

# Our Stories Matter

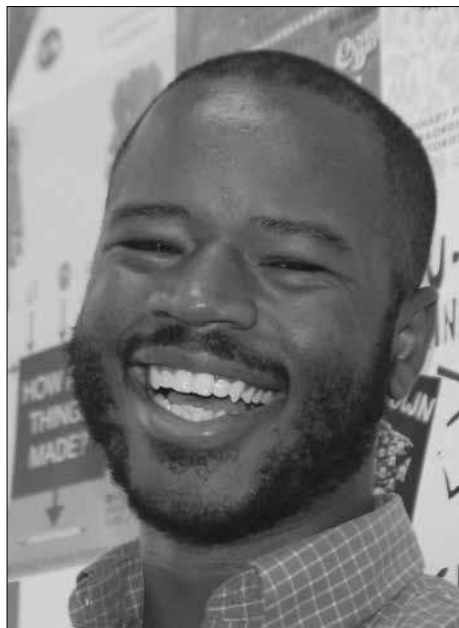
Local group pushes for more inclusive curriculum

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A new campaign to bring more multicultural history into local classrooms is drawing support.

“Our Stories Matter” is the name of the initiative by a Portland nonprofit known as Know Your City and led by Cameron Whitten, a young African American activist.

With the support of Portland School Board Member Mike Rosen, 2014 Ore-



Cameron Whitten

gon Teacher of the Year Brett Bigham, the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, and other community members, the plan calls for more resources to teach racially inclusive history in the public education system.

“As teachers, we know our students need an authentic education when it comes to their own history and culture,” said Portland Association of Teachers President, Gwen Sullivan. “If we want to equip them to change the world for the better, we have to make sure all voices are heard.”

Know Your City will ask the Portland City Council this week to support its efforts and make itself accountable to the city’s own 5 Year Action Plan that calls for promoting school curricula that reflect the experiences, histories and cultures of Oregon’s communities of color, immigrants, and refugees to boost student investment and performance.

The group feels the city and state has

not adequately implemented its education objectives. The Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 739 in 2013 which urged the Oregon Department of Education to diversify Oregon Studies curriculum, something which has not yet been funded.

Know Your City is also launching the Human Rights Education Report, a research tool that will document the steps taken by 25 school districts in Portland metro area to support inclusive cultural curriculum that reflects the history and cultures of all communities in Oregon.

The education report will be published in February 2017.

“Oregon has a glaring history of discrimination and exclusion,” said Whitten. “The demographics of our classrooms are changing, making the damage to our students more severe. Oregon prospers when the culture and history of all people are uplifted—that’s why our stories matter.”

# Vigil to Remember Aaron Campbell

Members of the community are invited to attend a prayer vigil on Friday to mark six years since the police shooting death of Aaron Campbell, an unarmed African American man who was emotionally distraught over the loss of his brother.

The Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform is planning the event to commemorate Campbell’s life, examine the changes his tragic death brought our community, and renew the call for police account-

ability in Portland and around the country.

The vigil will be held at First AME Zion Church, 4304 N. Vancouver Ave. on Friday Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. The remembrance will also mark one month after the Oregon Court of Appeals ordered the city to re-hire Ron Frashour, the officer who shot and killed Campbell with a sniper rifle and was fired in 2010.

For more information, contact Dr. LeRoy Haynes at 503-287-0261.

# Human Solutions Shelter

An emergency family shelter is set to open in outer southeast Portland on Monday to help meet the needs of homeless families.

The non-profit group Human Solutions is re-purposing what was formerly the site of a strip club at 16015 S.E. Stark St., and will operate the building as an emergency shelter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure that homeless families have a safe place to be both at night and during the day and have access to the resources and support necessary to find and

maintain stable housing.

Human Solutions relies on community donations to be able to provide blankets, pillows, new and gently used clothes and shoes, and nutritious food for homeless children and parents. The shelter also needs diapers for babies and toddlers, and educational toys, books, and other supplies. Community members interested in donating or volunteering can call Danielle Stirnaman at 503-278-1637 or email her at dstirnaman@humansolutions.org.

# Supporting Community Projects

The Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods will award six grants of \$2,000 each to support community projects, and it’s time to apply.

The Woodlawn Farmer’s Market, which launched last year, is an example of a community project that the coalition has supported financially. The coalition looks for-

ward to funding six more, equally meaningful projects this year.

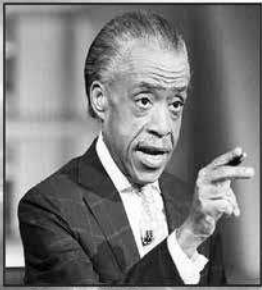
Applications are due by Thursday, Feb. 25 by 5 p.m. An optional information session for applications will be held Thursday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. at the coalition’s headquarters at 4815 N.E. Seventh Ave. For more information, visit necoalition.org/grants.

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**D. L. Hughley**  
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