

Housing Crisis

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

staff, the Home Forward board, residents and community partners to fine-tune the framework of the new plan.

“We want to be the best we can possibly be,” she said. “Everyone who takes a paycheck from Home Forward is an ambassador for affordable housing and quality of life.”

There’s also a lot more positive energy at the national HUD level with the new Democratic administration, she said.

“They are extremely responsive to supporting and giving housing authorities what they need to work on addressing local solutions for affordable housing,” she said. “It certainly warms our heart. It’s a big sigh of relief.”

Mathews grew up in rural South Carolina and said the first time she experienced quality housing was when she went to college. She had great parents, but both had low levels of education and though they worked hard, it was never enough to secure stable housing.

“We were truly the working poor,” she said. “They made a dollar too much to qualify for any type of government assistance or anything like that, but it also left us with missing some of the basic necessities, and that was housing.”

Mathews was able to go to college because of a basketball scholarship to Newberry College, a small liberal arts college in her home state.

“That was really the gateway for transforming and transitioning my life,” she said “When I was in college I did a lot of volunteer work through my basketball team with children who lived in affordable housing through the local housing authority.”

Through that program she worked with the local housing authority in mentorship and after-school programs.

“I always felt a strong connect

with the families there and the children because I knew exactly their life experiences because I had lived those experiences,” she said.

Because of her volunteer work, at her college graduation Mathews was surprised to be named the recipient of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award for excelling in community service, one more sign of the direction her life was to take.

“I had no idea this award was even given until my name was called at graduation and was totally a shock to me,” she said. “So these were the kind of things that overlaid my purpose.”

Mathews majored in sociology, which she said helped her understand her own life and her journey.

“It made me more focused on reaching those goals that could transform my life, having been a first generation college student,” she said. “I knew this would be an opportunity for me to change the trajectory of my life and then my children’s and their children’s children.”

After graduation, Mathews landed a job working in compliance for the Aiken Housing Authority in Aiken, S.C., where she looked at all the federal regulations in specific programs to make sure there are standard operating procedures, that staff is property trained and getting feedback from residents.

“Working in that arena I felt like it was a way to advocate for families,” she said, noting that federal regulations can be interpreted in different ways.

“So I helped people in that role, helped people understand that sometimes you are dealt these cards, that some of us, like myself, were born into poverty,” she said, as well as having health issues or the need for older people to age in place.

“We all need a place to call home,” she said.

Summer Tennis Camps Offered



Tennis Coach Don Johnson is the nonprofit chief executive officer and co-founder of Kids N’ Tennis, a culturally, ethnically and economically diverse youth-tennis program.

Coach puts out word on diverse program

Kids N’ Tennis, a nonprofit tennis program serving culturally, ethnically and economically diverse young people, is reaching out to encourage sign-ups for free spring and summer tennis camps, while encouraging all ages to support the group’s annual Juneteenth fundraising tournament.

Tennis is booming and Coach

Don Johnson, the CEO and co-founder of Kids N’ Tennis, says this is a great time for young people to put themselves in the game by signing up for the organization’s special events, promotions and play opportunities.

A free Tennis Play Day last Saturday at the Portland Tennis Center marked the 35th year of free summer tennis for 7 to 18 year old participants. The camps are run at Irving Park in northeast Portland for two months, from June 20 through Aug. 11 and will meet Mondays through Thurs-

days from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The annual Kids N’ Tennis Juneteenth Classic, June 17-19, will be a fundraiser for junior tennis programs with play at the tennis center and Grant Park, also in northeast Portland. Last year was a huge success with 125 participants.

For more information and to sign up for Kids N Tennis activities or the Juneteenth tournament, visit kids-n-tennis.org, call Coach Don Johnson at 503-880-0582 or email donjohnson8@me.com.

Mask Up for Rising COVID

Multnomah County health officials are asking people to wear masks indoors until new COVID-19 counts and hospitalizations start to decline.

Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Vines issued the recommendation last week, saying it was not a mandate but a request for everyone to put their masks back on for a few weeks as they go to school, work and other indoor events. Officials strongly recommend people wear masks in schools.

Multnomah County has been averaging about 350 new cases a day, up from less than 100 in early April.

The current COVID-19 wave



Photo by Lukas Smilan on Pixabay is expected to peak in about a month, according to Oregon Health and Science University.

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