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## Scholarships Build on Community

### VOA names annual Al Forthan scholars

Volunteers of America Oregon recently awarded \$60,000 in scholarships to 29 Oregon students coming from families impacted by alcohol and drugs in an effort to break the cycles of addiction.

The Al Forthan Scholarship awards on May 5 paid tribute to each scholarship recipient for the tremendous courage they have shown.

“A lot of times I don’t want to share my story because I want to avoid the pity and the pain that follows from remembering,” said



Al Forthan

scholarship recipient Yahir Gonzalez. “Applying to the scholarship has been immensely liberating. I have found a community that encourages one to find solutions to generational patterns of addiction. A community that be-

lieves in me.”

Another student talked about the pain of her parents’ addiction, “It has led to personal insecurities and harmful situations throughout my life. However, it has also made me stronger than anyone could imagine a teenager being,” said Rena Howard.

Author Nicholas Kristof was keynote speaker for the ceremony.

“Addiction is a hard subject to talk about. I tend to think that as a country the issues that we are worst at tackling, as a public policy matter, are those issues that are hard to talk about.” Kristof continued, “If we don’t talk

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## Show of Force Grows

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According to a statement announcing the joint police and FBI effort from the mayor and city commissioners, authorities found that there are “imminent” efforts from outside groups, some traveling from Washington and California, to “engage and advance gun violence” in the city.

When pressed about what kind of groups were involved, Lovell

said thought the shootings were gang-related and involved retaliation.

“There’s a cycle of violence here that we’re trying to break,” he said.

Since the beginning of May, before Sunday, police have responded to 40 reports of shots fired, with four people killed and 14 injured in shootings, Lovell said. There have also been 31 homicides in the city so far this

year, compared with four by this time last year and three at this time in 2019, he said.

Seven people that were shot at a vigil for a shooting victim in Gresham last month. A statement from Wheeler and the City Council noted that there are several upcoming vigils and funerals that could be targets for more shootings.

“Our goal is to deescalate and lower the tensions in the community that are fueling this crisis,” they said.

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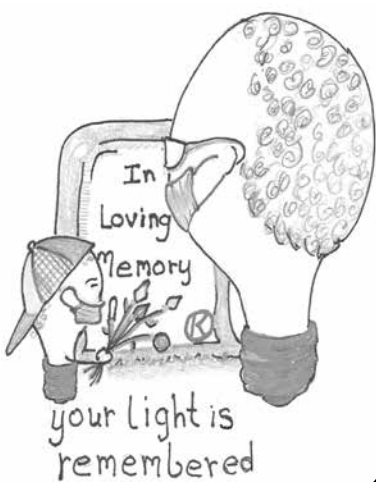
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## COVID Business Help Back on Track

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

July by the Oregon Legislature’s Emergency Board. The monies had been locked up because of a lawsuit that was recently settled.

“We are working as fast as possible to notify applicants and distribute awards, while ensuring security and compliance,” said Anthony Jordan, president of The Contingent, the nonprofit administering the funds.

Grant awards will go to those entities and individuals that applied for the fund in November and December of 2020 and demonstrated financial harm due to COVID-19. No new grant applications are being accepted.

Applicants do not need to re-apply or take any further action.

Officials said that due to the need for COVID-aid outpacing the amount of aid available and the need to follow U.S. Treasury guidelines regarding Federal fund disbursement, not all applications are guaranteed funding.

In March, The Oregon Cares Fund reached a settlement agreement with plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit filed against the fund. The agreement allowed the remaining \$8.8 million temporarily held by the court to be distributed to Black Oregonians, Black-owned businesses and Black-led nonprofits.

The court immediately re-

leased \$5.3 million. The remaining \$3.5 million continues to be held by the court, but those funds are expected to be disbursed in the future upon court approval, officials said.

The Oregon Cares Fund was a targeted grant program available to help Black individuals and families, Black business owners and Black-led nonprofits across Oregon weather the financial harm caused by COVID-19.

This was necessary because the Black community often receives a disproportionately lower amount of financial support from relief funds, such as last year’s CARES Act passed by Congress, officials said.

## Jazz Phenon Eyes Artists’ Sanctuary

**CONTINUED FROM FRONT**

plinary restoration-themed music projects.

“The environment most conducive to my wellness and creative productivity is one where other frontline cultural-workers are supported and immersed in their own artistic devotions,” Spalding

said. “Hence, my intention for this Sanctuary to serve a very real need among my community for BIPOC artist-led space to gather, share ideas, and practice regenerative gardening.”

Spalding has a goal of recruiting 300 individuals to donate \$1,000 by June 3 to complete the purchase of a property at 10302 N.

Charleston Ave., with contributors receiving an invitation to watch her perform in an exclusive zoom concert.

To donate, visit [gofundme.com/f/esperanzas-bipoc-artist-sanctuary-in-portland](https://gofundme.com/f/esperanzas-bipoc-artist-sanctuary-in-portland)