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A walking tour of black historic sites
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Good in the Hood
Images from Saturday's parade!
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Portland Observer

Established in 1970

Volume XLVIII • Number 23



www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • June 26, 2019



Committed to Cultural Diversity



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Representatives of Self Enhancement, Inc., the non-profit serving the African American community, and the Portland Water Bureau, are assisting qualifying low income households and those in temporary financial crisis with financial support to help pay their water and sewer bills. Pictured (from left) are Melissa Navarro of SEI, Anna McDonald of the Water Bureau, Sahaan McKelvey of SEI, Corbett White of the Water Bureau, Megan McGinnis of SEI and Fabiola Casas of the Water Bureau.

Helping Make Ends Meet

SEI and Water Bureau assist low income

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Representatives from Portland Water Bureau and Self Enhancement, Inc. are on a mission to let economically struggling families know about the financial assistance options the city utility offers, which have been increased this past year.

The Water Bureau has expanded discounts for qualifying low income households and those in temporary financial crisis, opened a relocated and more trans-

portation-friendly office, and established community partnerships with culturally specific groups, like Self Enhancement Inc., the non-profit serving the African American community of Portland.

All those actions spelled good news for Iva, a senior citizen who was living off of a fixed social security income when health issues brought her in and out of the hospital for a six week stretch. Her water bills fell behind and she accrued late fees, unable to do much else other than focus on her health.

Thanks to Water Bureau's utility crisis voucher—which recently increased from \$150 to \$500—Iva was able to get back on top of her payments after she got well.

"We were able to help her out," Melissa Navarro, an SEI Intake Coordinator, told the Portland Observer.

Navarro recalled others she's helped in similar situations, including a single parent who had lost her job, living off of savings, and had been denied unemployment; and another single mom whose car, which she depended on to make ends meet working for both Uber and Lyft, suddenly needed costly repair.

"Personally, I just love my job because a lot of times people...you can see them getting teary eyed and cry, they're just so grateful. I mean, I get hugs every week so it just feels good to be able to do that type of work," Navarro said.

Though the utility crisis voucher can only be used per customer once per 12 month period, the Portland Water Bureau



Michael Booker, beloved for his community advocacy work, died Friday at the age of 64.

Safe, Clean and Sober Leader Dies

Miracles Club director had life of advocacy

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A longtime advocate of the African American community of Portland passed away Friday after an unexpected liver cancer diagnosis just three weeks prior.

Michael Booker, 64, most recently helmed the executive director position at the Miracles Club, a non-profit for recovering addicts of the African American community.

"The reaction is there is a lot of sadness. The community is mourning. What I'll say just from my personal perspective is that everybody has a special story about Michael or about their relationship with Michael," Liliana McDonald, who is the Miracles Club program director and also shares a child with Booker, told the Portland Observer.

McDonald confirmed that in late May Booker was diagnosed with liver cancer and found out a week later that it was very serious.

"He was an icon of the community," McDonald added.

Before taking over as Executive Director

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