

Swim

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around 2,000 children every year. Parents can sign up for the free lessons from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. June 15 at any Portland pool. It’s first-come first-served and you need to register in person. Free classes are held from June 18 to June 21.

For the rest of the summer, lessons will run in two-week blocks. If you miss the free week and can’t afford the \$52.50 fee for the classes, you can apply for a financial aid scholarship at any Portland pool.

Every pool has a free open swim each week as well as offering teen nights, and during August, Dive-In movies. This year’s movie will be The Lorax.

Teens interested in working as a lifeguard or swim instructor this summer, need to complete the lifeguard’s training. The City hires more than 700 lifeguards every summer to keep swimmers safe. You need to be a strong swimmer and be able to complete the required training. The trainings are almost done for this year, so sign up soon. Check out the class schedule at Portland Parks website aquatic training.

Learning to swim saves lives. More than 3,500 people die in accidental drownings every year. And according to national statistics, African Americans are at higher risk. Black children aged 5 to 14 are almost three times more likely to drown than their White peers. But it doesn’t have to be this way. Parents can learn how to keep babies and toddlers safe. And everyone can learn to swim and be safe around water.



This alligator isn’t going into the water, but kids all over the city have a safe, fun summer planned with the help of Portland Parks and Recreation. Sign up now for classes and mark special events on your calendar.

Photos

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the Black presence. I’m looking for our life.”

This search is one of the reasons why she started her project. Not having a sense of easily accessible Black culture is disconcerting and hurtful, she says.

Almost everyone she meets wants to talk about gentrification. This includes non-Black people as well. From her discussions, it has become the main story of Black life in Portland. She sees a pervasive trauma in people’s stories of displacement.

Although Abioto has familiarized herself with some of the Black history of Oregon and the history of the Black community in Portland, she was particularly affected after reading “Portland Gentrification: The North Williams Avenue That Was – 1956,” which was written by the Skanner News’ Lisa Loving.

“Gentrification is not the right word to use here. For this population to be so small, five percent, and you’re just going to thump these people to the edge of the city, that’s vicious.”

While the trauma is real and the story is sad, she wants to show that Portland’s Black community is much more than that.

“It’s not who we are,” she says. “It’s not who Black people are. We are more than this story. We are more than that history. We are more than this present even.”

“To me, doing this project is about showing us to ourselves. I just want to tell stories about the truth about who we are in this place to the Black people that are here. We are diverse within ourselves, not just in the spectrum of other races.

“Beyond this sadness, I want to tell stories about who Black Portlanders were; who they are now. In the 50s, it was Jazz on Williams Ave. In Memphis it was Jazz. They know about WC Handy and BB King. Every city has its thing. What’s the thing

According to her, the response to the project has been all positive so far. People want to see each other, she says. She rarely comes across people that don’t want to talk and have their picture taken. The rejuvenation Abioto gets from these encounters and her

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here for Black people?”

When Abioto goes to arts events about Black culture or African history and culture, she finds that she’s usually the only Black person in attendance. As someone who con-

love of photography are what guide the project.

“You can find a way that connects to who you are to involve yourself,” she says. “There are ways that I’m not able to involve

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--Intisar Abioto

siders herself an adventurer, she says getting out and seeing people can lift her spirits when she’s having a down day. Seeing Black people in particular, especially in Portland, is good for the soul, she says.

myself because it’s not what I do, it’s not my passion, but this feels right.”

The day after she read the story of Williams Ave., Abioto says that she was looking for a notary with her mother and

happened upon Rose City Cab. They found out that the owner, Mr. Arthur Palmer, had recently passed.

She attended his funeral and she spent the time listening to stories about his contributions to the community. The experience was inspiring to her.

“After hearing that story about Williams, the details of the Portland Development Commission and all these things, I needed to hear those stories because I was hurting from the previous day,” says Abioto. “You need stories. Beyond just that story, there are other important stories that can be told that can help people in their day to day lives.”

At the end of the day, she doesn’t think that the people and businesses that have profited from gentrification are bad. In fact, she wonders if many even know the history of the area. Either way, Abioto doesn’t think that the businesses are going to pack up anytime soon. She believes we, as Black people need to be responsible for creating our own change and that’s the purpose of The Black Portlanders.

“If we aren’t in an area, we can be at this domain,” she says. “We can be seeing each other. We can be finding out who we are so we’re not dispersed.

“I love showing the beauty that’s in people. That’s one way I can share this community. That’s one way I can alter the terrain here.”

For more information, go to <http://the-blackportlanders.com/> or email Abioto at theblackportlanders@gmail.com.

CIA

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Some Republicans in the state House have expressed concern that the licenses will be provided without sufficient oversight. However, the measure passed the state Senate unanimously Friday.

Democratic Sen. Tracey Eide of Federal Way, who sponsored the legislation, said the law strengthens the state’s control over the licenses. On the issue of whether the CIA

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would qualify, Eide said that decision would be up to Inslee and the state’s attorney general.

A spokeswoman for Attorney General Bob Ferguson said it was premature to comment in the legal interpretation of a bill that is not yet law.