

Summer Jobs

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Worksystems, Inc. which is financed in part by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The program emphasizes underrepresented youth who face challenges like growing up in poverty or are at risk of dropping out of high school.

"We've been able to grow this program at Multnomah County since 2011 from 25 young men and women to 125 this year," says County Commissioner Loretta Smith. "This program works because it connects young people with quality jobs at good pay and provides the skills they need to make their lives better now and in the future."

The program was formed in response to a persistent youth unemployment problem in Oregon; 36,000 young people are both out of school and out of work in the Portland-metro area. Last year, only about 25 percent of people aged 16 to 19 had a job. For young African-American males, the figure was a mere 12 percent.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales has also prioritized working with public and private partners to build a more robust internship system for local youth, connecting Portland students to the local workforce, and is particularly focused on breaking down the disparities in education, work and family outcomes for African-American men.

"There are several ways we as a community have failed the African-American youth — education, employment, incarceration rates," Hales says. "These internships help level the playing field in a key performance measure, employment. This program provides a leg up. It's a small step, but a good one."

Celebrating Kirk Reeves

A mural will pay tribute to popular bridge performer

Commuters going across the Hawthorne Bridge in years past often got a glimpse of Kirk Reeves, playing his trumpet and performing magic tricks; now the late Portland staple will be memorialized in paint.

Over the next two weeks, Portland artist Gwenn Seemel will be working on a mural-sized portrait of Reeves who passed away in November 2012.

The 10 by 30 foot mural will show Reeves in his trademark white tux, black sparkly sweater, his trumpet and red sequined hat. The background will be the musical score for the first few bars of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," a song



often played by Reeves on his trumpet.

The portrait is being paid for by the Regional Arts & Culture Council as part of its public art mural program and will be painted along the east

A 2007 portrait of street performer Kirk Reeves by Gwenn Seemel. The trademark style of Seemel's work will be part of a new mural of the late musician being painted on the wall of a building at Northeast Grand and Lloyd Boulevard, formerly the location of Rich's Deli

facing wall of a building on the southwest corner of Northeast Grand Avenue and Lloyd Boulevard.

Seemel writes on her blog, "...he was always dressed to the nines—white tuxedo with tail, sparkly black sweater, Mickey Mouse hat...He was doing what he loved and he was glad for it."

Her mural of Reeves is meant to capture his lively presence that was appreciated by young and old alike.

Dawson Unveiling

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there's new play equipment, new fountains, new places to sit, new lawn, and sunshine. So probably now than ever it's going to be place for the neighborhood to be," said Abbate.

Just blocks away from Legacy Emanuel Hospital, the institution that accepted responsibility for pushing many black families out of inner north Portland about a half-century ago because of the hospital's expansion plans, the new greenspace includes several nods to the local African-American community's vitality. It should be noted Legacy Emanuel donated \$200,000 towards the construction of the park's new splash pad.

Isaka Shamsud-Sin, a black artist, was commissioned through the city's Regional Arts & Cultural Council along with a design team to

design the new fence surrounding the children's play area. He's also at work creating 14 two-sided panels depicting local black culture in north and northeast Portland that will adorn the fence.

"This neighborhood was the commercial center for the African American community which included outlying housing projects in north, northeast and southeast Portland," Shamud-Sin said in a statement. "Most of us shopped or frequented stores, restaurants and clubs within walking distance of the park. It's the story of energy and enterprise."

The Portland Development Commission had the lead role in funding the improvement project and contracting for construction.

"This neighborhood has long been a focus of our work," said PDC head Patrick Quinton. In all, he said the 89 percent "utilization rate" for

the project contracting through disadvantaged, minority-owned, woman-owned, and emerging small business, which he called "almost unprecedented" for a public construction project and a model the economic development agency is committed to continuing.

Donny Adair, a lifelong neighbor to Dawson Park and respected leader from the African American community, was recognized for his civil rights activism with his name carved into stone near the park's new splash pad. When touring the park, it came to his attention that his first name had been misspelled 'Donnie' on the carving. He still was happy with how the park had been transformed.

The former Boise-Elliott-Humboldt Elementary (previously Boise), and Jefferson High School student remembers kids creating their fun even back when the amenities (like a basketball court) at Dawson Park were few and scarce between; like turning the greenspace into a softball field, setting up imaginary borders.

"That gazebo over there, it wasn't there but we made [it] home plate, we played softball. And if you hit the building, or went over the building as some of us could do, it was a home run!" he said.

Other memories for Adair include a visit to the park by former U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy who delivered a presidential campaign speech at the site, just days before being assassinated in California in 1968.

Adair expects the improvements to the park will guarantee fond memories for many years to come. "It's a better facility, one that I can bring my grandkids to, and I say in a couple of years my great-grandkids—because I'm a great-grandfather now."

Wednesday he's looking to bring his 3-year-old grandson to the park for the official Dawson Park Dedication ceremony, which will also double as a free concert featuring Ocean 503. The dedication ceremony and concert begins 6:30 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

The Portland Observer Established 1970

USPS 959-680

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

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