

Inspired by King's Letters



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
From a garage next to 1112 N.E. Morton St., Jamie Bolwyn responds to a book request from an inmate in Aberdeen, Wash.

continued ▲ from B15

romance novels and action thrillers dominate the small selection.

Making the task even more difficult locally, Oregon laws prohibiting used books hinder the campaign for literacy among the growing number of prisoners living in this state.

"It's very hard to get new books donated, and it takes a lot of money to get those new books," says Alex Johnson, who has worked regularly with the program for five years. Finding he couldn't send literature to a couple of friends in jail, Johnson helped start an organization called Books to Oregon Prisoners to specialize in soliciting publishers. Begging for new books uses most of his spare time, but he also squeezes in moments to show those in power that state laws limit prisoners' opportunity for self-empowerment, education, and entertainment through reading. There are dozens of organization across the country developed to go beyond the barriers for prisoners receiving books, but few ever even try to send anything to Oregon prisoners because of the unique laws.

King approved of finding ways around laws until civil-rights amendments passed. "The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed it will inevitably open the door to negotiation," reads King's Letter from Birmingham Jail.

There are many ways you can help the efforts, including filling donation bins at the Hollywood Theatre, 4122 N.E. Sandy, In Other Words, 8 N.E. Killingsworth, or Laughing Horse Books, 12 N.E. 10th.

Both groups are looking for books with educational content: dictionaries, thesauruses, GED study guides, foreign-language materials, fiction and poetry, and books on music, trade, hobbies, crafts and business.

The groups most often get requests for dictionaries and history books, especially African-American, Indigenous, Latina/o, Asian and queer studies, literature by women and biographies.

You can volunteer to open letters, match up requests and package books for Portland Books to Prisoners mailing nights on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5 to 8 p.m. in the garage next to the house at 1112 N.E. Morton St. Books to Oregon Prisoners mailing days are the second and last Saturdays of every month from noon to 4 p.m. at the Blackrose Collective Bookstore, 4038 N. Mississippi Ave.



Marian Wright Edelman

PSU Presents Children's Advocate Will deliver MLK Tribute

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, will be the featured speaker on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. at Portland State University's Lincoln Performance Hall.

The community-wide event, commemorating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., will also include special performances by the Highland Choir. The event is sponsored by PSU and Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Limited seating tickets are \$10 for the general public and free for students with a valid student ID. They are available for purchase at the PSU Box Office (Smith Memorial Student Union, room 102) by calling 503-725-3307 or through all Ticketmaster outlets.

For more information call Sa'eed Haji at 503-725-5345.

Edelman, a lifelong advocate for the American people, was the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar.

She began her role in the Civil Rights Movement as a director for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and later became a counsel for Dr. King's "Poor People's Campaign."

Edelman went on to establish and lead the Children's Defense Fund. She is the recipient of the 2000 Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award.

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The Chehalis Tribes' salute Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for his tireless efforts to end racial discrimination. We urge everyone to honor his memory by continuing to work toward that goal.

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The State of Oregon is proud to honor Martin Luther King Junior's birthday, as well as the upcoming Black History Month. We also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Portland Observer on its 38th year of publication. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) are the sponsors of this message and are Equal Opportunity Employers committed to a diverse work force. You can find current job announcements for the State of Oregon, on the Web at www.oregonjobs.org

You can also find out about current job openings at OLCC by calling the Job Information Line at 503-872-5238.

