

METRO

The Portland Observer



Mad Hot Ballroom
Jefferson High School's film festival event for April
See Arts & Entertainment section, inside

37
years of
community service

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Lawmaker Feedback

State Rep. Chip Shields of District 43, which encompasses inner north and northeast Portland, will be available to meet with constituents at Reflections between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Friday March 30th. The popular neighborhood coffee and gift shop is located at 446 N.E. Killingsworth St.

Black Museum Action

Thursday, March 29, and Thursday, April 5, at 6:30 p.m., the Black Museum committee will be meeting at King Neighborhood Facility, 4815 N.E. Seventh Ave., to establish the foundations structure. To be involved, visit blackmuseumoforegon@yahoo.com or call 503-284-0617.

Spring Break Art Journeys

Currently thru Friday, March 30, the Portland Art Museum hosts the instructional art series for children ages 7-12. Contact 503-226-2811 or visit portlandartmuseum.org, for more information.

Zoo Spring Break Fun

Through April 7, the Oregon Zoo will host tropical island fun and events for spring break. For more information, call 503-226-1561 or visit oregonzoo.org.

Undivided Rights

Tuesday, April 3, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth St., will host the weekly roundtable discussion "Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice." For more information call Radical Women at 503-240-4462.

Healthy Kids Fair

Saturday, April 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Legacy Emanuel Hospital: Atrium, 501 N. Graham, will host the 23rd annual fair to introduce children to the hospital and caregivers. Scheduled activities include: egg hunts, photos with the Easter Bunny, healthy kid checks, and much more. This is a free event.

Rabbit Romp

Saturday, April 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Oregon Zoo, 4001 S.W. Canyon Rd., will host an Easter egg hunt every 20-minute for children ages 3 - 10 years old with a special hunt for toddlers 2 and under. Visit oregonzoo.org or call 503-226-1561 for more information.

African American Council

You're invited on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. when the African American Advisory Council meets at the King Facility, 4815 N.E. Seventh Ave. Call 503-823-0000 for more information.

Life after High School

Monday, April 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., PSU's Smith Ballroom, will host the Career and Educational Opportunities Fair, a venue for local businesses, trade apprenticeships, summer work programs and educational organizations to present career opportunities available within their organizations. For more information, call 503-230-9427.

Elephantastic

Saturday and Sunday, April 14 & 15, the Oregon Zoo invites guest to celebrate Packy the elephant's 45th birthday; activities include special performances by Packy's pachyderm-pals, with cake for everyone at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Free with zoo admission.

Fostering Diversity

Thursday, April 26 thru Friday, April 27, Mt. Hood Community College and Portland State University, will host the two-day conference to address critical diversity-related issues in the Portland and Gresham communities, with educational, business and cultural leaders. Call 503-491-7254 for more information.

Community Support

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 aahealthportland.org.

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.



PHOTO BY NIA DIVIG/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Supporting Workplace Rights

Providence Hospital food service worker Scarlet Allen (right) and Emanuel Hospital housekeeping worker Shirley Clark join in song to help Providence support staff employees win a fair vote for collective bargaining rights. Hundreds of community members and hospital workers gathered for the March 21 Candlelight Vigil for Fairness march, sponsored by the Service Employees International Union.

African Immigrants United

Coalition pools resources

The number of Africans living in Portland and Southwest Washington is on the rise and a special coalition has formed to respond to the growing concerns of this community.

The African Community Coalition of Oregon was created to unite such a diverse community of immigrants and refugees from various countries across the sub-continent. The culture, lifestyles and politics of each country may have separated them at home, but as citizens of the Pacific Northwest they find common ground in their priorities and goals.

ACCO recently partnered with the AmeriCorp Links program and welcomed "Mobilizing the Masses" coordinator Carol Littleton in their efforts to provide outreach. Littleton



Carol Littleton

has spent much of her time raising awareness about the organization and increasing membership.

Board president Basko Kante believes that to bring about change and progress, Africans must organize themselves.

"It's time African communities come together," he said. "Because it is time we began to do for ourselves and pool our resources together, creating better chances and choices for African people in the Portland community."

Kante, originally from Ghana, West Africa, said there are many challenges amid the success of the Pan-African organization. Established in 2005 as a 501(c)(3) organization, some of its initial goals were

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On N MISSISSIPPI AV Avenue Building a Resume Youth get job-ready at Pasta Bangs

BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

An electric red sign and photos of mostly women customers decorate the entrance to Pasta Bangs. The faces look happy. Maybe it's from the libations from the bar or the hefty sauced pasta they ate or maybe it's because they got a double bang for their buck.

Customers at Pasta Bangs not only get to eat well but they get to help out kids that look like Damian Ochoa.

Ochoa, 19, is a cute full-bodied Filipino kid and a graduate of Open Meadows Alternative School in north Portland. The restaurant staffer is also a rapper, showing off his 21 tattoos.

He pays homage to his parents who have both died, with a tattoo his father on



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Pasta Bangs owner Polly Bangs has a laugh with one of her workers Damian Ochoa, who is now on staff after working with the Pasta Bangs job readiness program.

his right arm and one of his mother on his left.

In 2004 Polly Bangs, a former social worker, opened Pasta Bangs at 3950 N. Mississippi Ave. The neighborhood is riddled with gentrification, but she is more than just another white person opening a restaurant in the hood. Bangs gives a chance to some kids who may not otherwise get one.

It started when Bangs read an article about English Chef Jaime Oliver and his Fifteen Foundation, a chef training program for at risk youth or homeless youth.

"That was my light bulb moment," said Bangs, who works with agencies like Outside In and Open Meadows, where Ochoa was a student.

Four young people are hired by Bangs

every three to six months. Their tasks include doing basic labor like sweeping, mopping, bringing bread to customers and light food preparation. She has had more than 50 kids in the program and hired three including Ochoa.

"It's the hardest thing to let them go," said Bangs, "It's a nice home base for them to come in and say hi."

What Bangs enjoys about helping disadvantaged youth is giving them a first chance that many other teenagers could take for granted.

"Some of these kids may have drug problems or mental health issues which can hinder their success," said Bangs, "They just need a chance."

Ochoa says he transferred from Roosevelt High School to Open Mead-

ows because of the alternative school's job focus with two days each week in the classroom and the other two spent out in the community. Ochoa graduated last year and works full-time now at Pasta Bangs.

With many restaurants failing across the country, having enough clientele to support philanthropy efforts can prove difficult. Pasta Bangs pays half of its teenagers' salaries and the other half is paid by sponsoring organizations.

The customers are aware when they come into the small restaurant that the service they are getting is also providing a service to the community. On each table has a happy hour menu and information on the youth working program on the

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