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FALL 2021



A free publication from Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN)

HEY NEIGHBOR! This newspaper is a free publication brought to you by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN)

MISSION STATEMENT:

Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN) increases neighborhood livability through highly inclusive civic engagement and grassroots community building. NECN believes in creating healthy neighborhoods by engaging people to become directly involved in determining how their neighborhood evolves.

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Q&A: Commissioner Mingus Mapps

On his agenda: Housing, public safety and protecting Bull Run from climate change

By Lisa Loving, NECN

As Portland grapples with historic crises – from gun violence to affordable housing, climate change and Covid-19 – Hey Neighbor! spoke with Portland Commissioner Mingus Mapps about his work focus, what his constituents are talking about and what’s under the radar.

Hey Neighbor!: For readers who aren’t familiar with the issues, can you please talk about what bureaus you manage for the city?

Commissioner Mapps: I have deep roots in Portland. I’m raising a family here. I grew up here. I am your commissioner in charge of the Water Bureau and the commissioner in charge of the Bureau of Environmental Services and the commissioner in charge of our Emergency Communications, which is basically 911.

HN: What’s your vision for the long-term supply of drinking water from Bull Run?

Mapps: Well, my vision is to provide Portlanders with a safe and sustainable water supply both for today and for generations to come, and frankly we are in a really good position to do that. Even in a time of climate change, Portland is not in a place of water scarcity. Bull Run is just a remarkable literal rain for us.

According to all of our predictions, both in terms of population growth and climate change, we expect to have a plentiful supply of clean water for a hundred years. But one of our obligations here is to actually keep that up, keep our water clean. So a lot about being the commissioner in charge of the Water Bureau is really around environmental protection and protecting public



Commissioner Mingus Mapps

“But whether you’re at the left end of the spectrum or the right end of the spectrum, there’s a clear expectation that the city and Portland must do better by our most vulnerable neighbors.”
—Commissioner Mingus Mapps

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Cleaner Air Oregon Puts N/NE Portland Emissions Under Watch

Oct. 26 meeting offers updates, review of air pollution tests and next steps



The North Edge of Portland, along the Columbia River, has the highest concentration of facilities under Cleaner Air Oregon evaluation anywhere in the entire state.

By NECN Staff

It’s been said a million times: Portland’s environment is beautiful, but our lush green landscape is misleading.

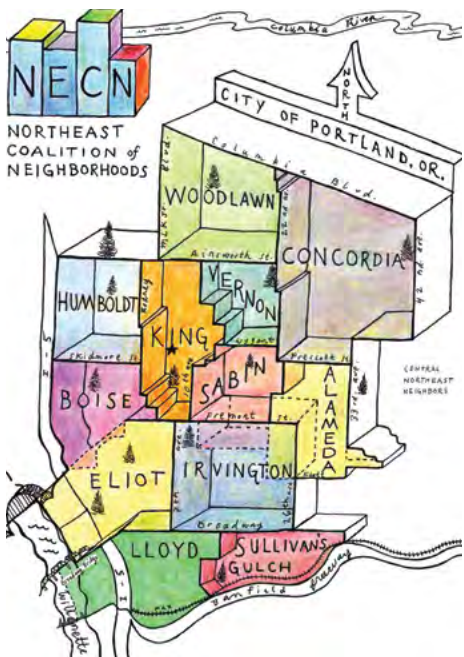
In fact, North and Northeast Portland zip codes house some of the most diverse communities in the state – but we also have some of the worst air quality. How bad is it? We’re about to find out.

After chugging along for the past 2 ½ years, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality’s statewide air toxics clean-up program, Cleaner Air

Oregon, is finally starting to report the results of mandatory tests on air emissions in our area – believed to be some of the worst in the state.

Now we know there are high levels of arsenic and lead, plus more than a dozen other tox-
See CAO pg 5

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www.eliotneighborhood.org/association

Humboldt
HNAnews@gmail.com
https://humboldtneighborho.wixsite.com/humboldtcare

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www.irvingtonpdx.com

King
4815 NE 7th Ave.
info@kingneighborhood.org
www.kingneighborhood.org

Lloyd
Visit www.lloyddistrict.org for meeting schedule and location

Sabin
3535 NE 15th Ave.
sabin@necoalition.org
www.sabinpdx.org

Sullivan's Gulch
1548 NE 15th Ave.
sullivansgulch@necoalition.org
www.sullivansgulch.org

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5431 NE 20th Ave.
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817 NE Madrona St.
info@gowoodlawn.com
www.gowoodlawn.com

Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (NECN), founded in 1974, is an independent nonprofit organization. NECN is one of seven neighborhood coalitions in Portland, which are primarily funded by the City's Office of Neighborhood Involvement. NECN identifies and takes on hyper-local issues to increase neighborhood livability and civic engagement. NECN's service area includes 12 neighborhoods in inner North/Northeast Portland: Alameda, Boise, Concordia, Eliot, Humboldt, Irvington, Lloyd, King, Sabin, Sullivan's Gulch, Vernon, and Woodlawn. Any person that resides or works in North/Northeast Portland can get directly involved!

Community Mourns Shawn Penney, Led Good in the Hood Festival

He made national headlines by standing up to white supremacist threats

By NECN Staff

A powerhouse of the Northeast Portland community, Shawn Penney passed away Oct. 3, 2021. He was for many years the visionary Executive Director behind the Good in the Hood Festival, who impressed the nation when he stood up to white supremacist threats against the beloved event.

A third-generation Portlander, Penney descended from Texas rail yard workers, and attended King Elementary School, Harriet Tubman Middle School and Jefferson High School.

He worked as District Controller at Waste Management and retired after 20 years before being named President of the Good in the Hood Festival. There, his dynamic style of leadership shaped the growing organization for years to come.

Penney's fearless approach to community-building hit center stage in 2017, when Good in the Hood received anonymous death threats – includ-

ing threats against him, personally – which many feared would shut down the annual weekend of events.

But Penney led local organizers in going on with the show, eventually bringing his unique voice to media interviews all across the country – including a powerful interview originally aired on OPB, but now hosted as a podcast at WNYC.

At Good in the Hood that year, Penney's friends and supporters wore bright red baseball caps that said: "I am Shawn Penney/Good in the Hood 2017."

In tributes across multiple social media pages since his death, hundreds of people shared memories and praise for Penney's contributions to the local community – and individuals' lives – over the years. On Facebook, 2021 Pulitzer Prize winner Mitchell S. Jackson, who also grew up in Portland during the 1990s, left his condolences, part of a river of posts by loved ones.

Another post, by Montrail

Menefee, said: "... I never understood how he could be in so many different places doing so much and helping so many different people, he was EVERYWHERE! Always trying to help out. He was one of the most intelligent Black men born and raised in the HOOD that I've ever met. He could sit and talk for hours about sports, politics, the streets, the community, anything you brought up..."

Community supporters launched a fundraiser to cover funeral costs, at gofundme.com/f/shawn-penney-homegoing.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Shawn Penney



PHOTOS BY JESSICA ROJAS

VOZ Native Garden Complete

NECN's new landscape of native, drought-tolerant wildflowers and grasses -- highlighted with boulders of Oregon jade and basalt -- is complete after a year of work. The collaboration between NECN, VOZ and the EMSWCD was made possible by plant donations from Portland-area Native American community plant advocates. Participants shared and discussed knowledge of local plant uses, including a language exchange. This summer NECN staff spotted butterflies, including a Mourning Cloak, flitting among the flowers there.

Concordia University Trial Likely Pushed to 2023

The HotChalk corporation reportedly seeks hundreds of millions in damages from Missouri church group

By Max Horten, of cusfacts.com

The trial in HotChalk's lawsuit against Concordia University Portland will likely move from this October to the spring of 2023, according to statements made by HotChalk's lawyers in a court hearing on Aug. 27.

HotChalk's lawyers say they need more time to depose members of the Concordia board of regents and administrators of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Concordia's supervising parent organization and another defendant named in the suit, as well as resolve a "fairly major discovery dispute" with the Synod. Lawyers for the Synod filed a protective order covering several categories of documents, signaling that the sprawling court battle over Concordia Portland's assets is likely to last for some time.

The August protective order motion was filed hours after Judge Eric Dahlin ruled in the 90-minute hearing that he



Concordia University Bell Tower

would likely find information about how the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, a third defendant in the suit, markets the 24-acre campus property relevant to HotChalk's claims that it was defrauded by Concordia in concert with the Synod and the Extension Fund.

The Fund acquired Concordia's campus for \$3 million in a foreclosure sale last summer, which HotChalk claims constituted a fraudulent transfer. Judge Dahlin said he would al-

low HotChalk access to redacted information about offers for the Concordia property, saying "ultimately, what we're looking at is what's the actual offer, what's the dollar amount that's being offered."

Lawyers for the Fund wanted to keep all information about offers private, arguing that its purchase of the property was not fraudulent because it was acquired through foreclosure and secured interests the Fund established through years of lending to Concordia.

HotChalk managed Concordia's online programs until the school shut down last year and is claiming \$302 million in damages. It is owned in part by the giant German media conglomerate Bertelsmann, which spent \$230 million to acquire a minority stake in HotChalk in 2015.

Since the sale of Concordia's campus in June, HotChalk's lawyers have indicated they are looking beyond a claim to campus property and have their eyes on the assets of the Extension

Fund, which exceed \$2 billion. There is "evidence it has ample assets to pay," said HotChalk attorney Gabriel Weaver.

The vast majority of the Fund's assets is in the form of loans receivable—money the Fund expects to get back from borrowers it lent to, primarily churches, schools, and other entities affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Over \$1 billion is owed by LCMS congregations.

In 2020, the Fund downgraded \$225 million in congregational debt from its highest "Pass" category to "Special Mention," which it assigns to "loans where the borrower exhibits trends that, if left uncorrected, may threaten their capacity to perform."

The Fund also carries \$1.6 billion in notes payable—money it owes individual LCMS members who have invested in the Fund. The Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means investments in the Fund are not FDIC-insured.

NECN Community Grants 2021-22

Since 2006, NECN and the Office of Civic and Community Life have partnered to provide grants to neighborhood and community organizations working to make our North/Northeast Portland communities stronger and more inclusive. We have funded dozens of innovative projects that have collectively improved the quality of life in our area, brought residents closer together, and strengthened community capacity to create positive social change.

\$27,000 in awards to give away!
Average grant size: \$2,000!

We fund as many projects as possible!

Do you have a project that will actively engage and benefit folks within NECN boundaries?

NECN wants to hear about projects that:

- Amplify historically under-represented or underserved voices
- Build resilience and civic leadership
- Increase community impact on public decisions
- Diversify and expand participation in community life

Community Grant Goals:

★ Increase number and diversity of people engaged in increasing livability and improving broader community

★ Strengthen community capacity to create change by building leadership, identity, skills, relationships, and partnerships.

★ Increase community impact on public decisions and community life

GRANTS WORKSHOP

We offer one-on-one workshops for potential applicants to work with one of our grant coordinators to help develop project ideas and for assistance making your application stronger.



INTERESTED? START HERE

Go to our website www.necoalition.org and download the application guide on the RESOURCES menu.

Read through an example of a funded grant application.
Read about previous years' awardees.
Frequently Asked Questions

TO APPLY:

Contact NECN staff for any questions about the program or to discuss an idea for a project:

Email us at grants@necoalition.org.

PAST WINNERS 2019

Vanport Mosaic
Black Panther Legacy Tour of Albina
www.vanportmosaic.org

Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center
Boise Business Youth Unity Project
www.portlandoic.org

Another Level
Sex Trafficking Group Support Program
www.anotherlevelportland.com

Kukatonon
Children's African Dance Troupe Expansion
www.kukatonon.org

Growing Gardens

NE PDX Culture of Gardening Project
www.growinggardens.org

Woodlawn Farmers Market
Teaching Nutrition, Ecology and Conservation Through the Power of Produce
www.woodlawnfarmersmarket.org

North by Northeast Community Health Center
Community Resilience Through Emergency Preparedness
www.nxneclinic.org





PHOTOS COURTESY EARTHJUSTICE.ORG

REPORT: Glass Recycling Plant Continues Harmful Emissions

Owens Brockway impacts air quality across North and Northeast neighborhoods

By Becca Bowe, *EarthJustice.org*

A new report released by a group of clean-air advocates highlights the ongoing health risks posed by air emissions from the Owens-Brockway glass recycling plant in Northeast Portland's Cully neighborhood. Despite an enforcement action from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and operational changes that took one furnace offline, the facility continues to release harmful amounts of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and lead into the surrounding environment, impacting three nearby schools and a park where youth routinely play soccer and get exercise on playground equipment. Youth returning to school nearby the facility this fall face a higher health risk of respiratory illness.

"The Owens-Brockway facility has been putting schoolchildren attending a number of local schools in danger for years," said Gregory Sotir, a retired educator with the Cully Air Action Team. "Elevated pollution levels from the facility fall disproportionately on BIPOC youth. They are experiencing higher risks of asthma and other respiratory illnesses because of unfiltered pollution from Owens-Brockway."

The report presents the results of the first publicly available air-modeling study ever conducted for Owens-Brockway, which does not follow the same set of air regulations as similar emitters because

"Elevated pollution levels from the facility fall disproportionately on BIPOC youth. They are experiencing higher risks of asthma and other respiratory illnesses because of unfiltered pollution from Owens-Brockway"

—Gregory Sotir, *Cully Air Action Team*

it was built before the Clean Air Act took effect in 1978.

"Even though Owens-Brockway has retired one of its glass-melting furnaces, modeling results show that it still releases enough pollution to exceed national ambient air-quality standards for key pollutants that cause asthma and other respiratory problems," explained Ashley Bennett, senior associate attorney at Earthjustice.

"It's been clear for years that this facility is pumping many different kinds of harmful pollution into the Cully neighborhood," said Mary Peveto, executive director of Neighbors for Clean Air. "But we have yet to see DEQ take effective action to rein in the pollution or see the facility take any voluntary steps to filter the emissions."

The report also includes stories told by two Latinx mothers residing in Cully, who are concerned about their children's exposure to hazardous air.

"The pervasive pollution from Owens-

Brockway is an environmental justice problem that disproportionately impacts communities of color, and low-income folks," said Sergio Lopez, the energy, climate and transportation program coordinator at Verde.

The Department of Environmental Quality recently issued an enforcement order against Owens-Brockway, which included a \$1 million fine. Advocates say Owens-Brockway should do more to clean up the air in Northeast Portland. Community organizations who collaborated on this report have called on the company to install pollution-control technologies — the only effective way to reduce air pollution from melting glass.

"There's an opportunity here for Owens Brockway to work with residents of the Cully neighborhood and implement measures to address the significant issues raised by this report, ensuring clean air for the families who live here," said Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal. "That would be good corporate citizenship — good for business, and good for the community."

"We recognize that Owens-Brockway plays a significant role in our state's recycling economy by recycling glass bottles," said Jamie Pang, environmental health program director at Oregon Environmental Council. "Ideally, that would continue but the plant must operate within the confines of the Clean Air Act and protect public health if it truly wants to call itself a 'sustainable' business."

The report is a collaboration by Cully Air Action Team, Verde, Neighbors for Clean Air, Oregon Environmental Council, Northwest Environmental Defense Center, Portland Clean Air, and Earthjustice.

Nine Things You Should Know About N/NE PDX Air Quality

1 Climate change makes air pollution worse. A mid-October report by a coalition of national environmental nonprofits, released locally by Environment Oregon found the Portland/Vancouver/Hillsboro area had 55 days of elevated ozone and particulate matter in 2020. Increasing wildfires near the city set records for pollution level in September of last year. <https://environmentoregon.org/feature/ame/trouble-in-the-air>

2 The Cleaner Air Oregon presentation coming up on Oct. 22 is actually a Land Use Transportation Committee meeting. The LUTC needs more members! This and other grassroots advisory committees are key seats to build awareness of important issues facing local communities.

3 In order to take on emissions testing for suspected high-polluting facilities around the state, the Oregon DEQ set up a system prioritizing pollutants-testing in multiple steps -- with the suspected biggest polluters being tested first.

4 This system -- called Cleaner Air Oregon -- was rolled out by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in 2016, after the Bullseye Glass Company-- and others -- was found to be emitting harmful pollutants. The program lists "Toxic Air Contaminants" and closes regulatory gaps in federal anti-pollution programs.

5 The North Edge of Portland, along the Columbia River, has the highest concentration of facilities under Cleaner Air Oregon evaluation anywhere in the entire state -- and a total of seven facilities in North and Northeast Portland are in line for emissions testing and review over the next few years.

6 Cleaner Air Oregon's first "prioritization" lists 20 suspected polluters across the state -- four of these are in North and Northeast Portland. All of these will be discussed at the live zoom event Oct. 26:

- **Columbia Steel Castings Corporation**, 10425 N Bloss Ave.
- **Ecolube**, 11535 N Force Ave.

- **Hydro Extrusions**, 7933 NE 21st Ave.
- **Owens Brockway**, 9710 NE Glass Plant Rd.

7 The second prioritization list has 1 more:

- **ORRCO Portland**, 4150 N Suttle Rd.
- **Malarkey Roofing Products**, 3131 N Columbia Blvd.

9 And finally, a special addition to the list in 2020 included a Cleaner Air Oregon evaluation for:

- **NW METALS**, which came under DEQ scrutiny after a tire fire in its Cully neighborhood auto-dismantling yard in 2018. Since then, the Oregon DEQ took NW Metals to court under new guidelines of Cleaner Air Oregon.

DEQ won an extension of their regulatory power, including the right to hold the company in contempt of court if it violates the environmental law, "which is punishable by a penalty and jail sentence for its senior management," according to the legal judgement; DEQ won the right to inspect NW Metals at any time without warning and without their consent; and the right to hold NW Metals in contempt of court if they deny DEQ inspectors' access.

A final piece of the judgement -- about how much the DEQ can levy in fines against NW Metals -- has not yet been decided in the Court of Appeals.

CAO cont'd from pg 1

ics and heavy metals including chromium, mercury, formalde- in to push for a bigger, better cleanup. Find a link to the

“Now we know there are high levels of arsenic and lead, plus more than a dozen other toxics and heavy metals including chromium, mercury, formaldehyde, copper, ammonia, and hexane”

hyde, copper, ammonia, and hexane.

That means it's your big chance to get involved in meaningful action to impact your community's immediate health and climate change itself -- both.

Start by joining NECN and our colleagues at North Portland Neighborhood Services, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 6-8 pm. Learn the facts on the most recent tests and find out how you can plug

Zoom on our website, www.heyneighborpdx.com, or find it on @necoalition on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. A transcript will be made available for anyone who misses the live event. Or use the coordinates below:

Tuesday Oct. 26, 2021, 6 – 8 PM

Go to <https://zoom.us>. Type in- Meeting ID: 874 7570 2681 Passcode: 520734

CLEANER AIR OREGON REVIEW

VIRTUAL MEETING

Focus on Four N/NE Portland Facilities
IN DEQ EVALUATION FOR AIR TOXICS & HEALTH RISK:

CULLY • KENTON • ST. JOHNS

OWENS BROCKWAY 9710 NE GLASS PLANT RD 97220
HYDRO-EXTRUSIONS NORTH AMERICA 5325 NE SKYPORT WAY 97218
ECOLUBE RECOVERY 11535 N FORCE AVE 97217
COLUMBIA STEEL CASTINGS CORP 10425 N BLOSS AVE 97203

PRESENTATIONS DISCUSSION ENGAGEMENT

**TUES
OCT 26
6-8 PM**

VIRTUAL MEETING ACCESS via ZOOM • <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87475702681?pwd=MGRsMkdEbKQwbEQrS2xocTl0THl0dz09>
Meeting ID: 874 7570 2681 • Passcode: 520734

Joint District Land Use & Transportation Meeting
Northeast Coalition Of Neighborhoods & North Portland Neighborhood Services

OPINION

Large-Species Trees Needed Now More Than Ever

By Trees for Life Oregon

Trees for Life Oregon is a group of neighborhood tree team leaders and tree stewards whose mission is to preserve large-species trees and space for new ones to be planted. We do this through education and advocacy, including a summer program called Soak-it-Week.

The city declared a climate emergency in summer 2020. But the 116-degree temperatures that killed dozens of Portlanders in summer 2021 brought home in a visceral way the life-and-death stakes of climate crisis. During the heat dome, some Portland neighborhoods with little to no canopy were 25 degrees hotter than leafier, wealthier neighborhoods.

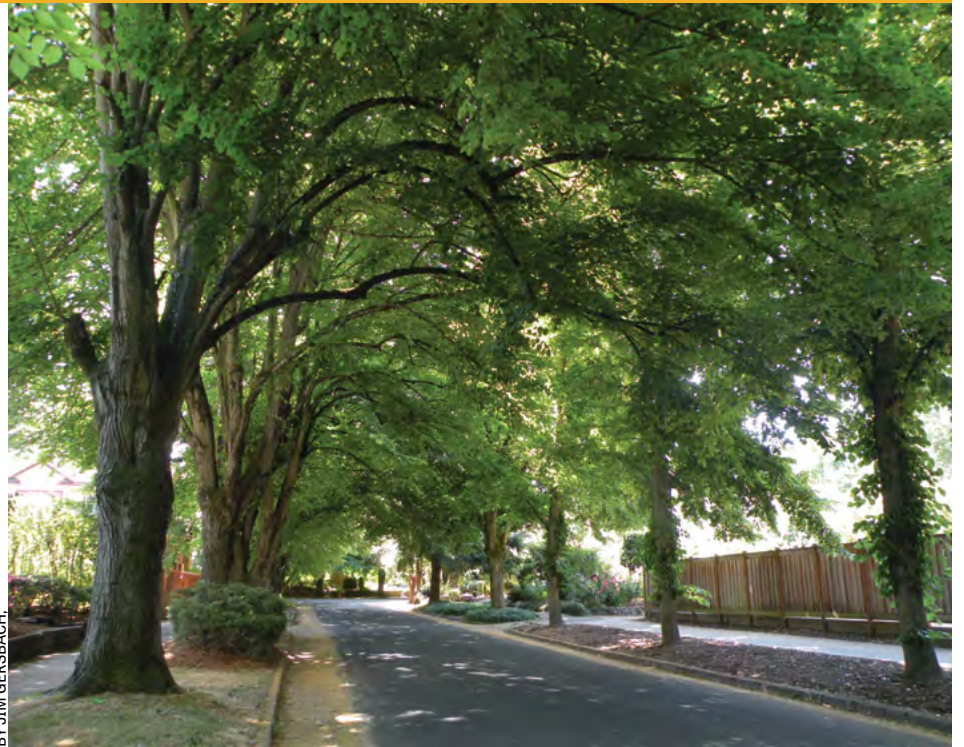
Large-species trees matter now more than ever.

Large-form trees—those that grow more than 50 feet tall at maturity and live more than 75 years—give us the most when it comes to health and environmental benefits. Think Douglas-firs or oaks or lindens. Science shows that big trees cool our homes and sidewalks, clean

our air, manage our stormwater, reduce noise and crime, and enhance our mental and physical well-being in specific ways such as by lowering our stress levels. Small ornamental trees are pretty. But their limited leaf volume and relatively short lifespans do not offer the same level of benefits that large trees do.

Portland is losing its big trees to development and to individual homeowners who have the right to remove large trees on their property—half of all city trees are in people’s yards, not in the public right-of-way. Tree advocates hope that revising the City’s tree code, Title 11, which City Council is scheduled to do in 2024-2025, will address some of the loopholes that allow tree removal in development situations. But larger issues such as building and street design and how different City bureaus interact around decisions affecting trees also have considerable impacts on our private and public right-of-way trees.

Find more information about our work at www.treesforlifeoregon.org and sign up for updates to keep informed about how you can help our large trees.



Littleleaf lindens, Ladd’s Addition



East of 82nd Ave., north of Division St.



COVID vaccination outreach at Right To Dream Too

We want to start this issue by thanking all the friends, volunteers, and supporters who have helped us make such extraordinary progress in such a short period of time. A special thanks to all of you who were able to attend our Summer Garden Party, to the many who made generous contributions, even if you couldn’t attend, and to the many volunteers who helped pull it off. We raised over \$10,000 in pledges and donations that will underwrite WeShine’s administrative costs for the remainder of 2021. Pledges included one for our shower unit at our first

site! Donations are still and forever possible at WeShinePdx.org/support.

Thank you all!
Volunteers are already making a difference!

- We collaborated with Jenn Louis, a Sullivan’s Gulch neighbor who has built a network of volunteers and resources to serve approximately 40 campers whom she has been visiting twice a week for more than a year. Some of our volunteers have continued to work with Jenn over the last few months, delivering food, clothing and water.
- When the heat wave hit, several WeShiners were out helping Jenn deliver water, ice, and information about cooling shelters to campers on both outreach routes.
- We also worked together to get the information out about accessing stimulus checks and vaccinations.
- We formed a small new team of volunteers interested in doing outreach to our unhoused neighbors. In June, we began regularly visiting several encampments off both Sandy Blvd. and Halsey St. between 21st and 43rd avenues. We distributed food, personal hygiene, and first aid items as well as water. We also were able to distribute information about help available to get stimulus checks through CASHOregon.

- Starting in July, we connected with the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management and Portland Fire Bureau and began offering COVID vaccinations to interested campers on Jenn’s and our WeShine’s outreach routes. Altogether, we were able to vaccinate 16 individuals so far.

- In July, we hosted a volunteer training on the use of Naloxone to prevent opioid overdoses.
- In August we will convene our Neighborhood Engagement & Outreach Committee. Members of this Committee will include both board members and volunteers interested in helping WeShine engage, manage, and support our neighbors and faith-based communities, matching them to roles that meet their many interests and use their diverse skills.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities:

- **Outreach volunteers:** preparing kits or sandwiches and/or taking food, water, snacks, hygiene and first aid kits, etc. to visit encampments.
- **People with construction skills:** as soon as we have the lease signed for our first site, we will begin acquisition of construction materials, and the build-out of the units.

Check out our volunteer site at <https://weshinepdx.org/join-us/> to learn of new opportunities and to fill out a volunteer application.



THEN & NOW...

The picture on the left looks east on Alberta Street past the intersection with Union (now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.). Taken in the late 1930's, there are still several recognizable landmarks in the current photo. The Piedmont Pharmacy building on the southeast corner of the intersection now houses DPI (DePaul Industries). In

the distance on the left is the Assemblies of God building. Directly across Alberta from DPI is the Harry Jackson Plaza, named in 1997 for Portland Police Sgt. Harry Jackson in a ceremony by King Neighborhood Association, Adidas America and the Portland Development Commission (now Prosper Portland).

—Margaret O'Hartigan

Mapps cont'd from pg 1

health.

So over the course of the next couple of years, you'll probably hear me talk a lot about the need for a new water filtration system, which we're in the process of building, to protect our water supply from pathogens, which frankly we have found in the water in the past. The water filtration plant is also really important, in the context of climate change because of the risk of forest fires.

Should we find ourselves in a situation where there was a forest fire in the wrong place along Bull Run, that in and of itself under current conditions would devastate our water supply. However, the water filtration plant that we're looking at will actually have the capability of keeping the faucets on, even when the fires are burning.

HN: When it comes to balancing the needs for protecting our local environment with the needs and the requests to accommodate unhoused people, what is it like to find that balance, especially from someone who is so on-the-record about caring about unhoused communities as you are?

Mapps: I find it is a challenge. I think when it comes to caring for our most vulnerable neighbors and protecting the environment – I think that's a false choice. I think that we can house Portlanders and give them humane, safe, dignified places to live, and at the same time, celebrate and maintain our parks and protect our open spaces.



Anyone who knows my career knows that I've done an awful lot of work around trying to get people housed and make Portland a better place for people who were down on their luck. At the same time, one of the

“A lot of the challenges that we've talked about today, whether it be houselessness or homicides, I think ultimately come down to the disruption which has been brought by this pandemic.”

—Commissioner Mingus Mapps

things that defines Portland is our open spaces. As the guy in charge of Environmental Services, one of the things I'm keenly aware of is that we have a sacred obligation to protect our natural spaces.

As the guy who manages a lot

of open spaces that function as floodplains – where we also see a lot of households camping – those are also an enormous fire risk. And as we've seen too often this summer, we have had truly terrifying fires, both in the wilderness and in town.

HN: Which issues are you hearing the most about from your constituents?

Mapps: It's a tie between houselessness and public safety issues.

Portlanders are awfully frustrated with the emergence of houseless camps, it feels like, on every corner of the city. And I think every Portlander is humane. But whether you're at the left end of the spectrum or the right end of the spectrum, there's a clear expectation that the city and Portland must do better by our most vulnerable neighbors.

And the other close second would be public safety issues. I think that Portlanders want better policing, and that means both police reform and better police protection.

I think one piece of our current condition, which I don't think gets nearly enough attention, is gun violence. And everyone is aware of a rise in gun violence. You know you're a lucky Portlander at this point, if you don't hear gunshots in your neighborhood on a very regular basis. But the sum total of gun violence is just astounding.

I believe that as of today we

have so many shootings, we're easily on track to see homicides at double – if not triple – what our historic levels have been. And also, two thirds of the folks who are being murdered on our streets are people of color.

So there's a real irony at a time when I think Portlanders have never been more aware that Black lives matter. At the same time, we've never seen Black lives cut down on the streets more than we have the last few months. I think that's a real tragedy. It makes my heart heavy and the legacy of that, I know, stretches through generations.

It's something that we're focused on that I think is going to also have long term consequences for the health of our community. And I hope that we can come together as a community to discourage weapons.

HN: What have we not discussed yet?

Mapps: If there's one topic we didn't talk about that I want to amplify it's just the importance for everybody who is medically able, to go out and get their COVID shot.

A lot of the challenges that we've talked about today, whether it be houselessness or homicides, I think ultimately come down to the disruption which has been brought by this pandemic. We have the tools to conquer this pandemic – that's a simple shot in the arm at this point.

I've done it myself, and it's not that bad. I personally think the people I represent are really ready to move on to the post COVID era and get back to business.

Local Free Meal Nonprofit Expands Grassroots Network

Meals On Us PDX serves thousands of delicious meals weekly -- and the food is beautiful

By Lisa Loving, NECN

A small grassroots nonprofit that jumped into action last year to support struggling Portlanders during the pandemic, Meals On Us PDX has blossomed into two community kitchens serving the city and beyond, while rooted in the Sullivan's Gulch neighborhood.

Founder and visionary chef Marco Antonio Guzmán at first wanted to support his fellow food workers in need after their restaurants and cafes were shut down to combat Covid 19 – but soon the need for food assistance skyrocketed to shelters, camps and communities impacted by wildfires.

Leveraging contributions from local food distribution networks, small area farms and a unique community of food activists, Meals On Us PDX has served more than 20,000 full plates, and “upcycled” 20,000 pounds of food waste into nutritious meals.



The not-McRib sandwich

They've racked up more than 7,000 miles delivering locally -- but this past September, hundreds of food trays went all the way to the Klamath Tribal com-

“The need for food assistance has skyrocketed to shelters, camps and communities impacted by wildfires.”

munities in Southern Oregon, setting the table for more than 800 people there.

The group typically prepares breakfasts, lunches and dinners that get packed up by volunteers and delivered in bulk. That may sound dull, but Guzmán chronicles everything in gorgeous social media posts packed with photos and videos of fresh



Vegan meal



Meals On Us veggie crew



Marco Antonio Guzmán

vegetables and sizzling dishes (on Facebook and Instagram, @Mealsonuspdx).

This year the cooking's been done in a vibrant commercial kitchen collective space known as Haleakala: PDX, located near Northeast 28th and Halsey Streets. More than a commercial kitchen,

Haleakala: PDX is a social justice hub supporting nonprofit groups and communities with delicious fresh-cooked food.

That collective kitchen is the brainchild of master pickle maker Ashley Tenud, who is building a name for fiery, fresh fermented carrots and cucumbers at The Good Pickle – all made by hand at Haleakala, which can also be rented.

Now, Meals On Us PDX has also expanded into a second commercial kitchen space, also at the corner of Northeast 28th and Halsey.



Meals On Us kitchen



Chicken and rice

PHOTOS BY MARCO ANTONIO GUZMÁN



Chicken dinner

For its own part, Meals On Us relies on occasional crowdfunding campaigns, including a current drive for money and useful in-kind donations to get their project and the kitchen facilities through the winter.

“With farms starting to slow down with the change in season, we are going to have to rely on purchasing product to con-

tinue to provide nutritious and delicious eats,” Guzmán says.

“We are trying to raise money to buy a few refrigerators, freezers, hot boxes, and food ingredients to further enhance and expand our mission of feeding folks needing nourishment!”

Interested in helping support the project? Give at Venmo and cashapp: mealsonuspdx.