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Leaders from both the African and African American communities in Portland brainstorm to plan a major summit to focus on improving relations between the two populations. The summit will take place Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13 and 14 on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College. To learn more go to bethebridge.ucraft.net.

Dispelling Misconceptions African and African American experiences explored

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Rev. Hilary Gbotoe moved here from Liberia in 2003, he would only let his children have white friends because of the stereotypes he had learned about African Americans.

"I was told when I came here not to engage with black people, they will bring you down and your children will become gang members," he said.

It was only after Gbotoe (pronounced BOW-TOW) came to befriend some African Americans in Portland that he under-

stood his perceptions were misguided.

That growing awareness of the differences within the African and African American communities led Gbotoe and other black leaders in Portland to start a series of discussions leading to a major summit later this month, called the African and African-American Summit Bridge.

The event will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 13; and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14 at Moriarty Arts & Humanities

Building on the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College, 705 N. Killingsworth St. There is no charge for the summit, but donations will be accepted. Attendees can register online at bethebridge.urcraft.net.

The summit will start out with song and dance music that will tell the stories of both the African and African American experience, said Levell Thomas, who is working with Gbotoe and Rev. Cliff Chappell to pub-

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One in Three Can't Meet Basic Needs

Most low- and middle-income workers in Multnomah County are being left behind, according to a new report on poverty. Among the key findings: 34 percent of Multnomah County households are unable to meet their basic needs.

The 2019 Poverty in Multnomah County report, produced by the Multnomah County Commission for Economic Dignity, examined poverty in the region based on years of economic data. Researchers looked at every angle of poverty, including its demo-

graphics, geography and how it affects residents' well being and access to opportunities.

The findings paint a picture different from recent headlines about Portland's economic growth. Since 2010, Portland has become the 10th wealthiest major city in the U.S. and the number of households with incomes of \$100,000 or more has grown by 45 percent. But more than a third of households fall below the region's self-sufficiency standard.

The report also found that since

1990, the county's population in poverty grew at almost twice the rate of the population as a whole. The highest poverty area was east of I-205, where up to 22% of residents are impoverished.

The report also found that median hourly wages in 8 out of the 10 most common jobs in Multnomah County are unable to support a family with young children, and the poverty rates for African Americans, Native Americans, and Latin Americans are more than twice the rate as white residents.