

Peeps This! After School Program Grows

Follows passion to help kids outside of the classroom

BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Most of Jeffrey Taylor's jobs have been working with youth. It was only natural for him to start his own organization to help kids who may be over looked within the school system.

The Franklin High School graduate attended North Portland Bible College, but instead of pursuing a degree, he decided to follow his passion outside of the classroom.

"I saw a vision because there are only so many places to take your kids in Portland," said Taylor, a father of Jeffrey Jr., now 12. "It was my son who said, 'Daddy you should come up with your own thing.' I didn't think he was old enough to understand what inspiration it gave me."

In 2005, Taylor was a substitute teacher at Albina Head Start and with his dream he decided to leave a steady paycheck and start PEEPS (Preparing Every Environment for Preparation Services).

Currently, the program runs Monday through Friday from 3

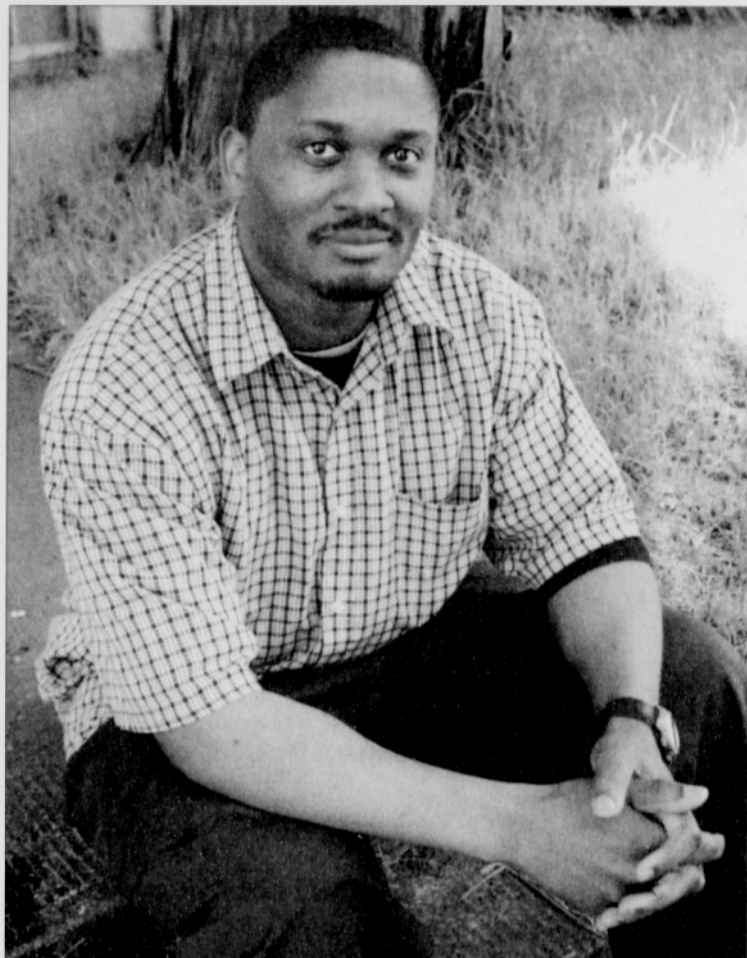


PHOTO BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Jeffrey Taylor has founded his own organization to help kids.

p.m. to 6 p.m. in the back area of Reflections Coffee Shop on Northeast Killingsworth and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, but he hopes someday to have his own space and more children -- clients as he calls them. But money is always an

issue for any start up business.

"My heart is out there to do different kinds of things for children of different ages," said Taylor, 36. "A lot of families are on fixed incomes and I just want to help them all."

A balance between giving back

and making ends meet has caused Taylor to look for other ways to pay for the program, like hosting a PEEPS fundraiser last year.

Flexibility replaces the 40-hour-work week Taylor was once accustomed to.

"I also enjoy working for myself because I get to meet new people and help new people," he said. "Just like with any occupation, you have to like your job."

Taylor strives to be a good role model for his son. That came from his father, who he said was his mentor.

"You have to raise your children right," said Taylor, who believes that children copy things their parents do, even the negative things. "Kids are going to need someone positive to talk to regardless of their circumstances."

But more than someone to talk to, PEEPS is also about having fun.

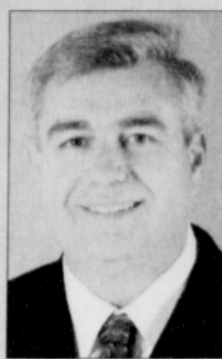
Taylor is currently recruiting high school and college students to serve as mentors. All interested applicants will get background checks.

PEEPS offer sports clinics, movie nights, board game night and dance. Once summer comes, the hours will be expanded and so will the activities, Taylor said.

To find out how to get your child involved, call Taylor at 503-493-1614.

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Salaries Carry Gender Gap

Much of pay disparity remains

(AP) -- Women make only 80 percent of the salaries their male peers do one year after college; after 10 years in the work force, the gap between their pay widens further, according to a new study by the American Association of University Women.

The group's education foundation found that 10 years after college, women earn only 69 percent of what men earn.

Even after controlling for hours, occupation, parenthood, and other factors known to affect earnings, the study found that one-quarter of the pay gap remains unexplained.

The group said that portion of the gap is "likely due to sex discrimination."

"Over time, the unexplained portion of the pay gap grows," the group said in a news release.

Catherine Hill, the organization's director of research, said "Part of the wage difference is a result of people's choices, another part is employer's assumptions of what people's choices will be. ... Employers assume that young women are going to leave the work force when they have children, and, therefore, don't promote them."

The organization found that women's scholastic performance was not reflected in their compensation.

Women have slightly higher grade point averages than men in every major, including science and math.

But women who attend highly selective colleges earn the same as men who attend minimally selective colleges, according to the study.

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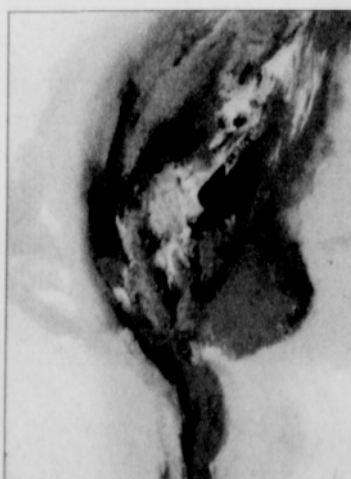
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