

IT ALL STARTED ON THE BUS

A SALUTE TO ROSA PARKS (1913-2005)

On December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama after refusing to give up her seat to a white man while riding a segregated bus.

Rosa Parks' courageous act drew national attention to simple truths: A public transit system paid for by all must benefit all, and civil rights must be protected for all.

ROSA PARKS STATION

In honor of Ms. Parks' courage, TriMet is proud to announce the renaming of the Portland Blvd. Yellow Line MAX Station to the Rosa Parks Station on her birthday, Wednesday, February 4, 2009.

TRIMET

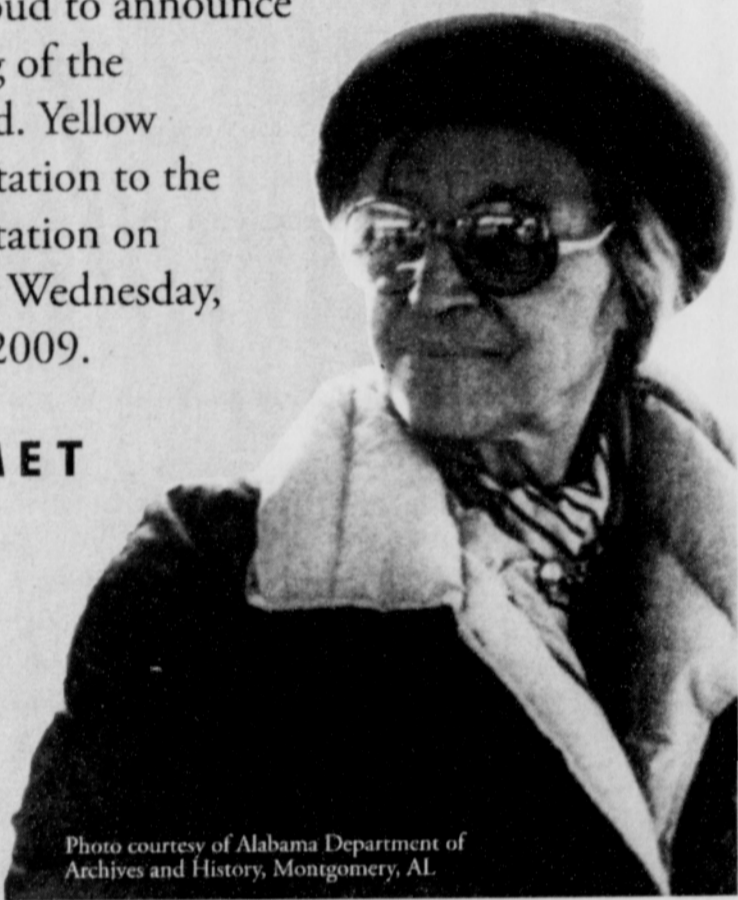
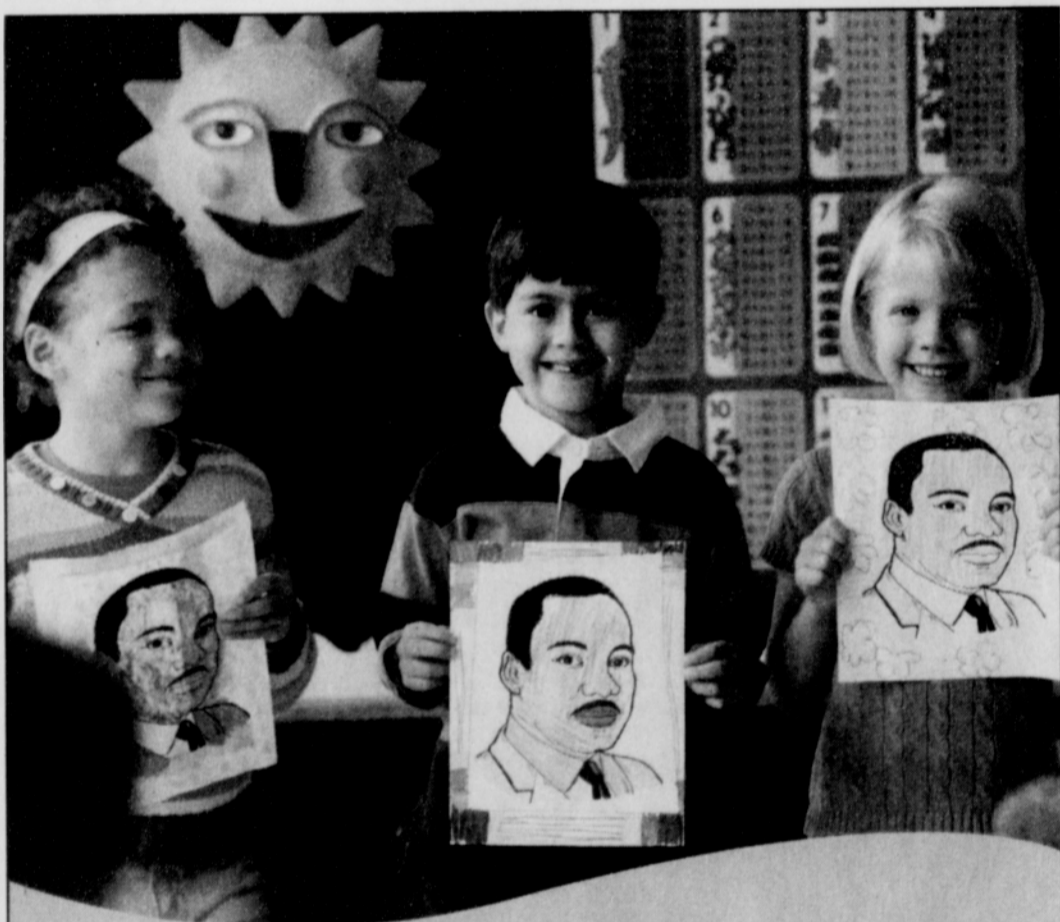


Photo courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL



**It takes one mind
to have a dream,
and many hands to shape it.**

It has been nearly 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr. shared his vision for a gentler, more harmonious world. Today, his words continue to inspire us all.

At Providence, we're proud to be part of our Portland communities, as a caregiver and an employer. We believe every life touches all those around it. And the best way to fulfill a dream is to share it for a lifetime.

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A multicultural group of activists called "Freedom Riders" fought for justice and equality for African Americans in the civil rights movement. A photo from May 19, 1961 shows Jim Zwerg opening the door for fellow Freedom Rider Paul Brooks as they enter the Birmingham, Ala. Greyhound Station. Both men were later arrested and jailed for sitting in the white section of a segregated bus.

Partners in the Civil Rights Struggle

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president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. He founded the Rosenwald Fund which donated millions to support the education of African Americans and other philanthropic causes in the first half of the 20th Century.

From 1910 to 1940, over 2,000 primary and secondary schools and 20 black colleges, including Howard, Dillard, Fisk and Tuskegee universities were supported in whole or in part by contributions from Rosenwald.

At the height of the so-called Rosenwald schools, nearly 40 percent of southern

Blacks were educated at one of these institutions.

In 1909, African and white Americans worked together to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Jews were well represented in the movement. One year later, other Jewish and Black leaders created the Urban League.

About 50 percent of the civil rights attorneys in the South during the 1960s were Jews, as were over 50 percent of the whites who went to Mississippi in 1964 to challenge Jim Crow laws.

Dr. King recognized a relationship between Blacks and Jews when he said, "the seg-

regationists and the racists see no distinction between the Negro and the Jew."

Thanks to King and the multicultural army of civil rights activists, African Americans enjoy more freedoms today than ever before. But the freedoms we enjoy today also give us the opportunity to meet our responsibility to help bring more freedom to others.

As one Rabbi stated, the matzah (bread) of freedom becomes the mitzvah (commandment) of responsibility.

Michael Hudson is a labor relations specialist in Los Angeles and a contributor to the Portland Observer.

"The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

-- Martin Luther King Jr.

Gonzalez Shares Road to Equality

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more advantaged backgrounds and might have had preschool or had other activities that gave them a leg up before they entered the school system. Investing more in kindergarten could help even this out, he said.

"We all know that there is an initial gap that students come into the classroom," said Gonzalez.

The Oregonian has reported that there is stark discipline gap amongst students along racial lines. For instance, in 2006 one in four black middle schoolers had been suspended.

Gonzalez said that part of the problem is cultural, with white teachers misinterpreting students' behavior. He added that the problem needed to be addressed on a classroom-by-classroom basis, with a

specific plan targeted at classrooms that have this issue.

With all the other pressing problems facing the nation, Gonzalez isn't quite sure what to expect out of President-elect Obama's administration in the way of educational policy. But he is eagerly awaiting the economic stimulus package, which will likely help with the schools' aging infrastructure.

The biggest educational reform to come along in a generation has been the controversial No Child Left Behind Act, which requires schools to periodically administer standardized tests to students. Schools that don't make progress have this fact publicized and parents can transfer their students, and it loses funding.

"I think that from the perspective of community people,

like myself, yeah there has been some good stuff about the act in spite of all the complaints people might have," said Gonzalez. He explained that the law has provided a portrait of where students stand and has brought the glowing disparity in achievement to the forefront. However, he added that it was still an unfunded mandate and places too much emphasis on standardized testing.

Despite the daunting challenges facing PPS, Gonzalez said he is optimistic. He cited the new superintendent, Carole Smith, and the rest of the board are open to looking at the "hard issues" and eager to confront them.

In particular, Gonzalez said he is pleased that his colleagues are willing to give students falling behind special attention.