

# The Call for Good People in Teaching

Few things in our society convey a sense of status and success as much as one's choice of profession. Doctors, lawyers, bankers – all of these are held in esteem by many Americans, and they often come with a healthy paycheck to boot. But I submit to you that there is another profession which, while perhaps not as lucrative or as flashy, is a truly noble calling and commands a special prestige all its own – the teacher.

If you ask any American to name the top five most influential people in his or her life, chances are a large majority will have at least one teacher on that list. Teachers not only impart to young people the basic tools they need to make their way in life, they are de facto mentors, counselors, coaches, cheerleaders, role models, and – sometimes – parental figures.

If we paid teachers a salary commensurate with the importance of their role in American life, they would earn as much as doctors and lawyers do. As it stands, though, a career in teaching brings with it a decent salary and good benefits. But more importantly, teaching is a labor of love. Teachers do what they do because they are called to do it, because teaching pays them on the inside as well on the bottom line. It's difficult to find a teacher who hasn't, at some point in his or her career, paid for classroom supplies out of their own pocket, or who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help a student in need.

We need for good people to hear this call and answer it. Fortunately, there is a growing need for qualified teachers

## Cascade Connections

by Dr. Karin Edwards



in the Portland area right now. The steady influx of new residents to the Portland area, combined with the pending retirement of many teachers from the Baby Boom generation, is creating more and more vacancies in classrooms across the region. Portland Public Schools estimates that they will have approximately 1,000 full-time teaching openings over the next two years.

So – what is the best way for someone to answer this call? How does one become an educator? The “best” way is a matter of personal preference, but I can tell you that Portland Community College offers an accessible, affordable, academically rigorous way to start on the journey toward earning a teaching credential.

The Portland Teachers Program (PTP), based at PCC's Cascade Campus, is our region's premier resource for training and educating teachers of color for local public-school classrooms. Through a unique partnership with

Portland State University, Portland Public Schools, and the Beaverton School District, PTP students begin their education at PCC and transfer to PSU en route to a Master's degree and a teaching credential – all at no cost.

And through the Center for Careers in Education – also based at the Cascade Campus – students can pursue a transfer degree in education or follow a different education-related path, such as a one-year certificate in the Para-education program. Para-educators work in support of teachers, and can choose an emphasis in special education or working with English language learners. The Center for Careers in Education also offers a Library Assistant certification which can be earned in less than one year, and provides general support and resources for students pursuing a career in education.

Teaching is among the noblest of professions. It is not without its challenges and occasional frustrations, but it offers meaning and personal satisfaction on a level that few other occupations do. Moreover, teachers can claim something that few others can – at the end of the day, they can look in the mirror with the firm knowledge that they helped make the world a better place.

I encourage you to look into a career in education, starting at Portland Community College. Who knows – maybe one day you'll end up on someone's list of their top five most influential people.

*Dr. Karin Edwards is president of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus.*

## Economic Justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

marched with Dr. King, Julian Bond, Medgar Evers and other fighters for social justice,” said Larry Anderson, a member of Portland's African-American community and a former Portland Police Officer who is one of the event organizers.

“I've had the privilege of meeting Ambassador Young several times and I'm really glad he accepted our invitation to speak to the people of Portland about economic justice,” Anderson said.

Young, 83, started his career as a pastor in Georgia and through his work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference befriended Dr. King. After the assassination, Young became executive vice president of the SCLC. He later entered the world of politics and won Georgia's Fifth District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, one of the two first black Southerners in Congress in the 20th century.

In 1977 President Jimmy Carter named him U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. After returning to Atlanta he was elected Mayor and ultimately helped the city land the Summer Olympics in 1996. Mr. Young is currently working to find sustainable solutions to eradicate hunger, malnutrition, lack of education and economic injustice through his non-profit foundation.

“Ambassador Young is coming to Portland to share the story of his personal faith journey in the tradition of the Portland Business Luncheons,” said event organizer Doug Crane. “And as a businessman, I'm looking forward to hearing his message about economic justice and how he teamed up with key influencers in Atlanta to help transform that city into the amazing international hub it is today.”

In a recent interview, Young described the economics of poverty as not based on race, but of a lack of jobs, a lack of education and a lack of health care.

Portland Business Luncheons is a collection of business people who embrace the religious faith in their lives and meet together monthly for lunch. The purpose is to develop relationships within the business community to encourage one another to carry out the greatest commandment: love God and love each other.

For tickets and more information about the Dec. 17 event, call Rae Lynn Barela at 503-906-1581 or visit [pdx-lunch.com](http://pdx-lunch.com).



photo courtesy Community Cycling Center

## Holiday Bike Drive Legacy

*The Community Cycling Center had a very successful 20th annual Holiday Bike Drive at Legacy Emanuel Hospital Sunday as nearly 300 deserving children received donated bicycles and helmets. The event has come a long way since its inception in 1995 when founder Brian Lacy used to gather a few volunteers, load up his pick-up truck full of bikes, and deliver them to neighborhood kids.*