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in the New England Journal of Medicine. It's the latest study to analyze how many people died during or after the Category 4 storm that hit the U.S. territory in September 2017, causing more than an estimated \$100 billion in damage. Researchers led by Harvard University called the official toll of 64 deaths

information, including how some people died. Previous studies have found that the number of direct and indirect hurricane-related deaths in Puerto Rico is higher than the official toll, including a 2017 report that there were nearly 500 more deaths than usual on the island in September.

“Indirect deaths resulting from worsening conditions or from delayed medical treatments may not be captured on death certificates

a “substantial underestimate.”

Maria caused the longest blackout in U.S. history, leaving the entire island of 3.3 million people without power, including those in hospitals and nursing homes who relied on respirators. Researchers surveyed 3,299 households earlier this year and used the findings to extrapolate to the whole island. They found that 31 percent reported disruptions in medical services, and more than 14 percent said they were unable to access medications.

“Indirect deaths resulting from worsening of chronic conditions or from delayed medical treatments may not be captured on death certificates,” researchers said in the study.

They calculated 4,645 more people died in the three months after Maria compared with the same period in 2016. One of the researchers, Rafael Irizarry of Harvard University, told the AP that the estimate is uncertain because of its limited size, but that the study still provides valuable

In late February, Puerto Rico's governor announced that a team of experts at George Washington University would lead an independent review to determine the number of deaths caused by Hurricane Maria amid ongoing accusations that the government undercounted the toll. A preliminary report was due in May, but Puerto Rico officials announced last week that the team requested and was granted more time. The director of that study did not return messages for comment.

The government of Puerto Rico issued a statement Tuesday in response to the study saying that it welcomed the research and would analyze it.

“As the world knows, the magnitude of this tragic disaster caused by Hurricane Maria resulted in many fatalities. We have always expected the number to be higher than what was previously reported,” said Carlos Mercader, executive director of Puerto Rico's Federal Affairs Administration.

PPB Sunshine Division to Distribute Summer Food Boxes to Families

On May 31, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., the Portland Police Bureau Sunshine Division, Safeway, and Advantis Credit Union volunteers will pack 1,000 food boxes at Sunshine Division's 687 N. Thompson Street warehouse as part of their summer food box program. In its sixth year, the summer food box program provides a week's worth of child-friendly breakfast, lunch, and snack items to bridge the gap between summer meal programs and free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs provided during the school year.

The program is generously funded through a grant awarded by “Hunger Is”, a joint charitable program of the Safeway Foundation and the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF), designed to build awareness and raise funds in an effort to eradicate childhood hunger in America. The \$178,000 grant will fund approximately 30,000 pounds of food for the summer food boxes and, as part of a larger programmatic summer food insecurity initiative, provide healthy breakfast options at the Sunshine Division's two pantries throughout the summer months.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU

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of the nonprofit that organizes the Good in the Hood festival every year.

“Our theme is families and communities together,” Penney told *The Skanner*.

Hugh Hewett, known for being part of the R & B and soul group Shalamar and who enjoyed some solo hits in the 1990s, will headline the event, whose musical offerings run the gamut from hip-hop to jazz, neo-soul and Latin music. The event will also include health screenings and the distribution of scholarships, and the Portland Farmers Market will also have farmer's market booths on Northeast 7th between Alberta and Prescott. Penney said organizers were able to disburse about \$8,000 worth of scholarships to youth in the community last year.

This year's parade will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a slightly different route than previous years: it will start at Legacy Emmanuel Medical Center and

end at King Elementary School.

In the weeks leading up to last year's Good in the Hood festival, organizers received a threatening letter promising a “blood bath” and referring to Penney with racial epithets. Penney said

“Just because you've not gotten any threats this year, we're not going to let up.”

he was scared and considered cancelling the event, but was ultimately undeterred – and the festival went forward without incident, though with an increased security presence.

The Portland Police Bureau and the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated the threat and provided increased security detail in concert with the event's private security. According to police bureau spokesperson Sgt. Chris Burley, that threat “was mitigated prior to or at the start of the event.”

“With the threat last year, honestly, it terrified me, and I bless that we haven't gotten any threats this year. But the Portland police said, ‘Just because you've not gotten any threats this year, we're not going to let up. We're going to

keep it tight,’” Penney said. “It seems like, to me, anybody that has a voice, that's

outspoken, that's a community activist, anyone that's fighting for the positive all the time, that's an advocate for minorities – there's always somebody out there that wants to shut them up. But I don't want to shut up. I'm going to continue to fight and continue to fight for the people that need to be fought for.”

Penney said this year's festival will continue with a heightened security presence, though organizers have not received threats.

Read more at TheSkanner.com

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ter. While at OHSU, she recognized the lack of African American participation in the program and decided to go straight to the source.

After meeting with several members of the Black community, along with health professionals and nonprofits, Boise organized a series of conferences called “Aging and Memory in the African American Community,” from which PreSERVE blossomed.

“There has been a lot of discussion, for example by the Alzheimer's Association and other researchers, that suggest that African Americans have a high prevalence of Alzheimer's disease,” said Boise.

Although not biological researcher herself, Boise said she doesn't necessarily believe the prevalence statistic. Rather, she thinks there might be a higher incidence of cognitive impairment and dementia – not exactly Alzheimer's – in African Americans.

What Boise finds particularly inter-

esting is the link between the Black population and vascular dementia, which can be caused by high blood pressure and excessive gain weight.

“Seniors who participate in the arts have less falls

According to the American Heart Association, 59 percent of all African American men and 56 percent of African American women are classified as having high blood pressure.

So for PreSERVE, it was important that the “Art and Soul Food” program promote both healthy living and healthy brains.

Traditionally, soul food is characteristic of being high in fat, calories, and sodium. And with that, health professionals have seen a rise in diabetes and kidney disease in the African American community.

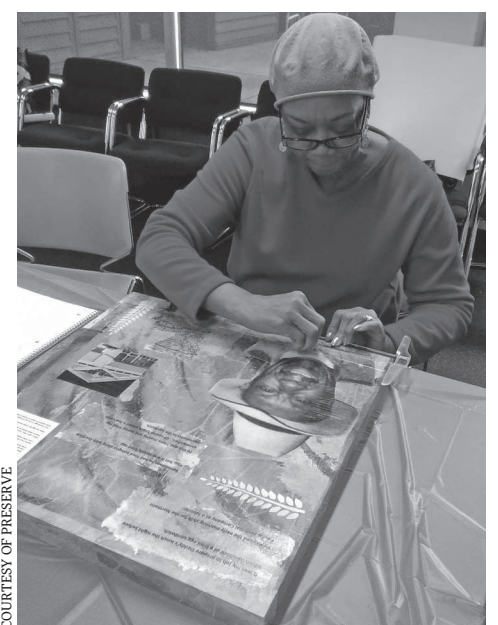
What the “Art and Soul Food” program did was help participants put a healthy twist on the recipes, so that the cultural identity of the food was retained, while being modernized into a health-conscious meal.

The act of creating art, too, has been shown to improve physical and mental well-being.

“Seniors who participate in the arts have less falls, they take few medications, and they have lower blood pressure,” said Henderson, whose Geezer Gallery supports elderly artists and offers therapeutic arts programs to low-income seniors.

“But it's not only about doing art and being creative,” continued Henderson. “It's also about bringing people together who are largely isolated, which has a significant impact on their health. It lowers depression and anxiety and improves quality of life.”

Read the full story at TheSkanner.com



COURTESY OF PRESERVE

Participant of the “Art and Soul Food” program, sponsored by the PreSERVE Coalition and offered by the Geezer Gallery. All artwork will be on display at the June Key Delta Center on June 9, 2018.