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New Ideas on 'Crime'

Harm Reduction Conference spotlights alternatives

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

Overdose, disease, arrest and imprisonment are among the most serious consequences of injecting drugs. Remove overdose and add the danger of being abused, and the same risks apply to prostitution. Drug users and sex workers take the brunt of these risks, but their families, children and the community also suffer.

National experts at the 9th annual Harm Reduction Conference, "From Public Health to Social Justice", which convened in Portland Nov. 15-18, say the way we deal with drug use and sex work can make a big difference. The harm reduction approach works with people who currently use drugs or work in the sex trade, encouraging them to identify the risks involved and to take steps to minimize the resulting harm.

"We started our needle exchange program 22 years ago in 1989," says Kathy Oliver Ph.D., executive director of the homeless youth nonprofit Outside In. "We did it because we didn't think it would work to just tell everyone not to take drugs. It allows us to meet people where they are at and move them toward a safer lifestyle, one step at a time."

Outside In still operates one of two needle exchange programs in Portland, and uses harm reduction alongside other less controversial approaches. Multnomah County started the second needle exchange program 20 years ago. In partnership with Outside In and Portland Womens Crisis Line, the county also coordinates a "Bad Date Line," that encourages sex workers to circulate descriptions of violent or abusive clients.

The conference included the voices of people who identified themselves as current drug users or sex workers.

"The cool thing about this conference is, it lets people who are living this experience come and have a voice, and share a place at the table to help make the community safer

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TRAGIC FIRE



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

James McClendon is embraced by a friend hours after the fire was extinguished at Mack & Dub's last week. The fire is being investigated as an arson, a burglary, and a possible hate crime. The tragedy has a wider impact because the cafe has become a major community meeting place.

Mack & Dub: We Will Re-Open

Restaurant owners work to recover after devastating fire

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

James McClendon and William Travis, known to many as Mack and Dub, have been building their cooking reputation for years. Despite a fire that severely damaged Mack & Dub's Excellent Chicken and Waffles last Wednesday, they vow to push on and re-open.

"We're committed to our business, our brand and our community," says Travis.

Last week's fire is being investigated by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) as an arson, burglary and possible hate crime.

According to Sgt. Pete Simpson of the PPB, fire investigators estimate the damage at \$50,000-\$75,000.

McClendon says the owners will be meeting with adjusters later this week.

Part of the damage included racist graffiti.

During an interview with The Skanner News last week,

Simpson couldn't specify what the graffiti said.

McClendon won't specify either because he doesn't want to empower the perpetrators.

"We didn't really want to put it out there because we, as Black people, have already been subject to so much throughout the test of time," he says. "I think people already felt bad enough knowing something was put out there and we don't want to give the haters their props. We're not going to advertise

what you put on our wall for you. To me, that's what they wanted."

Mack & Dub's opened up on Feb. 1. The owners say the date was purposeful because it's the first day of Black History Month.

"It's a good anniversary every year," says Travis.

Both men grew up cooking and have been in the music industry for years. McClendon was a member of the U-Krew, which was recently inducted

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Minority Contracting Initiatives Ready

New City of Portland programs will focus on developing small firms

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

The City of Portland is rolling out new initiatives to address disparities in contracting that negatively affect women and minority owned firms.

"The idea of this program is to develop those contractors so that they can take some of our large contracts," says Christine

Moody, chief procurement officer for the City. "As a development over time, the idea is that a minority contractor or a woman owned business will be in line to take some of our largest contracts in the areas such as sewer construction, water construction, street improvement, building alteration and building construction. That's specifically where the City bids out 95-98 percent of its prime contracts."

With the new Prime Contractor Development and Professional Services Marketing and Outreach Programs, the City hopes to create more competitive opportunities and provide resources for minority, women and emerging small businesses (MWESB).

According to the City's 2011-2012 Procurement Services Annual Report, MWESB

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