



# CONCORDIA NEWS

A free publication of the Concordia Neighborhood Association

September 2022

Black United Fund

## African American foundation helps to make dreams come true

By Rob Cullivan  
CNews Editor

**K**enyahta Sikes, co-owner of PDX SuiteSpot, an event space in Chinatown, says Black United Fund of Oregon (BUF-OR), 2828 N.E. Alberta St., is a valuable resource for her and other African American business owners in Portland.

She noted the Concordia-based organization helped her host 40 other Black businesswomen for a workshop titled

*“We’re engaging in acts to drive economics in our favor.”*

– Emmanuel Williams, Black United Fund

“Boss Talks: Entrepreneurship for the Black Woman.” Attendees learned about how to use digital marketing and social media as well as access capital, she said.

“I wondered how many other Black business women were struggling with the same things,” she said, adding that a challenge for many Black business women is finding the resources and funding they need to make their companies succeed.

“Nine times out of 10, that’s the greatest struggle,” she said.

Sikes’ company can host photo shoots, music videos, house parties with live music, baby showers, exercise classes, birthday parties, small banquets, launch parties and meeting space. She adds that she plans on taking advantage of any business assistance she can find through BUF-OR.

“Black United Fund has been influential in my business journey.”

That’s exactly the kind of words Emmanuel Williams, the foundation’s community-justice and equity coordi-



Christine Bynum, a pre-dental student at Spelman College in Atlanta, credits Black United Fund for financially assisting her while she attends the prestigious institution. Contributed photo

nator, wants to hear. Black United Fund is designed to help folks like Sikes turn their dreams into reality, he said, to help African American entrepreneurs stake their place in the nation’s business landscape.

“A lot of the problems we deal with are economic,” he said. “We’re engaging in acts to drive economics in our favor.”



### Legacy of uplift

Founded in 1983, Black United Fund of Oregon works to increase post-secondary opportunities for young people, support BIPOC as well as female-led nonprofits through its leadership program as well as by providing them grants, and aims

to foster “a broader understanding of ethnic and culturally diverse groups,” its mission statement reads.

Located in a one-story building, the nonprofit foundation plans to literally enlarge its presence in Concordia over the next few years, aiming to erect a multi-story structure by 2024 that will replace its current building and that will host not just BUF-OR but multiple other nonprofits as well.

The new building will be called the Building United Futures Complex. Anchored by Black United Fund, it will be a consortium of organizations, programs and businesses centered on “equipping, empowering, encouraging and engaging Black and other BIPOC communities to enhance their educational advancement, economic mobility and social liberation,” reads a statement from Adre, the real-estate development company overseeing the project.

Dr. LM Alaiyo Foster, BUF-OR president and CEO, says the new building will be designed to be welcoming to all people, with open spaces and lots of windows, and may even feature showers where houseless folks can get off the streets for a moment and take care of their hygiene.

“It will be a neighborhood hub and unapologetically Black,” she says.

### Scholarship students

Among the foundation’s best-known programs is its Post-Secondary Options, coordinated by Saeeda Wright, which

Story continued on Page 7



Saeeda Wright, left, coordinator of post-secondary options at Black United Fund, talks to Emmanuel Williams, the organization’s community-justice and equity coordinator. Photo by Javier Puga-Phillips



CNews Editor Rob Cullivan is a veteran journalist, publicist and grant writer who has written about everything from rock ‘n’ roll to religion. He possesses a deep affection for writers and photographers who hit deadline.



Delorie Finch

Delorie Finch, a veteran of early childhood education, has opened a pilot site for Multnomah County’s Preschool for All program near Concordia. Story on Page 3.

### CNA Mission Statement

To connect Concordia residents and businesses—inform, educate and report on activities, issues and opportunities of the neighborhood.

### Concordia News

This free, monthly publication of CNA will abstain from publishing anything that could be construed as libel.

Copies are delivered to all residences and many community and business locations in the Concordia neighborhood.

Concordia News is printed on 40% post-consumer or better paper, manufactured at a local mill.

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From the Board

By Peter Keller, CNA Chair



McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room

We took the month of August off from meeting as a board, which was a nice break and appreciated by our all-volunteer board. Of course, there’s always work to do, and currently we’re working on a definition for our “community partners.”

As I’ve mentioned in previous columns, we are fortunate to have use of the McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room. The agreement we have with the Kennedy School, dating back to when McMenamins took it over in 1997, is that the Concordia Neighborhood Association would manage the room and rent it out at a reduced rate or free. Any proceeds from the room benefit CNA and thus the Concordia neighborhood.

These proceeds help offset the cost of CNews and events produced by the CNA Board. During the early pandemic years, the community room was closed for some months and since then has slowly come back online. With some cutbacks, fortunately the CNA Board survived financially.

Over the years, the CNA Board has allowed certain groups to use the room for free and charged others a nominal fee for the room. The rates have stayed the same since 1997: \$25 per hour for businesses and private parties and \$15 per hour for nonprofits.

As you know, we’ve experienced some inflation since 1997. For example, a modest house in Concordia would set you back about \$100,000 and some change in 1997. According to Redfin, as of June 2022, the average cost of a home in Concordia is \$685,000.

In 2022, we’ve also seen rapid inflation. Therefore, the board has decided to act and raise rates. While we are still debating the raise’s exact amount, the rates are going to increase. We’ll announce the rate increase soon, but rest assured the community room will still be reasonably priced.

In addition, we are putting in place a policy for “community partners,” which will make the room available for free to those people and groups who demonstrate that they give back to Concordia. In turn, this would allow such groups to offer their programs at a free or reduced rate.

At our Sept. 7 CNA Board meeting at 6 p.m., we’ll present the new policy, and the CNA Board will vote on it. I’ll announce the results of that vote next month.

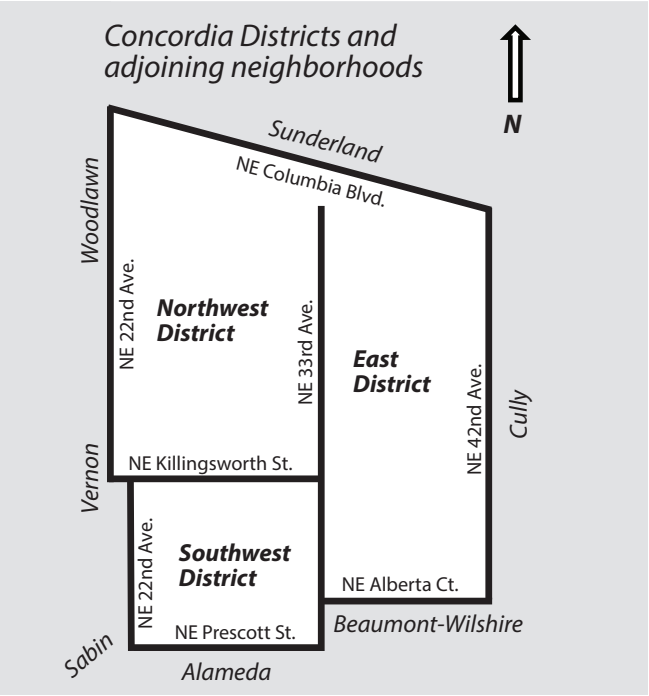
Also, a reminder that we’ll have Gloria Cruz from the City Charter Commission at our general meeting on Sept. 7 at 7 p.m. to talk about the City Charter ballot measure.

To learn more about the proposed charter, read page 3 of the Aug. 2022 edition of CNews at [ConcordiaPDX.org/concordia-news/concordia-news-downloads/](https://ConcordiaPDX.org/concordia-news/concordia-news-downloads/).

We hope to see you there!

*Native Portlander Peter Keller has lived in Concordia since 1997. He runs a small marketing agency with partner Max, out of their home studio. He loves exploring outdoors with and without his dogs.*

*We’ll announce the rate increase soon, but rest assured the community room will still be reasonably priced.*



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CNA meeting venues, how to attend

To learn how to attend CNA meetings in-person (when available) or remotely, visit:

- [ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMeetings](https://ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMeetings)
- [Facebook.com/groups/ConcordiaPDX](https://Facebook.com/groups/ConcordiaPDX)

Concordia Neighborhood Association

Board Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 7, 6 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Peter Keller, [Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org)  
Future meeting dates: 10/5, 11/2

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 7, 7 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Peter Keller, [Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org)  
Future meeting date: 11/2

Social Committee

If you’d like to volunteer to help plan fun, community-building events, contact Javier Puga-Phillips at [Social@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:Social@ConcordiaPDX.org).

Media Team

1st Monday of the month, Monday, Sept. 5, 6 p.m., venue: remote, see box below, contact Shawn Mihalik, [MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org)

Finance Committee

Last Wednesday of the month, Wednesday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m., venue: contact Heather Pashley, [Treasurer@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:Treasurer@ConcordiaPDX.org)

Community Room Rental

For info and scheduling, visit [ConcordiaPDX.org/community-room-rental](https://ConcordiaPDX.org/community-room-rental) or contact Javier Puga-Phillips at [CNARoomKennedy@gmail.com](mailto:CNARoomKennedy@gmail.com).

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North Community Safety Team

Jacob Brostoff & Daniel Franco-Nunez, [north.pdxteam@PortlandOregon.gov](mailto:north.pdxteam@PortlandOregon.gov), 503.823.4064

SUBMISSIONS & ADVERTISING

Submissions to Concordia News: Deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the upcoming monthly publication. Contact [CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org)  
Submissions to CNA website: Submit nonprofit news & events to [MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org)  
Advertising: Leigh Shelton, [CNewsBusiness@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:CNewsBusiness@ConcordiaPDX.org), 971.600.1678

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Back to School

# Preschool, afterschool to open in Concordia

By Leigh Shelton  
CNews Advertising Representative

For Delorie Finch, the dream of opening her own preschool began in 1998, while sitting in the balcony of the Maranatha Church in Northeast Portland.

“The pastor said, ‘God has blessed many of you with talents, and many of you are sitting on those talents,’” Finch said. “And I heard God say to me, ‘Delorie, you need to start the school. Start the school and the people will come.’”

Twenty-four years later, she started the school, and thanks to funding from Preschool for All, a 2020 Multnomah County voter-supported ballot initiative, the students have come.

In its first year of implementation, Preschool for All has enrolled 677 students across the county, 10 of whom will attend Finch Academy, located in Maranatha Church, 4222 NE 12th Ave.

“They’ve been wonderful,” Finch said, referring to the Preschool for All counselors who’ve helped her. “They’re doing everything they possibly can to make

sure we’re successful.”

Preschool for All has provided Finch Academy grant money to help cover infrastructure expenses, training and mentorship. The academy has also received tuition aid to cover 10 three- and four-year-olds.

Funded by a tax on high-income earners that Multnomah County started collecting in January 2021, Preschool for All makes full-time preschool free for families in the county.

*“Parents shouldn’t have to choose between paying the bills and rent and preschool.”*

– Delorie Finch

Finch long dreamt of opening her own school and spent 27 years running the preschool program at Matt Dishman Community Center in Northeast Portland’s Eliot neighborhood. She retired in September of 2021.

“When I started [at Dishman], it was all Black children,” she said. “By the time I retired it was all white except for one. This is a result of gentrification.”

Finch said she loved her experience at Dishman. But she still felt a yearning to lead something of her own making and



Delorie Finch, left, greets her preschool students each morning. Here she greets Londyn Brown, who high fives her father, Neal Brown. Photo by Leigh Shelton

fulfill a deep need she saw for children to attend preschool.

“It’s not fair for children to be left out just because their parents can’t pay,” Finch said. “Parents shouldn’t choose between paying the bills and rent and preschool, yet they do. These kids are so smart. They are like a sponge. We need to fill their little minds with as many good things as we can.”

For Preschool for All, Finch Academy is considered a “Pilot Site.” That means

it’s one of the first contracted preschools in the program and, akin to user testing, will influence the overall shape of the county’s preschool program as its details are worked out.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson was a key leader of the 2020 Preschool for All campaign conducted by a coalition of parents, teachers, unions, preschool providers

Story continued on Page 8

 Leigh Shelton is the new lead ad representative for CNews. She loves raising her three children in Concordia and doing yoga nidra. For advertisement inquiries, contact Leigh at [CNewsBusiness@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:CNewsBusiness@ConcordiaPDX.org).

## Charter info session Sept. 7

City Charter Commissioner Gloria Cruz will address a general meeting of the Concordia Neighborhood Association board from 7 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 7, in the Community Room at McMenamins Kennedy School, 5736 NE 33rd Ave.


Cruz will speak on the proposed charter for Portland, which residents will vote on this November. The proposed charter would change the city council’s makeup from its current one of four at-large members and the mayor to one made up of 12 members who will represent four districts, each with three council members representing it.

Furthermore, council members will no longer run city bureaus, and voters will be able to use proportional ranked-choice voting to choose their council members. Proponents claim ranked-choice voting is more inclusive of underrepresented voters than the current simple majority system by which councilors are chosen.

Cruz is a member of the independent 20-member City Charter Review Commission, which has been at work for more than 18 months gathering citizen input on the proposed charter.

To learn more about the proposed charter, visit [Portland.gov/omf/charters-review-commission](http://Portland.gov/omf/charters-review-commission).

## Need a place for your book club to meet?



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Social Column

Yard sales to take place first week of September

By Javier Puga-Phillips  
CNA Social Committee Chair

Concordia's National Night Out parade took place Aug. 2. You can enjoy our photo package of the event on Page 5.

Thank you to Flour Market for hosting the beginning of the parade with cookies, refreshments, and water for our participants.

The parade ended at Mildred Hall, where our gracious host Matthew Hollingsworth opened the doors for celebrations.

We had food and fruit catered by

Ramiro from J.R. Skillets, music by Pop Cart PDX, and story-telling by Edith Johnson. Zoe Mendez painted faces of the attendees, and other volunteers made this an evening of fun and laughter.

Also, in late August we hosted our bi-monthly Concordia Neighborhood Litter Pickup. Thank you to Solve for your support and a special shout-out to Gina Levine our neighbor who has been there helping and making sure we're organized and ready to clean our streets.

Yard Sales

Our next event is the CNA Annual Yard Sale, which is set for Friday

through Sunday Sept. 2 to 4. Please visit ConcordiaPDX.org and look for the registration link, or email Social@ConcordiaPDX.org, and I'll be happy to share the link with you.

CNA is happy to report that our Halloween party will be held this year at Bar Cala, 2703 NE Alberta St., on Monday, Oct. 31. We will have treats for children and music. Adult beverages will be available for purchase, and costumes are highly encouraged.

Bike Safety

On a serious note, we'd like to ask all of our residents to please help us spread the word about bike safety on our streets. Portland is a bike-friendly city, and we'd like to continue sharing our road with bikers of all ages. Yet lately we have seen more biking accidents, which leads me to share that friend of Concordia and co-owner of Bonne Chance, James Ehrmann, was recently run over by a car and seriously injured while biking. He is hospitalized but on his way to recovery, and many of his friends and patrons have stepped up to help either at his business or by organizing a GoFundMe (please email if you'd like to donate, and I'll send the link) to help get him through recovery until he can work again.

Also, if you'd like to support his business, please stop by Bonne Chance, 2203 NE Alberta St., where his brother and business partner Mark will be keeping the doors open.

Community Room

We'd also like to remind everyone that CNA is mainly funded by the rentals of the community room at Kennedy School. The room is available to be rented hourly with special rates for non-profit organizations.

All proceeds from the room are used to fund our events and cleanups, the newspaper, and other important projects for Concordia.

We currently need volunteers. Please reach out to me at 503.343.5561 or Social@ConcordiaPDX.org for volunteer opportunities.

Follow us on Instagram @CNAPDX and use #SocialConcordiaPDX for shout-outs.

We also have a Facebook page @ConcordiaPDX for updates.

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Javier Puga-Phillips holds the At Large 4 position on the Concordia Neighborhood Association (CNA) Board of Directors, manages rentals of the McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room and chairs the CNA Social Committee. He is a real estate professional locally, and he is a published author and motivational speaker in Latin America and Spain.

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Asher Schwab, 8, decorated rocks at the event.

# National Night Out

Residents of Concordia and Vernon neighborhoods participated in National Night Out Aug. 2. Participants rode bikes from Flour Market to Mildred Hall and enjoyed food catered by RJ Skilletts. Photos by Michael French



Edith Johnson tells a story to children at National Night Out.



Zoe Mendez, left, paints the hand of Sunday Johnson, age 6.



From left: Concordia Neighborhood Association leaders Javier Puga-Phillips, Gina Levine, Heather Pashley, Peter Keller.



Area residents marked National Night Out with a bike parade that began at Flour Market, 5507 NE 30th Ave., and ended at Mildred Hall, 5138 NE 23rd Ave.



News from the NET

# How to Start Preparing For Potential Disasters

By Erin E. Cooper  
Concordia/Vernon/Woodlawn  
Neighborhood Emergency Team

If you haven't started setting aside supplies for a disaster, or done any other kind of planning, where is the best place to start? This is a common question, and while there's no one right answer, I'll give you my priorities to use as a guideline in case you need it.

Remember that you don't have to tackle everything at once, and I highly advise taking it in small doses. A small amount of planning is better than no planning.

It is important to make sure that everyone in your family knows what your reunification plan is. To learn how to make a plan, visit ConcordiaPDX.org, click on "Concordia News" and read the NET columns in the Oct. and Nov. 2021 editions. A reunification plan doesn't require any supplies, just thinking and talking things through with your family.

For supplies, I suggest starting with a three-day go-bag for each member of the family, including children, and I'll cover what you should put in it in next month's NET column. These are supplies you can use in your home or take with you, depending on the situation.

Once you've got that in place, it's time to start thinking about larger quantities of water, a subject I covered in the July and Aug. 2022 NET columns. You will also need food supplies for a longer

period of time. It's a good idea to have at least two weeks of food and water supplies on hand. If it's too much to buy all of that at once, add to your supplies gradually—it's not an all-or-nothing rule. Some is always better than none!

If you feel like you have enough supplies for your family for a couple of weeks or more after a disaster, it's time to get involved in your community if you haven't already. Find out about joining your Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) at [Portland.gov/pbem/neighborhood-emergency-teams](http://Portland.gov/pbem/neighborhood-emergency-teams), or your BEECN (Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Node) team at [Portland.gov/pbem/about-beecn](http://Portland.gov/pbem/about-beecn) (and see Concordia News August 2021). Or connect with neighbors to share preparedness duties and develop a disaster response plan for the block on which you live.

A community that plans together survives better and recovers faster from disasters!



Erin E. Cooper is a marine biologist living in Woodlawn. She spends a lot of time thinking about disasters and has been a NET member for many years.

Contact her at [OceanListener@gmail.com](mailto:OceanListener@gmail.com).

# News Items

Oct. 1 marks the **United Nations International Day of Older Persons**. This year's theme focuses on the "Resilience and Contributions of Older Women."

In recognition of the event, North-east Village PDX will showcase the voices of three of its women members, each of whom found ways to overcome great adversity. Using a storytelling format, the event will be held via Zoom.

Details are still being worked out, so check out the Calendar at [NEVillagepdx.org](http://NEVillagepdx.org) as the date approaches.

## Safe Routes to School looks to add new committee members.

### Safe Routes to School

Are you passionate about the ability to walk and roll safely in Oregon and helping our children do the same? The Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee is looking to add three to four new members between the ages of 16 and 24.

In particular, the committee is inviting young people with disabilities, BIPOC persons and/or people with experience in health care to join.

The application will be open through Sept. 15. Staff will follow up with applicants in September.

A sub-committee of the Safe Routes to School Advisory committee will recommend 3 to 4 new members

to the Oregon Dept. of Transportation director in October.

New members will begin their term in January 2023.

The SRAC recommends which grants to fund for ODOT's Safe Routes to School Construction and Education programs. The SRAC advises ODOT, the Oregon Transportation Commission, and consultants with the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee.

A new SRAC member must be able to attend six 3-hour meetings annually (generally every other month) starting in January. Meetings may be held online, in-person or as hybrid options. Accommodations to participate in meetings are available, such as material in alternate formats.

The SRAC is a dynamic group of partners who engage in lively debates with open minds and respect. The committee works together to determine the priorities for the Safe Routes program, provide feedback to staff for program implementation, and make important recommendations for grant funding.

To learn more, visit [OregonSafeRoutes.org](http://OregonSafeRoutes.org), or call LeeAnne Ferguson, program manager, at 503.910.8994.

### VOA virtual celebration

The Volunteers of America Oregon will host a virtual celebration on KGW Channel 8 or via livestreaming at [KGW.com/watch](http://KGW.com/watch), at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 15.

This event highlights volunteers' continued steadfast commitment to the residents of Oregon. Proceeds from the event further VOA Oregon's mission to enhance lives by promoting self-determination, building strong communities and standing for social justice.

To RSVP, for free, visit [VOAor.org/changemakers](http://VOAor.org/changemakers).

## Concordia Neighborhood Annual Yard Sale

Friday, Sept. 2 – Sunday, Sept. 4  
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.



Get started by downloading a map from [ConcordiaPDX.org](http://ConcordiaPDX.org). Maps also available at participating houses.

Questions? Contact Javier Puga-Phillips at [Social@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:Social@ConcordiaPDX.org) or call/text 503.343.5561.



## Heart in Hand Preschool

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Parent- Child Classes starting monthly



## Want to get involved locally?


Wednesday, Sept. 7, the Concordia Neighborhood Association will hold two meetings:

- 6 p.m. – Board meeting
- 7 p.m. – General meeting

Join us in the McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room or attend remotely: [ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMEetings](http://ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMEetings).

For more information about these two meetings, see *From the Board* on Page 2.

All are welcome!





## Meet Truman.

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Stumptown Scholar

# Jefferson High valedictorian wins scholarship

By Rob Cullivan  
CNews Editor

**A fan of anthropology and history, Rowan Dodero is a valedictorian of the Class of 2022 and says she's fascinated by how folks lived in the past.**

Rowan Dodero, 18, a graduate of Faubion Elementary School as well as Jefferson High, can speak Spanish, paint murals and talk fashion—Roman fashion, from back when the Caesars were emperors, not salads.

A fan of anthropology and history, Dodero is a valedictorian of the Class of 2022 and says she's fascinated by how folks lived in the past.

"I'm interested in the people," she says. "I really like looking at what they

town Scholars are primarily funded by retailer Mattress Lot and local donors. Scholarship awards are based on an essay, academic performance, community leadership and financial need.

For her Stumptown essay, Dodero was asked how she would teach young people 20 years from now about what it was like to be a student during the Covid lockdowns.

"I would start by delving into the effects that quarantine, masking and social distancing had


*"Our scholarship committee was super impressed by Rowan's essay."*

—Michael Hanna

wore and learning about what they believed and why and what they did."

In addition to the aforementioned subjects, Dodero has also learned about biotechnology as an intern at her high school's OHSU program, and she enjoys writing as well. The stellar student earned 40 college credits while in high school by attending Portland Community College classes through its Cascadia campus, graduated with a 4.2 weighted GPA and is enrolled at the University of Oregon.

She earned a Pathways Scholarship to the home of the Ducks, which she says will cover her tuition, and plans to pay her housing bill with the help of a \$1,000 Stumptown Scholarship. Dodero was one of 16 East Portland high school graduates who won such a grant. Stump-

*CNews Editor Rob Cullivan is a veteran journalist, publicist and grant writer who has written about everything from rock 'n' roll to religion. He possesses a deep affection for writers and photographers who hit deadline.*

on people," she wrote. "I would focus on youth because I have first-hand experience being a high schooler during the pandemic, and I could relate it to my students. I would look into the long-term effects this had on my generation, how school etiquette and social skills were hindered."

"Our scholarship committee was super impressed by Rowan's essay," Michael Hanna, a Stumptown spokesperson, said. "Rowan is a creative and thoughtful writer. She writes clearly, in an organized manner. We liked her description of life during the pandemic for high school students and her description of how the pandemic changed our culture and society for years to come."

Dodero credited her parents, Calley Dodero and Stephen Phillips, for supporting her academic journey, and added that her interests are varied, ranging from volunteering on behalf of the Oregon Food Bank to serving as a Portland Parks and Recreation camp counselor this summer, as well as an art camp counselor the previous three years.

Although she would love to study Spanish abroad, Dodero said she has not yet made up her mind what she wants to pursue as a career after university.

"I'm just trying to learn a bunch of stuff and see what I like."



## Black United Fund makes dreams real

Continued from Page 1

provides educational and financial assistance to young people. Wright has mentored Christine Bynum, a junior at Atlanta's Spelman College, the nation's oldest college for African American women. Bynum said she wants to inspire other African Americans because she is planning to become an orthodontist.

"As a future Black dentist, I know there are not that many Black dentists out there," she said. "I want to be a role model to other students."

Bynum is also studying Spanish and hopes to work with Spanish speakers as well as folks of any race who are unable to access dental care due to financial challenges. As

someone who's worn braces herself, she said it's important for people to feel welcome and supported as they get their teeth fixed.

"You are trying to help them smile better, and they never forget their orthodontists."

She credited Black United Fund for helping her to defray the considerable costs of her college education.

"The financial support means that I am able to continue my time at Spellman," she said. "I am able to reduce the amount of loans that I may need to take out for school."

For more information on Black United Fund, visit [BUFor.org](http://BUFor.org).

For more information on PDX SuiteSpot, visit [PDXSuiteSpot.com](http://PDXSuiteSpot.com).

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# Community events calendar

Saturday, Sept. 2, Noon–5 pm  
**ALDER COMMONS FESTIVAL**  
**Location:** 4212 NE Prescott St.  
Second annual Alder Commons Festival. Local vendors in the parking lot, prize giveaways, cooking demo, woodworking demo, pop-up free play with Portland Free Play, tours of Alder Commons, Lonchería los Mayas food cart, a live letterpress printing station and more.  
**Details:** aldercommons.org

Saturday, Sept. 10, 2 pm  
**ALDER COMMONS AFRO MADE POP UP MARKET**  
**Location:** 4212 NE Prescott St.  
Come support Black-owned businesses at our market in the parking lot.  
**Details:** aldercommons.org

Saturdays 10 am to noon  
Mondays 4–6 pm  
**ST. CHARLES FOOD PANTRY**  
**Location:** 5310 NE 42nd Ave.  
“Shop” at the food pantry Mondays & Saturdays this month, or request contactless delivery of food boxes. The 9.53-square-mile service area is 28th to 82nd & the Columbia River to Mason, including Dignity Village.  
**Details:** stcharlespdx.org/food-help.html, svdpdxsc@outlook.com

Saturday, Sept. 17, 24  
**FOOD PANTRY**  
**Location:** 5209 NE 22nd Ave.  
Sharon Seventh Day Adventist Church hosts its food pantry the last two Saturdays each month with restrictions & strict adherence to physical-distancing procedures.  
**Details:** sharonsda.net, office@SharonChurch.comcastbiz.net

**Community calendar items**  
Admission to events is free unless otherwise noted. Priority is afforded to local events sponsored by—or which benefit—local nonprofit organizations. Submit information to [CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org](mailto:CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org) by the 10th of the month preceding the event.

## Preschool and afterschool to open

Continued from Page 3

and community groups. Pederson said she feels proud of reaching this milestone in the Preschool for All journey, and is still active on the team.

“Families are dropping off their little ones at preschool and are free from the significant financial burden of childcare,” Vega Pederson said, adding: “This program was recognized as a potential national model, and we’re going to make sure it’s a success.”

Applications are currently open for existing or would-be preschool providers interested in joining for the 2023–24 school year. Cash assistance and free training are available. For more information, visit [Multco.us/preschool/providers](http://Multco.us/preschool/providers).

And although Finch Academy’s Preschool for All funded slots are filled for this school year, she still has room for more students, and Finch said she will not turn away families. For more information, call Finch at 971.544.7291.

**“We Play” After School**

Concordia neighborhood leader and former CNews Advertising Representative Gina Levine’s We Play Portland, an after school childcare program for Faubion School students ages five through 10, has found a new home in St. Michael’s Lutheran Church, 6700 NE 29th Ave., starting this month.

Levine has long provided before- and after-school care for friends and neighbors out of her house. But this year she has taken her business to the next level,

finding a convenient location in the church’s Fellowship Hall next door to Faubion.

“I’ve been somewhat unofficially watching other people’s kids since my nine-year-old was a newborn,” Levine said. “But it was never a business. It’s really exciting to be taking the next step. I can help more families, and I see it as a longer-term career.”

Levine said she named her care program “We Play” because that’s what she wants to give the kids, a chance for unstructured time to just play and be themselves.

“I don’t think kids get to play enough during the school year,” she said. “To me, play is building relationships, building community and figuring out who you are when you’re a kid.”

And for Faubion families, it’s a vital service for those parents who are working and can’t pick up their kids at 3:15 p.m. when school dismisses students, she said. We Play Portland is offering care Monday to Thursday for two hours after school.

One such parent is Christine Sullivan, a single mom and full-time teacher in Portland Public Schools. When her daughter started in-person classes at Faubion last school year, she was stressed and scrambled to find before- and after-school care.

“I think the [school] district needs to do a better job of offering more options,” Sullivan said. “I’m so thankful for Gina. She provides such an amazing service for the community by watching all these kiddos.”

Levine said a few spots remain open in this year’s program, so contact her at [WePlayPortland@gmail.com](mailto:WePlayPortland@gmail.com) to enroll.

If all goes well at Faubion, she hopes to open a Vernon School location for the 2023–24 school year.



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*“Come join us at our Fall launch where there’s a place for everyone.”*



**Faubion Welcomes Staff**

Faubion School welcomes two new assistant principals this fall: Cynthia Kieffer and Celina Garrido.

Kieffer was a middle school teacher in Beaverton before entering administration in Portland Public Schools. She lives in the Sabin neighborhood and said she already feels connected to the community.

Kieffer, who is Latina and speaks fluent Spanish, comes to Faubion from James John Elementary, a K–5 school. She requested to be moved to a school that served older children.

“I found I was missing that middle school component,” Kieffer said. “Grades six through eight are a discovery period. Kids are forming their hopes and dreams. To watch that identity grow and blossom is just so invigorating.”