

Pipeline

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land State researcher who authored the report, “That number has deteriorated and today two-thirds (67 percent) of African children live in poverty.”

“Our belief is that the community is deeply imperiled and faces challenges that often place it in the most marginalized of all communities of color,” the 2010 report said.

“Many African juveniles are already imprisoned in Oregon. With this growing reality, the community is in a state of shock.”



Mussé Olo

have to fend for themselves.”

Olol believes most families need counseling, but don’t get it.

“All of the newcomers need therapy—especially when they come from a war-torn place like Somalia.”

Families typically wait years for a sponsor before they are accepted into the United States. Meanwhile, the children are missing years of education. Once in America,

Somali youth, who pick up English quickly, often must bear the added burden of having to translate American language and culture to their elders. Somali parents may have no experience of education and little idea of how to support their children in this new world.

“They are maybe 14 or 15 years old and they have maybe a second grade education,” Olol says. “So what do the schools do? They place them in the 8th Grade. That’s not going to work. You’re setting them up for failure.”

“And when a child fails in this country they are going end up in the criminal system. It kills their future prospects.”

Olol says many Somali American youths have not been able to find a legal way to earn money and make lives for themselves.

“There are a lot getting diplomas, but have no prospects,” Mussé says. “It is scandalous. With employment as bad as it is, a lot of them end up in our living rooms.”

“Some kids are just 18 or 19 with a felony,” he says. “It’s really hard to give hope to kids like that. That’s why we’re trying to get them earlier.”

African-born youth are now also at risk of getting involved with gangs. In April, 2012, Abdalla Burey Sheikwali, 23, and Fahad

PAL Saved

Children at the Police Activities League youth center in Gresham took part in a talent competition Friday. The center is being taken over by Boys and Girls Clubs of the Portland Metropolitan Area, after the league announced it no longer has funds to support the program. Erin Hubert, CEO of Boys and Girls Clubs, said a new center is in the works to serve East County children and teens. Most staff will be retained.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Abdalla Abdiaziz, 24, were arrested in a shooting near Rose City Elementary school.

The Immigrant and Refugee Council of Oregon runs gang prevention programs, using city-funded outreach workers. Currently IRCO has unspent money for an outreach worker, and the city has agreed to use those funds to hire a

worker for African-born youth.

Antoinette Edwards, director of the city’s office of Youth Violence Prevention, says she’s excited about the partnership, with IRCO and with Portland’s African community.

Read the rest of this story online at [www.theskanner.com](http://www.theskanner.com)



Work

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your own employer to pitch in, or making a financial contribution as an individual.

“Most of us adults have a memory of getting a summer job and that is just not a reality for youth today,” Lord said.

Studies of retirement patterns in the local area indicate an expected 50,000 skilled jobs will open up over the next five to 10 years, and advocates worry that now is the critical time to get young people into the employment pipeline.

“We provide all the training on the front side – screening, matching and ongoing job

‘Most of us adults have a memory of getting a summer job and that is just not a reality for so many people today’

—Reese Lord, Worksystems, Inc

coaching for that young person,” Lord says.

“We think as a result of all those services over the last four years, we’ve placed 1,800 youth in our community and over 90 per-

cent of those youth successfully completed their internship.

“Given the crisis, this can have a transformational impact on a young person,” Lord

says. “It’s not only good for the young person; employers see a tangible return on their investment. These people come in do good work and produce results, and it’s a good opportunity to improve leadership for front line employees.”

“It’s not just about how good it is for young people in our community, it also had some bottom line results for employers.”

For more information, go to [www.worksystems.org](http://www.worksystems.org).

Pot

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growing cannabis, Clark said. Master gardeners are volunteers who work through state university systems to provide horticultural tips in their communities.

The situation is the same in Colorado, where Colorado State University in Fort Collins recently added a marijuana policy to its extension office, warning that any employee who provides growing assistance acts outside the scope of his or her job and “assumes personal liability for such action.”

The growing predicament is just the latest quandary for these states that last year flouted federal drug law by removing criminal penalties for adults over 21 with small amounts of pot. In Washington, home-growing is banned, but it will be legal to grow pot commercially once state officials establish rules and regulations.

In Colorado, adults are allowed to grow up to six marijuana plants in their own homes, so long as they’re in a locked location out of public view.

At least two Colorado entrepreneurs are taking advantage of that aspect of the law; they’re offering growing classes that have attracted wannabe professional growers, current users looking to save money by growing their own pot and a few baby boomers who haven’t grown pot in decades and don’t feel comfortable going to a marijuana dispensary.

“We’ve been doing this on our own, but I wanted to learn to grow better,” said Ginger Grinder, a medical marijuana patient from Portales, N.M., who drove to Denver for a “Marijuana 101” class she saw advertised online.

Grinder, a stay-at-home mom who suffers

from lupus and fibromyalgia, joined about 20 other students earlier this month for a daylong crash course in growing the finicky marijuana plant.

Taught in a rented room at a public university, the course had students practicing on tomato plants because pot is prohibited on campus. The group took notes on fertilizer and fancy hydroponic growing systems, and snipped pieces of tomato plants to practice cloning, a common practice for nascent pot growers to start raising weed from a “mother” plant.

Ted Smith, a longtime instructor at an indoor gardening shop, led the class, and warned these gardeners that their task won’t be easy. Marijuana is fickle, he said. It’s prone to mildews and molds, picky about temperature and pH level, intolerant to tap water.

A precise schedule is also a must, Smith warned, with set light and dark cycles and watering at the same time each day. Unlike many house plants, Smith warned, marijuana left alone for a long weekend can curl and die.

“Just like the military ... they need to know when they’re getting their water and chow,” Smith said of the plants.

The class was the brainchild of Matt Jones, a 24-year-old Web developer who wanted to get into the marijuana business without raising or selling it himself. As a teenager, Jones once tried to grow pot himself in empty Home Depot paint buckets. He used tap water and overwatered, and the marijuana wilted and died.

“It was a disaster,” he recalled.