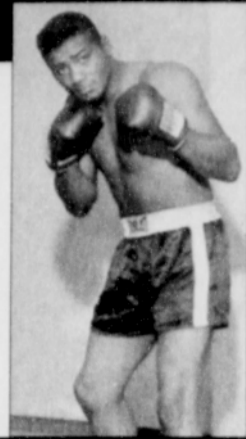


METRO

The Portland Observer



Looking Back...
*African Americans
 we lost in 2006*
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SECTION B

Breaking Barriers to Owning a Business

Association incubates ideas of disabled entrepreneurs

BY SARAH BLOUNT
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Job Erickson is a typical Portland man in his mid-20s—he wants to express himself artistically and make a living doing so. But unlike other young artists, Erickson does not supplement his art with early shifts at a coffee shop or late nights tending bar. Because of a serious head injury, it's difficult for Erickson to express a word

in less than several minutes.

But with the help of his mother, a caretaker and the Differently-abled Business Association, his graphic design sketches (made by hand, and then drawn onto the computer) have earned hundreds of dollars this year, with a website coming soon.

Erickson's success story illustrates the business potential of those living with disabilities. His business achievement took



PHOTOS BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Differently-abled Business Association staff member Tanya Montgomery (left) and DBA founder Kedma Ough help disabled individuals find resources to start their own businesses, most of which are launched in-home.



Sarah Bourne was diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder years ago and had difficulty starting her own quilt shop business. Now, as a client of the Differently-abled Business Association, Bourne is getting business advice tailored to her particular needs.

flight when his vocational rehabilitation counselor contacted Kedma Ough.

A longtime advocate for women, minorities and disabled persons, Ough secured a United Way grant this fall to foster the business instincts of entrepreneurs like Erickson. Headquartered in the Gotham Building on North Interstate Avenue in the Albina neighborhood, the DBA is a first of its kind organization that offers traditional resources for disabled individuals.

"We get frustrated when the assumption is made that disabled persons can't

contribute to society," Ough said. "When Job comes into the office we treat him as a business owner."

Ough wasted no time spotting the gaps in local opportunities for underserved entrepreneurs when she arrived in Portland five years ago. Shortly after relocating from Arizona, she created the Avita Business Center, which provides employment resources for women, minorities and clients with disabilities.

She and her staff continue to operate Avita, but an epiphany Ough experienced nearly a year ago led her to look into further

work with clients not suitable for work, but suitable for self-employment.

"I was frustrated because there was no voice for disabled people in business to be heard collectively," she said. "I began researching, and it dawned on me there was nothing like this in the United States."

With nearly a decade of small business experience under her belt, Ough developed the concept of a disabled business owner resource center, and secured the three-year, \$85,000 grant through the

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Bell Takes Reigns as Youth Advocate

Experienced executive to lead commission



Iris M. DeGruy Bell

and cultural competency. She will also represent the agency on the state's Child Welfare Advisory Committee.

Bell has worked in government for many years, and brings a wealth of management experience related to the

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Minority Outreach Boosted at PDC

New director to focus on equity, diversity

The Portland Development Commission has appointed Lolita B. Burnette, an experienced executive in Portland's business and governmental sectors, as its new director of business and community relations.

Burnette will be responsible for implementing strategies and programs to ensure that PDC supports community values, goals, equity and diversity.

"We heard directly from the community and our own staff that community relations and diversity needed to be represented at the highest levels of the agency—and we have responded," said Bruce Warner, PDC executive director. "I am very excited to have Lolita joining the PDC team. She is the right person to build upon our outreach efforts as well as manage our important contract compliance and workforce hiring program."

Burnette will be the primary representative between the city agency and commu-

nity groups. She will also have responsibility for PDC's minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small business and construction workforce diversity initiatives. The new job starts on Monday, Jan. 15.

Burnette most recently has served as a program manager at Providence Health Systems where she has assisted the healthcare provider on fostering a diverse workforce, community partnering and cross cultural care giving.

She specializes in leadership and executive coaching, strategic change initiatives including diversity and cultural competence, public involvement and the design and delivery of related educational programs. As a former small business owner and external consultant, she helped



Lolita Burnette

engineering firms increase their minority, women and emerging small business capacity.

She conducted organization and team assessments and facilitated planning discussions leading to organizational change for clients such as the city of Portland, Clackamas County, Washington County, City of Eugene, and King County in Washing-

ton. She has also served as director of public and employee relations at the city of Gresham and spent 20 years in a series of leadership positions at US West Communications, AT&T Communications, Pa-

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Community Calendar

Season for Giving

The African American Health Coalition, a non-profit that touches the lives of millions of African Americans each year, reminds you to support your community organization. All donations, grants, and gifts are tax deductible. For more information, visit aahc-portland.org.

Diabetes Support Group

Legacy Emanuel Hospital hosts a diabetes support group the first and third Thursdays of every month, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., in Room 1027. Next meeting is Thursday, Jan. 4.

Hospice Volunteers Needed

Legacy Hospice Services is looking for volunteers for the Scappoose/St. Helens, Beaverton and Oregon City/Gladstone areas. Winter training classes start Jan. 18. Call 503-225-6157 or email: atcox@lhs.org.

Weight Loss Series

New Seasons Market at Northeast 33rd and Killingsworth Street will host free weight loss classes on Jan. 31, Feb. 28, March 28, and April 25 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Nutritional Cooking

On Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., the National College of Natural Medicine will host a free nutrition class and cooking demonstration by the Nike chef at 221 N.E. Fremont St. Call 503-413-1850 for reservations, seating is limited.

Fitness Challenge

Portland Parks and Recreations host the 6th annual Water Warriors fitness challenge, Monday, Jan. 1, and running through the entire month of January. For details, call 503-823-5130.

Fort Lantern Tours

Fort Vancouver National Historical Site, 1001 E. 5 St., will host the highly anticipated lantern tours from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on: Friday, Jan. 5, Saturday, Jan. 20, Friday Feb. 2, and Saturday, Feb. 17. Reservations are required. Call 360-816-6230.

Holiday Art Exhibit

WSU Vancouver, 14204 N.E. Salmon Creek Ave., presents Acrylics on Clay, by local artist Linda Sawaya, through Jan. 12, in the Student Services Gallery and selected works by Ines Epperson thru Jan. 28, in the Engineering and Life Sciences building. For more information, visit vancouver.wsu.edu.

Bradley-Angle House

The Bradley-Angle House needs volunteers to help its outreach against domestic violence. Women of color and bilingual women are encouraged to call. For more information, call 503-282-9940.

Girl Scouts Screen Video

Friday, Feb. 2, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at the Kennedy School theater, the Girl Scouts will raise funds for its Family Giving Program with the screening of the locally produced video "A Circle is Round". Call 503-287-5140 or 503-977-6805 for more information.

Write Around Volunteers

Are you interested in becoming a facilitator for Write Around Portland's volunteer-run ten-week workshop? The workshop is for low-income adults, homeless or mentally disabled people or others who face barriers to writing workshops. Contact Jill Tuleya at 503-796-9224.

Work Against Abuse

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists or office support team member. For information, call 503-280-1388.

Oregon Food Bank

The Oregon Food Bank seeks volunteers on Mondays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon, to sort and repack perishable foods. Call 503-282-0555, extension 272 or Oregonfoodbank.org.

Volunteer for Crisis Line

Want to make a difference in your community? Volunteers and advocates are needed for the Portland Women's Crisis Line. The needs include on-call advocates to respond in person or over the phone, outreach and educational efforts, and fundraising and administrative duties. Call 503-232-4176 for more information.

Home buying Classes

Portland Community Land Trust helps first time and low-income homebuyers purchase homes at below market price. Attend a free, one-hour class to learn more about the program. Contact Kelly@pclt.org or call 503-493-0293.

Parenting Classes

Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can attend classes through Providence Health Systems to learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much

more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit: providence.org/classes.

Women in Community Service

Volunteer female mentors are being sought by Women in Community Service to work with incarcerated women at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The women provide support and encouragement for inmates transitioning from prison back into the community. For information, call 503-570-6614.

Black History Museum

The Black History Museum of Oregon is seeking brilliant minds of concerned individuals to help in restructuring the museum foundation's committee. For information, call 503-284-0617.

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 years of
 community service