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Tubman School Closed

Families struggle in vain against fast-tracked process

By Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

The Portland Public Schools Board voted Monday night to close one of the district's only schools focusing on science, math and engineering – and the only all-girls public school in the state. <http://www.theskanner.com/article/Tubman-Humboldt-Families-Fighting-for-Their-Schools-2012-04-13>

The panel also voted to close Humboldt Elementary – after years of proposing to shutter it — and send its students to Boise-Eliot.

Facing \$27.5 million in state cuts, combined with federal budget cuts and a tax base crippled by the economic downturn, district officials said the Harriet Tubman Young Women's Leadership Academy didn't have enough students to warrant keeping the doors open.

Parents countered that the five-year-old school never had a chance to grow beyond its 224 students because the district had threatened to close it so many times.

Board members Matt Morton and Martin Gonzales voted against the Tubman closure.

"It was really sad and it confirmed the concerns that the whole thing was a done deal," said prospective Tubman parent Sonya Gregg. "When you only have 20 days to make it happen there's only so much you can do."

Gregg confirmed that her daughter will now attend George Middle School, their neighborhood school in St. Johns.

"We have our local middle school and we'll make the best of it," she said. "This sounded too good to be true."

District officials fast-tracked the Tubman closure vote, pulling it out of the general budget package, which will be voted on May 14.

The district said it sped up the closure to help girls' families find new schools more quickly, but Tubman families say it was to

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INGRAM LEGACY



PHOTO BY HELEN SVISIS

About 200 teens attended the Rob Ingram Youth Summit Against Violence Saturday April 21. Ingram's mother, Milele Hobbs, welcomed youth to the summit, which was organized by Multnomah Youth Commission. The young people developed a range of policy recommendations and presented them to city and county politicians, school leaders and decision makers.

Grassroots Foreclosure Forum

Church groups, Occupy spinoff collaborate with Rep. Lew Frederick

By Bruce Poinsette
Special To The Skanner News

Instead of enjoying a sunny Sunday afternoon, members of Occupy North East (ONE) - "The Black Working Group," We Are Oregon and Ainsworth United Church of Christ (UCC) came together to discuss foreclosure and how churches can get involved.

"Our position is that the struggle has to emanate from the ground up," says Ahjamu Umi,

of ONE. "It can't happen any other way and everyone needs to be involved."

Umi's words were reflected by the racially diverse group gathered in Ainsworth UCC's Cambric Parlor. Ainsworth considers itself a "multi-cultural, multi-racial, open & affirming, Just Peace and accessible church".

Following introductions, participants shared their personal foreclosure stories.

One woman told the group her foreclosure was more painful

than a divorce she was going through around the same time. Another couldn't help but curse when she relived her experience.

While big banks were the main target of the testimonies, ONE's Alicia Jackson expressed a broader sense of distrust. She says her home was marked for foreclosure in 2008 and she self evicted out of fear. When she went to a nonprofit organization for counseling, she says she was charged \$25 for a credit check. Jackson later found out she

could get the service for free. In addition, she said she was receiving letters from various groups, but didn't know who to trust.

Ultimately, Jackson says she found reliable help in ONE and We Are Oregon. Jackson refuses to be embarrassed by the experience.

"Why should we be ashamed," she says. "The banks should be ashamed. They are committing the crimes."

Umi stressed the need to re-

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Signature Event for Small Businesses

54 Hours + Your New Business Plan = Portland Startup Weekend

By Bruce Poinsette
Special To The Skanner News

When Jeff Martens came to Portland Startup Weekend (PDXSW) two years ago, he had left his last employer and was looking for a fresh start.

"I was going to look for a job but then I thought it would be great if I could start my own business instead of getting a job with

someone else," he says. "Fast forward a year and a half later and we've raised venture capital."

PDXSW is a competition where aspiring entrepreneurs try to bring their business ideas to life over the course of 54 hours.

Martens is the co-founder and CEO of CPUUsage, a PDXSW success story. He says when he came to the event that he didn't know anyone. However, when he pitched

his idea for a business on Friday night, it became popular.

By Sunday, he had the foundation and confidence to go forward with his business. CPUUsage has since raised venture capital from Silicon Valley investors and now Martens helps run PDXSW, along with lead organizer Shashi Jain, to show his apprecia-

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