

# METRO

## Empowerment for Local Youth

Summer jobs advance education and careers

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

As summer vacation for Portland Public school began last week, Commissioner Loretta Smith unveiled a new summer mentorship program, which will provide 25 jobs this summer for youth within the community.

The need for the program became a priority for this year's budget cycle after Commissioner Smith organized an issues forum for African American youth and men.

Nearly 200 people attended the standing room only event, where both men and young people within the community expressed what they see as necessary steps to ensure a better future.

"This program responds to the sentiment voiced in last month's forum by young people that the best way to keep them and their peers off the street is with a job," said Smith.

In response, she insisted the county budget include a focus on the need for employment opportunities for local youth, where there is currently a 30 percent unemployment rate for young people actively seeking opportunities.



Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith introduces young members of the community who will participate in a new mentorship summer jobs program. Pictured (from left) are Shirley Luo, 18; Bre'on Dance, 20; Loretta Smith; Micah Mitchell, 17; and Giovanni McKenzie, 17;

"We are helping to keep kids off the streets, teaching them skills here at Multnomah County that will help them advance their education and careers," said Smith.

The program, which is part of a summer youth Connect Partnership among Multnomah County, the city of Portland and the private sector, will pay for 25 young people to gain

work experience throughout the summer.

"It will give our young people skills they

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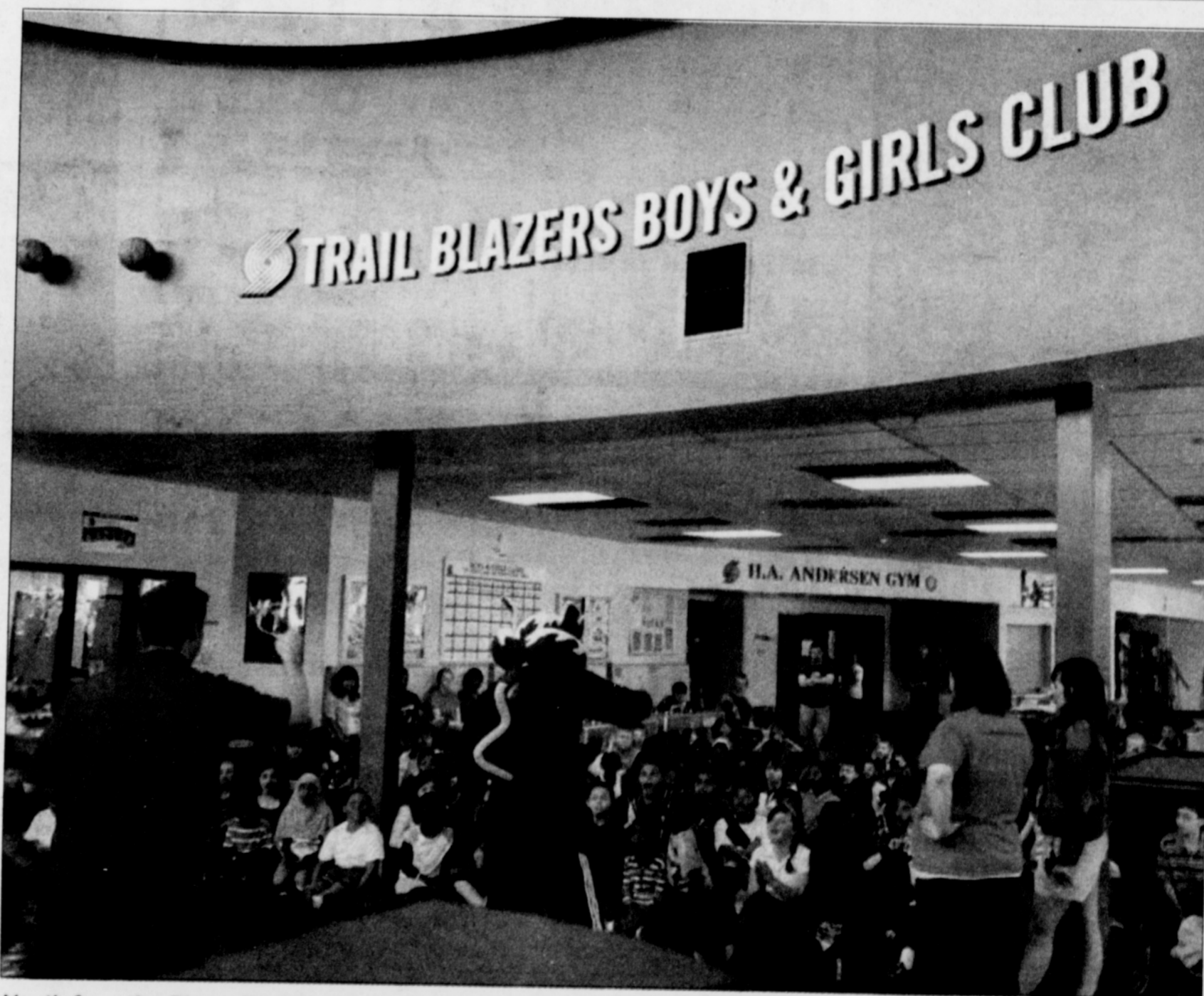
## Boys and Girls Club Celebration

Community resource renovated thanks to volunteers

The Portland Trail Blazers teamed up with Windermere Real Estate and other volunteers to revamp a community resource, the Blazers Boys and Girls Club on northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Helping clean and organize the activity areas were Ovations and AEG make-it-better employee volunteers, as well as volunteers from Windermere and their partners.

Trail Blazers alumni Jerome Kersey and Terry Porter, along with president emeritus Harry Glickman, joined volunteers on Friday to celebrate the completion of the



Youth from the Blazer Boys and Girls Club celebrate a cleanup and restoration of their northeast Portland youth center thanks to the efforts of volunteers from the Portland Trail Blazers and Windermere Real Estate.

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