

An Inauguration to Remember

continued ▲ from Front

then Oregon was not the place it is today, says Lenard who recalls African-Americans not being able to walk down the street without being hassled.

"I've seen a whole of changes in my lifetime. And I like what I see going on," Lenard says. "We've come a long way, brother."

Lenard hopes that Obama's inauguration will encourage future generations to work hard and seize the opportunities available to them.

"The door is open now. If they don't walk in it, it's nobody's fault but their own," he says.

Lorraine Thompson, 67, is hoping that as president Obama will enhance access to jobs and medical care.

"America needed change," says Thompson, who was pleased to see people of varying backgrounds coalesce around the candidate.

"I am so excited about that, and so honored, and so proud," says Jul Karp, a 70-year-old at the center, on having an African-American as president. She says that is she amazed that the country has gotten this far and is happy to see people united.

"I think he's extraordinary," says C.J. Hamilton, 63, who expects Obama to create opportunities that weren't there before.

"This is a very precious day," says D'Norgia Price, the director of adult and senior services program for the Urban League.

Growing up in Chicago, Price remembers attending as many marches and demonstra-



'As long as he keeps his hands in God hands, he'll be alright,'
-- Ada Lee Little

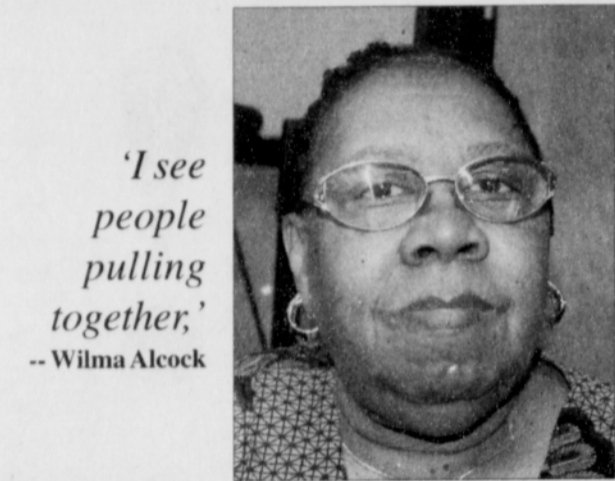
'America needed change,'
-- Lorraine Thompson



'A very precious day,'
-- D'Norgia Price



'I'm hoping we'll all come together,'
-- Dorothy Rogers



'I see people pulling together,'
-- Wilma Alcock



'We've repositioned ourselves,'
-- Sunshine Dixon



'It made me cry,'
-- Nicole Acosta

tions as possible in support of the civil rights movement, and hearing about people risking life and limb to be able to vote.

"It brings everything into focus about what all that work was for," says Price of the culmination of events.

"I remember picking cotton. I remember breaking corn. I remember pulling peanuts," says 82-year-old Dorothy Rogers of growing up in rural Louisiana. She remembers her father doing backbreaking work for very little money and leaving for the Northwest in the 1940s.

"I'm hoping we'll all come together," she says, and adds,

"I had a hunch that I'd live to see it."

"As long as he keeps his hand in God's hand he'll be alright," says Ada Lee Little 73.

Little hopes that the country will be more united because, "it's better to be closer than far apart because that's how God wants it to be."

Wilma Alcock, a 70-year-old who grew up in Portland, remembers the days when places in Portland were for "whites only."

"I see people pulling together to make this nation what it should be: a place of land and liberty," she says of Obama's

inauguration and is hoping it will inspire future generations to take advantage of opportunity.

A television, softly blaring coverage of the inauguration, is quieted as Alcock steps up to recite a poem expressing her joy that the nation has overcome past problems and takes a big leap forward.

Shortly afterward, Sunshine Dixon steps up to recite a poem she wrote on a similar subject.

"There is a nation in every baby born," says Dixon as she concludes the poem.

"We've repositioned ourselves as allies and not adver-



saries for the rest of the world," says Dixon, a community organizer at the center.

"It made me cry," said Nicole Acosta, a 30-year-old medical

assistant, between drags of a cigarette outside the center. Acosta is hoping that Obama will bring in a more inclusive agenda.



"You're a great guy... but when you're playing, you're different. And it sure doesn't seem like fun."

Need help with a gambling problem, or know someone who does?

1-877-MY LIMIT

1877MYLIMIT.org

Sponsored by the Oregon Lottery

Treatment is free, confidential and it works.

Local School Celebrates Presidential Inauguration

With hopes for the future

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Before LaShawn Lee became principal of Faubion Public School in northeast Portland, she taught for 20 years. During that time she had to confront a question periodically raised by her students: Why do we not have a black president?

"I would give them the politically correct answer," said Lee, who would explain that if they worked hard and studied they could achieve any goal, but had trouble believing what she was

hoping for the future.

Takiyah Williams, teaches first grade at the school, and said that she has stressed to the kids the importance of King's legacy, and how Obama is an heir to it.

However, she hopes they learn more than that. She wants them to know that they truly can achieve anything with enough hard work.

"Hard work makes a whole lot of difference," said Williams, who has a unique perspective on the matter as an immigrant from the Caribbean country of Trinidad and Tabago.

In the cafeteria, all the tables were taken out where the kids dine each day for a special celebration. They were replaced by



PHOTOS BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Faubion Elementary Principal LaShawn Lee helps decorate the school cafeteria for a community celebration to mark the inauguration of Barack Obama as the first black president.

telling them. Until now.

As Barack Obama was sworn in as the nation's 44th president, more Americans are feeling that old wounds can heal.

"It's been like there's electricity and static and energy in the air," said Lee of the atmosphere at Faubion. The school has gone to great lengths to celebrate the culmination of the long and trying path for equality and justice that was traveled for this moment.

On a wall in a hallway at Faubion is a collage of small bits of paper of differing shades of color that are deftly arranged in the likeness of Civil Rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. and Barack Obama. Lining the pictures are notes from the kids addressed to the two men expressing their

round tables with white cloths. Balloons were scattered about and portraits of King and Obama stood on either side of a stage set up for a four-piece jazz band.

On Friday, Faubion put on a gala to celebrate Obama's swearing in. Lee said that the school's budget was tight, but had a number of people step up and kick down donations for the event.

Sheila Warren had a special connection to the school. Her daughter went there and her grand daughter is currently attending.

She reflected on how pleased she felt about Obama's success in breaking down barriers to get elected and making the country more united.

"Barack brought that out in us," she said.