

Great Expectations for Grant Youth



Rahel Yared is coordinator of student programs and diversity in the school of business administration at Portland State University.



Nural Willis III (from left) and Jibri Willis, both juniors at Grant High School, meet with African American Studies teacher Mark Jackson and Portland State University student programs and diversity coordinator Rahel Yared.

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will provide unprecedented accessibility to the students.

"We want them to see successful black leaders right here in their backyard," Jackson said. "This sends a message to students that there is a certain value I have when a professor comes to me."

Students can spend the morning choosing from a number of workshops covering health issues and parent and community engagement, followed by the keynote address and catered lunch with entertainment and ending with an afternoon panel discussion.

One participating panelist is Rahel Yared, a coordinator of student programs and diversity at Portland State University's School of Business Administration.

Yared has been instrumental in this year's conference and has a history of fostering diver-

sity since moving to Oregon from Ethiopia when she was 12.

She can relate to students today because of her experience of being a minority and learning a new language while attending Franklin and Grant high schools.

"How can you not feel the pressure?" she said.

Yared studied business at PSU, but found very little diversity in her classrooms and the retail industry. She assembled a career panel to expose PSU students to different cultures within the university.

After graduating in 2005, Yared started working in the college's diversity program, connecting minority college students with opportunities in the retail and food industries. The program has direct ties with REAP because it also prepares minority high school students for these careers.

"We'd like to get PSU stu-

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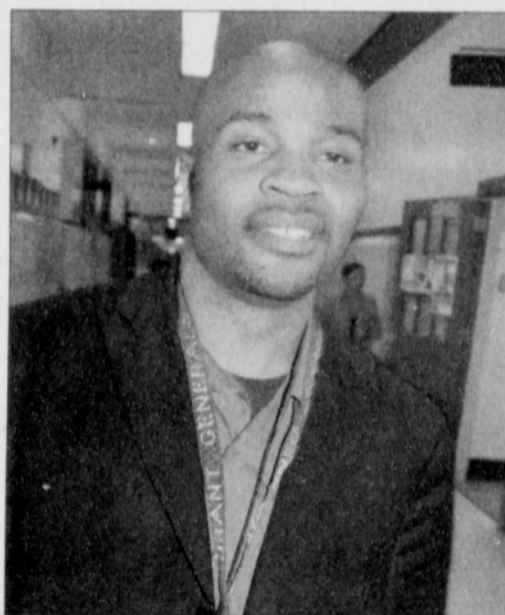
— Mark Jackson, program director for REAP

grounds, but how do we show them the path if we don't reach them in high school?" Yared said.

Thursday's conference will take place on a teacher planning day, so no school will be in session. Last year's event drew 200 students, Jackson's main

goal this year is to raise expectations. He plans to engage more parents with a workshop underscoring their role in student support.

For more information about the event, contact Jackson at 503-341-6161 or email reaping@msn.com.



PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Mark Jackson, program director for REAP, Inc. (Reaching and Empower All People) teaches black studies at Grant High School in northeast Portland.

It only happens twice a year, so hurry in and save big on a terrific selection of shoes, clothing and accessories, including items purchased especially for this event.

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