

Festival cont'd from pg 1

honoring Black Excellence, which is the pillar of her high school's Black History celebration.

Every day during the month of February, Jefferson will recognize an African American student for their merits – from good grades to goodwill.

"We have staff mem-

bers that we'll be honoring too, because they do a lot for us and don't always get recognized," Dyamond told *The Skanner*.

Jefferson joins others like Roosevelt High School in hosting Black History Month assemblies throughout the month.

“The festival will expand upon the production's message of truth, unity and hope

bers that we'll be honoring too, because they do a lot for us and don't always get recognized," Dyamond told *The Skanner*.

Jefferson joins others like Roosevelt High School in hosting Black History Month assemblies throughout the month.

Alongside the library exhibits – on display for the duration of February – the Black History Festival NW will span from Troutdale to Beaverton, combining arts, education and advocacy at its heart through a number of culturally-specific events.

According to its director Shalanda Sims, the festival grew out of World Stage Theatre's production of "Who I Am Celebrating Me," a long-running stage play that celebrates Black culture.

Sims, who is also the founder and artistic director of World Stage Theatre, said the festival will expand upon the production's message of truth, unity and hope, which "transcends perpetual negative images portrayed by mass media and the criminal justice system."

"More and more through social media, African Americans and people of color in general are seeking safe spaces to attach themselves to, as well as organizing

of World War I's closure to the current War on Terrorism.

In addition to the 12th annual performance of "Who I Am Celebrating Me" (Feb. 11 – 12), festival highlights include a month-long Black History Scavenger Hunt, gospel service, book fair, and a screening of the highly anticipated Marvel movie "Black Panther."

On Feb. 24, the Black History Festival NW will wrap a month of celebration with the Unity Gala at Self Enhancement Inc. With keynote speaker Jemele Hill – journalist and co-host of ESPN's Sports Center 6 – the gala will exhibit works and products of local Black artists and vendors.

The festival, whose sponsors include Oregon Metro and the Regional Arts and Culture Council, is also aiming to bridge economic, social and generational gaps through its programming.

For Ricky Pettifort, advisor at Jefferson's Black Student Union, the last part is crucial.

"What Portland, in my mind, has done is destroyed the Black community," said Pettifort. "And by doing that, what once connected us – the elders and the youth – that doesn't exist anymore."

Read the rest of this story at TheSkanner.com

Lawsuit cont'd from pg 1

Hayes, fatally shot Merle Mikal Hatch in 2013. In March, a Multnomah County grand jury declined to indict Hearst in connection with Hayes' death.

The tort claim letter, attached to the press release, also notes the Hayes family has not been successful in their attempts to get more information about what happened the morning Hayes died.

"Our knowledge of the circumstances of the incident is somewhat limited, largely due to the fact that the only non-law enforcement officer to witness the shooting, Quanice, is dead," the letter reads. "While the Grand Jury proceedings in this case were recorded and made public, the process was inherently one-sided: the District Attorney's office presented evidence to the grand

jurors that the shooting officer could not possibly have known, and presented evidence designed to vilify Quanice while painting the shooting officer in a highly positive light, making it seem as

“The only non-law enforcement officer to witness the shooting, Quanice, is dead

if the officer had no choice but to shoot Quanice. We disagree. Moreover, the city has refused to provide us records in its possession, despite repeated requests. Therefore, we again request you provide us all documentation in

the city's possession that describes or documents this incident in any way. This request includes any 911 recordings, police reports, scene photographs, CAD recordings, MOAT text messages, data from employee phones, dispatch recordings, notes, internal affairs investigations or other similar investigations from within the city or outside agency, documents in your possession produced by others including but not limited to autopsy photographs – relevant to the incident, communications with insurance providers, and any other documentation of any description

related to this incident."

A crowdfunding website to help with the Hayes' family's legal fees, www.crowdjustice.com/case/quanice, will go live on Thursday at noon.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VANCOUVER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Seeks Children for Easter Choir

The historic Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church in North Portland is once again gathering children who love to sing, from the ages of four years to 14 from the community for the Easter Celebration taking place April 1. Four scheduled choir rehearsals will take place March 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 3 p.m. at the church location of 3138 North Vancouver Avenue. Following each rehearsal session, lunch will be provided for the children prepared by a host of local adult chaperones. Free Transportation services are also available upon request for each rehearsal. For more information and or to sign your child up, please contact Raymond Burell at (503) 593-5285/or at raymondburell@hotmail.com, or contact the church office directly at (503) 282-9496.

Measure cont'd from pg 1

about four-and-a-half years in two juvenile justice facilities in Oregon – but White still has a felony charge on his record. Though he received job training and several certifications while incarcerated – including a forklift license and a food handler's license – White told *The Skanner* that after he was released, he struggled to find work and housing.

He also feels he was more fortunate than many in having family and mentors to offer him shelter and support while he re-entered society.

Now White works at POIC + Rosemary Anderson High School mentoring youth in the school's community healing initiative. He also works with the Anne E. Casey Foundation to advocate for youth and for criminal justice reform.

"If I had the power to eradicate [Measure 11], I would. It's too many young individuals, it's too many African Americans, it's too many Latinos – it's too many people of color that are being punished for crimes that are products of circumstance," said White, who is African American.

Earlier this month, the Oregon Council on Civil Rights published

a report in partnership with the Oregon Justice Resource Center – "Youth and Measure 11: Impacts of Mandatory Minimums" – that includes some damning statistics on racial disparities in Oregon's

“I was very, very, very illiterate when it came to law or my rights

juvenile justice system. It found:

- Black youth make up 15.5 percent of Measure 11 indictments, but only 1.8 percent of the general population in Oregon;
- Black youth were nearly three times as likely as White youth to face a Measure 11 charge, and nearly five times as likely to be indicted;
- Black youth face conviction at rates 12.5 times greater than White youth for Measure 11 offenses, only slightly less than their overall rate of referral;
- Latino and Native American youth were also significantly overrepresented relative to White peers.

The report notes that while

Black youth indictments are more likely, they are less likely to lead to a Measure 11 conviction.

But an indictment can still reshape the course of a young life, and the report connects the dots between disproportionate rates of incarceration and other problems hampering Oregon's Black communities, namely economic mobility.

In Oregon, nearly 30 percent of Black families live in poverty, and the median income of a Black family as of 2010 was \$15,000 lower than White families.

"The economic disparity among Oregonians of color is compounded by the fact that the children in these communities are all statistically more likely to have a parent in prison," the report said.

"For me I think the most surprising thing is how much science and research that has been done over the past couple of decades and how our criminal justice policies aren't really connected to that," Bobbin Singh, the founding executive director of the Oregon Justice Resource Center, told *The Skanner*.

Read more at TheSkanner.com



Quanice Hayes

FACEBOOK PHOTO