



North Portland news and events  
**St. Johns**  
NEIGHBORHOOD

# Roosevelt Freedom Writers

## Students motivated for social justice

BY CARI HACHMANN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

"There are many people in the community who don't get the credit they deserve for the work they do," said Jocelyn Loyd, a student at Roosevelt High School and member of a summer project, the Freedom Writers. "But that's doesn't stop them."

Loyd, like other activist-minded students in the group, first became motivated to write about local people that they believe are fighters of social justice after learning about influential freedom fighters of the past, mainly during the civil rights era.

"To be a freedom fighter does not mean to be something extremely big or perfect," said writing student Dorian Erich. "You can be a freedom fighter by just speaking up and raising awareness and issues in our community," said classmate Hana Kent.

Last spring vacation, Roosevelt students traveled to Alabama and Georgia on a national college tour to visit historical African American colleges and sites of the civil rights movement. For many, the trip sparked interest in the role young people play as advocates for freedom.

Now, many of the same students are taking part in the Freedom Writers project, guided by Kate McPherson, a longtime English and Social studies teacher interested in taking student writing to a higher level.

"It has inspired them to know what things they care about in the community and how they can take action," said McPherson.

Interested in making their own writing a more public voice in the community, the group, made up of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, decided to create a student publication. They began gathering interviews, stories and photographs from activists, writers, professors, publication leaders, and other people in the Portland area who they believe are advocates and spokespersons for social justice.



The Freedom Writers from Roosevelt High School visit the offices of the Portland Observer to learn and write about past and present advocates for freedom and social justice.

Jovany Romero said working and interviewing people in the community really opened "my eyes to see and observe more into the problems," such as gangs and poverty.

Along the journey, the students have honed their own writing skills

while learning about different types of writers.

The project is part of a larger effort to establish writing and publishing center at Roosevelt.

As for a new era of Roosevelt writers, they hope to continue a

practice that will benefit the community as voices of change.

"I want to use my craft to do good for my community, but I also want to help other people outside my boundaries," said Loyd.

# Donations Needed for Youth Football

Hoping to cover football equipment costs for 3rd through 8th graders, the Roosevelt Youth Football League needs to raise up to \$3,000. At the same time, the sports program is still open to kids who want to join and play.

As a Police Activities League program, the non-profit is led by a

dedicated group of north Portland parents and local business leaders that serve as coaches and staff.

Checks can be made out to PAL and designated for use of the Roosevelt Youth Football program on the memo line. The mailing address for donations is PAL, 449 N.E. Emerson St., Portland, OR 97211.

# Diaper Donations Drop-off

The Children's Relief Nursery in north Portland is low on diapers, mainly for babies and toddlers who use size 4 and 5 diapers. Other important needs include baby wipes and formula (Similac or Enfamil milk and soy-based,

regular size cans accepted only).

If you are able to make a donation, call 503-594-4511.

You can also spread the word on Facebook at facebook.com/crn4kids or on twitter at twitter.com/crn4kids.

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