

## Housing

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go out onto the streets or into a shelter. They'll be with family or friends," Brooks said.

"The hopes with this [initiative] is to start having a conversation about the importance of contracting directly with

### The average African American household cannot afford to rent or buy anywhere in Portland

culturally specific providers."

Before this partnership was announced, *The Skanner* reported that despite the \$30 million Hales was promising toward the "most vulnerable" populations, the pledge included no culturally specific language.

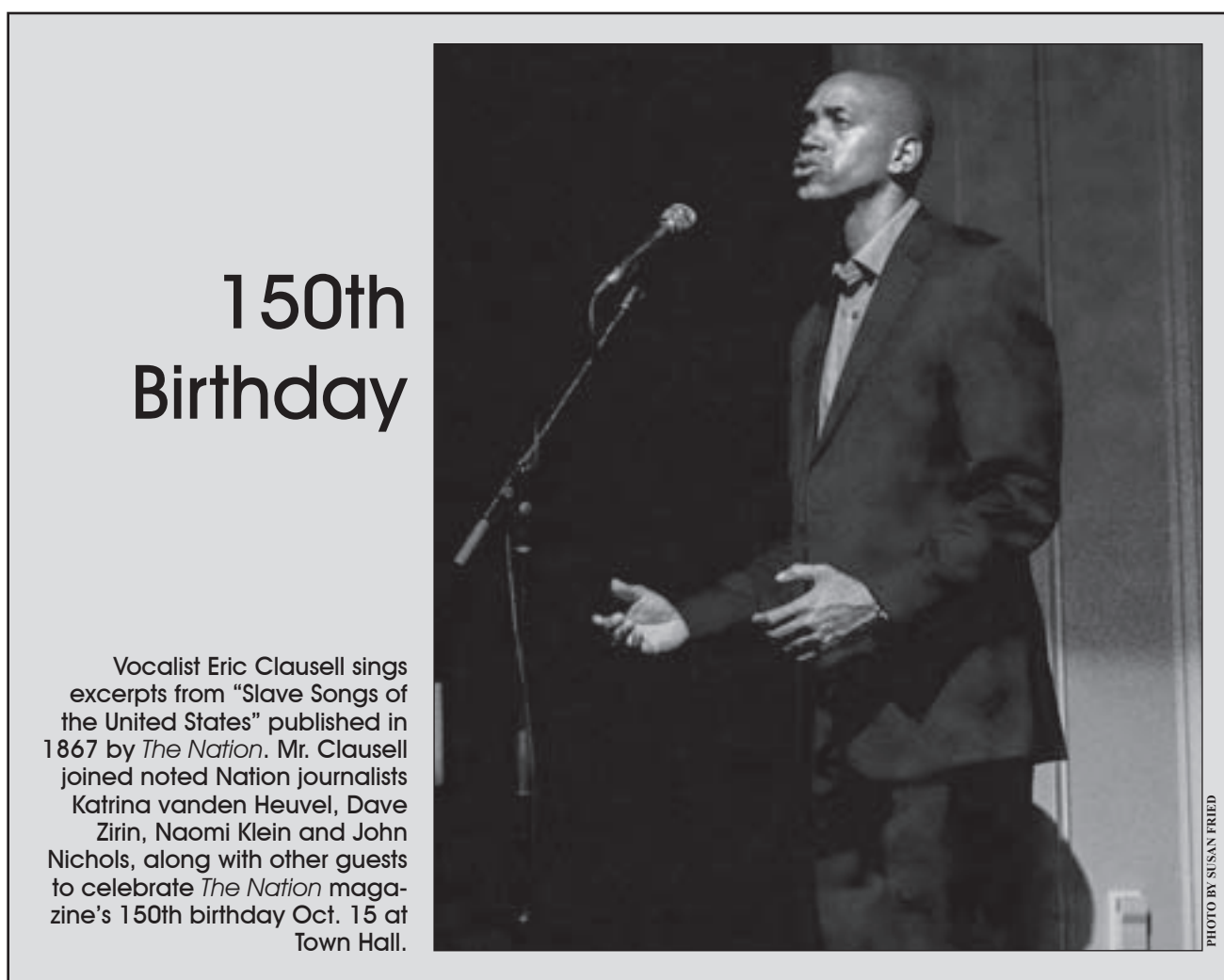
The Urban League's State of Black Oregon report this year also found that the average African American household cannot afford to rent or buy anywhere in Portland.

"That means generation after generation of unchecked gentrification and displacement and the results of recent Fair Housing discrimination for short-term rental assistance is not a significant solution to the crisis and I feel like we can do more," Carter said.

The Urban League of Portland has several other programs addressing Black homelessness, including its partnership with Cascadia Behavioral Health and Native American Rehabilitation Association which will house 50 people of color living with mental illness and drug-addiction.

Locally other initiatives like city-led the N/NE Housing strategy which has some culturally specific elements to it and the Portland African American Leadership Forum's efforts to create the People's Plan meant to be a comprehensive list of demands of what the local Black population wants and needs to thrive in the city have sprung up in recent years.

Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives also got its first grant over the summer to begin work on its Pathway 1000 program that aims to build 100 homes a year over the next decade through North and Northeast neighborhoods for



## 150th Birthday

Vocalist Eric Clausell sings excerpts from "Slave Songs of the United States" published in 1867 by *The Nation*. Mr. Clausell joined noted *Nation* journalists Katrina vanden Heuvel, Dave Zirin, Naomi Klein and John Nichols, along with other guests to celebrate *The Nation* magazine's 150th birthday Oct. 15 at Town Hall.

PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

displaced families.

Katrina Hollands, deputy director of the Community Alliance of Tenants, has been active around local housing issues for years now.

She mirrored Carter's cautious optimism on the plan, recalling past difficulties between the city and African Americans.

"The City has made promises before that it has not kept [to African Americans]," Hollands said, referring 1993 Albi-

na Community Plan which forecasted a number of land use projects in what were then majority Black neighborhoods.

As Portland's population continues to explode, Hollands says the City has a unique opportunity to implement equitable practices in housing as well as other avenues.

"How we handle this housing crisis has the potential to determine our reputation on an international scale. Are we going to continue to be racist or move forward and become a truly equitable city?" she asked.

## Convention

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"The achievement gap is no different than police shootings. The only difference is the weapon," Grimes said during his presentation. "There is no difference in the death of the mind — that happens as a result of miseducation that manifests as the achievement gap — than Amadou Diallo, Trayvon Martin, or Eric Garner."

Grimes put forth a call to action: "Black male achievement has to happen in cities whether we are 4 percent of the population or 86 percent of the population and everything in between."

Despite the relatively small Black populations in both Portland and the state of Oregon, conditions for African Americans tend to follow national statistics.

Grimes compared Oregon's founding — as a state intended to exclude Blacks — with a mentality reflected in the country as

and the poor. It requires hip-hop and Jazz. And it might require to the extent that the consciousness is true and the intent is poor,

### Nearly one-third of Black Portlanders live in poverty

a whole.

"The moment you talk about Black male achievement in the context of a White utopia, which is what this nation was created to do, then we're having a whole new conversation," Grimes said. "Brand new conversation requires brand new ideas. It requires the elders and the young. It requires the brothers and the sisters. It requires the rich,

Black and other."

Nearly one-third Black Portlanders live in poverty. The graduation rate for African Americans is 60 to 75 percent, and statistics show a disproportionate rate of discipline and skewed discipline rates for Black pupils in Portland Public Schools. African Americans are also disproportionately represented in Oregon's corrections system.

The adoption of the Black Male Achievement program in Portland came in part as a response to a resolution passed by the 2013 US Conference of Mayors in Washington D.C., in which they stated every city should strive to promote achievement among black men and boys through both opportunity, policy, programs and strategies.

Locally, the program is helmed by a host of representatives who've been involved in Afro-centric civic work years for decades and different city and educational entities including, the Urban League, NAACP, Portland African American Leadership Forum, Self Enhancement Inc., Portland Police Bureau, The City of Portland and others.

## Crews

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**TSN:** What workshops did your attendees seek out?

**KC:** Dr. Chris Emdin, his work around hip hop pedagogy and reality pedagogy, he was a huge draw. Tim Wise was a huge draw, just in terms of the keynote speaker.

We had a dynamic speaker from New Jersey, named Principal Kafele; he did a dynamic workshop around his 50 principles of leadership. Yeah, I think those were pretty much the draw. Pedro Noguera's workshop drew people too. Basically, the workshops are about how to reach kids in different ways and to be more culturally relevant in your practice.

**TSN:** Some influential people contributed to the conference — Tim Wise and GZA [a rapper best known as a founding member of the Wu-Tang Clan], to name a few. Was this

overwhelming?

**KC:** It was great for them to understand the vision and accept the offer to come speak, that was a great feeling. Just being

I'm working on getting to a level where we actually see it take place in the classroom, having these culturally relevant practices being measured and evaluated would be

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able to build with them when they arrived, especially Tim Wise. He understands the vision of the conference, we're definitely going to continue working with him and bring him back.

**TSN:** What has the response been from people who have been to conference?

**KC:** We have tons of testimonies. So many people have come up to me and shared the story of what the conference meant. Now,

ideal.

**TSN:** I saw that you had tons of sponsors like local school districts, PSU and the Oregon Education Association. Do you feel like this is an endorsement of equity in education?

**KC:** It's a step in the right direction and they all have different levels of sponsorship which means they can bring a certain amount of people to the conference.

So I definitely think it's great to have them as sponsors, but I'm interested a lot more in comprehensive partnerships where they can bring more of their administrators and more of their teachers as a collective group to come and to learn and to build around the work and to develop plans on implementation.

**TSN:** What is the Teaching with Purpose Leadership Institute?

**KC:** The leadership Institute basically was started through a grant from the Oregon Department of Education last year. We were able to get seven school districts to develop teams that looked at different educational policies that Oregon has in place.

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