

Gayle Yamasaki appointed to Oregon Cultural Trust board

Gayle Yamasaki of Klamath Falls is one of the newest members of the Oregon Cultural Trust board. Yamasaki's appointment was announced at the organization's board meeting last month. Chuck Sams of Pendleton was also appointed to the board. Both Yamasaki and Sams were nominated by Oregon governor John Kitzhaber and confirmed by the Oregon senate.

Yamasaki is an education and cultural leader in Klamath Falls and southern Oregon. She is currently the coordinator of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program of Klamath Falls City Schools as well as an advocate for the arts, culture, and heritage through her role as a "storycatcher."

Most recently, Yamasaki led two projects focused on intergenerational and cross-cultural education programs. In 2007, she worked with the Oregon Institute of Technology on "Voices: A Legacy of Hopefulness," a photography project connecting students and tribal elders. In 2013, she led "Breaking the Silence: The Power of Voice," an interpretive student visual art project using Japanese-American experiences and stories from the Tule Lake Segregation



Gayle Yamasaki. (Photo courtesy of the Oregon Cultural Trust)

Center. "My goal is to increase access for rural and at-'promise' youth to the arts," said Yamasaki, "to have them take part in the richness of

culture, art, and heritage that is not only reflective of who they are, but what they can be."

Sams is the director of communications for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. After graduating from Pendleton High School, he joined the U.S. Navy, graduating with honors from the United States Navy Intelligence Training Center "A" School. He returned home in 1992 to begin a dedicated conservancy career. He has received a U.S. President's Service Medal from the White House and was honored by the Points of Light Foundation for his work on salmon restoration in the Columbia River basin.

"Oregon's diverse culture is to be celebrated and the (Oregon Cultural Trust) supports visionary Oregonians and cultural organizations that keep our heritage alive," said Sams. "Being able to serve as a member of the board is an honor and privilege and I look forward to sustaining the great work happening across our state."

Yamasaki and Sams have already begun their four-year terms. To learn more, visit <www.culturaltrust.org>.

Small businesses in the Jade District to benefit from new SBDC in southeast Portland

Small business owners in southeast Portland recently gained another advocate in the neighborhood.

Portland Community College's (PCC) Southeast Campus is now the location of the college's newest Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is part of the school's Continuous Learning for Individuals, Management, and Business (CLIMB) Center for Advancement.

The PCC Southeast Campus, located at 2305 S.E. 82nd Avenue, is the third SBDC office established by PCC. Other locations are found at the CLIMB Center (1626 S.E. Water Avenue, Portland) and the Willow Creek Center SBDC (241 S.W. Edgeway Drive, Beaverton).

The new SBDC center is located in the heart of the Jade District, one of six city-designated Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative (NPI) zones in Portland. The zones aim to transform underserved business districts into engines of economic growth without displacing the communities that live and work there.

Tammy Marquez-Oldham, director of the SBDC, said the campus was a natural choice for the newest SBDC, which focuses on supporting small-business owners and entrepreneurs.

"The City of Portland has really focused its economic development efforts in southeast and east Portland, and we can leverage that momentum from the small-business perspective," said Marquez-Oldham.

"We know that thriving small businesses raise the vitality of the communities where they reside. And yet in this area of Portland, there is a large concentration of small-business owners who may not know how to ask for help or even realize that there are business development resources that can help them," she said. "They just do it on their own, by the sheer force of will and persistency."

The newest SBDC is located in the only census tract in Multnomah County where people of color are in the majority (53 percent) and have the greatest number of Asian residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In response, Marquez-Oldham has assembled a team of experienced business advisors who are successful independent business owners and share language, ethnicity, and cultural background with the community they serve. Advisors are able to personally relate to a business owner's experiences and challenges, and when needed, can communicate with them in their native language, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, or Tagalog.

"For many immigrant business owners in the Jade District, English is their second language, and they may be unfamiliar with rules, regulations, licenses, and permits" that are required to operate a business in Portland, said Marquez-Oldham.

Advisors meet with business owners at their convenience, either at their place of business or

at the SBDC. In confidential one-on-one advising sessions, they discuss business goals, challenges, and opportunities. Topics include operations, sales, customer service, marketing, capital to support growth issues, and more.

"It is exciting to have this tremendous community asset on our campus," said Jessica Howard, president of the Southeast Campus. "With more than 130 small businesses in the Jade District alone, the new center is ideally located to support local business owners."

The newest SBDC center is equidistant between the CLIMB Center and similar centers located in Clackamas and at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham. PCC's SBDC locations serve five counties — Yamhill, Columbia, Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington — and with the centers in Clackamas and Gresham, the collective effort illustrates a bridge of support and resources across the region.

Plans are already under way to collaborate with a variety of southeast Portland organizations — the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), the Jade District and other NPI districts in east Portland, and various chambers of commerce — in an effort to assist local business owners with job creation, access to capital, attracting new customers, and generating sales.

To learn more, call (971) 722-5081 or visit <www.bizcenter.org/PCC>.

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