



Paulicka McClaurin-Blamont (from left), Nikki Nguyen, and Karina Carrasco enjoy the end of summer carnival as part of Self Enhancement, Inc.'s 30th anniversary community celebration on Aug. 20 at Unthank Park.

## Celebrating 30 Years for Kids

Self Enhancement, Inc., a school and after-school program for local kids, recently hosted a community celebration and end of summer carnival.

In honor of SEI's 30th year of service, the community joined together for the lively party in Unthank Park on Aug. 20.

Festivities included free food, music and activities for the whole family. Free health and wellness screenings were also provided alongside supportive services from SEI's Community and Family Programs.

Everyone had a terrific time celebrating this milestone achievement and taking advantage of the beautiful Portland weather.

SEI Founder and Chief Executive Officer Tony Hopson was on-hand to provide a perspective on SEI's history and the journey moving forward. T-shirts were available for new supporters with the meaningful message "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

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## Mother Struggles with Expectations

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insurance or a family may qualify for state assistance, but he said there are issues of availability.

Vliet, a single mother who lives in a single bedroom apartment, said, "A prime example is when my mental health therapist asked for child daycare, so I could do one-on-one counseling, but DHS doesn't pay child care services."

She recognizes money is a big problem, not only because DHS is unable to provide services like child care, but also because they are also facing fiscal issues.

"They can't provide services because there is no funding for it," she said.

Evans said DHS services have to be paid for by the state or county funds, and unfortunately part those services have been reduced.

"Especially now, we are seeing lots of reductions and cuts in all kinds of services for low-income

families," he said.

Vliet spoke of her friend in her recovery group. "She couldn't have her overnights started with her child without having a proper bed for the child," she said. "But she couldn't afford the bed without having the funding she needed, and she couldn't get the funding without having some kind of statement."

Vliet said she has undergone numerous psychological evaluations throughout the past several years because the state says she has mental health issues. She said, however, the processes DHS has put her through and their lack of communication have only added to trauma of her situation.

According to Evans, Multnomah county juvenile court has created an educational program for parents. "It is that kind of ABC information parent's need," he said. "People who work in the system understand it inside out, but it is very alien and foreign to parents, especially par-

ents under stress."

Vliet said, however, there needs to be more of an effort to try to find out what kind of learning style parents have, and how they could properly communicate the information to the family.

Evans agrees and said adding to the trauma experienced by many of the parents is not okay.

"It is a complicated process. We have to remember these families are also under stress because their children have been removed," he said. "Communication is very important, and communication so people can understand is very important."

Vliet said the reality is that the system is failing to help families be successful.

"DHS child welfare service's mission is to help abused and neglected children and provide safe atmosphere for them," she said. "But they are falling away from the main reason they started the program in the first place."

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## HEALTH WATCH

**Cardiac-Rehab Exercises** -- A medically supervised exercise program for people dealing with heart conditions. For information, call 503-251-6260.

**Stroke Alert Screening** -- Check your carotid arteries with a painless ultrasound to assess your risk. Fee \$40. To schedule a screening, call 503-251-6137.

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**Better Breathers** -- An asthma educational support group meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. at Adventist Medical Center. For information, call 503-251-6830.

**Powerful Tools For Caregivers** -- 6-week educational series designed to help family caregivers take care of

themselves while caring for relatives or friends with chronic illness. Class size is limited, and registration is required. Call 503-413-8018.

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**Smoke-Free Support Group** -- Meets Mondays, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. For information, call 503-256-4000.

**Family Caregiver Support Group** -- This topic-oriented group offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care to an older relative or friend. Meets the first Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital.

**Chronic Pain Support Group** -- Meets the first Wednesday at 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the third Wednesday of each month, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.