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Joe's, we understand, and we won't open the store in question," the statement said.

The Portland Observer reported on the controversy surrounding the PDC deal back in November. Terms provided for a \$2.4 million break on the cost of the property and space for 4 to 10 other businesses and 100 surface parking spaces.

PDC Social Equity Director, John Jackley, acknowledged gentrification in north and northeast Portland as "primary issues" for the city of Portland at the time, but denied claims by some African Ameri-

can community members, leaders, and organizations that a Trader Joe's addition would play any role in further displacement.

Members of the local civil and social engagement group, Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF), held a pre-scheduled press conference Monday at the development site, coming just after Trader Joe's had withdrawn from the project.

Tony Hopson, former Sen. Avel Gordly, Steven Gilliam, Maxine Fitzpatrick, and other members of PAALF, spoke at Monday's press conference. Fitzpatrick, also executive director of the non-profit housing provider, Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, presented a list of demands of behalf of PAALF. It called for readily available and accessible numbers and details on economic development spending in the Interstate and Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Areas, and the creation of a "Vanport Small Business Assistance Fund" to support the small businesses that have set-up shop in and around Vanport Square.

Lastly, the activists want a legally enforceable community benefits agreement, negotiated by an independent community-controlled body that would ensure the employment of African-Americans and other disadvantaged community members in construction jobs as well as employment in newly established businesses.

PAALF asserted that their concerns and demands were "never about Trader Joes," but about stopping the further Diaspora of blacks in the city, and providing affordable housing options for people of color and others to return to the neighborhood.

Mayor Charlie Hales and the PDC issued a joint statement that called the Trader Joe's pull out a "loss for the city and particularly northeast Portland."

The city officials said they will soon be in talks with all the stakeholders in the neighborhood, but cannot say what will come next for the site. The brief letter also contained a nod to local African-American owned construction company Colas Construction who had just been named last week as the general contractor for the Trader Joe's construction.

The Portland Observer attempted to reach the owner of Colas Construction, Andrew Colas, for comment but our phone call was not immediately returned.

Two owners of nearby businesses, Tulas, a bakery, and the haircare store Living Color Beauty Supply, said they were looking forward to having the increased foot traffic from a grocery store, but understood the community's concerns that the development could also displace more families.

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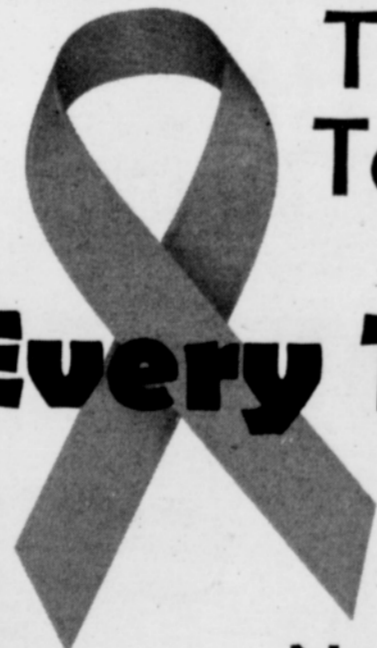
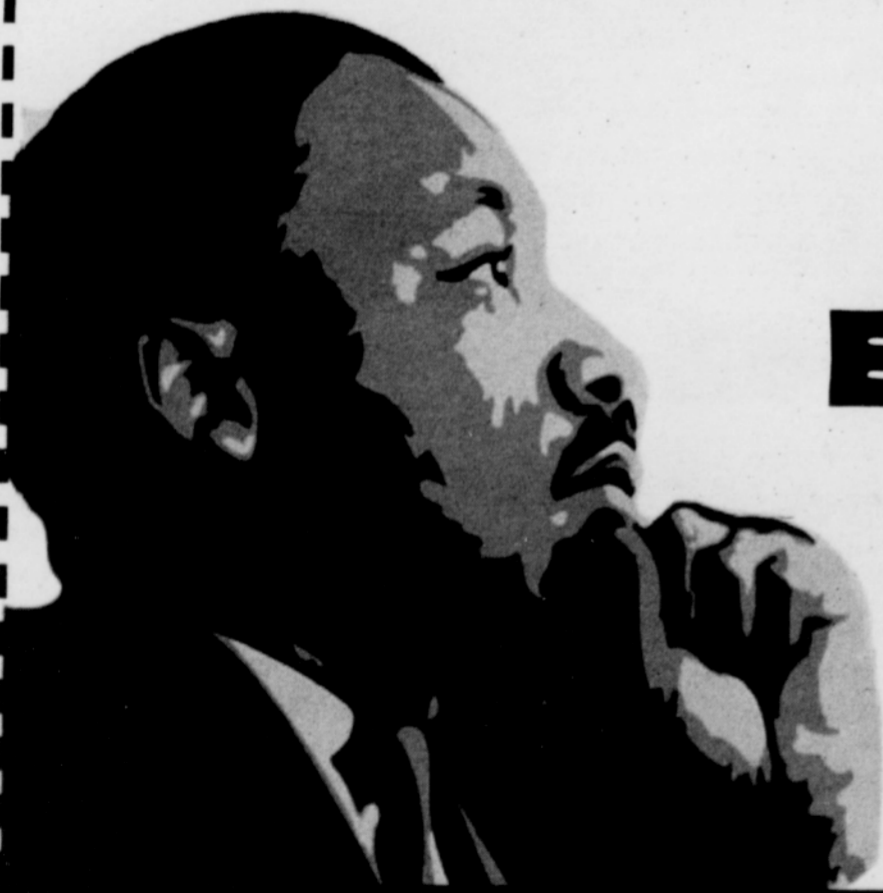
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