

His Legacy Will Live On

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Youth Center in Peril

continued ▲ from page 3

Chair Colleen Domenech, resigned.

Day TenEyck told the Portland Observer that the Gresham center was "a financial mess" when she was hired in 2011. In July 2012, she called a meeting to alert board members that PAL was financially "in the red" for the next six months, she said.

In August, the non-profit's corporate committee pledged to raise \$50,000. By the end of December, they had raised nothing.

Since the economy tanked in 2008, money from donating organizations had fallen through. Federal funding was cut for PAL's summer sports camp in 2005. PAL recently lost funding for their late night basketball previously budgeted by the Portland's Mayor's office of Youth Violence Prevention.

As county, state, and federal funding fell through, Day TenEyck said the budget got tighter and tighter. PAL proposed cutting both summer camp programs and their football program to save money. Money PAL staff and police officers earned

volunteering this summer for Safeway's LPGA golf tournament kept the non-profit afloat until the end of the year.

Damon Miller, PAL's associate director, was heartbroken when he heard about the closure. "The community will feel this," he said.

Miller, who began working for PAL as a youth counselor in 1995, is hoping to sustain PAL's football program, now in its 14th season and serving up to 1,200 kids. "Whether it's PAL or not it's a community program and Portland should take responsibility."

Day TenEyck said if PAL can make it to April, they have six to seven fundraisers planned through September. "I think we have a solid funding plan," she said, including a goal to secure more corporate support.

A group of staff, parents, kids and others from the community held a rally to save PAL late Friday afternoon near the center on Northeast 181st and Glisan.

Izaya Glover, a 14-year-old Walt Morey Middle School student and PAL's new youth president rallied

more than 200 signatures to give to the board to save the youth center that he has been attending for three years. "This is home to very many," said Glover.

Other kids made glittery signs that read, "SAVE PAL," and "Don't Take PAL away from us."

"This is the only place I can be," said Jesse Dunn, 12. "Both of my parents work until 5 p.m. I can't just be waiting on the porch. It's my home away from home," he said.

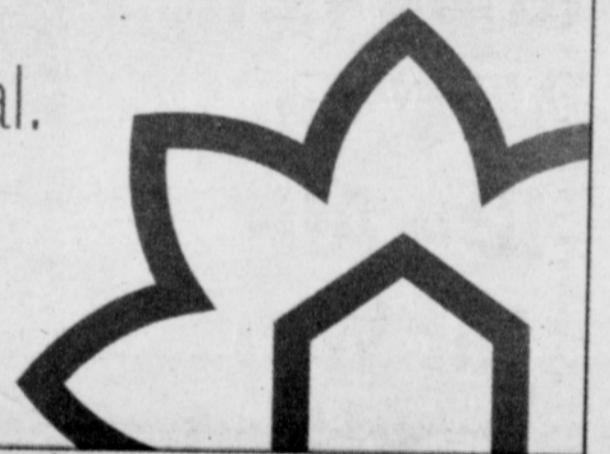
"This is the greatest place for kids," said D'Shawn Bogan, 13, a PAL regular since age 9. He had plans to continue coming to PAL until he was "at least in college."

Seventh grader, Antonia McSwain, 12, was angry, yet reflective. "I think it's stupid because it's such a good place. It brings such positive energy into kids' lives who don't come from a good past. It brings hope. So many kids would be struggling without it and they would have a negative impact on the world."

A little girl was overheard saying to her friend, "It's so sad that PAL is closing."

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