

Neighborhood Advocate Takes Charge

Northeast Coalition has new interim director

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Paige Coleman wants to make the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods a stable and strong resource for community members and organizations. Forgive people for saying they've heard this before.

The new interim director of the neighborhood group is the latest leader of an organization that has been in transition for more than two years. NECN provides services to inner north and northeast residents and neighborhood associations under contract with the Portland Office of Neighborhood Association.

John Canda left the coalition's executive job in 2006 to work in the office of Mayor Tom Potter (who later fired him). Former board director Willie Brown stepped in as acting director of the group for 10 months — and then rejected the permanent job when it was offered to him. After a complex process, the board finally hired Joseph Santos-Lyons, then fired him abruptly, without explanation, six months later. Paul Lipscomb served a two-month term as trouble-shooter and then last month, Coleman was hired for a six-month term.

Asked if she was interested in the job permanently, she told the Portland Observer, "It's way too early to discuss that."

The group's history has been stormy in other ways as well. NECN created four programs that addressed problems in its community: The Graffiti Abatement Program, the Northeast Workforce Center, the Youth Gang Outreach Program, and the TriMet Rider Advocates.

The city wound up transferring the funding for the Graffiti program to the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. Funding cuts at one point reduced the Youth Gang program from seven staffers to one, and seemed to set it on the road to extinction. Workforce Center director Jennie Portis removed her program from the coalition. The Pied-



Paige Coleman is the new interim director of the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods

mont Neighborhood Association followed suit, switching its allegiance to the North Portland Neighborhood Office in a move based at least in part on frustration with NECN.

Right now, Coleman told the Portland Observer, "We're identifying what works and what needs to be changed. What's working well now is the staff. We're getting better at putting the right people in the right job, so people succeed at what they do. We have a good level of satisfaction, with people coming to work earlier. More and more, we're increasing accessibility to programs and services. We're developing a team approach, and not having each employee working alone in a silo. If someone comes in when a particular staff person is gone, they can still get help."

Coleman is also trying to make her office at 4815 N.E. Seventh Ave. in the King Neighborhood Facility, "more welcoming, and more of a resource space."

Under the direction of the coalition's Cross Cultural Organizer, Sylvia Evans, and its Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, Lauren McCartney, the staff is visiting each of the neighborhood associations.

Since April, the coalition has been canvassing door to door in a different neighborhood each month, asking people about their needs and spreading word of the coalition's services. At a monthly organizers' luncheon, where everyone from public agency leaders to

ordinary citizens are welcome, "We share information and figure out ways to respond to issues," Coleman says.

The coalition's Public Safety and Land Use & Transportation committees meet monthly, and are "very active and the place for not just neighborhood associations but ordinary citizens to find out what's happening and bring their issues and concerns," she says.

Coleman has some first-hand experience with the issue of gentrification. Born in Boston, she moved to Portland in 1994, and at first settled in Southeast Portland. She moved to the Boise neighborhood in 1996 to be near her job as the new owner of the Rexall Rose Café and Theater (now Starry Rose), on Northeast Alberta Street, which has become the poster child for gentrification and change.

Although she has an MBA degree in Sustainable Business Development from the Bainbridge Graduate Institute, she says, "I received MBAs in sociology and business management at Rexall Rose." At the same time, there was also rapid change going on in Boise's North Mississippi Avenue. "Some of it was positive," she says, with the advent of Mississippi Pizza and the ReBuilding Center, "but there was also a down side, with people being priced out of the neighborhood."

She joined the Boise Neighborhood Association in the year 2000, and became its chair and NECN

delegate in 2006. "We tried to get both old timers and newcomers together to decide what we wanted to see happen, and how to make it inclusive of all people," she said. In the process the association was notably tough on some would-be developers. More recently they have asked similar critical questions of city planners charting future streetcar routes.

Coleman hopes to soon gain money for the Youth Gang program that will make it "a lot stronger." Regarding the neighborhood associations she says, "Their greatest commonality is that they're all experiencing a degree of change. We need to be able to meet their needs, whether they are housing issues, land use and transportation, or drug houses." Because these issues keep changing, "We're becoming nimble and resourceful" in finding ways to meet them, she says.

Regarding the neighborhood associations, she says, "We're building a very specific strategy to connect to (them). We're trying to specify the services that they can rely on a month to month basis."

As to the defection of Piedmont, and other signs of alienation, she says, "The coalition has heard loud and clear the wakeup call for change. We'll need everyone's help. What I've seen is a deep, rich history here, and a lot of pride in it. We want to continue the vision the original founders had. We'll be sure we keep up the traditions."

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CNN PRESENTS

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REPORTED BY SOLEDAD O'BRIEN

THE BLACK WOMAN & FAMILY
WEDNESDAY 9PM
JULY 23 EPT

THE BLACK MAN
THURSDAY 9PM
JULY 24 EPT

Oregon Zoo
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Surviving Abuse and Neglect

Children await adoption

Crystol is a beautiful girl with medium brown skin, dark eyes and a lovely smile. Kerry is a very active boy who enjoys playing games, basketball bring his passion.

Both children are among the approximately 300 Oregon kids available for adoption through the



Crystol

state, generally because of abuse and neglect.

Crystol attends a small-town elementary school and receives special education services. She enjoys school and proudly shows off the award she won for self-management skills.

She does well in science and art, and especially enjoys working with clay. She also has a beautiful singing voice. She is a good swimmer and likes to spend time with her foster family camping at the lake.

She is an affectionate girl who wants to please the adults in her life. She will need a good deal of parental time and attention.

Kerry is doing well in school despite having some challenges

with processing information. He needs a family that can be patient with his processing skills and be willing to advocate for him if issues arise due to the losses he has had in his life.

He responds well to rewards and consequences that are consistent, a structured routine and an active lifestyle where he can use his energy in a positive manner.

Kerry has endured many obstacles in his short life but has continued to prevail with his outgoing personality and good heart.

For more information on the availability of these children, or on how to become a foster or adoptive

parent, contact the Special Needs Adoption Coalition at 503-542-2392 or the Oregon Department of Human Services at 1-800-331-0503.



Kerry

Teen Cardiac Screening Event

A Focus on Student Athlete Health

Does your family have a history of cardiac problems? Is your teen athlete at risk? Join us at Legacy Emanuel Children's Hospital on August 23, 2008, to find out.

A team of physicians, nurses and EKG technicians will be on site to perform teen cardiac screenings. **You must pre-register for this event by August 13.**

This screening does not take the place of a school-mandated physical.

This family-friendly event includes sponsor giveaways and refreshments. The following screening will be offered for a \$10 fee:

- Cardiac Screening:** A full cardiac health exam, (blood pressure, height and weight); an electrocardiogram (EKG), which detects abnormal heart rhythms; and a detailed family history.

Please allow 30 minutes for screening tests.
PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST BE PRESENT.

Saturday, August 23, 2008
8 a.m. - Noon

Lorenzen Conference Center
Legacy Emanuel Children's Hospital
2801 N. Gantenbein Avenue
Portland, OR 97227

Cost for screenings: \$10 due upon registration (fee assistance available)

Appointments are required for the screening tests! Call 503-335-3500 to make your appointment and to register.

www.emanuelchildrens.org

Legacy Emanuel Children's Hospital

Legacy Health System, a nonprofit organization, includes Emanuel Hospital & Health Center, Emanuel Children's Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital & Medical Center, Meridian Park Hospital, Mount Hood Medical Center, Salmon Creek Hospital, Legacy Clinics and CareMark/Managed Healthcare Northwest PPO. © 2008 CHE-0018