



Remembering Cliff Robinson

Popular former Blazer dies at 53

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BACK TO SCHOOL



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Police Chief Chuck Lovell

Violence Turns Deadly with Dueling Protests

Chief decries downtown shooting

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
PORTLAND OBSERVER EDITOR

A supporter of a right wing group was killed in a confrontation downtown Saturday, the first deadly consequence amid three months of protests over racial injustice in Portland and across the nation.



Aaron 'Jay' Danielson

Portland Police responded to shots fired in the area of Southwest Third Avenue and Southwest Alder Street around 8:45

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Reimagining a Better School Year

Principal says COVID-19, racial equity push an opportunity

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
PORTLAND OBSERVER EDITOR

As students go back to distance learning and online instruction this fall there is a great deal of anxiety in school communities as they adjust to the public health restrictions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and a nationwide reckoning on racial equity.

For Nichole Watson, the adjustments being made now are an opportunity to provide a better education to all students now and in the future and to reimage a better normal for students under difficult circumstances, especially for disadvantaged and minority kids.

Watson, 39, is the new principal at Prescott Elementary in the Parkrose School District, the first African American educator to lead the northeast Portland school, and an authority on equity who recently took a year off from teaching at Rosa Parks Elementary in north Portland to focus on racial equity work for the Portland Association of Teachers.

She said the impacts from the coronavirus virus have exposed more of the inequities that too many families with children in school face. When distance learning was imposed in Oregon last March, for example, with stay at home orders by the governor closing classrooms, almost a third of Prescott's kids did not have access to a computer or Internet for at home learning.

The district was able to adjust to this inequity by providing one laptop to a family, based on need. But this fall, Prescott will go further. The district will provide each student with all of their school supplies for distancing learning and there will be a major effort to ensure sufficient amount of Chromebooks to distribute to every student in a family, based on need, along with free Wifi hotspots for Internet connections, she said.

Watson is trying to be available to answer questions and share information with parents on all the changes coming for the new school year.



PHOTO BY SHAWNTE SIMS OF SIMSHOT

Prescott Elementary Principal Nicole Watson rides in the back of an open pickup truck to wave and distribute candy to children and other families from her new school community in the Parkrose neighborhood of northeast Portland on July 31. The Meet the Principal parade was held under public health social distancing requirements to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"Change brings discomfort," she said. "But we are resilient. We always figure it out and we'll do that again," she said.

Watson held a back-to-school online session on Zoom with 60 parents last week to

inform them about the plans for re-opening. It was the second major introduction to her new school community, having been

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