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## Grant for Sexual Health

### Coalition to take on teen pregnancy prevention

By Arashi Young  
Of The Skanner News

A coalition of parents, community organizations and the Multnomah County Health Department will work together to tackle teen pregnancy rates around the county.

The department has been awarded federal funding to focus on eight high-risk areas in the Portland region to promote healthy relationship and life skills. The county will receive \$1.25 million per year for five years to create and implement the Adolescents and Communities Together project.

The program employs a "positive youth development" model, which focuses on teaching positive life skills so teens build a sense of self-value. ACT also concentrates on communities of color who have higher rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

Daesha Ramachandran, the adolescent health promotion supervisor with the county said equity is a core value of the ACT project.

"If we are really going to achieve sexual health equity ... we need to start looking at structural and sustainable interventions and approaches to helping youth navigate and make the best decisions for themselves," Ramachandran says.

Ramachandran said teen pregnancy rates have dropped nationally. But that drop exposes the racial disparities currently in place.

Data from Oregon Vital Statistics shows that in Multnomah County the birthrate for Black teenagers is 40.5 births per 1,000 females, nearly twice the national rate of 22.6 per 1,000.

ACT proponents believe any intervention needs the full involvement of parents and community partners working in harmony with the county health department. Partners include local school districts, Self-Enhancement Inc., Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette, the Boys and Girls

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# BROWN TALKS



PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH

Gov. Kate Brown, who stepped into office in February, stopped by The Skanner News offices last week to discuss her plans for the future and answer questions from The Skanner staff.

## Governor Looks to the Future

### Oregon's new governor talks about building equity into the system

The Skanner News Staff

Gov. Kate Brown, who stepped into office Feb. 13 – following the resignation of Gov. John Kitzhaber and right at the onset of the 2015 Oregon legislative session – visited The Skanner News offices late last week to discuss her term so far, and talk about the way forward.

Priority number one, Brown says, is restoring Oregonians' faith in government. (Brown, who had previously served as Oregon's Secretary of State, was sworn into office follow-

ing the resignation of Gov. John Kitzhaber amid an influence-peddling scandal involving his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes.) That includes strengthening the role of the Oregon Ethics Commission and pushing for greater government transparency, including the streamlining of public records exemptions, which was a priority during her tenure as Secretary of State. Brown told The Skanner she was happy to see progressive reforms like the Ban the Box bill, paid sick leave and portable 401k legislation pass this session. She also

spoke in support of early childhood education and free community college initiatives that passed this year, and in support of future planned projects including job creation and addressing the opportunity gap.

Brown also told The Skanner she's working to "weave equity into everything we do" in her administration – rather than treating it as an afterthought. Brown, who is bisexual, is the first governor in U.S. history to openly identify as a sexual minority. Following the introduction of her platform, she took questions from The

Skanner staff about how her administration can address racial equity and diversity issues around the state, especially in Portland.

**The Skanner News:** When it comes to investing in education, there are a couple issues we want to follow up on. One is disproportionate investment. We're finding that schools that are in predominantly minority neighborhoods are still not getting the same type of funding for the same types of pro-

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## De Blasio: Garner's Death Not in Vain

### Mayor seeks change in relationship between police and community

Colleen Long, Associated Press  
Jonathan Lemire, Associated Press

NEW YORK— The death of an unarmed black man who was held in a police chokehold wasn't in vain, and could help change the relationship between police officers and the communities they patrol, Mayor Bill de Blasio said at a church service in honor of Eric Garner.

De Blasio spoke Tuesday night, the day after the city reached a \$5.9 million settlement with Garner's family over his July 2014 death. His family said they would continue pressing for federal civil rights charges.

"This is a new chapter in our relationship between the police and our communities," de Blasio said. "That will make us a better people. That will make us a more just city. That will make us a safer city."

De Blasio, who is white and is married

to a black woman, spoke at the church the night of the grand jury decision not to indict the police officer. At that time, he connected personally to Garner's death, speaking of how he talked to his biracial son about being careful in his dealings with police.

Those comments sparked outrage from police unions, who accused de Blasio of fostering an anti-police sentiment. When

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