

Fighting for Relevancy

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ronment of low-income areas while promoting social justice; McCoy Academy, an alternative high school for adolescents that have not excelled in area schools; and Open Door Gallery, an art program for students old and young.

Although the organizations in the past may have been housed under the same roof at McCoy they did not always collaborate with one another.

For the last two years, the leaders at McCoy have been assessing how the four programs could better work together to better serve the community. Changes have been made to provide "wraparound services" so that clients can now look to McCoy as a location where a bulk of their essential needs can be taken care of in one space.

"It's wonderful to have a site, but when you're all working separately it's not always about the site and what's going to happen here. So now we've kind of come to a point of collaboration in the services that we want to provide," says Bobby Foucher who has been with McCoy Academy since 2006, teaching visual arts and dance.

In response to McCoy's push to unify and revamp, real-estate giant Windermere has already begun painting rooms for McCoy free of charge.

The company's generous contribution comes with the effort to liven up the 7,762-square-foot space and rent out some of the more dormant rooms to what they hope will be another non-profit.

Though it will end up costing McCoy upwards of \$20,000, Windermere will also be helping with the installation of a new dance

floor soon.

"With these types of angels, we've been able to make those kinds of improvements," Foucher says.

Completely out-of-pocket, leaders at McCoy also launched a Saturday Market where patrons can sell their homemade good right outside McCoy's doors and on the main thoroughway of MLK Boulevard.

After the marketplace was launched in May, YMA director Archie Moore feared they would have to shut it down for low participation, but a slight uptick in involvement and pedestrian foot traffic caused them to extend the Saturday Market another month in hopes of seeing more community participation throughout the entire summer.

One student intern who has been with McCoy for 5 weeks voiced frustration at the low turnout, "I just don't understand why there wasn't better turnout, with all the footwork and advertisement we did. There's been a lot cool stuff here, we've had other vendors, but just getting people here has been a challenge."

The fundraising efforts at McCoy also include a goal for the outright purchase of their building, not only to ease their annual operation costs of \$55,000 but also to secure a permanent position in the neighborhood.

Carmen Hawkins, another YMA coordinator, is in agreement with other McCoy tenants that remaining in northeast Portland and not being forced into the outskirts of the city or Gresham, like a host of other minority-focused non-profits, remains essential for many of their core clientele which is largely composed of African and Latin Americans.

Hawkins said many of McCoy's clients, especially the younger ones, rely on the

organization's centralized resources.

Taylor, a 16-year-old high school student and graduate of YMA, says McCoy's programs have been essential to his growth and have helped him "think differently from others, in a good way." He wants to see McCoy continue in their current location.

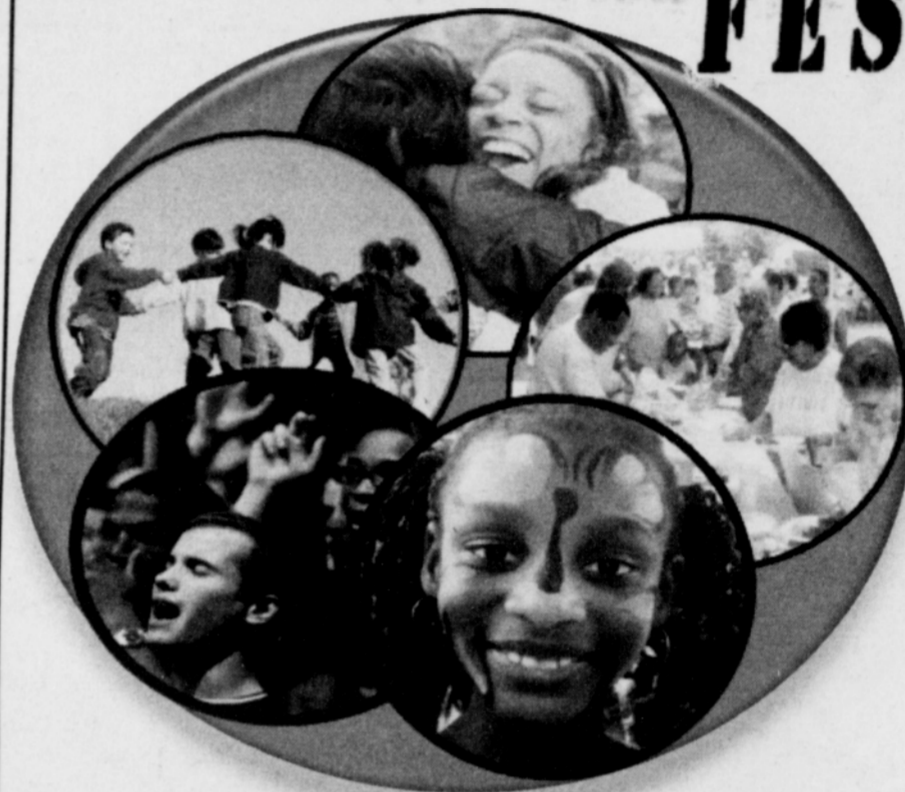
Though a move is not to bound happen in the immediate future, participants in McCoy

programs realize that growing support is the only viable way to continue their services into the next few years in the King neighborhood.

Donations to McCoy can be made by calling the academy at 503-281-9597. Support can also be made by purchasing items at McCoy Saturday Market which is open from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. every Saturday.

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Proud Father Needs a Transplant

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Center in Seattle, and is now on the waiting list for the gift of life - a transplant. He needs this transplant so that he can watch his three wonderful grandchildren grow up.

Transplants save lives but are very expensive. Few families have the resources to meet the financial obligations of such a major procedure. Insurance will only cover 80 percent of this surgery. Other expenses include traveling to Seattle for pre- and post- surgery evaluations, housing for Gibson and a caregiver for up to six months, and life-long post-transplant medications.

To help with Larry Gibson's out-of-pocket expenses, a fundraising campaign in his honor has been established through HelpHOPELive, a nonprofit organization that has been assisting the transplant community for 30 years.

All donations are tax-deductible, are held by HelpHOPELive in the Northwest Lung Transplant Fund, and are administered by HelpHOPELive for transplant-related expenses only. Gibson's family thanks the community for considering making a contribution:



Larry Gibson

Checks can be made payable to HelpHOPELive with a note in the memo section indicated the contribution is in honor of Larry Gibson, and mailed to HelpHOPELive, 2 Radnor Corporate Center, 100 Matsonford Road, Suite 100, Radnor, PA 19087. For credit card contributions, call 800-642-8399.

The Gibson family thanks the Portland community for their prayers and generosity. For more information, you can email Jameka Gibson at jamekalaree@gmail.com or Maggie Gibson at tacobill46@hotmail.com.

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