

Fostering Love for Children in Need

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her, so I knew I had do something for other kids – the ones that don't get picked up and have to stay," she said.

Dines used to help supervise foster care visits. She says that for black children entering white homes, the chances of getting someone culturally-sensitive and fluent in the micro-aggressions of daily black life are slim.

"I don't know what they might

think about a black child, or how they might react to any non-white child's needs if they don't have that kind of education or a background that would allow them to see that, to feel that it's valuable to them."

That's when Dines decided to start collecting donations of black hair products, lotions, shampoos and other resources for these foster children through her organization, Chocolate Kids Matter."

"During this time I started to



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PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Amber Dines fills a cultural gap for black children entering the foster care system by collecting donations of black hair care products, lotions, shampoos and other resources through her organization 'Chocolate Kids Matter.'

realize that there are a number of children of color entering into foster care without basic needs, resources, and support. It's not the kids' fault that they are placed in families that don't know how to properly care for them," she said.

The inspiration behind the name came from Dines' 8-year-old niece who described herself as chocolate instead of black.

"I wanted to give her the feeling she helped me do this too," said Dines. "She has been so

good and inspiring to have by my side. I have gotten to help her be a kid. When she came to me she would work, start cleaning and moving things. I told her that she was still a kid and she could play like one and have fun and relax a little bit if she wanted to. She is just learning to be a child now."

Dines said culturally-specific supplies are in great demand. There are 10,068 children in foster care in Washington, with a significantly greater proportion of those kids comprised of mi-

nority races and ethnicities.

The need is great and that's why she is reaching out to get help from others in the community.

Chocolate Kids Matter has since launched its own fundraiser online, hoping to raise enough funds to help every child of color in the system. To help or learn more about Chocolate Kids Matter, visit chocolatekidsmatter.tumblr.com. The official fundraiser page is available at gofundme.com/chocolatekids.

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