

Suburbia cont'd from pg 1

tice when someone is being silenced because we are thinking about our own discomfort and our own experience,” continued Stark.

“It’s really good to feel uncomfortable and to be able to sit with that feeling. It’s an integral part of the process of growth and change.”

The model is also

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unique. While The Old Church provides the venue, local organizations can design their own program for “We Can Listen” that specifically addresses topics and causes which concern them.

On Sept. 12, the series presents a screening of “Black Girl in Suburbia,” a documentary directed by Portland-native Melissa Lowery.

As its title suggests, the 55-minute film looks into the experiences of Black girls as they grow up in predominately White communities, and face the conflicts of navigating and relating to their homogeneous hometowns.

Lowery was inspired to make the film through her childhood experience of moving with her mother and siblings to West Linn, a White and wealthy suburb of Portland.

Through conversations with teachers, scholars and the Lowery’s own daughters, “Black Girl in Suburbia” works as a conversation starter for race relations, identity and perspective — all key topics to the series.

The notion for “We Can Listen” came about shortly before the presidential

election last November, said Stark, when the nonprofit’s newest employee — Moe Lincoln, a young African American woman — shared her story of being pulled over by a Portland police officer.

“Fast forward to the post-election fallout and it quickly became apparent that racism was a rampant and a core

issue in the election,” Stark said. “The election was the shock that really shook more people out of their comfort zone.”

Its inaugural event last April was “The Power of Being Heard,” programmed by Grammy-nominated recording artist Julianne Johnson. The roundtable included staffer Lincoln, who is also a musician, and Rwandan genocide survivor Solange Impanoyimana. All three women offered narratives drawn from their own lives and engaged in a discussion around the importance of listening.

“We Can Listen” is free to everyone. Check theoldchurch.org for future programs in this series that cover topics deemed crucial to Portlanders, including racism, homelessness, environmental concerns, gender equality and more.

“Black Girl in Suburbia” has been presented at the St. Louis International Film Festival, the International Black Women Film Festival and Portland Oregon’s Women Film Festival, among others.

A discussion featuring the director will follow the screening.

Susheela Jayapal Announces Run for Multnomah County Commission

Community activist Susheela Jayapal announced Tuesday her candidacy for the District 2 position of the Multnomah County Commission. The District 2 seat, representing North and Northeast Portland, has been occupied since 2010 by Commissioner Loretta Smith, who is unable to run for the seat again due to term limits outlined in the county charter.

Jayapal is a former corporate attorney for Adidas and Ater Wynne Hewitt Dodson & Skerritt. Her LinkedIn Page lists advocacy work with a long list of progressive organizations: Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette, Portland Schools Foundation, All Hands Raised, Literary Arts, Metropolitan Family Service, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. She has also evaluated grants for Oregon Community Foundation and has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in foster care.

According to the press release, Jayapal was born in India, and grew up in Singapore and Indonesia, emigrating to the United States at 16 to attend college. At the age of 16, her parents sent her to the United States to attend college. She holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from Swarthmore College and a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School. She lives in Northeast Portland and has two grown children; her younger sister, Pramila, represents Washington state in the House of Representatives.

Jayapal is the first to declare candidacy for the District 2 seat.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSHEELA FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Immigrants cont'd from pg 1

“show me your papers” law, and Initiative Petition 22 — an Oregon petition to overturn the state’s 30-year-old sanctuary law.

But dos Santos opened his remarks noting the immigrants’ rights community was also waiting to hear what would happen to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. President Trump had, earlier in the week, hinted he would be ending the program, which shields immigrants who were brought to the United States from deportation and offers them work permits and the opportunity to attend school. The Trump administration made good on last week’s threats Tuesday, with an announcement that DACA’s protections would be phased out within six months. The president has also called on Congress to repeal the act.

“It just feels like a very heavy day in the immigrant rights community,” dos Santos said.

While DACA’s fate remained uncertain, forum participants — addressing about 50 people at an event announced the previous

afternoon — discussed a ballot measure campaign to overturn Oregon’s sanctuary state law.

That law, which restricts the ability of local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws, was passed in 1987 with strong bipartisan support, Williams said.

“Oregonians for Immigration Reform had received \$3,000 from US, Inc., a White nationalist organization

The petition to strike it was created by Oregonians for Immigration Reform.

In August *The Oregonian* reported Oregonians for Immigration Reform had received \$3,000 from US, Inc., a White nationalist organization based out of Petosky, Michigan. Oregonians For Immigration Reform has created a committee specifically for the

petition campaign — the Repeal Oregon Sanctuary Law Committee, which has a separate listing on Orestar, the Secretary of State’s campaign finance records website. That page lists a number of small contributions and several large transactions from OFIR.

So far the US Inc. contribution is one of a small number of out-of-state contributions listed on Orestar.

The petition committee is run by Republican State Representatives Greg Barreto of Cove, Mike Nearman of Independence and Sal Esquivel of Medford.

Williams said the petition is still under judicial review, but immigration rights activists expect it to gather the 88,000 signatures necessary to make it to the ballot.

IP 22 is similar to Texas’ SB 4, which bans sanctuary cities and requires local law enforcement to enforce immigration law.

Texas’ law was struck down by a federal court last week, but dos Santos expects appeals.

Read more at TheSkanner.com

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nonprofits there. I worked with homeless youth, women who were underemployed and with families. So I’ve always had this social justice leaning in my heart.

I left Spokane to continue to grow my career, and I came back to Portland which is where my family lived. My mom modeled to us what a dedicated public servant looked like. I wasn’t sure I wanted to be a police officer, so I started looking for jobs. True story, my mom said, “Erika, you need to look for a good government job. You’ve done your time in private nonprofits.”

So I started looking through the county and city websites, then I saw the Multnomah County probation and parole officer job description. It was the perfect blend of the social justice passion that I had — and it also included an opportunity to learn a new skill, which was public safety and law enforcement. To further that, it really was a great way to honor my mom.

TSN: As a parole and probation officer, tell us about your experience working with gang members in Northeast Portland.

“How do we effectively engage in our communities, especially at a time when there’s so much distrust in law enforcement?”

EP: Often times people are concerned about living in the same community where they are working with their clients. You bump into them at the store or the gas station, or in the normal course of walking through your community. I lived and grew up in Northeast Portland, just off of MLK Jr. Blvd. We experienced a lot in our community growing up and this was before it began to be gentrified. I was really honored to work in Northeast Portland, and the majority of the people on my caseload lived in Northeast Portland.

So working with the gang members was really something that was rewarding to me, because I was able to give back and work with people who were looking to change their lives and to help facilitate that change. Ultimately we’re all responsible for our own change, but to be a part of providing resources was something that was really important to me. I wanted to be a part of the solution in our community.

Regarding gang activity, we’ve seen it ebb and flow. But what I believe that has happened for the last few years is that community and criminal justice partners have done a great job of coming up with programming, resources, support and mentoring for young gang members. I’m really proud to be a part



MULTNOMAH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Erika Pruitt is the new president of the American Probation and Parole Association

of initiating some of those collaborations, like the Gang Impacted Family Team (GIFT).

Read more at TheSkanner.com