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Pacific NW

The Skanner News presents our new regional edition, featuring more news and local information.

Jackson Talks STEM

Reverend visits NW to push tech diversity

Of The Skanner News

The Rev. Jesse Jackson embarked on a whirlwind tour of the Seattle area to push for equality and greater diversity in technology.

He spoke to a crowd of 700 students at the Technology Access Foundation Academy in Kent about the importance of education as a pathway to end racial disparities in high-paying technology careers. He applauded the students for studying science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

“Our mind is like a pearl, we can learn anything in the world,” Jackson told the audience.

The TAF academy, which focuses on preparing students for science and technology careers was started by executive director, Trish Millines Dziko, who left the technology sector because of a lack of racial and ethnic diversity.

He asked the students to stand up and repeat “I am somebody, I am somebody” and urged the students to keep learning.

The next day Jackson was joined by Washington State Governor Jay Inslee at the Washington STEM third Annual STEM Summit at Microsoft’s Redmond campus. Jackson spoke about need for gender and minority equality in STEM education and jobs.

At the summit the Boston Consulting Group released a report, Opportunity for All: Investing in Washington State’s STEM Education pipeline, which asserts that investing in STEM would have a large impact on Washington State’s economy and global competitiveness.

The report shows that only 40 percent of high school students graduate with competency in STEM, and only 9 out of 100 children born in Washington will end up being employed in a STEM-related field.

According to the analysis, a \$650 million annual investment in STEM education could turn these numbers around and create a 30 percent increase in women and under-represented minorities in STEM jobs.

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TEARS OF A CHILD



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Zem Zem Ahmed, a student at the University of Washington holds the bullhorn for 11-year-old Delaney during a march from Garfield High School to Seattle Police headquarters in Downtown Seattle on Saturday, Dec. 6 to demand police accountability after grand juries in Ferguson, Mo., and Staten Island, NY, failed to indict police officers who had killed unarmed black men. Delaney began to cry when she talked about being afraid of what could happen to her own father or family members during an interaction with law enforcement. The marchers stopped and occupied two intersections peacefully before occupying the intersection in front of police headquarters.

New Regulations Strain Childcare

Oregon agencies prepare for upcoming costs of new rules

Donovan Smith
Of The Skanner News

Oregon, already one the least affordable states for childcare, may have an increase in costs according to an audit released by Secretary of State Kate Brown this week.

The largely unknown costs of new federal inspection and fingerprinting requirements from Oregon’s Department of Education and Department of Human Services are set to take effect in 2015; however state agencies responsible for child care over-

sight aren’t yet sure how they’ll manage them.

The potential cost hikes for child care providers could potentially cause them to raise their rates, or even stop providing care altogether further reducing affordability and access.

Although the state currently offers subsidies and tax credits for child care, those breaks are set to come to an end by 2016.

“Child care helps children with early learning and helps parents enter the workforce,” Secretary Brown said. “Oregon

has to ensure access to affordable child care so that families can succeed.”

One national study conducted in 2012, ranked Oregon as the least-affordable state for center-based infant care for a married couple. The average yearly cost for center-based care was nearly \$13,000 for an infant; \$10,000 for a four-year-old; and \$5,000 for a school-age child, according to a study by the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies.

Many factors drive child care

cost: payroll, regulation, facility rent, mortgage payments and utilities are just some. Cost of living differences within regions also impact how much families can pay for care; in Oregon, care in urban areas is significantly more expensive than in rural areas.

Throughout the state, providers in 4,360 facilities and homes offer about 150,000 slots for 165,000 children needing care.

For many Oregon child care

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Year-end Oregon Health Plan Renewals

Qualified citizens urged to renew now and avoid the rush

Donovan Smith
Of The Skanner News

Many Oregon Health Plan members are due to renew their benefits before the end of the year on Dec. 31.

Contrary to the private health insurance plans available through the Affordable Care Act, you can apply for OHP at any time, however, members do have to renew their

benefits once every year.

Renewal dates are unique for every person and not everyone renews at the same time.

Oregon Health Authority has been mailing letters to everyone who is due to renew as a reminder, complete with instructions on how to apply.

State officials are urging people to not wait until the last minute, and to pay attention to the instructions in the letter. Some people need to fill out a full application, but

other OHP members will simply need to complete a brief consent form.

“If you received a letter from us, please take action right away,” says Judy Mohr Peterson, Oregon’s Medicaid Director. “We want to make sure that everyone who is still qualified for the Oregon Health Plan keeps their benefits and that people who no longer qualify know how to get private coverage.”

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