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where I could utilize my artistic abilities. I was proven wrong when, in the marketing department, I realized that there were multiple ways creativity was needed.

Coming up with different strategies to promote the Boys and Girls Club's brand took a lot of work. I was able to tag along in the summer programs and document their mission at its core, filming and editing a series of

to convey your story or message in artistic mediums is just another way of showing the world your beautiful voice.

There is nothing more dangerous than being silenced and it is in utilizing the craft of art as a tool for communicating and learning about the wrongs and the beauty of our society that will make the world a better place.

“All along there were people who actually cared for my future

videos of children benefiting from the service they were providing.

TSN: What did you enjoy about interning with the Boys and Girls Club?

CM: I remember growing up next to a Boys and Girls Club, but never really bothered to step foot in it. I thought that I was alone in my struggle to better myself as a first generation Latina student. All along there were people who actually cared for my future and many futures like mine and I believe if I would have gone there, I would've had more opportunities.

Even as an adult interning for them, I felt the support and care they exerted as they worked endlessly, providing a platform where all youth could achieve their goals and rise. I really enjoyed being surrounded by people who are passionate about making a difference in our community.

TSN: In your opinion, how does art help to change the world?

CM: What a lot of people don't realize is that art is all around us. It's in the way we talk, the way we write, how we dance and draw; it is how we express our inner selves and identity. Being able

TSN: What did you learn from the Washington D.C. Leadership Summit?

CM: The beautiful sights and historic landmarks were only part of the reason I enjoyed the Bank of America Washington D.C. leadership summit. Everyday there was something new to learn and to connect with. I was made aware of the gravity of social issues like gun control, health care accessibility and education, to name a few.

The most valuable things I learned were from the students themselves. This proves that as a force we can collectively use our stories and different perspectives to lead the next generation into the impossible future we always dreamed of.

TSN: What does the future hold for you?

CM: I haven't met anyone whose life turned out just the way they planned it to be. My path isn't so clear myself, but I am figuring it out day by day. However, there are some things that I know are certain: I want to defy all Latino stereotypes holding many of us back, and be a role model that people with my similar background can look up to.

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is focused on unapologetic self-acceptance.

She said Black Oregonians in particular have struggled against racist laws and practices, such as the Black exclusion clauses in Oregon constitution and redlining in Northeast Portland. She said these policies purposefully kept the state's Black community small.

“It's important to reclaim that Black folks do have a space here and we can create our own,” Oldham said. “I think it is also important to just have spaces that are for ourselves, without any allies.”

Oldham envisions bringing more “Black Joy” events to the area,

mixed-gender festivities such as game nights, movie nights, potlucks and dances.

She intends to grow this event into an even larger For Black Girls Only local

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movement in 2016. Oldham said this Black Joy day will plan for the needs of Black women and girls in Portland and the surrounding areas.

When Siyu Onesipho Siwisa created the Cape Town For Black Girls Only

day, she called for a space to deal with the trauma of being a Black woman without having to defend her pain to White allies. Similarly, Oldham said many Black people are constantly

working against racism, implicit bias and White allies who co-opt Black liberation movements.

“So many of us take on so many roles all the time, we don't just get to be,” she said.



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

African American Housing Fair

Wendy St. Clair-Smith (left), senior loan originator at Axia Home Loans, Carol Collier, a broker with Coldwell Banker SEAL Realty and Daniel Lechuga, a counselor with the African American Alliance for Homeownership, pose at the 17th annual African American Homeownership Fair, which took place Oct. 24 in Portland. The event

included vendor booths staffed by more than 40 different organizations, workshops for first-time homebuyers and workshops on foreclosure prevent and a presentation on the “Renter State of Emergency” by the Community Alliance of Tenants as well as a tour of homes for sale.

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Should they decide to terminate their offer, they must explain why in a series of written documents.

The Bureau of Labor and Industries will oversee and enforce the new law if it is adopted.

“The best way to end the cycle of imprisonment is a job,” Mayor Charlie Hales said as he opened up the floor for comment. Hales, now in his last year of office, has been a vocal supporter of the ban-the-box movement in the past year. “What we're proposing here is an intentional and persistent breaking down of barriers.

This summer, Gov. Kate Brown signed a measure into law that will remove the question of criminal histories from job applications.

However, the state law, which goes into effect Jan. 1, still leaves employers with the option to inquire about criminal histories during interviews.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman had a number of questions regarding the ordinance, including what would happen in the event of a potential hire voluntarily divulging information about a criminal past.

City Deputy Attorney Judy Prosper, offered some explanation to the inquiry — likening

such a disclosure to knowing if a candidate is pregnant, disabled or of a particular race or ethnicity.

“This is a similar thing. Sometimes we know things that we are not allowed to use in our decision-making process,” Prosper said. “The employer is already so-

“The best way to end the cycle of imprisonment is a job

plicated enough to know that they can't not hire them for that reason.”

Commissioner Nick Fish, a former employment lawyer, raised concerns that while employers may not ask about criminal history, those who have done time in prison may have large gaps in their employment records — raising potential red flags in the hiring process.

As a result of the hearing, the ordinance was altered slightly. The Bureau of Labor and Industry would oversee the enforcement of the law rather than the Attorney General's office.

Urban League of Portland president and CEO Nkenge Harmon Johnson talked about Portland having what is effectively a more

intense version of the state law, by pointing to the racial disparities in the criminal justice system.

She says 80 percent of Oregon's small Black population lives in Portland, yet are six times more likely than Whites locally to be imprisoned.

“Portland is indeed the hub of Oregon's communities of

color — and as such, you as elected officials representing Portland, have the greatest responsibility to address those unemployment numbers for Black Portlanders and others,” Harmon Johnson said before rhetorically asking why the law should be passed. “Because we know the playing field is not level for people of color.”

Unemployment among African Americans is about 10 percent higher than the state average with about one of five of Black Oregonians out of work — according to data found in the State of Black Oregon report released by the Urban League this year.

Rep. Lew Frederick (D-N/NE Portland), who recently declared his candidacy for the state Senate, offered his support of the law too.



PHOTO BY HELEN SILVIS

This Saturday, Black Lives Matter Portland will host “For Black Girls Only” — a self-care event open to Black women, girls and non-gender-conforming people.