

## Raiford cont'd from pg 1

2010, Raiford's nephew was shot outside an Old Town nightclub. With a surge of gang-related gun violence in the years that followed, she launched the social justice organization Don't Shoot PDX in 2014.

She has been active at numerous protests and public forums in recent years, and has

done from the mayor's seat, whose current occupier Raiford is particularly frustrated with.

"(Mayor) Ted (Wheeler) has let me and others down in such a tremendous way," said Raiford, pointing to what she sees as a failure to address police accountability and public safety. "It's time for change in Port-

**“It's time for change in Portland that comes from the un-vetted will of the people**

taken a vocally critical stance against City Hall. Last summer, she filed a \$500,000 lawsuit against the City of Portland for her 2015 arrest during a Black Lives Matter demonstration.

"Since my nephew's

land that comes from the un-vetted will of the people."

If her plans for running sound preemptive, there's a reason, said Raiford. "I announced early because Ted has made comments recently that



Teresa Raiford, seen here at a 2016 protest, has announced she's running for Mayor in 2020.

death I've tried to work with countless leaders in our community that are responsible for public safety, education, housing and jobs to end trends of poverty and mass incarceration," Raiford told *The Skanner*. "It's been disgusting to see how quick people who speak about equity shut out the voices of the most marginalized members of our community."

Raiford added that while she's happy to serve her community as an organizer, she believes she can get more

Portland needs a two-term mayor and I agree with him."

According to Raiford, she'll be announcing a platform based on a two-term goal and intends to form strategic partnerships with political allies she'll be working to get elected in May 2018, including Felicia Williams for city council and Don't Shoot PDX president Maria Garcia for Multnomah County commissioner.

Raiford said she is supporting both women in their campaigns.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GOFUNDME

## Family Recovering From House Fire

Community members are raising funds so a Northeast Portland family can recuperate after a fire forced them from their home on the 100 block of NE Lombard Dec. 9. Derrall and Chevon Davis and their children are currently staying in a Troutdale hotel room. Local activists with Don't Shoot Portland collected clothing, food, cat food and hygiene items at a Dec. 12 event at Artist Repertory Theatre. Funds are also being accepted through a GoFundMe at [www.gofundme.com/4u2apc8](http://www.gofundme.com/4u2apc8).

## Homeless cont'd from pg 1

treated mental illness and other problems on its streets.

For starters, the city put together a team that would track the 25 most costly and vulnerable cases, and hover over each one individually until he or she was in treatment or housing.

"It was when everything else seems to have failed," said Hil Kaman, who left his job prosecuting the homeless about a year-and-a-half ago and took up the challenge of finding solutions as the city's public health and safety director.

Officials also are pushing new permanent supportive housing and sending social workers out with police officers.

The city of 110,000 people north of Seattle and surrounding Snohomish County saw a 65 percent jump in people living outside in the past two years — among the largest increases on the West Coast in that time.

The number of unsheltered chronically homeless — those who have been homeless for lon-

ger than a year while struggling with a serious mental illness, substance use disorder or physical disability — has grown steadily in the Everett region, more than doubling since 2015.

**“These are expensive places to live. It's expensive for everybody. But the burden falls the hardest on people with the biggest problems**

The opioid epidemic, poverty, lack of unskilled jobs, rising rents and a shortage of affordable housing have made it harder for those who fall into homelessness to get out.

The problem is not limited to Everett. Up and down the West Coast, the high cost of housing has forced thousands of people to live on the streets, a trend that opioids have exacerbated.

"These are expensive places to live. It's expensive for everybody. But the burden falls the hardest on people with the biggest prob-

lems," said Steve Berg, vice president for programs and policy with the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

In 2011, roughly one in every five opioid-related deaths in

Washington state took place in the city and surrounding Snohomish County. That was the peak, but heroin deaths remain high and deaths from synthetic opioids such as fentanyl are climbing.

The crisis had become so dire that Everett city officials became among the first to sue the manufacturer of the painkiller OxyContin in January. The lawsuit blames Purdue Pharma for an addiction crisis that has overwhelmed city resources and deepened its homelessness problem.

## Symonette cont'd from pg 1

healthcare in America concern you on the future of Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette?

**SS:** I think health care is always changing and we're in a time where health care is changing rapidly. I feel that in the Columbia Willamette area we are in a very lucky spot with a lot of support from our community. But the threat of defunding is something we don't take lightly.

Our slogan is "Care No Matter What" and I think that is really true, whether you have commercial insurance or no insurance. So now, more than ever, it's important that we keep our doors open. Depending on what happens on the federal level, our services are going to probably be needed more than ever.

**TSN:** How does Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette work to address disparities in racial and ethnically diverse communities?

**SS:** I think we are doing a better job,

but there's definitely still work for us to do to have stronger relationships with communities of color. One of the areas I work with, in particular, is eq-

**“We have gone from having three board members being people of color, to almost half our board**

uity and inclusion. We have gone from having three board members (out of 19) being people of color, to almost half our board. They represent the Native American, Latino, Black, Asian and LGBTQ communities. So that was the part I thought was important — making sure that more of the communities we serve have a voice on the board and have access to those services.

Since I've been on the board I created

and hired for the position of Director of Equity and Inclusion, which Sirius Bonner currently holds.

**TSN:** During your tenure on the board, Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette has made strides in increasing equity and inclusion, as you mentioned, as well as providing transgender hormone provision at select health centers. What do you see as your major focus areas in your new role moving forward?

**SS:** As board chair, the focus area is the whole organization, and that's a lot of moving parts. One of the areas that we're really excited about is telemedicine, which we just launched. So we're going to be able to better meet the needs of people in rural and coastal areas that we haven't been able to access in the past. That's also part of our equity and inclusive work, making sure we can bring services to those areas.

As well, continuing to make sure



Sita Symonette, board chair of Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette.

that equity, inclusion and diversity are integrated into who we are — and not just something that we do. I think the team at PPCW is really working hard to make sure that that happens. Also, providing transgender care at our health centers in Northeast Portland and Salem is amazing and it shows again that we're walking the walk of inclusion to reach the people we need to care for.