

THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



For The Skanner
news alerts
Text "NEWS" to
503-715-0890 or
scan this QR code



The Skanner news alerts

Dropout Program Axed

Mayor eliminates Youth Connect, angers many

By Helen Silvis
Of The Skanner News

The City of Portland has axed \$379,000 in funding for a program targeted at preventing school dropout, closing the achievement gap and keeping some of the city's poorest students in school and out of trouble.

The Summer Youth Connect program identified students most at risk of dropping out as early as 8th grade, and offered them academic support, paid internships, and exposure to college and career planning resources. In 2012, 1,650 students received academic and career support through Summer Youth Connect. Around 96 percent of them were from low-income families, and more than 70 percent were youth of color.

Intended to prevent crime, reduce generational poverty and build the future workforce, the programs have shown some success in keeping students on track for graduation, college and career.

Heather Ficht, who manages the Summer Works youth employment program at WorkSystems, says the costs of not employing youth will be higher, since young people with no money and nothing to do all summer are more likely to get involved in minor crimes, for example, riding the max without a ticket.

Hales told *The Skanner News* that the cuts were necessary to cover a projected \$25 million shortfall.

"I love this program and this is a very hard cut to make," Hales said. "But we have a very large hole in our budget that we have to fill. So as soon as we got here we started looking at everything. We looked at our own staff and we reduced it from 25 people to 14, to save around \$600,000 a year. We're going to be pretty relentless in looking everywhere in terms of short-term cuts that we have to make, in order to balance the budget."

"The best way for the City of Portland to

See CUTS on page 3

GUNS, CHEAP

A man holds an inactive missile launcher he purchased near the Seattle Police Gun Buy Back on Saturday, Jan. 26. The missile launcher was later confiscated by the police. The event, which was held in a parking lot underneath the freeway between James and Cherry Streets, was forced to close up 3 hours early because so many people showed up to trade in their guns that they ran out of gift certificates. There were numerous people carrying signs offering to pay more for the guns on some of the streets near the buy back location.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Youth Summit Welcomes Parents

Organizers focus event on physical, mental health -- and music

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

The 7th Annual Portland Youth Summit, coming up Saturday, Feb. 9, at Portland State University Smith Memorial Union, brings a focus on physical and mental wellness with the theme, "Be Healthy or Die Trying."

The not-to-be-missed youth talent show Saturday at 6:30 p.m. is hosted by Vursatyl, an MC from the Portland hip hop group Lifesavas.

Last year the event tackled schools and personal knowledge with the theme, "The Mis-Education of Our Youth;" hundreds of young people attended.

This year, the free-of-charge event is continuing to grow its outreach to parents as well as teenagers and young adults.

"For me, when I read the statistics on obesity and mental health -- there are so many areas to go into there," said youth summit founder Imani Mohammed. "These shootings that have taken place like in

Newtown -- mental health is a big contributor.

"Also because of the economics people are losing their minds -- not just the adults, it impacts the parents' behavior with their kids," she said.

Mohammed's group, Youth Organized and United to Help, stresses that racial disparities can lead to obesity, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and communitywide problems in education and health.

"It just seems like physical health, mental health, spiritual

needs -- the more we give people the tools to cope with what's around them as an individual, the better off they are," Mohammed says.

"At the core of all of this, whether you have a job or not, is how do you remain healthy as an individual?"

One eagerly-anticipated workshop, Souffly Groovment, features a workout CD produced by rapper and activist stic.man from the political hip-hop duo Dead Prez. Lead by

See SUMMIT on page 3

INDEX

News2,3,5

Opinion4

A & E6,8

Bids/Classifieds7

Peninsula Park Rose Garden Celebrates

Volunteers mark 100th anniversary by replanting 3,000 flower shrubs

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

Right now the air is frosty and every one of the Peninsula Park Rose Garden's 3,000 blooming shrubs has been pulled up.

Come June 27 -- when the park's 100th anniversary is celebrated -- the replanted garden will be in full bloom with thousands

of new roses gifted from local growers.

But there's one hitch: the garden needs mulch -- a lot of mulch -- which is critical in protecting the flowers from midges. Portland Parks & Recreation and the newly formed Friends of Peninsula Park Rose Garden say they need about \$15,000 to put in the protective layer.

Many local businesses have contributed to the park renovation, from rose growers

Weeks Roses, Star Roses and Bailey's Nursery to coffee shops, hardware stores and more.

The value of the rose bushes alone is estimated at \$80,000-\$100,000.

Last week dozens of volunteers spent hours in the freezing mud, platting out the rows with blue and white flags and fertiliz-

See GARDEN on page 3