

Red Cross Commits to Diversity

continued ▲ from Front

when looking at this history.

"Throughout the challenges of segregation, black folks had to separately donate blood from white blood because it couldn't be mixed, but we still showed up and did that," she says.

She expressed pride seeing a portrait of Charles Richard Drew in the lobby of Portland's Red Cross headquarters. Drew was an African-American physician who protested against the practice of racial segregation in blood donations and made strides for Red Cross to promote equality during the middle of the last century.

The advances remain significant because non-whites' lower donation rate of much-needed organs and bone marrow may still stem from the legacy of using populations of color for medical experimentation. For Edwards, the question always rests on the level of commitment for which any particular person is ready.

"How do we get together and move beyond that uncomfortable, 'yeah, that was then?' Because we have work to do," she says.

Before committing to a career as a diversity consultant, Edwards served



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Antoinette Edwards, the new diversity outreach manager for the American Red Cross, teams up with AmeriCorps workers (from left) Mike Fish, Hillary Turby, Rose Bottle and Aman Kubrom, along with Kim Bryant, Red Cross community activity coordinator.

as the executive director for Portland's Youth Opportunity Center and worked as the coordinator of the Jefferson and Columbia Villa Family Resource Centers.

"We're a nonprofit that everyone can profit from," she says. "It's not dependant on a personality, but it's a value that's part of every fiber."

To this end, Edwards' hiring is not the only change coming to the chapter, where the goal is to increase the multicultural representation in the board of directors and amongst all paid staff.

The organization is expanding its Spanish-language safety offerings and Latino health outreach efforts, and extending service in neighborhoods most affected by house fires, many of which are located in diverse communities.

Red Cross and AmeriCorps will also spend several days this month at Humboldt Elementary in north Portland conducting interactive presentations about safety. With the economic challenges facing both the school and its students - over 95 percent of whom are on the free- or reduced-lunch program - traditional Red Cross training and materials were out of the question.

Edwards would also like to announce that space in the Red Cross facility on North Vancouver Avenue is available for community meetings. Call her at 503-528-5639 to reserve.

Great Jazz and Black History

continued ▲ from Front

The legendary alto saxophonist, whose last Portland appearance was in 1983, will be celebrated through a series of performances, lectures, panel discussions, and workshops dealing with the issue of jazz's future shape.

The festival's two weekends of headline programming and 18 ticketed events act as bookends to support community education and

outreach efforts on week days.

A focal point of these efforts are performances of the Incredible Journey of Jazz, a 60-minute music-theater piece tracing Black History movements and events in parallel setting to the evolution of jazz music as America's only indigenous art form.

These performances are staged for free at selected Portland area middle schools where students are exposed to African rhythms, drum-

The festival's theme *The Shape of Jazz to Come* is the title of Coleman's landmark 1959 recording

ming, the singing and chanting on slave ships, to the eventual evolution of gospel, ragtime, blues, and the syncopated swing of jazz through rap and hip hop.

Despite multiple venues, the festival has streamlined ticketing procedures with all shows on sale

at all TicketMaster locations, the Portland Center for the Performing Arts box office, or by calling 503-228-JAZZ (5299). Tickets and a complete schedule of events are also available by visiting the Portland Jazz Festival online at pdjazz.com.



Join the City Council at a Community Budget Forum

Thursday, February 21 2 Options!

Alder Elementary School
17200 SE Alder Street

Wednesday, February 27
Metropolitan Learning Center
2033 NW Glisan

Same Format & Times for Both Locations!

6:00-6:30 - PM Community Fair
6:30-8:30 - PM Budget Forum

For more information or to sign up for childcare or a Spanish language option, visit www.portlandonline.com/communitybudget

For more information, call 823-5288

All locations are ADA accessible. Special needs: call 823-4519 in advance, TDD: 823-6868

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In celebration of Black History Month, we're commemorating the amazing contributions made by African-American artists to 20th-century music with a quintessential collection of R&B and Soul. All profits from the sale of this album* will go to providing a world-class music education to youths in underserved communities.

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*All proceeds from album sales through December 31, 2008 will benefit three non-profit organizations providing music education programs: Opus 118 Harlem School of Music in New York City, Merit School of Music in Chicago and Scholarship Audition Performance Preparatory Academy in Los Angeles.

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