## The Hortland Observer Careers



## **CONTINUED FROM FRONT**

nity-specific nonprofit that operates and owns its own building and property on Alberta Street at this point in time, organizers said. The mural is a statement

holds its space and plans to stay. Zoe Piliafas, founder of both Art Uprising and Vox Siren, said she approached the organization in December after walking past the Black United buildand acknowledgement that the ing and noticing it standing

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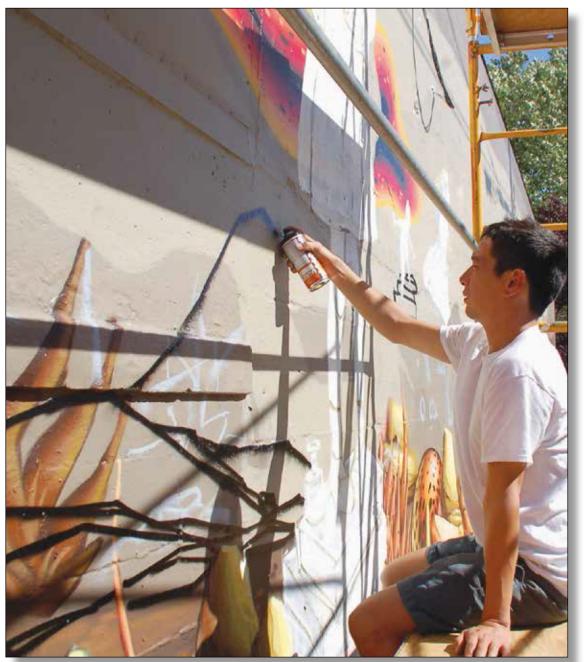


PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVED Tokyo-born artist Jeremy Nichols, the Portland co-creator of the new mural for the Black United Fund building at 2828 N.E. Alberta St., sits on scaffolding as he adds paint to the nearly 100 foot long image.

amidst the changing landscape complished a lot of work in the of gentrification. Piliafas had community, having recently hopes of creating more visibility for communities of color on system to rural parts of Oregon the rapidly changing street and specifically women of color.

"Visibility to history is key," she said. "Vox Siren is working relentlessly to dismantle sexism and create spaces in which women can thrive. We support organizations in creating spaces that attract, retain, celebrate and support the many contributions of all women. Our sister organization, Art Uprising, is the perfect partnership to bring us the lives and contributions of women through art. This mural will be a beacon of inspiration, history and possibility in Portland."

traction within the community has always been led by womthanks in part to in-kind do- en," said Kimberlee Sheng, the importance of collaboration nations and eventually a grant executive director of the Black to make progress; and the influfrom the Region Arts and Cul- United Fund. "Therefore it is ence of women in the past and ture Council. The organizers fitting that this mural would pay also got local people of color tribute to a few of the iconic to help them create artwork that would reflect the history of the black community and pay of hope for all, these historical tribute to members who have women stood alongside our managed to stick in the area and brothers and numerous commusome who have left.

Vox Siren has already ac- just as we still do today."

launched a digital management and Washington to ensure that girls and young women have access to empowering programs in science, technology, and mathematics. Piliafas also explained that her organization had worked with the U.S. military on analysing rape culture workers.

The Black United Fund of Oregon and its black women leaders helped inspire the mural and are gearing up for its public opening and celebration in early August.

"In our more than 30 years The project quickly gained of operation, the organization black women of the civil rights movement. Upholding a beacon nities involved in the struggle,

The official mural release party and celebration will be held on Saturday, Aug. 8 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Black United Fund, 2828 N.E. Alberta St. DJ Deena Bee, will be spinning live and there will be activities for the kids. Local black-owned food carts will be selling meals along with other communities of color.

Powerful women leaders inand sexual assault that affects cluding Kimberlee Sheng, the executive director of the Black United Fund of Oregon; Tiffani Penson, city of Portland Minority Evaluator Program and Supplier Diversity Officer and a Black United Fund of Oregon Board Member; and Zoe Piliafas, co-founder of Vox Siren; will be speaking about the impact of the Black United Fund; going into the future.

For more information about the mural or getting an invite to the Aug. 8 celebration, readers are encouraged to write to engage@voxsiren.com or visit artuprising.org. To learn more about the artists, visit plasticbirdie.com and Eatcho.com.