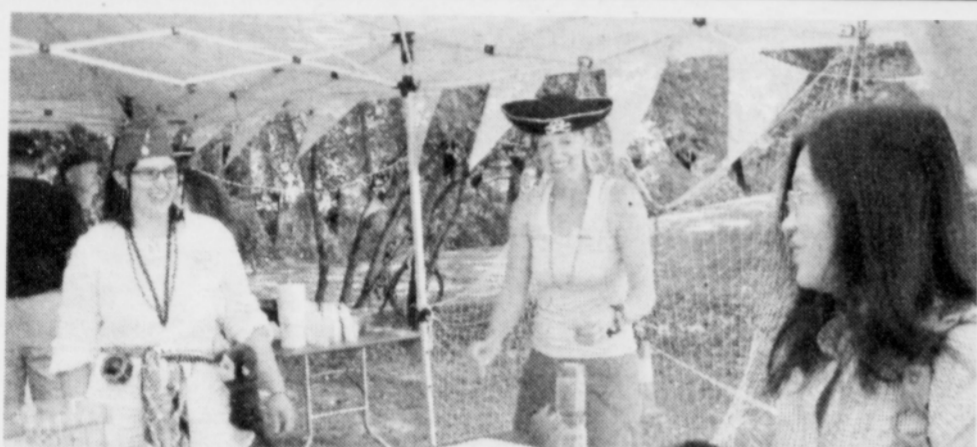


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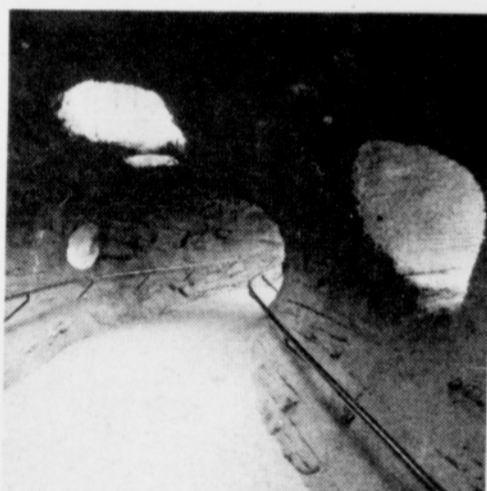


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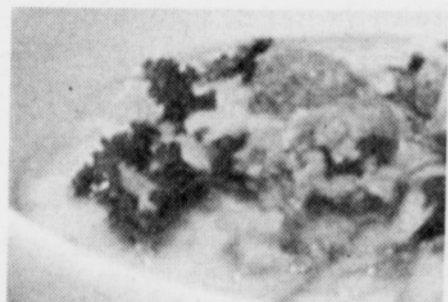
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What's on your list today?

LOCAL NEWS

No Time to Relax

Youth advocate sends message on gangs

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

David Miller never turns down an opportunity to help out youth in need.

The former TriMet Riders Advocate who helped customers with their transit needs while defusing tense situations, often with unruly youth, is now working as a youth gangs program manager for Youth Outreach.

Summer is typically when the city sees a spike in gang violence, as youth are out of school and out late. But Miller recently told the Portland Observer that just because the summer is coming to a close this is no time to relax, and the city should consider adjusting how it is responding to the problem.

"Just because fall is coming doesn't mean the violence is going to stop," said Miller, who is alarmed by the rash of gang-related shootings that occurred last month, eight of which occurred in the course of 24 hours. "It's all hands on deck right now," he added.

He said that as school starts, bad blood might be stirred back up as rivals encounter each other



David Miller

again in the classroom and at sporting events.

During the winter of 2008 and 2009, the city saw an uptick in gang violence, which Miller points to as a reason for people to not let their guards down.

He also called for a different approach to combating the problem.

The Mayor's Office of Youth Violence Prevention runs a grant that distributes money each year to six private non-profits that aim to reduce gang violence through outreach and prevention efforts.

During the last cycle, it awarded \$60,000 to six private non-profits. The funding helped pay for two part-time coordinator positions, and seven street level gang outreach workers, who make their presence known in "hot spots"

known for gang activity and build relationships with at-risk youth.

The program has undergone two grant cycles since it was implemented in 2007, during which it funded the same organizations including Brothers and Sisters Keepers Inc., Catholic Charities-EI Programa Hispano, Emmanuel Community Services, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, and Native American Youth and Family Services.

"We're getting the same results," said Miller of the outcomes from funding these organizations. "It's time to make a change."

Miller said that combating the problem of gang violence requires a more holistic approach that involves families in addition to youth. He also noted that many families are stretched thin financially, and if they could get help paying their rent or utilities it might provide some much needed home stability.

According to a report from the Youth Violence Prevention group's Street Level Gang Outreach Program, outreach workers were successful in reaching many of the families of at-risk youth. Additionally gang-related homicides have dropped from 27 in 2007 to 15 in 2008, and 14

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Neighbors Urge Police Staffing

Neighbors in the King Neighborhood of northeast Portland are drawing attention to a lack of police staffing after an episode of street violence.

It took several 9-1-1 calls for police to respond to a report of several young adults fighting in the street near Northeast 10th and Alberta. The disturbance took place around 9 p.m. on Sept. 6 and escalated into gun-

shots fired in the air.

The King Neighborhood Association brought up the incident with their neighborhood police officer representative who attended their monthly meeting on Thursday. While the neighbors said they appreciate the work that police officers do on a daily basis, they were concerned that a more timely response might have prevented the fight's esca-

lation into gunfire.

The neighbors also were astonished to learn that the King Neighborhood has no officer on patrol from 1 a.m. to 7 a.m.

The association has send a letter to Mayor Adams as police commissioner asking him to adequately staff the North Precinct to give officers the means to respond to urgent situations faster and at all hours.