

Fresh Drive to find Big Brothers

Wanted: Positive adult role models

When men met on a recent Saturday at Champions Barbershop on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, it wasn't just about getting a haircut; they ran into a campaign that's recruiting volunteer mentors to be Big Brothers.

The effort is an attempt to reverse dismal participation rates by black adult role models in the local Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest mentoring program. The philanthropic group served over 317 African American children in 2008, but only 16 percent of these children were matched with an African American Big Brother or Big Sister. Of the volunteers in the agency's programs, fewer than 2 percent are African American men.

In order to reverse this trend, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the African American fraternities Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi are partnering to take a fresh approach at recruiting black men to be positive adult role models for African American boys.



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Pamela Weatherspoon, African-American Mentoring Programs director for Big Brothers Big Sisters, gets help recruiting adults to serve as mentors for youth in the community from Art Williams (left) and Jamaal Lane, co-owners of Champions Barbershop on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Since the early 1990's, these fraternity brothers have reached out to young men by sharing activities and experiences that have a lasting impact.

"We are excited about this partnership with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and Champions Barbershop," said Pamela Weatherspoon, African Ameri-

can Mentoring Programs Director with Big Brothers Big Sisters. "With our collective efforts, we can really have a lasting difference on the youth in our community."

Nationally, Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi began using barbershops as venues for recruiting men to become Big Brothers four years ago with positive results. This is the first year that fraternity brothers have participated in barbershop recruitment in Portland.

"Big Brothers Big Sisters has continuously worked hard to improve the lives of children," said Phillip Rogers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. "It doesn't take a lot to be a Big Brother, and it really does a lot to improve the futures of young African American men."

Big Brothers Big Sisters helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with mentors that have a measurable impact.

Founded in 2002, Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest has become the largest one-to-one mentoring program in Oregon, the largest Big Brothers Big Sisters agency on the West Coast and the eighth largest in the United States.

For more information about volunteering or supporting the group, visit bbbsnorthwest.org.

Local Organizations Announce College Scholarships

The cost of attending a four-year institution has skyrocketed in recent years, however there are scholarships that will help defray the cost of getting that degree. But, don't delay. The application deadlines are close!

The Albina Rotary Foundation has sent out applications to North and Northeast Portland high school counselors for the 2009 Neil Kelly Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship offers \$1,000 to help fund a four-year degree. Four are given out annually to North and Northeast high school seniors, and can be renewed each year during the recipients' entire undergraduate educations.

To be eligible students need to have a 2.75 GPA. The foundation is most interested in funding students who have a real need, and have shown a

genuine commitment to their community in North or Northeast Portland.

The applications are due April 3, and can be picked up at a school counselors' office or downloaded at: www.albinarotary.org.

High school seniors can also apply for Al Forhan Memorial Recovery Scholarships. The scholarships are awarded by the Oregon chapter of the Volun-

teers of America Men's Residential Center. There are six \$1,000 scholarships.

Scholarships will go to one senior at Jefferson, Marshall, Roosevelt, and Madison. A fifth will be available to a senior from another Portland public high school, and the sixth will go to senior in Multnomah County who comes from a family that has grappled with drug or alcohol addictions.

The application is due April 6. To obtain a scholarship application contact Julia Peters at: 503-802-0299, or visit www.voaor.org.

Returning veterans also have the opportunity to get a degree, tuition free, from Concordia University.

The university recently announced that it has signed onto to the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, which provides a subsidy that is equivalent to the price tag of the most expen-

sive public university in the state for veterans receiving Chapter 33 benefits (educational benefits provided by the military). The subsidy won't cover the full cost of Concordia, but the university recently announced that it will pay for half the difference and the other half will be picked up by the Yellow Ribbon Program, a federal program that provides further funding for veterans.

For more information, contact the Office of Admission at: 503-280-8501.

Portland Development Commission

Announcement of Available Funds for Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) announces the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (ICURA) Community Livability Grant Program. This grant program focuses on ICURA community facility projects and historic or cultural preservation projects. Some examples of community facility projects are community-based art, music or cultural centers, community health centers, child-care facilities, community meeting space and senior centers.

For the complete announcement and application material go to:

www.pdc.us/communitylivability

Drop-In Workshops

Applicants can attend one of four mandatory workshops for information regarding project eligibility, the application, and the committee evaluation/selection process.

March 25, 2009: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Kenton Firehouse, 2209 N. Schofield Street, Portland

April 8, 2009: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Legacy Emanuel Hospital, Lorenzen Center, 2801 N. Gantenbein, Portland

Applications are due April 28, 2009, by 5:00 p.m.

Total Funds Available: up to \$300,000

Funding Source: Fiscal Year 2009/10 ICURA Budget – Community Livability

For information about the Community Livability Grant Program, contact Susan Kuhn at PDC, 503.823.3406 or e-mail kuhns@pdc.us.

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Supreme Court Nixes Minority Legislative District

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sections are held. A district like the one in North Carolina should be protected by federal law "so long as a cohesive minority population is large enough to elect its chosen candidate when combined with a reliable number of crossover voters from an otherwise polarized majority," Justice David Souter wrote for himself and Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and John Paul Stevens.

Civil rights groups that urged the court to uphold the North Carolina plan said such districts help to diminish racially polarized voting over time because the candidate who is the choice of black or Hispanic voters must draw some white support to win election.

In April, the court will hear a more significant challenge to another provision of the Voting Rights Act, requiring all or parts of 16 states with a history of racial discrimination to get approval before implementing any changes in the way elec-

logical split in this case strongly suggests that Kennedy could hold the key to the outcome in the April case as well, said Nathaniel Persily, an election law expert at Columbia University.

In another election-related case, the court let stand an appeals court decision that invalidated state laws regulating the ways independent presidential candidates can get on state ballots.

Arizona, joined by 13 other states, asked the court to hear its challenge to a ruling throwing out its residency requirement for petition circulators and a June deadline for submitting signatures for independent candidates in the November presidential elections.

Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader sued and won a favorable ruling from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

The cases are *Bartlett v. Strickland*, 07-689, and *Brewer v. Nader*, 08-648.

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