



# THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



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## Birth Survey Released

### Midwives group works toward better health for moms, babies

Lisa Loving  
Of The Skanner News

Black mothers in Oregon often give birth alone, are afraid during their hospital stay, and rarely take birthing classes or breastfeed their babies.

That's according to the preliminary results of a groundbreaking survey of African American women on their birth outcomes, conducted by the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, with number-crunching assistance from Portland State University.

The ICTC released a statement Wednesday after briefing health care professionals and service providers at Legacy Emanuel Hospital.

"These are issues that need to be exposed, explored and understood by the healthcare, public services and nonprofit sectors so that we can collectively work towards equity in the provision of healthcare services for pregnant and parenting Black women," said ICTC founder and Director Shafia Monroe.

The Center, based in North Portland, offers trainings and conventions around the United States focusing on increasing the number of midwives of color as well as doulas - helpers who assist new mothers with pregnancy, breastfeeding and family care, among other things.

The first-of-its-kind survey of 245 Black women was launched last year to dig into the reasons why African American babies are disproportionately underweight, and why they suffer the highest infant mortality in the area - 8.6 percent, compared to 4.9 percent for Whites and Hispanics, and 7.3 percent for people of color overall, according to the Multnomah County Health Disparities Project.

The Infant mortality rate measures the number of baby deaths in the first year of life, per 1,000 live births.

The ICTC has been working toward the survey for several years, as part of the

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# COLLEGE FAIR



PHOTO BY JULIE KEEFE

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education released a joint statement Friday sketching out new guidelines for university admissions - which clearly walk a tightrope between past Supreme Court decisions and the need to encourage more racial diversity in higher education.

## Feds Shift on Race Admissions

### Local efforts give youths of color a boost into higher education

By Lisa Loving  
Of The Skanner News

Adrienne Livingston of the Black United Fund spent months organizing last Saturday's second annual BUF College Fair at Portland State University.

She and her staff put together loads of materials and special assistance just to make sure as many youths as possible understand all their post-high school options.

But even Livingston - who

has immersed herself in university admissions - was shocked at the Obama Administration's reversal last week of his predecessor's elimination of race as a qualification for college admissions.

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education released a joint statement Friday sketching out the new guidelines - which clearly walk a tightrope between past Supreme Court decisions and the need to encourage more

racial diversity in higher education.

"Ensuring that our nation's students are provided with learning environments comprised of students of diverse backgrounds is not just a lofty ideal," wrote Attorney General Eric Holder. "As the Supreme Court has recognized, the benefits of participating in diverse learning environments flow to an individual, his or her classmates, and the community as a whole."

"These benefits greatly con-

tribute to the educational, economic, and civic life of this nation," he said Friday.

The crisis of college enrollment for African American students is stark: Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which have for more than 100 years graduated more Black students than any other institutions, are seeing enrollment drop-offs that threaten to shutter some campuses.

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## YouthPass Program for Kids on TriMet

### PPS students keep free transportation, but funds only cover this year

By Helen Silvis  
Of The Skanner News

High school students in have secured free transportation through the TriMet YouthPass until the end of this school year.

That's thanks to a deal inked this week between TriMet and the City of Portland, that will cover the program's \$675,000

shortfall.

Still, the future of the program remains unclear, despite hopes that it will be extended to students in and across the metro region.

Multnomah Youth Commission organized support for the YouthPass, sending a letter out to school principals Nov. 27.

"We had an overwhelming response," says Todd Diskin, the mayor's youth

engagement co-coordinator, who works with the youth commission.

"I received 250 emails to my office, from people in the community. They were from students, parents, and teachers. That spoke to the immediacy of the need. People really responded to this and told us it is very important."

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