and the rate of heart disease was 31 percent higher for African Americans than for white Americans.

In 2002, black men died from HIV at a rate more than seven times higher than white

men, and the rate for African American women was more than 13 times higher than the rate for white women. In Oregon in 2001, African Americans died from stroke at an 88 percent higher rate than whites.

"The tragedy is that many of the deaths that contribute to racial health disparities are

The tragedy is that many of the deaths that contribute to racial health disparities are preventable.

— Corliss McKeever, African American Health Coalition president and CEO

preventable," said McKeever. "That's why the dialogue created by the health conference is so important."

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