



PO QR code

The Portland Observer

Volume LIII • Number 04



'City of Roses'

www.portlandobserver.com
Wednesday • February 22, 2023

Committed to Cultural Diversity



Local entrepreneur, David Jefferson, moving his store to Lloyd Center

Embracing Sneaker Culture

BY BEVERLY CORBELL

“Black History Month should be every month”, says entrepreneur David Jefferson, and the way he defines it defines his own life, “to understand where you come from and where you’re going, and don’t let anyone else define you.”

Jefferson is living proof that your past doesn’t need to define you. The owner of clothing store Stackin’ Kickz, he recently moved his store from NE 33rd and Sandy to the Lloyd Center Mall where he not only sells “sneaker culture and street wear apparel,” but lifts up others as well with weekly inspirational meetings at the store for middle school boys, soon to be expanded to girls as well.

He grew up in North Portland and didn’t have the best childhood and got into trouble in his youth, Jefferson said. He thought his record would be a thing of the past when he graduated from the University of Oregon in political science, but soon found out that was not the case.

“When I graduated from college I thought that would wash things away, but that’s not what happened,” he said. “I got fired from my first job before I even started because of my record.”

That experience led Jefferson to not trust the system but at the same time inspired the belief that he would not do anything that he didn’t believe in. He had already amassed a big collection of sneakers and loved clothes, so that became his passion and eventually, his livelihood.

“So I started selling things out of my trunk,” he said. He didn’t work in a shoe or clothing store, but instead ordered items off the Internet that weren’t readily available here in Portland.

“My goal was to get things no one else had. I love clothes and love creating outfits, and I became spiritual about the same time,” he said. “Whatever I do, my main goal is to make sure I don’t do something I don’t love, so I settled on shoes and clothes because that’s what I loved.”

Jefferson eventually opened his store

at NE 33rd Avenue and Sandy Blvd., but for safety issues and because of slow foot traffic, about a month ago he moved to the Lloyd Center. His 1,500 square foot store is on the second level next to Joe Brown’s Caramel Corn, which a childhood friend bought a few years ago. He also sells online through his website stackinkickz.com.

His success comes from hard work and belief in himself, he said. “I didn’t wait for things to happen, like loans or help, I just put all my energy into it and after a while the universe had to respond to it.”

Jefferson passes on his belief in self-help through talking with students and local schools and inmates at area prisons where explains his philosophy. He also has a podcast and radio show.

“I go around a problem and expand it,” he said. “I don’t let society define me, I defined myself and I call that the defini-

Love for the Game and Community



New Executive Director Aaron Dickson

Friends of Baseball Taps Longtime Portland Athlete and Youth Mentor

One of Oregon’s most successful youth sports organizations, Friends of Baseball, has hired Aaron Dickson as its new Executive Director. Dickson takes over for fellow Portland State alum, Nova Newcomer. Dickson, a Portland native, has spent the last 12 years dedicated to impacting at-risk youth with Oregon’s largest African-American led non-profit, Self Enhancement Inc. His tenure as Leadership Program Manager delivered critical experience in building foundational programs and solidified his passion for community and mentorship. Proud Grant High School alum, Dickson went on to receive his bachelor’s degree at Portland State University, where he thrived as a defensive back under then coach, Jerry Glanville. It’s no stretch to say he grew up in sports – his father also played football for PSU.

That background, including his own

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7