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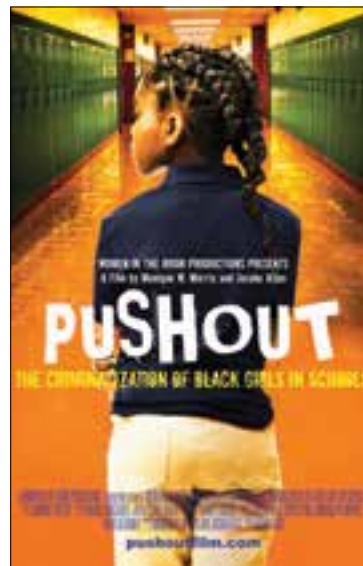
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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Film Screens with Call to Action

Community focus on unjust discipline of black girls



The community is invited to see the injustice and consider the solutions behind a new trend making African American girls the fastest-growing population in the criminal justice system when Warner Pacific University hosts a screening of the documentary "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School," on Monday, Feb. 3 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Pushout is a new film that shows African American girls are the only group of girls disproportionately experiencing harsh dis-

cipline at every grade level. The screening is hosted by HOLLA and Bars to Bridges in partnership with Warner Pacific and On-Point Community Credit Union. Refreshments will be offered be-

fore and during the screening and youth from both HOLLA and Bars to Bridges will share their personal stories immediately following the film.

"This documentary is an opportunity for the black community and beyond to finally see that this is not a niche issue and can become a vicious cycle if we do nothing," said Monique W. Morris, executive producer of the film and author of the book.

By recounting the stories of black girls around America, Pushout reveals alarming disparities in the education and justice system in America. While mass incarceration and its effects on young black males have been widely covered, black girls have been left without a space at the table. The documentary tackles this issue by sharing their stories.



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Andrea Vernae (left) stars as Paulina, the queen bee and mean girl, and Morgan Walker as Ericka, the newcomer who threatens her reign, in 'School Girls' or 'The African Mean Girls,' by award winning Ghanaian-American playwright Jocelyn Bih.

Beauty Explored in 'African Mean Girls Play'

Comedy tackles teen challenges

The breakout hit comedy "School Girls" or "The African Mean Girls Play" by Ghanaian-American playwright Jocelyn Bih explores the challenges facing teenage girls across the globe and cautions that while beauty may be only skin deep, its pursuit can cut much deeper.

A historic first time co-production between Artists Repertory Theatre and Portland Center Stage at the Armory, the play was inspired in part by Bih's mother's time in a boarding school in

Ghana and the author's own experience at a boarding school in Pennsylvania.

School Girls tells the story of Paulina, the reigning Queen Bee of her exclusive private school, who has her sights set on the Miss Ghana pageant. But the arrival of a new student with undeniable talent, beauty and light skin captures the attention of the pageant recruiter and nearly topples the social order of Paulina's friends.

"Oftentimes, the stories about Africa that are being served up are usually tales of extreme poverty, struggle, strife, disease, and war," said Bih. "This narrative is a dangerous and calculated one, and it has always

been my goal to present the Africa I know and love so dearly. School girls was my first produced play, and I'm so thrilled at the reception."

Preview shows began over the weekend at Portland Center Stage at the Armory, downtown. Opening night is Friday, Jan. 24 and the show closes on Feb. 16

Various community events will be held surrounding the show, including a pre-show reception with the Ghana Association of Oregon, a dramaturgy class taught by cast member Kisha Jarrett, and discussions with cast, crew, and community guests. For tickets and more information, visit pcs.org/school-girls or call 503-445-3700.

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