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Trayvon Martin Killing

Portlanders fill Peninsula Park to protest 'lynching'

A crowd of people wearing hoodies gathered in Peninsula Park in North Portland early Saturday to express support for the family of Trayvon Martin, the Florida teen who was shot dead Feb. 26 on a trip to the store to buy candy and an iced tea.

Organizers Mary Hill and Teressa Raiford had invited several pastors to speak, including Rev. J.W. Friday, Rev. Leroy Haines and Pastor Julia Neufeld. The mics were open for any community member who wanted to talk to the crowd, and many people spoke out. The chant, "no justice, no peace," was heard several times during the rally.

"Hoodies up," said Pastor Friday before making a prayer for the slain teen and the assembled crowd.

Speakers expressed sadness and voiced support Trayvon Martin's family in their call for the arrest of George Zimmerman, the volunteer neighborhood watch captain, who told police he acted in self defense, when he shot the 14-year-old high school student.

"How is it you can shoot a man down, shoot him down with the neighbors hearing him cry out 'Help?'" The law let him go home with the gun in his hand," said one speaker.

Speakers connected the shooting to similar events in U.S. history – the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till during the Civil Rights era – as well as to more recent shootings in Portland. The deaths of Kendra James, Keaton Otis, James Chassie and Aaron Campbell were among those remembered.

Hill, a mother of five children under 13, said the Martin's death has touched her profoundly. "I am a changed woman for ever. I will never be the same," she said. She urged the crowd to sign a circulating petition, saying, "This Zimmerman, he needs to be locked up."

One speaker who identified herself as a Hispanic woman, said racism was to blame for the shooting and that she felt shame that

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SKITTLES, TEA AND JUSTICE



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Trayvon Martin's cousin, Cedric President-Turner, 18, from Tacoma, led hundreds of people on a march to Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park March 25 to celebrate the life of his cousin.

School Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class

'Restorative Justice' could have saved Trayvon Martin's life

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Trayvon Martin was a typical Black teenager. And one of the ways he was typical was that he had a history of suspension from school. This week the world learned that the Florida teen was on a 10-day suspension for having in his possession a pipe and an empty baggie.

In fact, that's why the 17-year-old Florida teen was living at his father's fiancée's gated community on the fateful evening when he lost his life.

"We know that excluding kids from school doesn't work," says Tammy Jackson, an administrator in Portland Public Schools' Office of Student Services.

Schools in the Portland-metro area are pioneering a new approach to school discipline that aims to prevent suspensions and expulsions. Restorative Justice takes an educational approach to discipline. Supporters say it is our best hope for keeping students of color in school and on track.

Trayvon Martin had been sus-

pending from school twice before: for being late and for skipping class. Read the comment threads of news articles on the case, and you'll find that some people believe those facts mean that Martin was "a juvenile delinquent" a "drug addict" or even a "thug."

It's too late now to prevent Trayvon Martin from being suspended. Yet if his school had used Restorative Justice instead, he might never have encountered George Zimmerman.

Civil Rights
National studies tell us that school discipline is a bedrock civil rights issue.

In fact, as Lisa Loving reported March 6, in her article for The Skanner News, "Suspensions and Expulsions: The School to Prison Pipeline," kicking kids out of school as a form of punishment is an all-too-common rite of passage for African American students, especially Black boys. From pre-school on, Black students

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PFLAG's Edwards on Marriage Fight

Anti-gay group worked to split Democratic vote against Obama

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Democrats and marriage equality advocates are in an uproar over newly unsealed documents showing an anti-gay organization's strategy to discredit the president – and pit Black and Latino leaders against gay voters.

The document, a 2008-09 report to the

group's Board of Directors, squarely places the discrediting and electoral defeat of President Obama in 2012 as a priority, including a section called, "Sideswiping Obama," to which the group appears to be suggesting a \$1 million financial commitment.

The NOM is currently suing the Maine Ethics Commission and its chair, Walter McKee, over disclosure requirements under Maine's election laws; NOM has lost

repeated attempts in court to keep secret its donor list, and the documents were released as part of the court records in that case, which the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to take up since 2010.

The document, which is stamped throughout with the word "CONFIDENTIAL," lists the defeat of Proposition 8 in California as a

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