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Project Clean Slate

State legislature moves to support the program for 2012

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Out of a legislative season that many lawmakers are describing as better than expected, one clear victory has emerged: Project Clean Slate will again be funded by the state.

The community service organization, which helps Oregonians clean up their legal records so they can more easily find jobs and housing, is considered a national model of economic empowerment for underserved communities.

Founder and project manager Roy Jay says the \$300,000 Oregon lawmakers moved to invest in the program for 2012 is not a lot of money, but the organization's small overhead means financial stability for the project.

"Both sides of the aisle, both Democrat and Republican, they see the real productive result that the program has generated, people are back on track for helping remove the barriers to employment, housing, education, and credit that have been barring some people from applying for jobs," Jay said.

"I'm not just talking about the people that are in lower income - these are also folks that have also worked for some of these companies for years that all of a sudden they realize they are facing this barrier."

Since 2005 Project Clean Slate has helped qualifying residents of Multnomah County work out an array of agreements with law enforcement to regain drivers' licenses, make up child support payment and in some cases wipe out low level misdemeanor and felony penalties in exchange for community service.

The program also requires participants to attend classes in money management and avoid re-offending in any way.

The idea, supporters say, is to help people move forward in their lives through resolving legal trouble; the entire process can take up to a year or more.

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BIRTHDAY BEAUTY



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

Kentucky Derby was the theme for Betty Key's 80th birthday party last week, which featured a fashion show of hats for an appreciative crowd of family and friends. Nearly 100 people attended the gathering at the Rose Quarter in northeast Portland.

Z-Man Basketball Tournament July 16

This year's event honors long-time community coach Phil Walden

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

The Annual Z-Man Basketball Tournament and Day of Re-Tilling the Soil, Saturday July 16, is dedicated to longtime Portland-area coach and teacher Phillip Walden.

Organizer Larry Collins said Walden, who is currently battling cancer, has dedicated his life to working with young people, particularly in track and field.

"We wanted to give back to this man who has given so much to our young people," Collins said.

The summer community service event and free basketball tournament includes a book giveaway and free party at Irving Park.

The clean-ups start with free breakfast at 8:15 a.m. at the Maple Mallory Apartments, 3720 NE Mallory Ave.; Jefferson High School, 5210 N. Kerby Ave.; and Cornerstone Community Church, 2216 NE

Killingsworth St. The Z-Tournament, named in honor of deceased Portland Police Officer Mark Zylawy, runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Irving Park, NE 7th and Fremont Street.

The competition features one age bracket of eight teams of fifth and sixth graders, and a second bracket of seventh and eighth graders. To sign up for the tournament call 503-839-1701, or 503-839-8676.

The book giveaway and party

are at noon, with hamburgers and more, at Irving Park. Sponsors include the Housing Authority of Portland; the Portland Police Bureau; State Sen. Chip Shields; Providence Health System; On the Block Ministry; Multnomah County Emergency Management; and People of Purpose and Associates (POPA).

"This is a very big deal, every year it keeps growing," Collins, of POPA, says. "That's why our motto is 'stop pointing fingers,

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Prison Garden Program Inspires Inmates

Positive attitudes harvested through donated seeds, supplies, time

By Brian Stimson
Of The Skanner News

In seven Oregon state prisons, one job assignment has become especially sought-after; at one, you have to be all but a lifer to get on the team.

The prison garden, according to a number of program administrators around the state, has become a way for inmates to learn new

skills, cooperate on a project and help feed themselves and their communities.

While there haven't been any studies completed on the effect the program has on recidivism or aggression, administrators say they see a difference in the attitudes of the inmate gardeners.

"It's been very positive," says Dale Ahlstrom, physical plant manager at Columbia River Correctional Institution.

For the last two years, the Lettuce Grow program has been a driving force behind seven prison gardens in the state of Oregon. In addition to finding donated seeds, soil amendments, and volunteers, program founder Sarah Patterson helped bring in an Oregon State University Master Gardener class to each of the facilities that Lettuce

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