

PCC And Partners Break Ground!

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

the 2018 Metro Housing Bond and other sources, this project aligns with regional goals for housing affordability and accessibility.

PCC's new Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue (located at 4299 NE Killingsworth St.) opened last fall to the community. It is a collaborative endeavor supported by the Department of Human Services, NAYA and Home Forward, offering a comprehensive array of services, educational resources, and workforce development initiatives.

This center's primary mission is to address racial and

economic disparities by providing residents with access to education and career-track employment opportunities. The services offered include career exploration, coaching, skills development, and comprehensive support systems to help individuals achieve their goals.

Funded by the 2017 PCC bond measure, the 50,000-square-foot Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue is a state-of-the-art structure aiming for LEED Gold certification for integrating Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). This is a sustainable and eco-friendly construction material that contributes to the building's warmth and inviting atmosphere.

Abuse Victim Creates Nonprofit...

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

But a visit to her own grandmother changed her outlook and eventually became the basis of a nonprofit she started in September, Inner Beauty in U.

"I cried to her that I'm not pretty, I don't matter and nobody thinks I'm special," but her grandmother came back with wise words. "She said, 'At the end of the day, the only thing that matters is your heart. You are not responsible for how somebody else treats you, and your beauty comes from within.'"

That's the message Merriweather brings to other troubled young women at The Inner Beauty in U, according to its website:

"We are actively involved in domestic violence prevention and Education. We provide food resources, clothing resources, housing assistance, resume and job search, credit repair and business start-up."

Merriweather wants to help any young, at risk women, eventually to include young men, to learn to deal with the difficult and sometime unfair situations they find them in preventing them from having healthy, happy and productive lives.

When she decided to leave Las Vegas, by which time she

had her mother had healed their relationship, she stayed with her for the next year as she began to turn her life around.

"Women need to understand there is nothing so terrible or so bad that you can't find a way out of it," she said. "There is nothing you've done that you don't deserve to be loved."

That's the basis of Inner Beauty in U's philosophy, Merriweather said.

"Inner Beauty in U is a real story about real women who know there is more out there," she said. "Anyone can change their life and be more than they thought they can be."

Real change is never easy, but Merriweather hopes to make other women's lives better because they will have an organization that is on their side and will do whatever it takes to help another woman overcome the obstacles that may be holding her back.

"We don't want to turn anyone away," she said. "And at the end of the day if I only able to reach one person, I go to sleep knowing someone's life has been changed. That's all I care about at the end of the day."

In short, Merriweather wants to give struggling young women the support she didn't have when she needed it most.

It took a while for Merriweather, 50, to get back on her feet and to help other young women, and she gives a lot of credit to Kalondra Porter-Wright of the nonprofit Porter House Resources, who became a mentor and helped her through the ins and outs of becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit as she was getting Inner Beauty in U off the ground.

"I've often thought what would have happened if Kalondra had been there when I was 17," she said.

But it's her staff, particularly Bri Williams, with a master's in social worker, and Chandra Haynes, who has a mental health certificate in African/American health. They work with clients individually and also train mentor volunteers, Merriweather said.

"So, Kolandra helped with the financial aspect and Bri and Chandra have been with me, encouraging me, wouldn't let me quit, from the very beginning," she said.

To learn more about Inner Beauty in U, go to <https://innerbeautyinu.org>. Call 360-723-2344 or send an email to Innerbeautyinyou11@gmail.com. More volunteers are needed and donations and sponsors are encouraged.

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MAY 30
Hacienda CDC (for residents only)
9:30-11 a.m.
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Mobile Showers
12-2 p.m.
247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland

JUNE 3
Doreen's Place (for residents only)
12-2:30 p.m.
610 NW Broadway St,
Portland

JUNE 4
Jean's Place (for residents only)
1:30-3:30 p.m.
18 NE 11th Ave, Portland
Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
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JUNE 10
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Mobile Showers
12-2 p.m.
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JUNE 17
Doreen's Place (for residents only)
12-2:30 p.m.
610 NW Broadway St,
Portland

JUNE 18
Union Gospel Mission
2-3 p.m.
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JUNE 24
Mobile Showers
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
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9-11 a.m.
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JUNE 27
Hacienda CDC (for residents only)
9:30-11 a.m.
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Mobile Showers
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