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APPAREL



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PHOTO BY CHRISTA MCINTYRE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Randall Stuart has restored the former Alberta Masonic Lodge just north of Alberta Street on North-east 23rd Avenue and named it the Cerimon House to serve as a multicultural center for community events for his non-profit organization.

Home for Humanities

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

An actor, teacher and director who has worked up and down the West Coast for the last 30 years, Stuart led the charge in buying and restoring the building. He won support for the effort by developing trust with the neighborhood.

"One of the key things the city was helpful with was in directing our efforts to appeal to the neighborhood associations, most particularly the Concordia Neighborhood Association. We started to attend those meetings to get input and advocacy. We learned there that there were groups who had hoped to acquire the building, but ultimately neighbors said "no" to those particular uses."

After a successful two year capital campaign to raise funds

for renovations, the hard work of updating the building while keeping the 1920's charm of the space took shape.

Multicultural events have cemented activities at the center ever since its opening 18 months ago.

The Cerimon House was one of the first spaces to host Portland African American playwright and director Kevin Jones' sold out production of 'Hands Up: 7 Playwrights, 7 Testaments,' which has gone on to tour nationally.

On the 10th anniversary of the death of James Chasse Jr., the Portland man suffering mental health issues who was killed by police in a confrontation on a downtown sidewalk, the Cerimon House served as a public venue for the screening of local filmmaker Brian Lindstrom's doc-

umentary 'Alien Boy: The Life and Death of James Chasse.'

One distinct feature of the Cerimon House is Ephesus Hall, a large central meeting space built in a traditional Masonic design. Surrounded by multiple rooms with different layouts, the possibilities for community use of the space are endless.

Stuart says the goal is to have the humanities center buzzing with activities, a violin lesson, a therapist session, therapeutic massage, a lecture, a documentary shown on the new projection wall, art exhibit, a kid's clown class, a 50th birthday party, a wedding, a memorial or a chorus event.

You can learn more about the Cerimon House and the center's upcoming events on their website cerimonhouse.org.

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