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Minority & Small Business Week



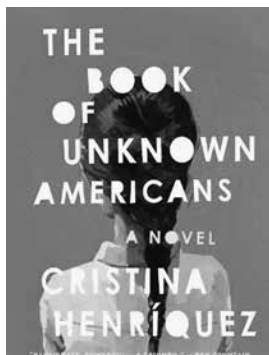
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LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Colas Construction has deep roots in the Portland community with members of the extended Colas family overseeing a diverse company that has become a powerhouse in the construction industry. Pictured (from left) are Colas principals Andrew Colas, Marc-Daniel Domand, Alex Colas, Aneshka Dickson, and Hermann Colas Jr.

From the Ground Up

Black-owned business grows into powerhouse

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

With Portland building and growing as quickly as it is, engaging communities of color in the development of the city has been critical. One family has managed to step forward and become a powerhouse in

the construction industry, working from a diverse group of builders, plumbers, electricians, architects, and other construction workers in the growth of the city.

The Colas family has managed to stay strong and bring in workers and contractors from all walks of life in their nearly 20 years of business in Portland and much longer when tracing the family history.

Hermann Colas Jr., a Haitian immigrant, came to the United States in the late 1960s from a family that used to run Haiti's second largest rum distillery.

He started off in real estate, pur-

chasing locations, and dreaming up big plans, until he formally got the construction company off the ground, launching the company in 1997.

"We are a family of black entrepreneurs several generations deep," explains Andrew Colas, Hermann's son and current president of the construction company.

The family patriarch wanted his son to stay in Haiti and take over the distillery, but Andrew says his father had a will and a dream of his own.

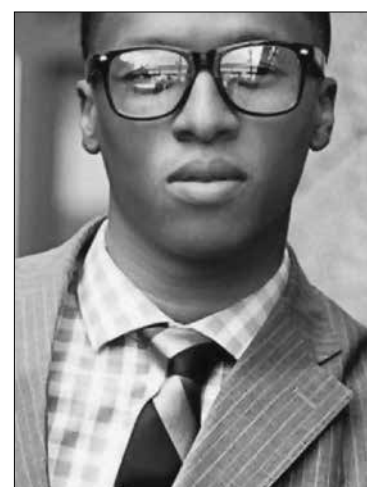
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Black Parenting Symposium

Open forum for sharing empowerment messages

An organization that brings black parents and caregivers together is getting ready to host their sixth annual symposium in Portland.

The Black Parent Initiative, which was founded nearly



Keith B. Wheeler

10 years ago to help families achieve financial, educational, and spiritual success, is calling community members together to remind families that "We Are The Village" we've been looking for – noting that interdependence and sharing child-rearing and empowerment messages allows families to address the idea that "it takes a village" to raise every child.

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