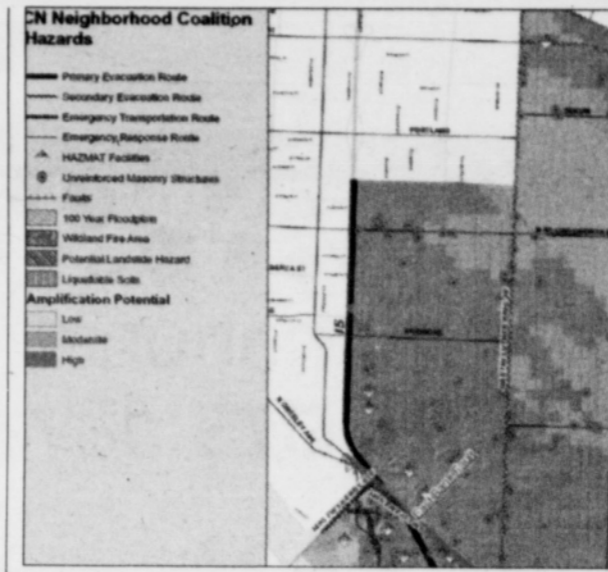




**Summer  
Fun Guide**  
Professional theater  
company opens  
production at the  
University of Portland  
See page 17



**Natural  
Hazards**  
Neighborhood  
maps rate risks  
and show  
community  
resources  
See Health, page 7

# The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses' 

Read back issues of the Portland Observer at [www.portlandobserver.com](http://www.portlandobserver.com)  
Volume XXXXI, Number 20

Wednesday • May 30, 2012

Established in 1970  
Committed to Cultural Diversity *years of community service*

## State Audit Not Enough

Long way  
to go for  
bringing  
children home

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Although a recent state audit shed light on necessary improvements within the Child Welfare Division, both agency workers and families believe there is more to the picture than the findings revealed in the report.

According to the audit, 29-percent of Oregon foster children are reunited with their families. Although the number is higher than the national average of 22-percent, the findings have revealed that there is a lot of room for improvement.

The goal of the report, a routine part of state government, was to look at how well the child welfare program does in returning children home to their parents or families, once they have been removed by the state.

Heavy caseload, limited access to drug and alcohol treatment programs for parents and limited financial resources were amongst many problems found within the state's analysis, which concluded there is a lot of work to be done to ensure caseworker's have the ability to help families be reunited with their children.

Currently there are around 2,700 case workers, who work within every county in the state, said Gene Evans, communications director for the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division.

Multnomah County, he said, has largest number of caseworkers because nearly half of the foster kids in the state are in the Portland metro area.

"I think the biggest issue the  
*continued* ▼ on page 5

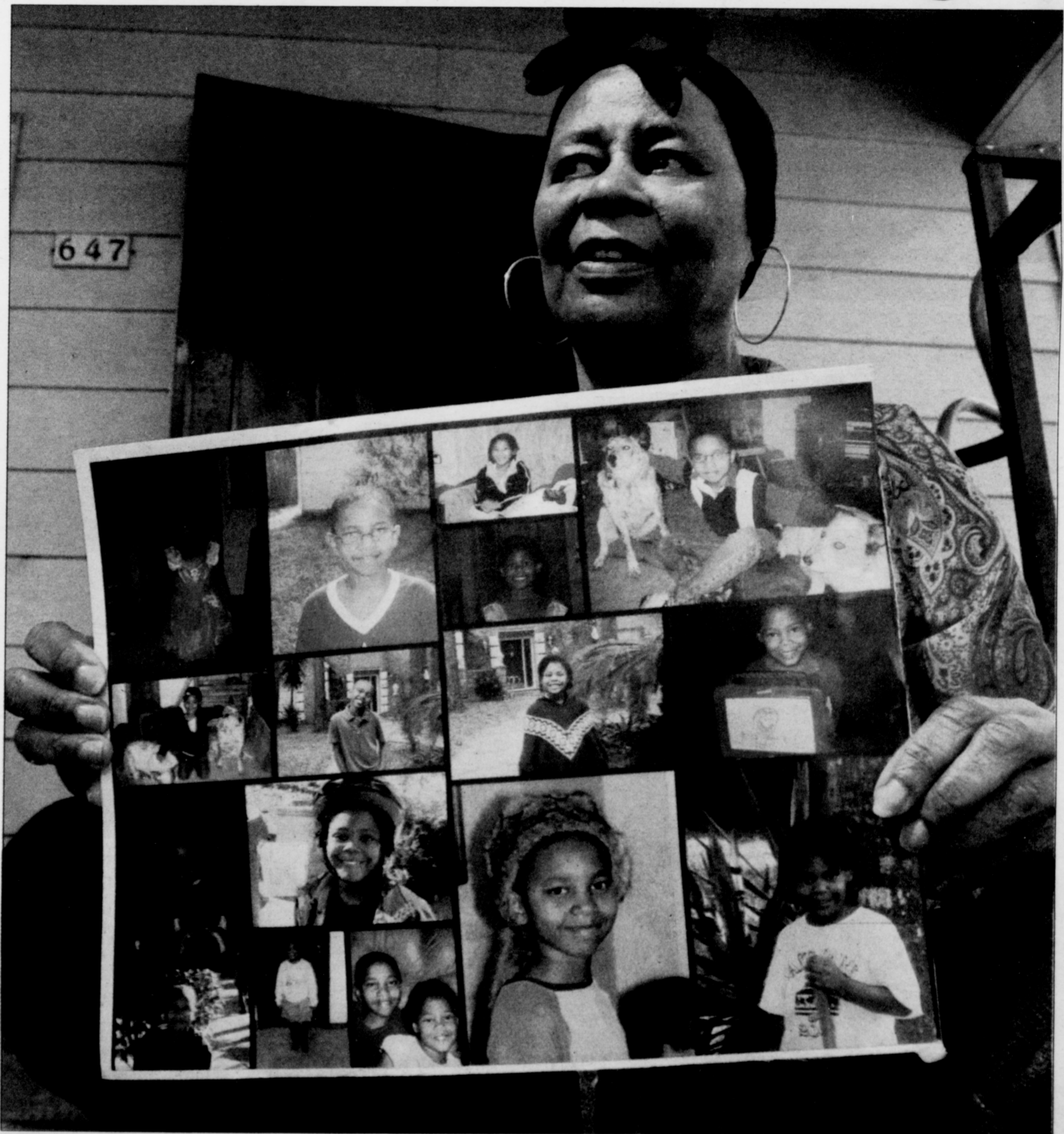


PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Carolynn Smith, founder of the organization Grandparents Raising Grandparents, takes a seat on the front porch of her north Portland home to talk about the long struggle she has waged with the state over the custody of her grandchildren.