

# METRO

The Portland Observer



## Oden Marks Blazers Turning Point

Pick gives team high expectations  
See Sports, page B6

SECTION B

### Community Calendar

#### African Arts Camp

Homowo African Arts & Culture will be immersing students in traditional African culture music and dance. Camps are scheduled Monday, July 9, thru Friday, July 13 and on Monday, July 16 thru Friday, July 20, for more information call: 503-288-3025.

#### Art Classes for All Ages

The Portland Art Museum is offering a variety of classes and workshops for all ages, beginning on Tuesday, July 10 at 10 a.m. Call 503-276-4254 for more information.

#### Mentor Portland Info Session

Be a mentor to a local youth who is either in foster care or has a parent who is incarcerated. Mentor Portland, a program through the Boys and Girls Aid Society, is holding an information session on July 10 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. For more information visit [www.mentorportland.org](http://www.mentorportland.org).

#### Friends of Trees

Saturday, July 14, the Friends of Trees will be training volunteer neighborhood coordinators for the Boise, Humbolt, Eliot and Piedmont neighborhoods. Contact Kathryn at 503-282-8848, extension 12 or visit [friendsoftrees.org](http://friendsoftrees.org).

#### Black Holes and Beyond

Monday, July 9, at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., the Mt. Hood Community College Sky Planetarium Theater, located under the Gresham campus library, will be exploring the mysteries of space. \$1 admission. For more information, visit [planetariumskytheater.com](http://planetariumskytheater.com).

#### Mississippi Street Fair

Saturday, July 14, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., the Mississippi Avenue Street Fair takes place between North Skidmore and Fremont. The Boise-Eliot Kid's Corner will be providing music, art, magic, games and more with special free events at the Mississippi Ballroom. This is a free event benefiting the Boise-Eliot Elementary School.

#### Harry Potter Book Party

Friday, July 20, at 8 p.m., In Other Words Bookstore, 8 N.E. Killingsworth Ave., and the Rock and Roll Camp for Girls will host the midnight release party, for the long anticipated, 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. For more information, call 503-232-6003 or visit [inotherwords.org](http://inotherwords.org).

#### Relationship Transformation

Peace-Making, a local group based on non-violent communication and conscious awareness, hosts a seminar that includes information on how to have better relationships both personally and professionally. Class times are ongoing. For more information, call 503-228-7256.

#### International Day Festival

Saturday, July 14, from noon to 6 p.m., the Roseway Neighborhood presents an International Day Festival at Northeast 72 Avenue and Sandy Boulevard with free family-friendly fun and food, followed by a free movie showing at the Roseway Theater. Visit [PDXID.com](http://PDXID.com) for more information.

#### Interstate Farmers Market

A farmers market is held each Wednesday through Sept. 26 from 3 to 7 p.m. just off Interstate Avenue between Overlook Park and the Interstate Kaiser Permanente Campus. The market is known for its variety of quality fresh local produce, baked goods, cut flowers, artisan cheese, meat and fish.

#### Planet Jupiter

On the second Monday of each month through August, at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., the MHCC Planetarium Sky Theater explores the planet that outshines every other planet in the sky except Venus. Visitors will learn how to locate Jupiter and its four moons as well as other planets. Admission is \$1.

#### 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.

# HOMELESS Not Helpless

Dignity Village is a self-governing community

BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A homeless community is thriving in our own backyard. Dignity Village, a tent city in between a jail, golf course and a compost heap between Northeast Columbia Boulevard and Marine Drive, is a place 60 people call home.

Laura Brown was the eighth person to move into Dignity Village after the Fremont Bridge three years ago. The proximity angered some while others were just happy to not have to spend their nights in the doorways of Downtown Portland businesses.

"I think at first everyone was upset because we were moving away from all of our resources and we are 40 minutes away from downtown on the bus," said Brown, 48. "I think at first we thought the city was setting us up for failure with an out of sight, out of mind mentality."

The contract for Dignity Village will expire in June of 2010. There is an option to renew but that's at the sole discretion of City Council. Then add another five years until the city's self-imposed deadline of 2015 of ending homelessness in Portland.

Aaron Smith found out about Dignity Village on the Internet.

Smith, 19, moved to Portland from Alaska after he was kicked out of his father's house. He hasn't seen his mother in nine years. He came to Portland with no money and a clean slate to start his adult life. Smith is one of the youngest community members of Dignity Village.

In correlation with Portland's popula-

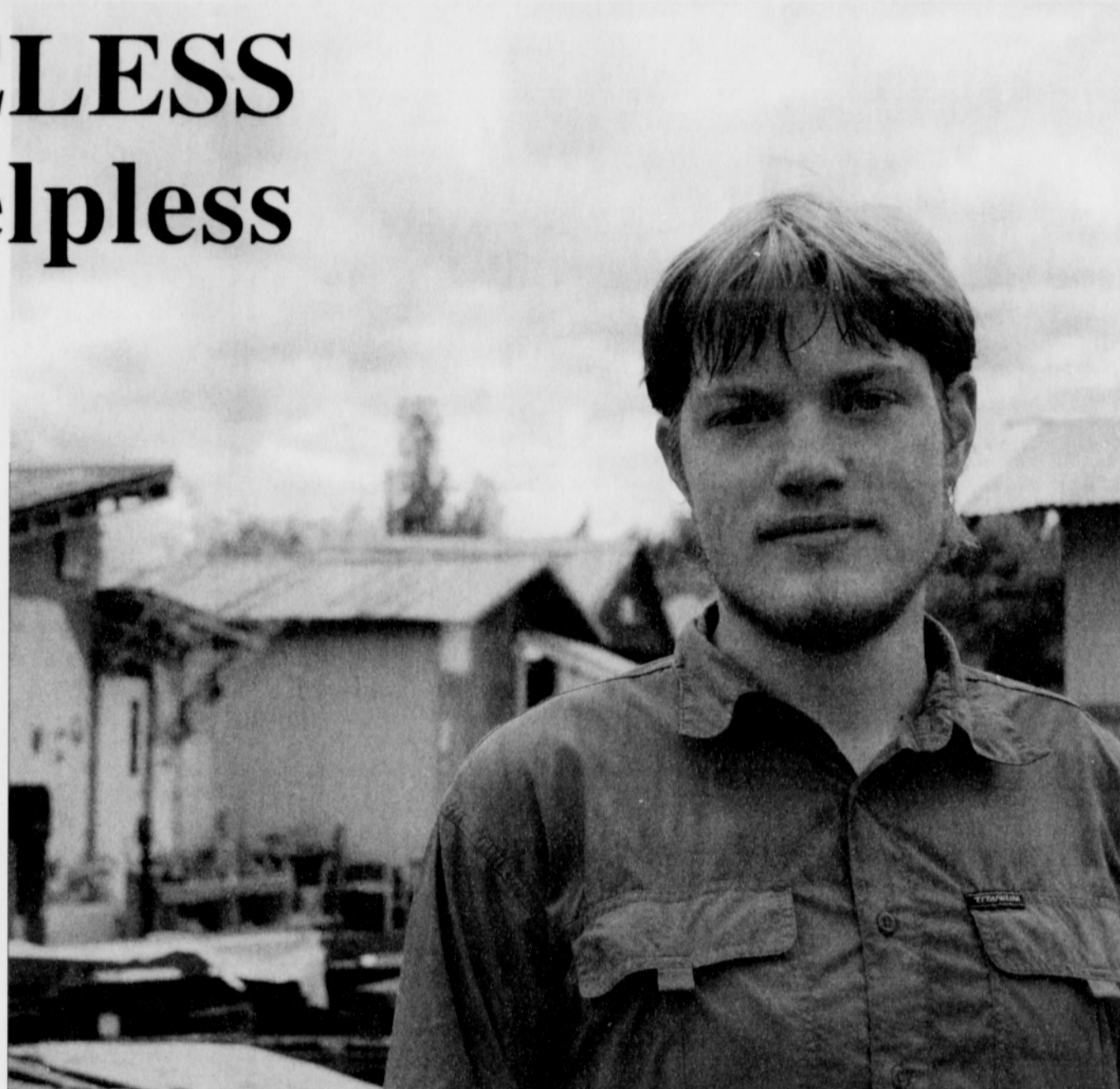


PHOTO BY NICOLE RONAL HOOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Northeast Portland Dignity Village resident Aaron Smith is 19 and homeless.

tion, Dignity Village isn't racially diverse. Just two African-Americans call it home. Last week there were three. But a 19-year-old woman was allegedly kicked out because she was gone for more than five days.

The 60 people remaining, regardless of race or background, all share a tie that binds: being destitute. They all have a story as to how they became homeless and it's extremely diverse.

"I wanted to get away from both of my parents," said Smith, "I said my goodbyes

and got rid of my family issues by coming here." He says all his needs are met by living at Dignity Village. He has a house he shares with a roommate. The house is covered with a tarp and a blanket serves as the door. To the right of the door is a fire extinguisher. And inside Smith must step over a knee-level wood slate to enter his room. It's to keep out the more than 30 cats that currently live at Dignity Village.

His window made of tarp blocks some of Mother Nature's fury but when it rains, Smith feels the wetness make its way to his

sleeping bag. There is a common area for food and a place to shower. With all these tools, it could put Smith or any resident in a place to find a decent job or even go to school.

But everyone has obligations at Dignity Village. The common stereotype about homeless people being lazy is not evident at Dignity Village. The "sweat equity," as resident Will Currier calls it, is required. Residents must contribute 10 hours per

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## Superintendent Search Intensifies

Interim leader confident in schools' future

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Steady leadership has been an ongoing challenge for Portland Public Schools.

So when Vicki Phillips left her superintendent post after less than three years, the Portland School Board hired Ed Schmitt as its interim leader.

Schmitt held the schools' top position at the county level for more than 10 years and formerly worked for the Portland School District.

He fielded some tough questions as he takes the city's most-scrutinized public office.

In a series of lively forums discussing the recruitment process, he became convinced that the board will do its best to pick a new superintendent that will lead the district for many years to come.

"They've heard it loud and clear from the community that stability is one of the top priorities," he told the Portland Observer, "so I'm confident that whoever they come up with next will be somebody who will be committed to the community for hopefully a long period of time."

The board is conducting a survey on its website at [pps.k12.or.us](http://pps.k12.or.us) that asks community members to rate the importance of a future superintendent's "working knowledge of Portland or statewide issues."

Schmitt argues that local ties are an important factor to consider in judging a potential superintendent's dedication.

"I'm sure that they will be giving seri-

ous consideration to more local candidates perhaps than they have in the past," he says.

Board members have already enlisted the same recruiting firm that induced Phillips to Portland from Pennsylvania.

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— Ed Schmitt

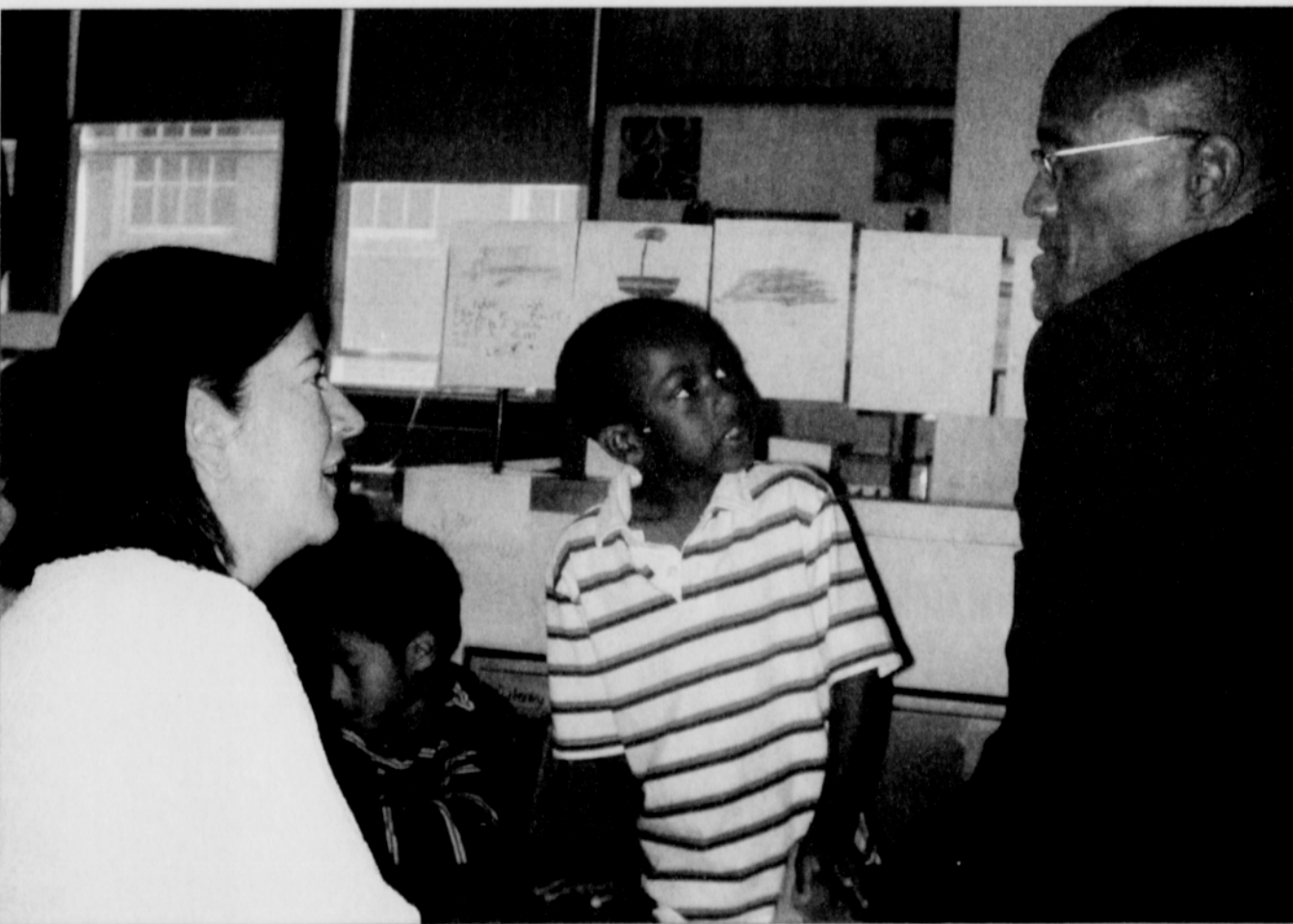


PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In her last week as superintendent, Vicki Phillips and Annenberg Institute for School Reform consultant Greg Hodge interact with Boise-Eliot Elementary student Malachi Bussey. A new summer program at the north Portland school was one of Phillips last actions before she took a job at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.