

# Rights Coalition Supports Office of Equity

## Coalition urges testimony before City Council

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Center for Intercultural Organizing, an immigrant and refugee rights coalition, encourages the community to attend a City Council meeting next

week to support the proposed Office of Equity to help eliminate disparities throughout the community.

A draft and work plan for the office was released by Commissioner Amanda Fritz last week, for which a work group was created last February by Mayor Sam Adams in an effort to reduce the barriers faced by Portland minorities and embrace the city's diversity.

Although members of the com-

munity applauded Adams' initiative, concern lingered with the lack of follow through to make the office a working department.

The Office of Equity would work in close collaboration with other city bureaus and departments to advance equity throughout the government and neighborhoods of Portland.

"Every year another report comes out highlighting the disparities suffered by a lot of different groups,"

said Andrew Riley, the Public Policy Director for Portland's Center for Intercultural Organizing. "I think the office of equity is an opportunity to change the conversation about how the city works with all of these communities."

According to Riley, it is vital for community members and allies to attend the council meeting, scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 31 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

"These disparities are

everybody's problem," he said. "Ultimately the kinds of disparities are a collective responsibility, and it's not any one person's fault, but it is our responsibility to fix them collectively."

Riley has high hopes for the future office.

"It is thrilling," he said. "The office of equity has the word equity in its title, so it's about recognizing that its central focus is correcting those disparities."

## Youth on Public Service Mission

BY CARI HACHMANN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jumping one by one from a TriMet bus they weighed with heaps of bagged garbage, a legion of young people in yellow shirts from the transit agency's First Step program stormed the parking lot in front of the Portland Observer on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on a recent morning.

Armed with garden gloves and white plastic receptacles, and obviously trained to the T in finding trash in a timely manner, the young workers hunted behind flower bushes, under cars, and around the perimeter of the building.

"What we're doing is trying to hit the hot spots, or large accumulations of garbage," said A.K. Roberts, a commander from the First Step pro-

gram. "We've already been to Hillsboro and Beaverton and now we're going around other hot spots and trying to keep businesses looking clean."

Once the land which sits adjacent to a bus stop was cleared of any noticeable debris, the group posed for a quick photograph and withdrew into their deployment vehicle in search of more dirt to decontaminate.



Filling a TriMet bus with garbage filled bags, young community activists stop to take a quick photo before returning on their mission to remove trash from green and cemented areas surrounding bus stops on metro area streets.

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## Crisis Response Team Supports Families

In an effort to support families and friends who have experienced the pain and loss of a loved one from a traumatic incident, the Portland Police Bureau's Crisis Response Team, in partnership with other organizations throughout the city, will host the community event "One Voice, Healing Hearts" on Saturday, Aug. 27 at Holladay

Park.

The public is invited to the event, which will include musical performances by Linda Hornbuckle and Life Change Christian Center Choir. "Healing Hearts" will be there to say "You are not alone!"

The event will be held from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Northeast 11th Avenue and Holladay Street.

## President's Jobs Council to Meet

President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness will hold an event at Portland State University, 617 S.W. Montgomery, on Thursday, Aug. 31 at 11 a.m., to discuss ways private and public partnerships can better support job creation in the future.

The event will focus on steps the country can take to curb an

engineering shortage threatening America's role as the world's leading innovator and hindering the ability to create jobs.

President Obama formed the council in January for the purpose of bolstering the U. S. economy by fostering job creation, innovation, growth, and competitiveness.