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our new regional edition, featuring more news and local information.

## Rent Increase Error

Low-income renters – in and out of affordable housing – can face confusion

By Christen McCurdy  
Of The Skanner News

A rent-increase notice of more than \$1,000 – sent last week to a resident at McCoy Village in Northeast Portland, which offers subsidized housing to tenants – turned out to be the result of a clerical error.

But advocates for renters say Alesha Steward's Facebook post about the increase went viral because it points to larger problems: confusion about how affordable-housing subsidies work, and an overall shortage of housing leaving all renters vulnerable to change.

Steward, who did not reply to a message from The Skanner News asking to comment, shared a photo last week of a letter from her property manager, Cascade Property Management, which manages her building on behalf of Catholic Charities, saying her rent would go up in October – from \$921 to \$1,926. By the end of the business day, her post had more than 700 shares on the social media site.

"The notice was sent out in error by our property management company, Cascade Management, and residents will NOT pay that amount," Richard Birkel, executive director of Catholic Charities, told The Skanner in a statement e-mailed Tuesday morning.

"The rent of \$1,952 is the determined market rate for the units in question. Of course, the whole purpose of affordable housing is to close the gap between that number and what a tenant can 'affordably pay' — a number which is determined on a case by case basis (e.g. income determination) and clear guidelines under which we work. Most residents will never see increases of more than 3 or 4 percent and some (Section 8 voucher holders) will see no increase."

The increase will be covered by the mix of government and nonprofit agencies that subsidizes tenants' rent.

See RENT on page 3

# TEACH-IN



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Rose Sanders, a senior at Technology Access Foundation Academy, and the director of the Minority Education Incentive Program, organizes a game during an education workshop July 25 at Rainier Beach Presbyterian Church. The workshops were designed to help students take control of their education by empowering them to find the resources and to ask the questions that will help them to reach their educational goals.

## New Urban League President

Mission is the same, but efforts refocused amidst new challenges

By Donovan M. Smith  
Of The Skanner News

Nkenge Harmon Johnson is new to her post, but not to the city.

About two months into her tenure as president of the Urban League of Portland, the Northeast Portland native says she is ready to continue the organization's legacy.

Harmon Johnson left her post as communications director for former Gov. John Kitzhaber last year and stepped into her new

role during a time when — as highlighted by the second State of Black Oregon report, released this May — Oregonians of African descent continue to struggle. The wealth gap between Blacks and the state's majority White population has widened (following a national trend), nearly a third are living below poverty, and in a state where Blacks are only 2 percent of the population the high school graduation is one of the worst in the country.

The civil-rights attorney, who now lives in Marion County

with her husband, attorney Erious Johnson, says the report highlighted two other important facts: Black Oregonians exist in every county of the state, and still continue to thrive.

Acknowledging the increased dispersal of the state's small Black population, she says he says the Urban League must "refocus its efforts" to create a more fortified community here.

"The population here is different; the mission is largely the same: jobs and education," she said.

"Oregon does a terrible job at getting people out of high school — Black, White or whoever. This is [everybody's] problem, and we can work on it all together. At the Urban League's recent job fair, 55 percent of the people who showed up were Black. What's that mean? That means the other 45 percent were everything else. The Urban League has always helped others."

Part of those refocused efforts has included Harmon Johnson

See URBAN LEAGUE on page 3

### INDEX

News .....	1,3,8-10
Opinion .....	2
Calendars .....	4,5
A & E .....	6,7
Bids/Classifieds .....	11

## Seattle Homeless Count Numbers In

Numbers are higher in Seattle, likely due to higher population

By Arashi Young  
Of The Skanner News

In an abandoned building, at a bus stop, on the sidewalk, under a freeway overpass.

These were the answers given when Seattle volunteers asked homeless people, "Where did you sleep last night?"

Earlier this year, coalitions in Seattle and Portland conducted a one-night count of

the homeless population in King and Multnomah Counties respectively. Both counts occurred at the end of January 2015, providing a snapshot of the individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the middle of winter.

In Seattle there were 10,047 people counted as homeless on the night of Jan. 23, 2015. The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness found 3,772 people sleeping on the street, 3,282 people in shelters and

2,993 people in transitional housing.

Multnomah County counted 3,801 people who were homeless; 1,042 people who were sleeping in transitional housing, 872 people who were in an emergency shelter and 1,887 people who were unsheltered on the streets.

Some of the difference can be attributed to the size of the counties. The population of King County is 2.044 million people ac-

See HOMELESS on page 3