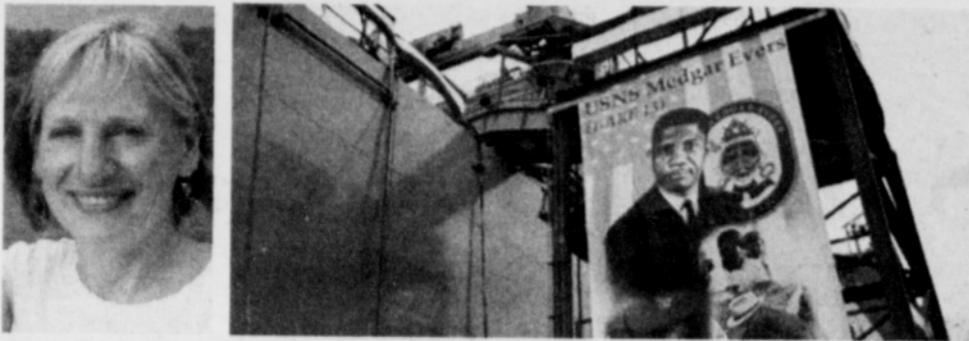


# The INSIDE



**LAW & JUSTICE** page 4-5



**OPINION** pages 6-7

**METRO** pages 9



**Arts & ENTERTAINMENT**

pages 12-16

**CLASSIFIEDS** page 18

**DECEMBER CALENDAR** page 19

**FOOD** page 20



This page Sponsored by:

# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?

## LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jefferson High School Principal Margaret Calvert addresses a public forum on efforts to reduce youth violence in the community.

### Action on Gangs Wanted

#### Forum draws community response

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

More than 50 members of the community, many who have been personally impacted by gang violence, attended a forum last week to say the time for action is now, or youth bloodshed will never come to an end.

The meeting Thursday at Jefferson High School had educators, policy makers, police officers and community members gathered together in an attempt to find solutions to the rising rate of youth gang-related violence within the city.

"This forum is so timely," said Tina Bouillion, program director of

LifeWorks Northwest, an organization dedicated to providing services to teenagers who suffer from behavioral and drug issues.

The first speaker of the evening asked for a raise of hands if anyone had been touched by youth violence. Within seconds, the majority of those within the room lifted their arms, looking around to see they were not alone.

"How many still feel something can be done about it?" he added.

Once more, arms rose quietly into the air.

According to Oscar Gilson, an administrator for Jefferson's Middle College Program, the issues of youth violence are very "close to home."

Jefferson Principal Margaret Calvert said gang-related activity has made her position challenging, but the violence throughout the surrounding neighborhoods does not reflect the quality of her school.

"Here at Jefferson we need to be good neighbors," she said.

Calvert said there is a need for the community to create more opportunities for youth outside of school.

A panel of respected individuals and stakeholders had their own perspectives of how to combat the issues before opening the floor to the rest of the attendees in the room.

Information tables for organizations, including Big Brother Big Sister and Connection, along with pamphlets on community resources were provided to help people become more involved and network for change.

Although there were multiple perspectives on which tactics could truly make a difference to curb the violence within the community, everyone agreed that something needs to change, and words are no longer enough.

### TriMet Youth Passes Saved

TriMet, the city of Portland, and Portland School District have combined resources to save a program giving local students free passes on public transportation for the current school year.

The YouthPass program started in 2008 for students at Jefferson and Franklin High Schools. The next year it was expanded to all Portland high schools, and 80 percent of these

youth report use of the pass on a regular basis.

Mayor Sam Adams said, "When I met with students on the first day of school this year, I heard how important the YouthPass is for the many students who don't have a safe and reliable alternative way to get to school every day."

The funding gap was closed with \$375,000 in discounts from

TriMet, \$75,000 from the school district and \$225,000 from the city of Portland.

Besides helping families financially, the YouthPass program reduces traffic congestion around neighborhood schools, lowers carbon emissions in support of Portland's Climate Action Plan, and nurtures the next generation of transit users.