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PHOTO BY CHRISTA MCINTYRE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

McCoy Academy Founder and Executive Director Becky Black and Director of Program Development Katie Carpenter stand in front the school's life-size mural of Martin Luther King Jr. as they look for support to save the academy which is facing displacement from plans to demolish the King Neighborhood building that houses the academy.

Counting on a Miracle

McCoy Academy faces closure

BY CHRISTA MCINTYRE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

McCoy Academy, a non-profit private high school serving underserved students in Portland for more than a generation is facing closure. The landmark 110-year-old house converted into a school on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard where McCoy is headquartered was recently sold to make way for condominiums.

The construction plans by new owners of the building have placed the school in jeopardy, according to school leaders. A desperate fundraising campaign to help save the school has been launched. An estimated \$50,000 will be needed for McCoy to pay for a lease on a new building and another \$4,278 to pay off the outstanding debt on its current site.

Named after the late Gladys McCoy, a former Multnomah County chairperson, school board member, and the first African American elected to public office in Oregon, McCoy Academy has been a

community fixture since 1988, providing a safe space where disadvantaged students are given the opportunity to graduate from high school or get a GED.

Many of its students face considerable challenges: Criminal backgrounds, gang ties, substance and alcohol abuse, anxiety, teen pregnancy and homelessness. They come to McCoy with holes in their education and unstable family lives. They often have behavioral issues after facing problems as children. Many of the students have been expelled from other schools or have had a difficult time functioning in

larger schools with multiple class rooms and teachers. McCoy students get one-on-one support and someone to listen, to trust and believe in their potential.

Without a building, the 15 students currently enrolled in the school will have few options, and according to McCoy Academy Director and Founder Becky Black, will face the likely prospect of not finishing their education. There's an even longer waiting list of students who would like to attend the school

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14