

# Shared Stewardship

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

reallocation of resources from things like prisons and police to services for things that can fulfill the basic needs of community members, like affordable housing, health care, mental health care, and education.

Mohamed Shehk, visiting communications director for the national Critical Resistance organization in Oakland, Calif., told the Portland Observer that advocates for the group see most of the existing polices around policing and law enforcement, for example, as ineffective tools against crime that

fail to solve bigger problems.

“The Prison Industrial Complex is a term that we use to describe the inner-locking systems of policing, imprisonment, surveillance, and the intersection of interests between government and industry that use those systems as solutions to problems that are actually political, social, economic in nature,” Shehk said.

United States’ disproportionate housing of the world’s prison population, and in particular of communities of color within the U.S., has been a contentious political issue. Civil rights leaders in Portland and nationally have



PHOTO CREDIT DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Social justice and communities of color advocates Cory Lira (from left), Myell Thompson, Anna Swanson and Mohamed Shehk promote the opening of the Dismantle, Change, Build Center, a new community gathering space in the former In Other Words feminist bookstore located at the corner of Northeast Killingsworth and Williams Avenue.

called for changing laws for better fairness, drawing support from liberals like Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders to former President Barack Obama, who commuted or pardoned 1,927 people for federal crimes, mostly for drug charges, by his last term in office.

In 2013, the United States represented about 4.4 percent of the world’s population, but housed around 22 percent of the world’s

prisoners, according to World Prison Population List from International Centre for Prison Studies. What’s more, African Americans and Hispanics made up 56 percent of all incarcerated people in 2015, though they comprised only 32 percent of the U.S. population, according to National Association for the Advancement of Color People’s website

Cory Lira, chapter member of

Critical Resistance Portland, said she found the organization at a time when she needed a new political home after seeing first-hand the devastating effects of the disproportionate impact that policing and imprisonment often has on communities of color.

Having worked on the front lines of migrant justice work and education, Lira said she began “seeing the ways in which young people are policed from such an early age and pipelined into prison.”

“Once I found CR, I was able to see the interconnected ways that government and institutions rely on the prison industrial complex to control and cage and kill us,” she said.

The Dismantle, Change, Build Center has become a home base for a myriad of other organizations including the anti-police violence group Don’t Shoot Portland; an empowerment group for young girls of color called Brown Girls Rise; and an outdoor program for youth, called Urban Nature Partners PDX.

The center also houses Portland Books to Prisoners, a non-profit that sends literature to those who are incarcerated, and Crescent Shine, a multi-vendor artist and consignment shop.

Donations, which can be made through Critical Resistance, help to keep the non-profit community based center afloat, organizers said.

This month Critical Resistance will host a postcard and holiday party at the Dismantle, Change, Build Center to send mail to those that are in prisons and jails.

The event, designed to remind those who are incarcerated that they’re not alone and there are those fighting for them on the outside, will be from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Dec 17.

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**MULTNOMAH COUNTY**

**CAREOREGON**

315 SW 5th Ave, Portland  
 Dec 5 .....9-11 a.m.  
 Dec 12 .....9-11 a.m.  
 Dec 19 .....9-11 a.m.

**CLACKAMAS SERVICE CENTER**

8800 SE 80th Ave, Portland  
 Dec 11.....10 a.m.-12 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

50 SW 2nd Ave, Portland  
 Dec 4 .....9-11 a.m.  
 Dec 18 .....9-11 a.m.

**JOIN**

1435 NE 81st Ave, Suite 100, Portland  
 Dec 13..... 12-2 p.m.

**MT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH**

8725 N Chautauqua St, Portland  
 Dec 8..... 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**PORTLAND RESCUE MISSION**

111 W Burnside, Portland  
 Dec 13..... 8-10 a.m.

**UNION GOSPEL MISSION**

3 NW 3rd, Portland  
 Dec 18 .....2-4 p.m.

**WORKSOURCE GRESHAM**

19421 SE Stark St, Portland  
 Dec 6.....2-4 p.m.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

**BEAVERTON LIBRARY**

12375 SW 5th St, Beaverton  
 Dec 12 .....1-3 p.m.

For information, or to host our team, call Tamara at 503-416-1479 or Caleb at 503-416-4883.

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