

Named Champion of Change

Equity push brings White House honor

The White House honored Portlander Desiree Williams-Rajee Friday along with nine others from around the country as “Champions of Change for Climate Equity.”

An equity specialist for the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Williams-Rajee has successfully worked with communities of color and low-income residents on a quest to educate them on climate change.

She has partnered with several community organizations to create a climate plan that not only significantly reduces carbon emissions, but also includes a preparation plan for climate impacts and outcomes in overlooked communities.

Identifying as black and Filipina, Williams-Rajee recognized quickly after moving to Portland



Desiree Williams-Rajee of Portland is honored by the White House for her efforts to include communities of color and low-income residents on matters involving climate change.

the disproportionate access areas of color had to action towards climate change.

“It did not take long to discover in Portland the people who benefited from sustainability initiatives did not look like me; the color green was in fact synonymous

with the color white and other prickly nouns like exclusion and gentrification,” Williams-Rajee said. “When the opportunity arose, I was intent that the City of Portland’s new Climate Action Plan would serve to correct that imbalance.”

Learn Lead Poisoning Prevention

A series of free workshops where participants learn how to prevent lead exposure in their home are offered by the nonprofit Community Energy Project.

The one-hour sessions are especially helpful for households with children or pregnant women in housing older than 1978, or those concerned about lead exposure. Qualified participants receive a free

kit of safety and testing supplies.

The upcoming workshops are Monday, Aug. 1 at 2 p.m. at the East County Women Infants and Children’s (WIC) office at 600 N.E. Eighth St. in Gresham; Tuesday, Aug. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Energy Project at 2900 S.E. Stark St., Suite A; and Saturday, Aug. 27 at 3:30 p.m. at the Multnomah County Central

Library, downtown. Register for the classes at communityenergyproject.org or call 503-284-6827, extension 109.

Schools Chief

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school districts to craft procedures for testing lead, radon and other chemicals at their campuses.

In her statement, Smith said it was critical for the school board to figure out how to work together with each other as a governing board and in partnership with the superintendent.

“It is with this understanding and significant concert that I have decided to retire from Portland Public Schools now,” she said.

The school board will conduct

an immediate search for Smith’s replacement.

“This timing gives the board the opportunity to bring in interim leadership this summer before the beginning of school, as we continue a national search for a permanent superintendent,” school board Chairman Tom Koehler said in a statement. “The board will double down on its focus to lead the district and make decisions in the best interest of the 48,000 kids we serve and the taxpayers and voters to whom we are accountable.”

Theater Director Profiled

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wrights share monologues on how they feel about the institutional profiling of black people, the Red Door Project website reads.

“Racial profiling is not a new story. It’s a very old story. It is not something that is difficult to

find out more about. If it’s not something you have researched from a historical perspective, we recommend you do so and then use your position, voice and privilege to influence the situation in a productive and healing direction,” Jones told the Willamette Week.

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