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ed for. The sister of one of the girls still being held captive fainted Wednesday upon hearing news that she was not among those freed.

One 14-year-old released by the fighters told reporters that five girls had died. She did not provide other details and it was not immediately

a nearby hospital, and “will be quarantined and be counseled before they go back to their schools,” he added.

The fighters had rolled into Dapchi in nine vehicles and the girls were left in the center of town.

As terrified residents emerged from their homes, the extremists issued an ominous warn-

“We were freed because we are Muslim girls and they didn’t want us to suffer. That is why they released us

possible to independently verify her claim.

The abductions in Dapchi have evoked painful memories of the tragedy in Chibok, where 276 girls were kidnapped from their boarding school.

Nearly four years later, about 100 of them have never returned home. Many had been forced to marry their captors and had children fathered by them.

The Nigerian government denied that it had paid a ransom in exchange for the girls’ freedom.

The girls were released “through back-channel efforts and with the help of some friends of the country, and it was unconditional,” Information Minister Lai Mohammed told journalists in the capital of Abuja.

“No money changed hands. They only had one condition — that they will return them to where they took them. So in the early hours of today, they did return the girls and most of them went to their parents,” he said.

The girls were meeting with counselors at

ing, resident Ba’ana Musa told the AP.

“We did it out of pity. And don’t ever put your daughters in school again,” the residents said the extremists told them. Boko Haram means “Western education is forbidden” in the Hausa language.

Nigeria’s government said 101 of the 110 schoolgirls had been confirmed freed and that the number “would be updated after the remaining ones have been documented.”

The latest mass abduction is thought to have been carried out by a Boko Haram splinter group aligned with the Islamic State group that has criticized the leader of the main Boko Haram organization for targeting civilians and has focused instead on military and Western targets.

The release came a day after an Amnesty International report accused the Nigerian military of failing to heed several warnings of an imminent attack on Feb. 19 during which the girls were seized.

The military has called the report an “outright falsehood.”



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

March For Our Lives Town Hall

Congresswoman Pramilla Jayapal met March 17 at the Quincy Jones Auditorium, Garfield High School with local student organizers for March For Our Lives, the youth-led national day of action against gun violence scheduled for March 24. The congresswoman and some of the students held a community town hall to discuss the movement to end gun violence after their meeting.

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racial oppression in its North and Northeast neighborhoods.

Running from April to June, the residency will select three artists — one per month — from any discipline to create works around re-establishing a community in the aftermath of gentrification. Participants will be provided with a stipend and have access to a network of resources.

Not specific to one location, however, the residency will allow artists the flexibility to create pieces throughout the city, from inner Northeast Portland to regions where gentrification has displaced residents to.

“You don’t have to prove to us that you were forced out,” said ‘Art Saved My Life’ organizer Donovan Smith. “Gentrification’ is a word we use for an experience that’s been continuing in Portland for a long time, so we just want to make sure that Black and Brown folks from our community are first in line for these resources.” Priority will be given

to those artists from North and Northeast Portland with ancestral ties to the neighborhood.

During their month-long residency, artists will also have the opportunity to host free, all-ages events to showcase their work,

“Priority will be given to those artists from North and Northeast Portland with ancestral ties to the neighborhood

as well as hold discussions and workshops on how art can help heal a community.

“The whole premise of healing is rooted in the fact that our community has a lack of resources and opportunities, and that comes with a lot of trauma,” said Janessa Narciso of Deep Under Ground (DUG), an artistic platform and partner organization of the residency. “When we think about ‘healing,’ we want to be able to dig deep into the logistical obstacles that stand in an artist’s way, but also the things

beneath the surface that can only be healed through community and fellowship. That’s the lifeline we’re trying to create with ‘Art Saved My Life.’”

The artist residency is a partnership between local organiza-

tions YBG Portland, Deep Under Ground, Friends of Noise and Gentrification is Weird, with funding through a Community Placemaking grant from Oregon Metro.

Candidates must be 18 years or older and be of African, African American, Asian, Asian American, Black, Chicano, Hispanic, Indian, Latino, or Native American descent. Participants will be selected on a rolling basis.

For further information, artists can contact the organizers at artsavedmylifepdx@gmail.com.

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tributor to the neighborhood?” Hallová said.

Stamm said the organization has reached out to community partners representing organizations in the neighborhood — including Self Enhancement Inc., Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives and the Urban League — to talk about ways to develop the space so it benefits the neighborhood. For example, Stamm said officials floated the idea of having a “convening space” available for community meetings, but said the organization won’t do it if it takes business away from other facilities.

Stamm also wants the new building to blend with some of the older buildings in the Albina neighborhood, which was initially developed in the 1910s and 1920s but has, in the last five to 10 years, undergone a wave of new construction. He doesn’t want the finished product to be more than three stories tall, and said some of the preliminary drawings even

have residential-style gables.

“When Doug reached out to me to talk about this, I said, ‘I think this is phenomenal, but make sure that folks understand a few things. You could have gone anywhere. You chose to

“Stamm and others stressed the importance of developing a site that wouldn’t displace anyone from their homes

come here. There’s plenty of space in the Pearl and they would have been just as happy to have you continue to stay resident there,” said Michael Alexander, who has served as a volunteer community liaison and advisor for Meyer on the project. “But I believe that the decision that’s made here is because the

work that gets done here is important to the foundation — being able not only to support the work but to become an institutional partner in that work was important.”

Hallová said Meyer has also reached out to the National Association of Minority Contractors and Portland’s Metropolitan Contractor Improvement Partnership with the intention of engaging minority-owned contractors on the project.

According to Stamm, Sergeant will remain on the lot until this fall, and construction will run through 2019. Meyer spokesperson Kimberly A.C. Wilson, said the total budget for the project has not been set since the organization has not settled on a design.

Stamm said the purchase and relocation is also part of an “equity journey” Meyer embarked on five to seven years ago. The organization’s board of trustees, staff and leadership team are now predominantly people of color. Meyer



PHOTO BY BERNIE FOSTER

Doug Stamm, Meyer Memorial Trust’s retiring CEO, and communications director Kimberly A.C. Wilson have announced the foundation’s purchase of a property in North Portland.

has also selected an African American woman to succeed Stamm—Michelle DePass, who most recently served as the New School’s Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy in New York City, takes the helm of the organization April 30.