

Gateway to College Follows King Dream

Providing opportunity to achieve

BY CHARITY PRATER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Community College is following in the footsteps of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by providing all students regardless of race and economic background an opportunity to achieve success through education.

The PCC Gateway to College Program has been successful in offering high-risk, high-school dropouts and young adults an opportunity to earn their high-school diploma through earning college credits.

Students are required to take classes at any of PCC's college campuses that satisfy their missing high-school requirements, and since the program is considered to be a fix for missing high school, students do not have to pay for tuition or books.

On Jan. 7, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. mentioned to the public what he had told his children:

"I'm going to work and do everything that I can do to see that you get a good education. I don't ever want you to forget that there are millions of God's children who will not and cannot get a good education, and I don't want you feeling that you are better than they are. For you will never be what you ought to be until they are what they ought to be."

The PCC Gateway program gives

all students an opportunity to live productive lives.

"The program allows kids to get the benefit of taking college classes at an accredited college and the program does not discriminate but benefits kids of minority groups," says Linda Huddle, director of alternative programs at PCC.

Huddle says many of the students are kids in poverty. More than half of the students live with single parents and about 38-percent of them have been on public assistance in the past. About a quarter of the students are in

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— Raniece Hardy

high school but are about to drop out, while another 38-percent no longer attend high school. About 44-percent are of a race or ethnicity other than Caucasian.

The gateway program was launched



PHOTO BY CHARITY PRATER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Raniece Hardy is putting herself back on track to achieve a successful life by her enrollment in Portland Community College's Gateway to College program.

in 2000 as a model to serve out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-20. The program is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and has grown from its original site in Portland to over 13 sites around the country.

"I work with Gateway because I wanted to help on a deeper level by helping to build strategic programs that help start and launch an accessible route to college," says Huddle. "Education really is a civil-rights issue. All students should have structured, supported access to college."

The program helps kids like 18-year-old Raniece Hardy who started the program over a year ago when she was kicked out of her high school for fighting, socializing and struggling with her grades.

"I haven't fought since high school," says Hardy. "You don't need to fight in the program. You appreciate the importance of education and your classes."

Dr. King has always fought for equal rights in the opportunity for education saying, "It is precisely because education is the road to equality and citizenship, that it has been made more elusive for Negroes than many other rights. The walling off of Negroes from equal education is part of the historical design to submerge him in second-class status. Therefore, as Negroes have struggles to be free they have had to fight for the opportunity for a decent education."

Programs like PCC's Gateway to College exceed the hopes of Dr. Mar-

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Courage is the power of the mind to overcome fear.

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Jubilant local residents greet the procession from the Selma march along Highway 80.



Mamie Glover peers with granddaughter Jeannette from the flap of their "tent city" home, early in 1966.



Seminary Student Jesse Jackson leads marches against segregated Chicago housing and schools in the summer of 1966.

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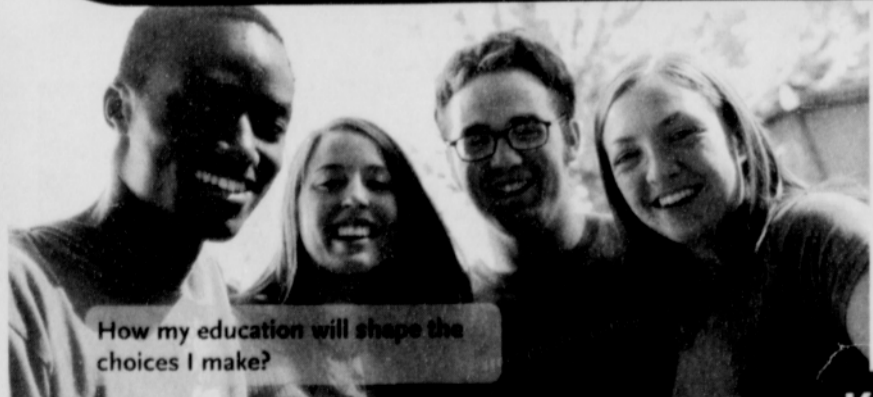
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