

Freedom

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The PBS exhibit is based on the documentary, "Freedom Riders," by filmmaker Stanley Nelson that premiered on PBS's "American Experience" May 2011.

Raymond Arsenault's book, "Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice," on which the film is based, is considered the definitive history of the Freedom Rides.

Roosevelt Principal Charlene Williams says, "Roosevelt High School is building a college-going culture, fueled by a dose of

ice and deeds."

The "Freedom Riders, Fighters & Writers Exhibit" was designed to accomplish the following goals: to inform and inspire local citizens about the role the Freedom Rides played in the Civil Rights Movement; to honor Portland's local Freedom Riders and Fighters; to engage local audiences in exploring ways to take a stand for social justice; to support local students' travels to historic black colleges and civil rights sites; and to provide an opportunity for Roosevelt students to advance and highlight their writing and presentation skills.

The students, under the direction of Roosevelt's Writing and Publishing Center facilitator, Kate McPherson, spent the summer and fall of 2011 conducting oral history interviews

with two Portland-area Freedom Riders, as well as other local men and women engaged in social justice work. They also interviewed staff in Mayor Sam Adams' office, The Oregonian and Powells Books to learn about public service, journalism and career choices. Material gathered through these

During the month of January, a "Freedom Riders, Fighters & Writers Exhibit" created by Roosevelt High School students

moral indignation. Students of color and those in poverty are statistically less likely to go to college. Adults and students at Roosevelt are not OK with that. They are rallying around the recognition that education is a civil right. And starting in January, they'll show what they mean in words, serv-



Roosevelt High School students researching the Civil Rights movement toured the Oregonian offices, where they met reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones, second from left. Photo courtesy Roosevelt High School

interviews provided inspiration for the creation of poems, narratives and artwork for the exhibit as well as to improve their writing and research skills.

First person contacts with individuals involved in social justice work provided powerful experiences for understanding his-

torical events and community problems. Roosevelt student Dorian Erich says, "To be a Freedom Fighter does not mean to be something extremely big or perfect... Becoming a Freedom Fighter will change lives for [a] better future."

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them up to fail.

"We shouldn't leave them with convictions," said Judge Patricia Martin. "Why haven't we thought about automatic expungement for juveniles?"

"Do you know how many kids in child protection can't get a job because they have a conviction?"

A staggering one in three Americans have been arrested by the time they are 25, a new federal study reported this month. The crimes? Most common are arson, disorderly behavior, vandalism, burglary and theft.

Researchers said the figures may reflect a criminal justice system that has become increasingly inflexible and focused on punishment to the detriment of prevention.

International studies show the United

States jails more people than any other Western democracy: 714 for every 100,000 people, compared to 96 for Germany, 91 for France and 142 for Britain which has the highest rate in Europe.

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At the Dec. 9 conference, Judge Martin condemned what she called "fake" crimes. A boy in a state institution took a candy bar from the storeroom, she said, and was charged with trespassing on state property and robbery. Consequences? Yes, she said.

Criminal charges? No.

"It just doesn't make sense. We have to be smarter about how we help kids and families."

Jonathan Cloud, a delinquency prevention specialist, said brain development research should guide policy. Children are hardwired to mirror the adults around them, and the experiences they have, he said. Comfort and safety are essential and so are joy and pleasure.

"The best things you all can do, is construct experiences that turn the brain on and help kids understand what they can do."

"The kids you're working with don't have a lot of positive "files" to draw from: The guy down the street who beats people up the drug dealer. Whatever is on late night TV. A

kid in domestic violence will have the neuro track for aggression locked in."

"I want to load his file cabinet up with tons and tons of possible files to draw from so that when he gets to 14 or 15 he has a lot of successful experiences to draw from."

Cloud said that teens are hardwired to take risks, challenge authority and seek excitement. Breaking rules and making mistakes have to be understood as efforts to find their own unique path in life.

Hill Walker, a researcher from the University of Oregon has studied children from pre-kindergarten through adulthood. He called for more investment in prevention. Children with problems can be identified very early, he said. The research shows that when families get support from pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade, children don't fall into crime.

Study

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Female grades were also affected but the study suggests that grade curving masked the severity of the results. Elizabeth Hope, who also attends UO, suggests that the gap between male and female achievement during fall term could be due, in part, to societal constructs.

According to the study, only ten percent of female students watched zero football games in 2010. Even less males reported not watching a single game.

Across racial lines, the survey found that black male students are the most affected by the football team's success.

"There are relatively few non-white students so those results are suggestive at best," says Isaac Swensen, a coauthor of the report. "80 percent of the sample were white students."

According to the UO's campus profile, people of color make up only 17.6 percent of the student population; less than two percent of the student body is Black.

The lack of Black students is one of the reasons Harris is skeptical of the study. "Even if they interviewed every African American student there still wouldn't be a

reasonable survey size," he says. "I don't buy it right now. There could be other factors like the economy. Plus fall term is weird for many students anyway."

The researchers acknowledge that most of the hype generated for the football team comes from students rather than the university's promotion.

Some examples include students wearing athletic apparel around campus and attempting to lobby their professors for leniency on game days during the school week.

In response to the survey question, "Does the success of the University of Oregon football team decrease the amount of time you study for classes?", males were more than twice as likely to answer "probably" and "definitely." However, the majority of both males and females responded "definitely not" and "probably not."

Both professors and students acknowledge that the school tries to work with students when conflicts arise with athletic events and class schedules.

Harris says the university sent out an

email last January to professors to be more accommodating for the BCS Championship game.

For example, UO professor Peter Laufer arranged a compromise that allowed one of his students to miss class and instead, complete an alternate assignment that incorporated his trip to Arizona for the game. As a

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part of an interview class, he assigned the student to interview one person at every gas station he stopped at and then compile an essay from the series of interviews.

Nonetheless, researchers suggest that the gender gap in grades and the seemingly negative effect of football season on GPAs across the board can be addressed by a reallocation of resources to academics.

The report points out that 211 out of 218 Division 1 athletic departments received subsidies in 2010. According to researchers, the average subsidy increased 25 percent to nine million dollars from 2006 to 2010. "Our results suggest the subsidies should be the other way around," says Swensen.

However, Swensen admits the researchers weren't able to obtain specific information on subsidies received by UO's Athletic Department. Also, he says there haven't been studies on the effects of other sports seasons on student grades.

Hope suggests the student body's fixation with football might come down to a simpler issue.

"The whole school can't really rally around the science department," she says. "However, everyone can participate in football in some way."

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com

