



# *The* URBAN EXPRESS

Vol. 1, No. 2

Urban League of Portland

Fall 2004

## **2004 Equal Opportunity Day Dinner Honors Brian Rohter, President and Co-Founder of New Seasons Market**

The Urban League of Portland's 2004 Equal Opportunity Day Dinner, held on October 13 at the Portland Hilton Hotel, was a tremendous success. More than 700 people attended the event and approximately \$163,000 in gross revenue was raised to support the League's programs and services.

The 2004 dinner theme, "Education, Opportunity, Equality," reflects the Urban League's commitment to building a community that provides opportunity to all. During the dinner, Brian Rohter, president and co-founder of New Seasons Market, was presented with the 2004 Equal Opportunity Award in recognition of his important contributions in the areas of workforce and economic development.

New Portland Public Schools Superintendent Vicki L. Phillips delivered the keynote address. Dr. Phillips spoke about education reform and the importance of closing the achievement gap. Governor Kulongoski also addressed the audience during the dinner.



*League President & CEO, Vanessa Gaston (left) with Brian Rohter and wife Eileen Brady (center) and Charles Wilhoite, Board Chair (right)*

Brenda Braxton, news anchor with KGW Northwest Newschannel 8, served as the emcee. The honorary co-chairs were Russ Danielson, Vice President and CEO of Providence Health System Oregon, and Matt Hennessee, President and CEO of Quiktrak, Inc.

The dinner was sponsored by Intel, Kaiser Permanente, NW Natural, OHSU, Portland General Electric, Portland Trail Blazers, Providence Health System, The Standard, Thomason Auto, Wells Fargo and Willamette Management Associates.

## From the Desk of Vanessa Gaston

The Urban League of Portland is actively involved in addressing issues relevant to our mission. I would like to share with you some of our recent advocacy efforts.

The League is a partner in an alliance of organizations working together to address issues between Portland Public Schools and the community. Other members of this alliance include the Portland Schools Alliance, Portland Schools Foundation, Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement (OCHA), Latino Network, APANO, Stand for Children, Community and Parents for Public Schools, and the Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education.

The League also is a member of the Albina Ministerial Alliance (AMA) Ad Hoc Committee for Social Justice that is working to improve relations between the community and the Portland Police Bureau. Other members of the Ad Hoc Committee include AMA, Portland Copwatch, Portland Jobs with Justice, Alliance

for Police and Community Accountability, Coalition of Black Men, Latino Network, Portland Peaceful Response Coalition, American Friends Service Committee, Sisters of the Road and many individual community members.

The League has signed on to an Amicus brief being prepared in the Li & Kennedy v. State of Oregon (same sex marriage) case to emphasize our position of standing for equality and against all forms of discrimination.

In order to protect K-12 education and services to our most vulnerable adults, the League joined as a member of the coalition to defeat Measure 26-64, which would end the temporary Multnomah County income tax if approved by voters.

The League also is working in partnership with KBMS Radio 1480 AM to organize and assist black-owned businesses in the Portland area so they can become stronger and more competitive.

This is an extremely important election year. We are in a critical period, both locally and nationally. We need political leadership that cares about improving our economy, providing affordable healthcare, protecting Medicare and social security benefits, providing youth with a quality education, and protecting citizens while also preserving our civil liberties and civil rights. We, as taxpayers and registered voters, must continue to be active in the political process. If we want to put this city, state and country on the right path, we must let our voices be heard!

It's been another challenging year, with the economy still sluggish and budget cuts and lay-offs prevalent. Yet, many individuals, businesses and foundations continue to make financial contributions to the League. I want to express my deepest appreciation to all of our supporters. Without you, our important work in the community would not be possible. Together, we are making the Portland metropolitan area a better place to live for everyone.

Thank you.

### URBAN LEAGUE OF PORTLAND - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Charles A. Wilhoite - Board Chair

Milton A. Coleman, Jr. - Chair-Elect/Vice Chair; Chair, Strategic Planning/Programs Committee

John H. Epstein - Treasurer

Carl R. Neil - Secretary

Lois L. Davis - Co-Chair, Development/Public Relations Committee

Sarah Mensah - Co-Chair, Development/Public Relations Committee

Karen M. Williams - Chair, Nominating Committee

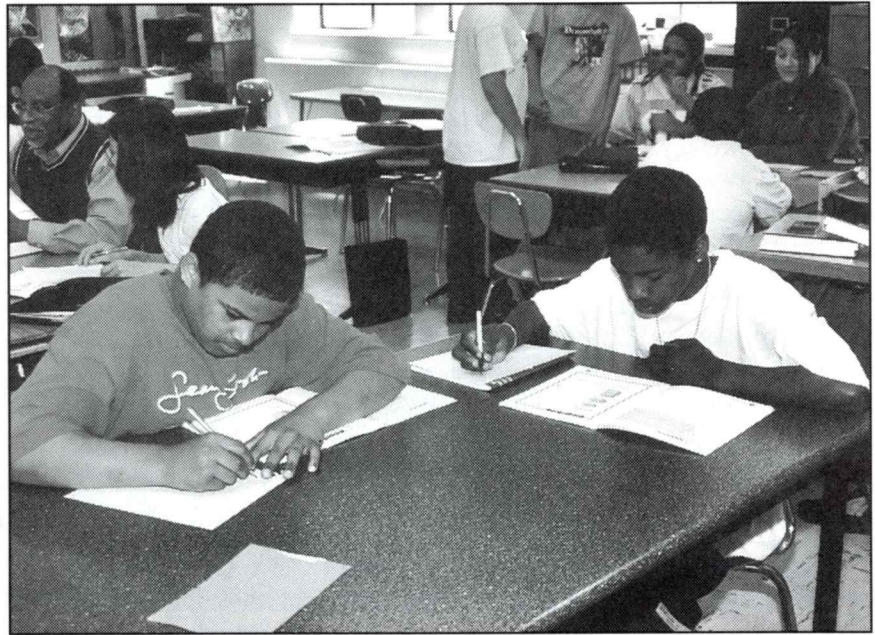
Barbe West - Immediate Past Chair

Arleen Barnett  
Mateo Bradford  
June Chrisman  
Isaac Dixon  
Bruce W. Feathers  
Dr. Algie Gatewood  
Sonja Henning  
La Shanda Hurst  
Brad Hutton  
Nitin Khanna  
Marcus C. Mundy  
Patricia Welch

## CARS Education Program to Continue at Ockley Green Middle School

The Urban League of Portland's Centers for Academic Readiness and Success (CARS) program was launched at Ockley Green Middle School in February 2004. The program provides intensive academic coaching designed to improve academic achievement in mathematics among low-income and minority students.

During the four-month period that CARS operated, significant progress was made. Most of the students were performing far below benchmarks when the program began. Of the 67 students served, 16% met or exceeded benchmarks by the end of the school year. The remaining 84% made substantial gains (test scores improved 1 to 17 points). In addition to test scores, student performance also was evaluated by daily progress reports and quarterly report card grades.



CARS was very well received by Ockley Green's principal and regular classroom teachers, as well as by participating students and their families.

The League has received approval from Portland Public Schools to continue the CARS program at Ockley Green during the 2004-2005 school year. Activities are expected to begin later this Fall.

## League Elects New Board Members

Since May 2004, the Urban League of Portland has elected seven new members to the Board of Directors. We are pleased to have their talent, enthusiasm and expertise on the Board.

**Arleen Barnett** is the Vice President, Administration, at Portland General Electric (PGE). Employed by PGE in 1978, Barnett has held various positions, including Employee Services Coordinator, Equal Opportunity Employment Specialist and Support Services Supervisor of PGE's Western Division office in Beaverton.

Arleen holds a bachelor's degree in English from Abilene Christian

University in Abilene, Texas and received her Human Resources Certification from Portland State University.

**June Chrisman** is the Chief Human Resources Officer for Providence Health System, Oregon Region. June has been a Human Resources leader with Providence Health System for over 16 years, and has worked in Providence facilities in California, Washington and Oregon. She also is an online faculty member with University of Phoenix, teaching in their M.B.A. programs.

June has a bachelor's degree in Human Relations and Organization

Behavior and a master's degree in Human Resources and Organization Development.

**Isaac Dixon** is Vice President for Human Resources at Uritas Community Credit Union. Prior to that, he had two stints at Nike, as staffing manager and HR manager. He also served as HR director for the City of Gresham and HR manager for Colonial Pacific Leasing.

Isaac holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Warner Pacific College and a master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Marylhurst College.

*(continued on page 6)*

## Urban League Seniors Are On the Move

The Urban League Senior Center has exciting new projects going on this Fall.

A ten-week writing course for seniors was started and each of the classes has been full to overflowing. These classes give participants a new avenue to tell their story in their own words with the help of a trained facilitator from Write Around Portland (WRAP). The first class sessions were conducted over a 5-week period last summer and yielded six published stories in WRAP's *Free Write* newspaper. Three workshop participants also recited their material at the Writers Block Party celebration and forum at the North Portland Library.

Once a month, Senior Center clients are taken to Reflections Bookstore where they listen to poetry

readings and read poems on their own. Several times a week, the seniors go on trips to the grocery store, the mall, or to vintage stores in the area. In the near future, the Senior Center will offer more trips to neighborhood shops and other establishments of interest, such as the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, the neighborhood library, Salvation Army and local restaurants.

In the first three months of the current fiscal year, the Urban League of Portland's Senior Center provided case management services to 122 individuals—an increase of 25% over last fiscal year. These individuals receive in-home care such as housekeeping, personal care assistance and other services that make it possible for them to remain in their homes safely.

During the summer of 2004, Senior Center staff delivered fans to eligible clients and some received air conditioners through a county project. In addition, clients were given information about the West Nile virus and how to protect themselves. Assistance also was provided to those needing help securing home windows and doors.

In preparation for winter weather, the Senior Center offered Energy Assistance registration on October 13, 14 and 15, 2004. Last year, more than 400 individuals registered through this process.

The Senior Center also is working to develop a computer lab that will allow seniors to learn how to use computers, e-mail and the Internet.

## 2004 National Urban League Conference

The National Urban League's 2004 Annual Conference, held July 21 to 25 in Detroit, focused on the theme of "Empowerment: Building on the Civil Rights Movement."

The conference featured some of the nation's top black business people, authors, political figures, government officials and community leaders. This year's conference offered a more condensed format and some new elements including a "Women of Power" awards luncheon, "Behind the Business" tours of African-American owned companies, the Tom Joyner Sky Show, a voter empowerment rally and a voter registration drive. The conference also

featured personal appearances from President Bush and Democratic Presidential nominee, John Kerry. Next year's conference will be held in Washington, D.C. and promises to be just as exciting.

This is the second time that Vanessa Gaston, the League's President and CEO, attended the National Urban League's annual conference. She enjoyed learning about how leaders across the country are addressing issues similar to those facing the League's constituents in Portland. During the conference, Gaston also had the chance to hear from top African American business leaders about entrepreneurialism and building wealth in

the community. She also attended a thought-provoking panel discussion on the Brown v. Board of Education decision and how it changed the face of segregation but has not fulfilled its promise of equal educational opportunities for children of color.

According to Gaston, the most important part of the conference was the emphasis on voter registration and the opportunity to hear from both President George Bush and Senator John Kerry. "The message was clear for the entire Urban League Movement: we must get people registered to vote and engaged in the political process," said Gaston.

# Portland Urban League Young Professionals: Defining Future Leaders Today

The Portland Urban League Young Professionals (PULYP) is a unique entity of the Urban League of Portland, designed for young professionals ages 21 through 40 that live, work and serve in the greater Portland metropolitan area. This new developing force includes local talent of young professionals who are committed to supporting and promoting the mission of the Urban League of Portland--to help empower African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment and economic security. The Portland Urban League Young Professionals group is one of 37 chapters of the National Urban League's Young Professionals initiative, which has a three-pronged agenda--financial literacy, real world education and political participation.

In an effort to balance the lives of its members as they work to create stronger communities, PULYP supports its membership through



*PULYP President, Michael Isom, and Kali Thorne, PULYP member.*

personal and professional development, outreach programs and volunteer opportunities. General body meetings for PULYP are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Urban League of Portland offices.

For more information, please contact Michael Isom, PULYP President, at (503) 957-1220 or michaeljisom@hotmail.com or Kali Thorne at kali\_thorne@yahoo.com.

## **New Seasons Market Holds Benefit BBQ for the League**

On August 7 and 8, New Seasons Market held a benefit barbeque for the Urban League of Portland. The 2004 benefit BBQ raised \$4,124 to support the League's programs and services! The event also helped raise public awareness about the League.

Thank you, New Seasons!

## **NULITES Program Enters Second Year**

NULITES is a National Urban League initiative designed to promote civic engagement and leadership development among African American high school students.

The League launched a local chapter of NULITES in September 2003. During its first year, NULITES featured a series of outdoor recreation trips sponsored by REI, educational workshops, guest speakers from a variety of career fields, and the Second Annual African American Student Leadership Conference. NULITES members also participated in several voter registration drives and helped to register over 125 new voters.

This year, meetings will be held the first and third Wednesday of every month. NULITES members will begin planning for the 2005 African American Student Leadership Conference, which is scheduled for January 29, 2005.

For more information about the NULITES program, please call Debra Ballard at (503) 280-2619 or visit our website at [www.ulpdx.org](http://www.ulpdx.org).

## New Board Members *(continued from page 3)*

**Bruce Feathers** is the CEO of FeatherLite Enterprises, a minority-owned company established in 1998 that markets, sells and distributes a variety of workplace products and services. Bruce became an entrepreneur in 1996 when he co-founded Footwear Specialties International. Prior to that, he worked for Avia Group International and a number of national and Fortune 500 companies.

Bruce holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Anthropology from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.

**Dr. Algie Gatewood** is the new President of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus. Before coming to Portland, Gatewood served for seven years as director

of health, education and welfare with the University of North Carolina's State Education Assistance Authority. Prior to that, he was dean of student services at South Piedmont Community College.

Dr. Gatewood holds a doctorate in education from North Carolina State University, a master's degree from Appalachian State University and a bachelor's degree from Livingstone College, all in North Carolina.

**Sonja Henning** practices labor and employment law at Tonkon Torp LLP. Before joining Tonkon Torp, she was general counsel with lucy.com, where her experience included a significant amount of work in corporate and intellectual property law, in addition to employment law.

Sonja was a member of the 2003 Leadership Portland class sponsored by the Portland Business Alliance. She is a member of the Oregon State Bar, the State Bar of California, the American Bar Association and the Multnomah Bar Association.

**Marcus Mundy** is Vice President and the Regional Compliance Officer for Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest. Marcus has over 20 years experience in finance, strategy, regulatory, operational fund-raising, compliance and practice management. His industry experience includes government, healthcare, consulting and managed care. Marcus is a graduate of Howard University, and holds memberships in numerous healthcare and financial management associations.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 29, 2005	Annual African American Student Leadership Conference <i>Location TBA</i>
February 18, 2005	Vanessa Gaston speaks at City Club of Portland <i>Location TBA</i>
March 22, 2005	Career Connections Job Fair <i>Doubletree Hotel, Lloyd Center</i>
May 10, 2005	Urban League of Portland Annual Membership Meeting <i>Location TBA</i>
June 11, 2005	Rummage Sale <i>Multicultural Senior Center (5325 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, Portland)</i>
June 24, 2005	June Jam for Seniors <i>Multicultural Senior Center (5325 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, Portland)</i>
August 26, 2005	Seniors Fishing Derby <i>Scappoose, Oregon (tentative)</i>
October 11, 2005	Annual Equal Opportunity Day Dinner <i>Portland Hilton Hotel (921 SW 6th Ave)</i>

# Support the Urban League of Portland and Become Part of the Movement

Join the Urban League of Portland and make positive changes in the community!

For more than 50 years, the Urban League of Portland has helped empower African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment and economic security. Your tax-deductible contribution will directly support the League's much-needed programs, outreach and advocacy.

In addition to individual memberships, the League also has membership programs for businesses and community partners (nonprofit organizations, professional associations, and faith-based organizations).

To learn more about the Urban League's membership programs or other charitable giving options, please call the League's Development Department at (503) 280-2611.

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## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

To become an individual member, please complete this application and return it to the Urban League of Portland at 10 N. Russell Street, Portland, OR 97227.

### MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER TYPE	CONTRIBUTION	BENEFITS
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60+) or Student	\$10	membership card, newsletter, notification about League events
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35 - \$99	membership card, newsletter, notification about League events
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$100 - \$499	all of the above, plus recognition in the League's annual report and copy of annual report
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$500	all of the above, plus invitation to yearly reception with the League's President/CEO
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1,000	all of the above, plus recognition at the League's Annual Equal Opportunity Day Dinner
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$2,500 & over	all of the above, plus 2 complimentary tickets to the League's Annual Equal Opportunity Day Dinner and recognition on the League's website

### METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Please make check payable to the Urban League of Portland.*

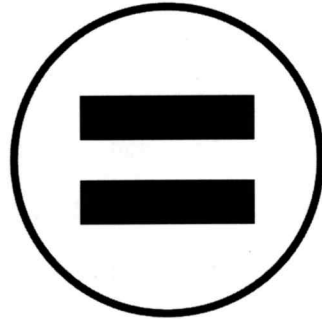
Credit Card  Visa  MasterCard Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*All memberships are ANNUAL from the date when application/payment is received in the League office.

# MISSION

The Urban League of Portland helps empower African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment and economic security.



Administrative Offices  
10 N. Russell Street, Portland, OR 97227  
(503) 280-2600

Multicultural Senior Center  
5325 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211  
(503) 988-5470

[www.ulpdx.org](http://www.ulpdx.org)

**Urban League of Portland**  
10 N. Russell Street  
Portland, OR 97227