



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Networking for Career Success

Local career professionals put their networking skills to the test during the recent grand opening of the expanded offices for the housing agency Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI) at 6329 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Pictured from left are Roy Joy of the African American Chamber of Commerce, Rev. Rene Ward of Ross Hollywood Chapel, State Rep. Chip Shields, Portland Observer Publisher Charles Washington, Dominic Chandler of PCRI, Marcus Branch of Services for Humanity, Inc., Kimberley Mason of PCRI, Simone Brooks of PCRI, and Phil Damiano, a PCRI board member.

Students Urged to Consider Computer Science

Microsoft chair says jobs pay good and are fun

(AP)—Calling computers fun, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates is urging minority college students to consider careers in computer science.

Wrapping up a three-day tour of college campuses at predominantly black Howard University, Gates said computer software writers will be in greater demand than ever in the next decade.

Even so, the number of college graduates seeking software jobs is declining - a trend Gates said his tour is designed to help reverse.

"These are jobs that pay great," Gates said. "These are fun jobs, and so you'd think right now we'd be having more people applying in them than ever."

"But in fact," he added, "somehow we haven't got the word out. We haven't made it clear the steps to get the right skills to get these jobs."

Those statistics apply to all races, Gates said, but are particularly true among blacks and other minorities, among whom only a tiny percentage of college graduates pursue computer careers.

"Getting minorities into those jobs - we're not doing everything we should be to point out the opportunities," Gates said.

Gates' appearance before an enthusiastic crowd of more than 600 at Howard's Blackburn Center was the final stop in a three-day tour that also included visits to the universities of Michigan and Wisconsin, Princeton and Columbia universities and the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada.



Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates shows off the next generation Xbox at Howard University in Washington, D.C. (AP photo)

Microsoft spokeswoman Ginny Terzano said the speeches at all six schools had the same goal: "Getting good young people interested in the technical sciences for great careers in the industry."

Abisola Oladapo, a Howard junior from Lagos, Nigeria, said she was impressed with Gates.

Oladapo, a student member of the National Society of Black Engineers, said the number of young black engineers is decreasing. Asked how that can be reversed, she said, "Get people like (Gates) who are very intellectual to come to meetings like these and make an impact."

Terique Greenfield, a 19-year-old junior from Silver Spring, Md., called Gates' appearance a boost for Howard, a historically black university with a strong science and engineering program.

"I'm glad he recognized the importance of minorities in the work force at Microsoft," Greenfield said. "I thought it was great for Bill Gates to show all the opportunities at Microsoft."

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