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INSIDE

Death with Dignity

page 4

Vanport Survivor

page 6

Healthy Holidays

page 10

Mistakes But Not Misuse

Wilhoite Defends Outgoing President Marcus Mundy

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

The Urban League of Portland has taken two painful blows in the last month. First came the sudden death of Rob Ingram, inspirational leader of the Urban League's Young Professionals. Now, the league has lost its president, Marcus Mundy, after a succession of audits found \$44,000 in undocumented expenses.

What's next? Multnomah County has threatened to withdraw funding if the league doesn't demonstrate tightened financial control of its funds. The Department of Justice has opened an investigation into the league's fiscal management. And questions have been raised about \$320,000 in City of Portland funding that supports job training and other workforce development activities.

"What they have to show is that they have fiscal controls in place and the money spent was in support of the Urban League's mission," said Dave Austin, communications specialist with the county. "If we don't see that controls are in place the funding is in jeopardy."

Austin said the county has granted the league a total of \$729,000, or roughly \$250,000 a year. The majority of the money supports the Urban League's senior services. Some other contracts support health work the league has undertaken. That money is not paid to the league until after the work has been done, Austin said.

"We have a long relationship with the Urban League and we would like to see them succeed," he said.

The Urban League has a 66-year history of advocating for Portland's African American and minority communities. With Mundy at the helm, the league has arguably been more influential than at any time in its past.

In 2008, it produced the State of Black Oregon report, which sounded an alarm about deep poverty in Portland's African

See MUNDY on page 13

HOLIDAY BIKE DRIVE

Kids from all over Multnomah County were matched up with brand-new bikes courtesy of the Community Cycling Center. More than 400 kids and their parents got bikes, helmets and safety training Sunday afternoon at Legacy Emanuel Hospital's grand atrium. Since the Holiday Bike Drive's inception in 1995, the Community Cycling Center has provided over 4,500 children in Portland with the gift of a first bicycle.



PHOTO BY ROHITH GUNAWARDENA

PCRI's Foreclosure Help - for Free

Homeownership retention program helps seniors stay in homes

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

There were years when Wendy Williams thought she would be on the street. She was under fire from the IRS and she didn't have a working bathroom for three years.

Williams' fortunes changed when she got involved with Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI) and their Free Homeownership Retention Program for seniors.

"Without the program, my house probably would've been foreclosed by now," she says.

The program provides culturally specific home ownership retention and counseling. It connects clients with resources for such services as home repair, tax deferral, legal assistance and utility and energy assistance.

The program is a part of the Minority Homeowner Assistance Collaborative (MHAC), which includes the African American Alliance for

Homeownership (AAAH), Hacienda CDC, NAYA Family and PCRI.

MHAC will be holding an informational session on the Oregon State Property Tax Deferral Program on Tuesday, Dec. 21 at the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs.

The homeownership retention program is funded by the Portland Housing Bureau but PCRI's Homeownership Retention Coordinator Shalonda Menefee says it needs more sup-

port to provide more services.

"It's important for black senior home owners because we connect them to agencies and provide access to resources," says Menefee. "It also helps agencies because it helps them tap into an under served population."

Williams has lived in her home for fourteen years. She says the sellers told her she wouldn't have to pay taxes on the property after ten years; after not paying taxes for a few

See SENIORS on page 3

INDEX	
News	2,3,6,9-11
Opinion	4,5
A & E	6,7
Healthy Food.....	8,9
Bids/Classifieds.....	11

OSU Football Tackle Fred Thompson

Why do too many young black athletes die of heart problems?

Fred Thompson a freshman football player at Oregon State University suddenly collapsed and died during a pickup basketball game Nov. 7. He was rushed to Good Samaritan hospital in Corvallis, but it was too late to save his life. It was just four days before his 20th birthday.

Thompson was from Richmond, Calif., said in his bio that he chose Oregon State

because of its "family vibe, nice campus and great academics." The Oregonian reports that the 6 foot 4", 317 lb defensive tackle, who graduated from Oakland Tech died of an apparent heart attack.

Sadly, Thompson's too-early death is not a uniquely rare occurrence, according to Richard Allen Williams MD, a fellow of the American College of Cardiology, a founder of the Association of Black Cardiologists

and author of "The Athlete and Heart Disease: Diagnosis, Evaluation and Management."

"It's not that common but it's not uncommon; it's not rare," Williams said. "It occurs in one out of every 500,000 athletes. There is a death."

While we don't yet know what took

See ATHLETE on page 3