

HOUSING

Utility Savings for Families

Pilot program helps low-income households

The local housing provider Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI) believes that low-income families should not be forced to choose between keeping their homes warm and putting healthy food on their table. To help disadvantaged families stay warm and have money left for other essentials, PCRI has started a pilot weatherization partnership for 10 single family homes in north and northeast Portland.

The program is collaboration between PCRI and Verde, another non-profit group, and will be funded by NW Natural. It provides energy-saving weatherization improvements like air sealing and insulation to low-income households without challenges like waiting lists and up-front costs that accompany many existing weatherization programs.

"This pilot is a great opportunity



Two local non-profit groups are sponsoring a weatherization project for families who can't easily access other programs.

to more efficiently provide utility cost savings to families who need it most," said Travis Phillips, housing development manager at PCRI. "We're eager to see and expand on the pilot's success so

these and other families can spend their hard-earned salaries on school books and healthy food instead of keeping their home warm."

PCRI and Verde are also using the pilot to provide economic opportunity

to low-income families and communities of color. The two non-profits engaged Home Energy Life Performance Group (HELP), a minority- and woman-owned business who has already weatherized

and reduced energy consumption for over 800 Oregon homes, to perform the weatherization improvements. The project is expected to create 340 work hours in its pilot phase, with additional opportunity in future phases.

The pilot includes an education program, funded by a grant from The Concordia Foundation, helping residents understand the work being performed and how household habits affect their energy bills, comfort and healthy indoor environments.

"NW Natural is excited to fund and partner on this innovative program," said Bill Edmonds, NW Natural director of environmental management and sustainability. "Even though gas prices are as low as they were in 2004, that doesn't make drafts any warmer. We think it's important to reach as many households as possible with education and services about energy efficiency."

In the future, PCRI and Verde aim to replicate the program elsewhere in PCRI's affordable housing portfolio, for seniors in PCRI's Homeownership Retention program, and with other organizations serving low-income Oregon residents.

Fix-It Fairs to Save Money

Free Fix-It Fairs where you can learn simple and effective ways to save money at home and stay healthy this winter and beyond are coming soon to

north and southeast Portland.

Featuring exhibits from numerous community partners, these events also include an extensive schedule of work-

shops held throughout the day.

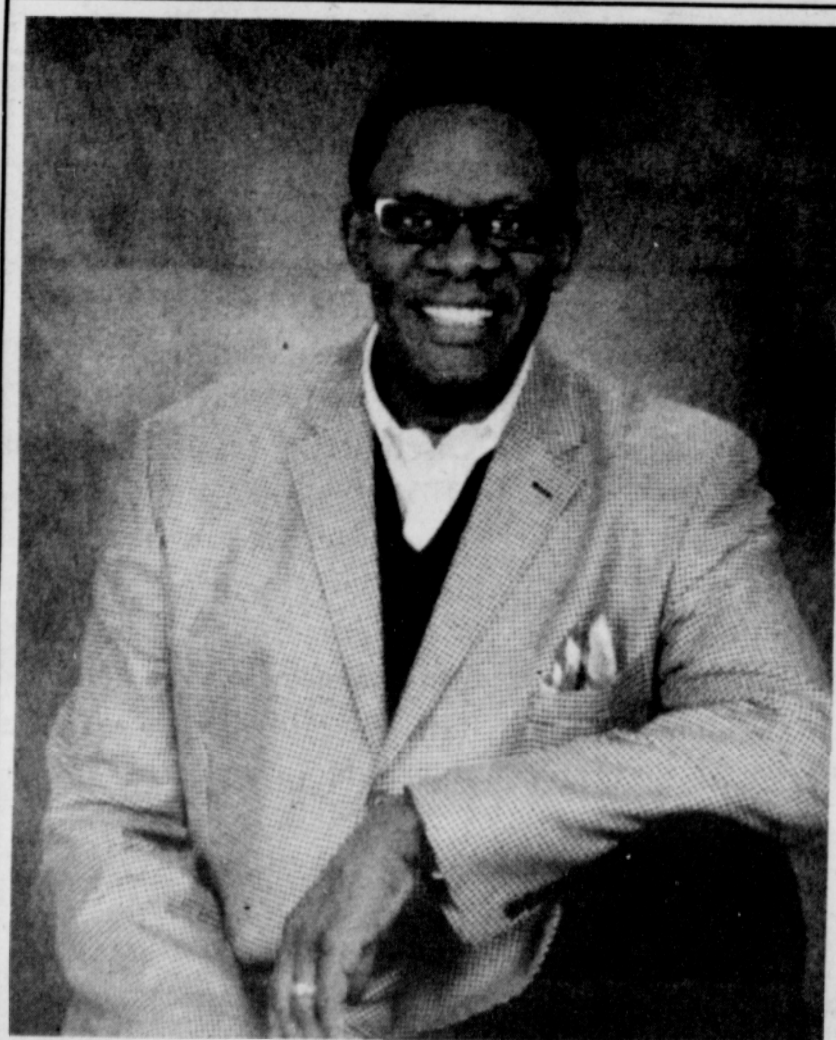
Experts will be available to talk with you about water and energy savings, personal health and healthcare, food and nutri-

tion, community resources, recycling and yard care, lead testing and more.

Rosa Parks Elementary School, 8960 N. Woolsey Ave., will host a Fix-It Fair on Saturday, Jan. 25 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and David Douglas High School, 1001 S.E. 135th Ave.,

will host a Fix-It Fair on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Special workshops in Spanish will be offered at David Douglas event; and free professional childcare and lunch is provided at each of the fairs.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

THE SPINA COLUMN™

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Part 14. Scoliosis Exam: The most important test your kids will take all year.

Q: My kids already get back-to-school check-ups. Why should I bother with yet another one?

A: Scoliosis, a lateral curvature of the spine, is one test probably not included in your children's back-to-school physical checkups. And yet, it is disturbingly common among teenage girls. If left untreated, scoliosis often leads to painful arthritis of the spine. But if the disorder is detected by age eight, before the adolescent growth spurt, there

is better than 50% chance for complete recovery.

Q: How can I tell if my daughter might have scoliosis?

A: The most common visible symptom is very prominent shoulder blade higher than the other. However, the best check for scoliosis is an annual pre-school checkup with a Chiro-

practor. The one professional best trained to detect and correct spinal disorders. It's a simple, painless, inexpensive procedure that can save your children years of discomfort and disfigurement later in life. For a scoliosis checkup, or for answers to any questions you might have about your own health, call us at the number below.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office

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