

# A Home for Miracles

continued **▲** from front

throughout north and northeast Portland since the club's creation in 1993, the persistence and dedication of stakeholders to find their own place to reside has finally been completed.

The Miracles Club uses a 12 step approach helps individuals sustain a life free of drug and alcohol addiction. According to Herman Bryant, the executive of Miracles since 2010, the club serves at least 300 individuals weekly through mentorships, clean and sober activities, and family oriented forums, summits and presentations.

"Miracles is an ally in the aftermath of treatment, and in some cases, those without treatment," Bryant said. "Individuals can not only receive culturally competent assistance at the club, but they also are the recipients of cultural sensitivity necessary to sustain one's recovery."

Although Miracles Club is mostly made up of African American individuals, Dionne Preston, Miracles Club program director, said it welcome everybody to the club because recovery sees no color.

"Anyone can come here and get anything they need to be successful in their recovery," she said.

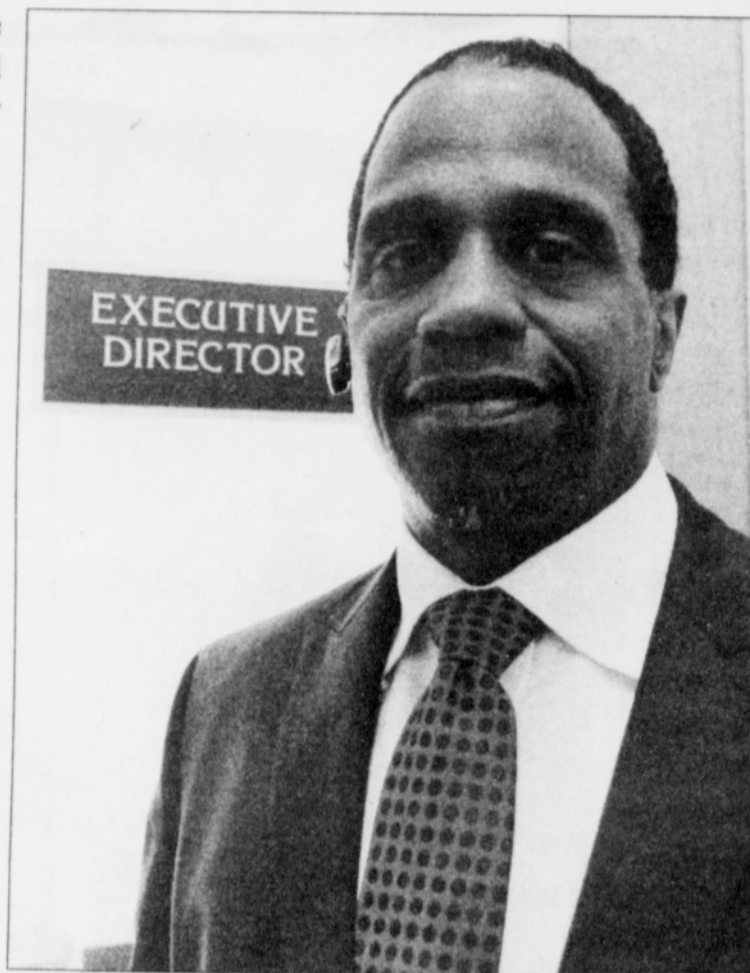
The new club's recovery center on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard will be located on the first floor of the new five-story building, which is a mixed use facility that sits kitty-corner from their older leased center on MLK and Mason.

A resident coordinator, who is a member of the Miracles community, will be located on site and is familiar with the barriers and challenges commonly faced by those battling addiction.

Preston said the location of the new facility is perfect because it is centrally located and easily accessible.

"It's unique because north and northeast Portland is the heart of where African Americans are located, and we don't want it to be difficult for people to get here," she said.

To become a resident in the new building, individuals must



Miracles Club Executive Director Herman Bryant.

have been clean and sober for one year and have six months of gainful employment. Currently, said Bryant, there are already 15 tenants ready to move into their new homes, which will be expected to be available at the end of July.

Bryant said, "The thing I'm most excited about is the reflection of there being life beyond surviving in recovery and a facility that seems more credible to the individual who needs services." "Miracles Club isn't a repair," said Bryant, who has maintained recovery since 2000. "It's an outcome."

He said when he first approached Miracles Club he had been battling addiction for over seven years.

He said he remembers before he began his own recovery and walking into Miracles one day where he witnessed a group of individuals reflecting on the meaning of survival.

"They were spiritually driven

to the mission of Miracles being a place that reflects life, not just surviving," explained Bryant.

It was in this moment, he said, that he became ready to start recovery.

"In the year 2000, when I became ready, I was able to see that there was not only something at Miracles for me, but also the opportunity to give back to the Portland community and society I had ruthlessly taken from," he said.

The Miracles Club was originally founded in 1993 as a for-profit organization by three men who wanted a safe and clean sober environment to sustain the African American community, but in 1994, after con-

tinuous business troubles, the original founders sold the club to another individual.

In 1996, however, the club became a non-profit organization, established by the Real Brothers, who were a group of men in recovery looking for a way to sustain the life and meaning of Miracles.

That same year, the value of this recovery community was seen by Multnomah County, which financed a \$30,000 annual grant with the condition the club enacts mentorship programs to receive the funds.

But in 1998, the club moved to their third location. "The Miracles needed to have a home less vulnerable to landlords controlling whether we have a place or not," he said.

When Miracles was threatened in 2005 by conditional use permits and attempts from the land lord to sell their current center, a team from the club appealed to the community at large, which earned

them \$500,000 worth of support from the City Commission and commissioner Dan Saltzman.

"The search was daunting," he said. "Which is when Dan Saltzman stepped in again and referred us to Guardian Management, which is a developing agency experienced with Recovery housing."

Soon to follow, they submitted a proposal, and now the upcoming 40-unit affordable housing complex will be brought to life and open in less than two weeks.

The funding for the affordable housing opportunities have been made possible through various limited partnerships and grants as an extension of the Miracles Club, including support from institutions and organizations such as U.S. Bank and Northwest Real Estate Capital Corporation and more.

"I like to call it a community re-investment act," said Bryant. "It is supported totally by unexpected angels in the business world."

Bryant explained, six of the units are priced at a 30 percent medium income, and the remaining units are at a 50 percent income. The new building is also a green goal facility, equipped with a recycled water system, solar panels and built to be extremely energy efficient.

Although a permanent place for Miracles Club seemed an impossible vision for years, the community worked hard to keep the spirit of the community alive. "Miracles is unique compared to other assistance in recovery communities because the club is based on showing and loving until individuals learn to love themselves," he said.

"This facility will continue to be in the need of new services that go with the times, and we must be inviting at all times to people who walk through its doors," he said.



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