

MBE 2011

Minority Business Enterprise
Special Edition Inside

CDC Funds Gutted

Advocates say grant cancellation gets our priorities all wrong

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Should we prevent teens from picking up guns and knives? Or should we simply put them in jail after they hurt somebody? The Senate committee in charge of the U.S. budget seems to have chosen prison over prevention.

Public health officials think that's wrong. "It is crucially important that we provide young people with the resources and opportunities they need to avoid violence instead of waiting for them to commit violence and the only solution be arrest and incarceration," says Noelle Wiggins, program manager for Multnomah County's Community Capacity Center in Portland, Ore.

Wiggins was responding to news that last week, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee cut \$19.7 million in funding for youth violence prevention. That's the Centers for Disease Control's entire budget for national violence prevention.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people aged 10 to 24. For African American young people, it is the leading cause of death.

"To see an entire area of violence prevention cut where public health has really an enormous contribution to make was a very surprising development," said Rachel Davis, managing director of the Prevention Institute in Oakland, Calif., which stands to lose funding for the UNITY research program.

Public health studies have identified risk factors that increase the likelihood of youth violence in communities. But they also have found protective factors that help prevent teens from picking committing violence in the first place, Davis said.

"The kinds of things that put communities at risk, are: poverty and economic disparity, community deterioration, a lack of opportunities for young people, truancy, illiteracy and a failing school system, also-

See GRANT on page 3

HOPE FOR JOBS



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

Since last year, Daniels says, they've added more math components to their training to help students do better on their final exam – which lasts two hours and covers everything from cement forms to tools. The program is free for participants, funded through grants and corporate sponsorships, but the coursework is difficult. At the end, graduates get tools, certifications, and help with job placement. Photo courtesy Constructing Hope

A Jobs Training Program That Works

Constructing Hope is free for participants – but coursework is

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

With all the talk about jobs creation coming out of government offices, there's at least one small local nonprofit that is actually doing it.

The Constructing Hope Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides training, equipment and job mentoring to clients referred through the criminal justice system – and with the help of local unions and construction companies, they are not placing their graduates right into

family-wage jobs.

"With the changes in the economy, construction is a viable career, it pays a lot of money, and a person can start a construction career and have a living wage," says Director Pat Daniels.

"We do target people who have a legal history, because our belief is that once you've done your time you deserve a second chance," she says.

Low-income minority men and women from the community are also referred through Worksystems, Inc., and other jobs programs – but even if you are referred you have to pass an interview

process to win selection.

The program is free for participants, funded through grants and corporate sponsorships – but it is not for the faint of heart.

The heart of the program is a nine-week construction pre-apprenticeship training.

The course content is heavy and varied, leaving those who make it to the end with: flagging, fork-lift and CPR/first aid certifications; computer skills, a digital resume and email; a driver's license; hundreds of dollars worth of tools plus work

See HOPE on page 3

INDEX	
News	2-4,6
Opinion	4
A & E	5,8
Sports	7
Bids/Classifieds	7

REAP: Celebrating 10 Years

Youth leadership organization touches thousands of young lives

Celebrating 10 years of services to youth, Reaching and Empowering All People (REAP) held a fundraising gala Thursday, Sept. 29, at the Oregon Convention Center. Speakers included former Sen. Margaret Carter, former Portland Public Schools

Superintendent Dr. Matthew Prophet, and Roy Jay of the African American Chamber of Commerce.

Fashioned as a dinner theater, the event featured a play called "C-Student," performed by young people. Written by REAP staffer and artist Sunshine Dixon, the show is produced in

partnership with the BaseRoots Theatre Company.

"This celebration is going to showcase the solution around supporting students to effectively identify the leadership potential of young adults," says Executive Director Mark Jackson, before the gala. "If given the proper support and

belief system – that what they have to offer has validation and capital — we believe we can turn individuals around and accelerate the change that we all envision for our young people, because they're our future. It's not the idea of just their future, they represent our future,"

See REAP on page 3