



The Portland Observer

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Committed to Cultural Diversity

Portland Cancer Care Center Expands!

The Start of a Major Investment in Expanded Cancer Treatment Capacity

Cancer patients in the Portland area can expect expanded access to radiation treatment in the coming years, as a 4,300-square-foot addition gets underway at the Interstate Radiation Oncology Clinic. Leaders from Kaiser Permanente Northwest and its Radiation Oncology team gathered Wednesday to mark the start of construction on the project, which is designed to increase capacity as demand for cancer care continues to rise across the region.

The expansion is designed to help address a growing need for radiation therapy services in the Pacific Northwest, where more people are living longer after a cancer diagnosis. By expanding treatment and planning capacity, the project aims to reduce delays in care, keep patients close to home, and strengthen access to timely cancer treatment for the broader community.

"This groundbreaking marks a significant milestone for our team and our patients," said Dr. Tasha McDonald, Chief of Radiation Oncology at Kaiser Permanente Northwest. "We've been waiting a long time to build this expansion, and it reflects something very positive. Our ability to prolong lives with cancer treatments means we are caring for more cancer patients than ever before. Radiation oncology is a dynamic, technology-driven field, and our ongoing investments in state-of-the-art equipment enhance the safe and effective care already delivered to our patients. With the addition of this new facility and advanced machines, we'll be able to strengthen our ability to provide world-class, leading-edge treatment while addressing the increasing demand for cancer care throughout the Northwest region. This expansion both signifies our commitment to



Kaiser Permanente leaders and project team members break ground on the Interstate Radiation Oncology Clinic expansion, marking the start of a major investment in expanded cancer treatment capacity in Portland.

advancing medical technology and underscores our dedication to patient-centered care."

Construction is expected to be completed in 2027, with the

expanded clinic supporting both cancer treatment and regional imaging needs. Once open, the facility will help strengthen cancer care capacity in the Portland

area and support Kaiser Permanente's broader commitment to improving public health through early, effective, and accessible cancer treatment.

Honoring Two Advocates for Racial Justice



Dr. Karin Edwards and Dr. Megan Dudley (Photo courtesy of YWCA Clark County)

Continuing Val Joshua's Legacy

In a moment when communities across the nation again face rising division and calls for racial equity, YWCA Clark County will honor two visionary local leaders whose values and impact mirror the courage of civil rights advocate Val Joshua. The organization is proud to announce the 2026 recipients of the Val Joshua Racial Justice Award: Dr. Karin Edwards and Dr. Megan Dudley.

Community members are invited to celebrate the honorees at Shine, YWCA's annual Gala on March 21, 2026, at ilani Casino

Resort, where the awards will be formally presented.

"Val Joshua fought for racial justice during one of the most divisive times in our country's history—and her legacy remains just as vital today," said Brittini Lasseigne, CEO of YWCA Clark County. "Dr. Edwards and Dr. Dudley remind us that courageous, values-driven leadership can change institutions, transform communities, and bring people together around shared hope and belonging. That's what this award—and our mission—are all about."

For more than three decades, the Val Joshua Racial Justice Award has recognized individuals who advance racial equity

and build inclusive communities across Southwest Washington. Named for Val Joshua, a longtime YWCA Clark County leader who challenged racism and inequity during an era of open segregation and intolerance, the award honors those who carry her work forward—with empathy, resilience, and action.

Dr. Karin Edwards, President of Clark College, has been selected as a 2026 recipient for her transformative, equity-centered leadership and enduring impact on educational opportunity in Clark County. Under her leader-

Snap Recipients Affected by New Federal Work Rules

Recipients Urged to Connect with Free Job and Training Help

Recent federal changes mean more people in Oregon who receive SNAP food benefits must now show they are working, looking for work or participating in training to continue receiving aid. WorkSource Oregon centers offer free employment and training services to help people meet the requirement and stay eligible.

The Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Employment Department, both WorkSource Oregon partners, are encouraging people who receive SNAP food benefits to take advantage of free job search and training at one of the 37 centers across the state.

Recent federal changes mean some adults who receive SNAP must now meet work requirements to keep getting benefits for longer than three months. These changes apply to more people than in the past, including some adults up to age 64 and some households with older children.

To help people meet these requirements, the state is connecting SNAP participants with free employment and training services that can build skills, support job searches and create new career opportunities. Many people may already meet the requirement through work, volunteering or other activities they are doing now.

“Through case management and employment and training services, we work with each person to create a plan based on their interests, strengths, and abilities. This helps them meet requirements



(AP photo/ Damian Dovarganes)

while moving toward a career path that fits their goals,” said Jessica Amya Hoffman, SNAP Director at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Staff from both agencies are available to help participants understand their options and stay eligible for benefits while working toward employment goals. Services include personalized support to develop a case plan that identifies all available options for meeting work requirements. Job search assistance includes identifying openings and submitting applications, resume development and interview preparation through one-on-one coaching and workshops.

Job readiness workshops focused on workplace expectations and professional skills, connections to education and training programs such as GED completion, short-term training and industry recognized certifications.

There is also help with items needed, such as transportation assistance to be successful in the program. “WorkSource Oregon staff are ready to help SNAP participants look for meaningful work, meet SNAP requirements, and stay eligible for the benefits they rely on while moving toward their professional goals,” said OED’s Workforce Operations Director, Jim Pfarer. “Just like any job seeker that comes

to one of our centers, they can get career coaching and help with resume writing, practice interviewing, and job search strategies—all at no additional cost.”

Some areas of Oregon are not required to meet these work rules because they do not have a nearby WorkSource Oregon center. This includes people living in Crook, Gilliam, Jefferson, Lake, Morrow, Sherman and Wheeler counties.

Anyone who has questions or thinks these changes may apply to them is encouraged to contact ODHS. Staff can help determine whether a person already meets the requirement or qualifies for an exemption.

New Lighting Brightens Central Eastside Gateways

Supporting Safety and Economic Vitality

After years of advocacy, collaboration, and direct business feedback, the Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC) its Enhanced Service District Central Eastside Together (CET), and the City of Portland’s Public Environment Management Office have completed a major lighting initiative beneath several viaducts in Portland’s Central Eastside to transform once-dark underpasses into brighter gateways for businesses, workers, and visitors.

The Viaduct Lighting Project began

with a clear message from district employers: the Burnside, Morrison, and Hawthorne bridge viaducts were priority areas for improved safety and visibility. Business retention conversations and member surveys consistently identified under-bridge conditions as a barrier to pedestrian comfort and evening activity.

“This project is the result of years of business advocacy,” said Carolyn Holcomb, Executive Director of CEIC. “Through close collaboration and hands-on problem solving between our team and the City’s Public Environment Management Office, we turned community feedback into action. Through persistence, creativity, and coordination we’ve created brighter, safer, and more welcoming public spaces.”

In 2023, with the support of City staff, the CEIC formally requested \$232,000 from Multnomah County to implement a coordinated viaduct lighting initiative. The request was approved as part of the County’s budget work plan, launching an inter-governmental agreement between Multnomah County and the City of Portland. Since then, CEIC and CET have worked alongside the Public Environment Management Office (PEMO) to assess bridge conditions, coordinate design, and illuminate key corridors throughout the district.

“Safe streets and a welcoming environment are essential to the economic vitality of any business district,” said Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson. “Multnomah County’s investment is a great example of partnership between gov-

ernment and local business in responding to the needs of our community. We are all excited to contribute towards renewed vibrancy and a brighter future for Portland’s Central Eastside.”

The project illuminates the Avenue of Murals, a celebrated public art corridor that activates industrial walls and underpasses with large-scale works by local artists, as well as the world-renowned Burnside Skatepark, one of the most famous DIY skateparks in the world, located beneath the east end of the Burnside Bridge.

“The Public Environment Management Office is a critical steward of our community – resolving problems and improving

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When they go low, we go high

Happy Birthday **Renee**

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Larry, Kaleb, and Kenya



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LOCAL NEWS

Remembering Avel Louise Gordly

February 13, 1947 - February 16, 2026



Former Oregon State Senator and Representative, Avel Gordly, February 13, 1947 - February 16, 2026. Photo from Wikimedia Commons by Authur Alex.

Avel Louise Gordly was born in 1947 in Portland, to Beatrice and Fay Lee Gordly, a working-class family. Her father was a Union Pacific Pullman Porter. She went on to serve with the American Friends Service Committee, Black United Front, and later as State Representative and the first Black woman State Senator from 1991-2009. Avel Gordly's memorial gathering will be held in March, 2026. The date and location are to be determined; more info to come on www.PortlandObserver.com.

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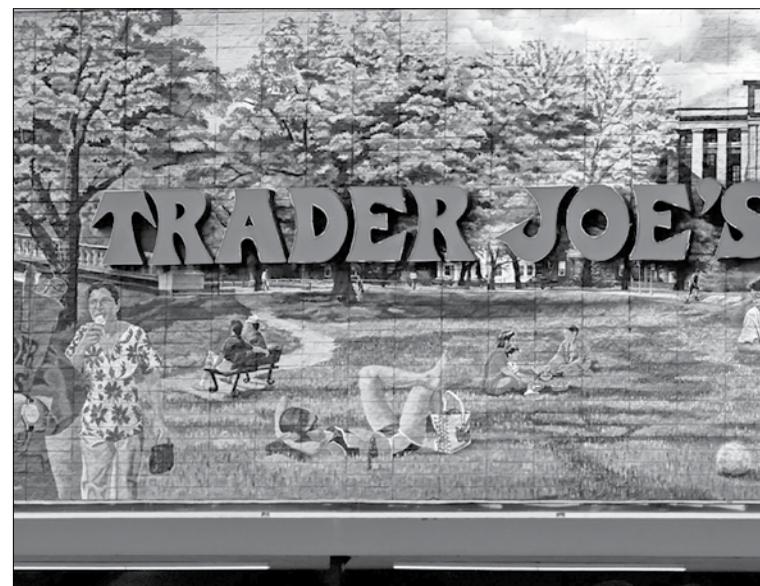
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Nearly 3.4 Million Pounds Recalled!

Trader Joe's Chicken Fried Rice Products may Contain Glass

A Portland, Oregon, company is recalling nearly 3.4 million pounds of frozen chicken fried rice products sold at Trader Joe's stores and in Canada because they may contain pieces of glass, U.S. Agriculture Department officials reported.

Ajinomoto Foods North America Inc. pulled Trader Joe's Chicken Fried Rice from stores nationwide. The frozen product — containing fried rice, vegetables, chicken meat and eggs — is sold in 20-ounce plastic bags. The affected packages have best-by dates of Sept. 8 through Nov. 17, 2026. The products are stamped with the establishment number P-18356 inside the USDA mark of inspection.



The Trader Joe's logo hangs on a mural, Aug. 13, 2019, in Cambridge, Mass. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File)

The company also recalled cardboard packages containing six bags of frozen Ajinomoto Yakitori Chicken with Japanese-Style Rice with best by dates of Sept. 9 to Nov. 12, 2026. Those products were sold only in Canada.

The problem was detected after four consumers complained of finding glass. No injuries have been reported. Consumers should avoid eating the product and throw it away or return it to the store where it was purchased.

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Publisher: Mark Washington, Sr.
Editor: Shawntell Washington • Admin Coord: Quayuana Washington
Office Mngr/Clasfds: Lucinda Baldwin • Creative Director: Kenya Anderson

CALL 503-288-0033 • FAX 503-288-0015
news@portlandobserver.com • ads@portlandobserver.com
subscription@portlandobserver.com

Postmaster: Send address changes to Portland Observer,
PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

New Lighting Brightens Central Eastside Gateways

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livability across Portland,” said Mayor of Portland Keith Wilson. “The lighting initiative supplements the 300 trees along 100 blocks of the Central Eastside already illuminated with pedestrian safety tree lighting. Continuation and reinvestment into these programs are important to improving and maintaining our neighborhoods.”

Businesses report that the improved lighting enhances safety and visibility while highlighting corridors where retail, manufacturing, and creative businesses operate side by side.

“As a long-time retailer in Portland’s Central City, we know how important first impressions are for visitors,” said Bridgid Blackburn, Co-Owner of Cargo. “After years of working to find solutions to light the underside of our viaducts, we applaud the collaboration with the County and the City. Portland’s short winter days have been transformed by this project. We’ve seen a noticeable increase in foot traffic—especially in the evenings.”

The skate community has also welcomed the improvements.

“By definition, the underside of bridges can feel uninviting,” said Chad Balcom of Skaters for Portland Skateparks. “The



Central Eastside Viaduct Lighting Project Transforms Key Gateways with Long-Awaited Safety Improvements (Photo provided by Central Eastside Industrial Council. Photo by @dustinpattison_photography)

lighting initiative has made the Burnside Skatepark a more comfortable and welcoming public space.”

Developers and property owners agree that the project sends a strong signal about investment in the district’s future.

“We greatly appreciate the support from Multnomah County for the improved lighting,” said Matt Schweitzer, President

of North Rim Development. “The Viaduct Lighting Initiative has made the area significantly brighter and more inviting for visitors and businesses alike.”

The result is a visible investment in safety, economic vitality, and public space, reinforcing the Central Eastside as a place where industry, culture, and community thrive side by side.

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Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



Timothy Salaz - Versa Style Street Dance Company (Photo courtesy of White Bird)

White Bird and The Reser Welcome Versa-Style

A Celebration of Street Dance and Culture

Honoring their 20th anniversary, Versa-Style Street Dance Company brings an exhilarating program to White Bird's 2025-26 season. Tribute: Guardians of Street Dance celebrates the company's artistic journey and pays homage to West Coast Hip Hop and the street dance artists who shaped it—past and present. Versa-Style will perform at The Reser, March 19-21, in a co-presentation between White

Bird and the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts.

Jackie "Miss Funk" Lopez and Leigh "Breeze-Lee" Foaad co-founded Versa-Style in 2005 to reflect versatility within street dance, and to honor the roots, origins, beauty, and power of Hip Hop dance. Celebrating diversity and equity on and off stage, the company's talented dance artists and educators seek to empower marginalized groups through dedicated community outreach and engagement, cultivating the next generation of Hip Hop artists. Receiving rave reviews for their multidisciplinary artistry and pure musical energy,

Versa-Style has performed at international venues and festivals and toured extensively across the U.S. at venues like The Joyce Theater and Jacob's Pillow.

Versa-Style's newest full-length work, Tribute: Guardians of Street Dance, weaves the company's 20-year artistic and community evolution with a vibrant celebration of Los Angeles and West Coast Hip Hop dance culture. Honoring the influential artists and movements that shaped global street dance - including Hip Hop, house, popping, locking, and more - Trib-

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Honoring Two Advocates for Racial Justice



Civil Rights Advocate Val Joshua
(Photo courtesy of YWCA Clark County)

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

ship, Clark College has embedded racial justice into its institutional foundation—closing equity gaps, boosting retention and completion rates for students of color, and expanding access to basic needs through the college's Basic Needs Hub, which serves hundreds of students each year.

Beyond her campus leadership, Dr. Edwards is widely recognized as a bridge-builder and community advocate. She forges partnerships across education, workforce, and housing sectors to broaden opportunity, while leading with steadiness, courage, and a deep commitment to measurable progress toward racial equity.

"Dr. Karin Edwards leads with grace, respect, and an unwavering belief that higher education can transform lives," said Tanisha Harris, one of Dr. Edwards award nominators. "As a strong, intelligent, and determined Black woman leading Clark College, she embodies the inclusive and courageous spirit that Val Joshua championed."

"Karin's leadership has been both steady and courageous through times of challenge and change," said nominator Matt Morton, President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington. "She has redefined what it means for Clark to be truly 'the community's college'—a place where equity, belonging, and opportunity are built into the institution's foundation."

Dr. Edwards was nominated by Paul Speer, Marilee Scarbrough, Calen Ouellette, Tanisha Harris, Matt Morton, and Jeanne Bennett.

Dr. Megan Dudley, Founder of the Ridgefield Multicultural Initiative, is recognized with the 2026 Val Joshua Racial Justice Award for her grassroots leadership and talent for building belonging in spaces where equity work can be most challenging—small, predominantly white communities. Through her founding of the Ridgefield Multicultural Initiative, Meaningful Movies Ridgefield, and the Ridgefield Multicultural Festival, Dr. Dudley has created spaces for dialogue, education, and cultural connection that amplify historically excluded voices.

Her leadership bridges community organizing, education, and heartfelt relationship-building. She brings together students, educators, leaders, and neighbors to confront racism with honesty, compassion, and action. Known for her humility, persistence, and empathy, Dr. Dudley reflects the essence of Val Joshua's legacy: justice rooted in love and collective responsibility.

"Dr. Megan Dudley is the most dedicated, passionate, hardworking, and empathetic leader that I know. She is tireless in her pursuit of helping others understand the necessity of systemic equity, and she does so with patience and compassion that never ceases to amaze me," said award nominator, Rebecca Frommlet, French Teacher and Equity Representative, Ridgefield School District.

"Megan Dudley's integrity, strategic thinking, and tireless advocacy have empowered our community to reach its full potential. Her leadership and compassion have unified residents and strengthened Ridgefield's commitment to equity and inclusion," said Stephanie Moro Baxter, Ridgefield resident and community volunteer.

Dr. Dudley was nominated by Ernie Guerrero, Abby Braithwaite, Yasmina Akin, Rebecca Frommlet, Rheta Rubenstein, Casey Fisher, and Rosann Picchioni.

YWCA Clark County is proud to uplift the work of Dr. Edwards and Dr. Dudley—two visionary leaders whose lives exemplify YWCA's mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Their courage and compassion continue the work Val Joshua began—laying the foundation for an equitable future shaped by community, justice, and hope.



Viola Davis Honored at NAACP Image Awards

Celebrated for a Groundbreaking Career

(AP) - Viola Davis delivered a powerful speech about self-worth, resilience and collective progress on the 57th NAACP Image Awards stage Saturday night, telling the audience that personal and national growth require confronting truth and hardship.

"There is no becoming without healing and without a radical acceptance of one's truth," Davis said after receiving the NAACP's Chairman's Award at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium near Los Angeles. "We either move forward together or not at all."

The Oscar, Emmy, Tony and Grammy winner reflected on her journey from childhood poverty in Rhode Island to international success, saying, "I just wanted to be somebody. I wanted success because I thought it was significance."

Davis, 60, has earned widespread acclaim for performances in films including "The Help," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" and "Doubt," while also captivating television audiences in the legal



Viola Davis accepts the Chairman's Award during 57th NAACP Image Awards on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, in Pasadena, Calif. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

drama "How to Get Away With Murder." She achieved EGOT status after winning a Grammy for the audiobook version of her memoir, "Finding Me," adding to two Tonys, an Emmy and an Academy Award for the film adaptation of "Fences."

"No one can describe the journey of going from the little chocolate girl searching for hope," Davis said, "to the girl living a transcendent life."

Michael B. Jordan capped off the night as the winner of enter-

tainer of the year after also taking home best actor for his dual performance as twin brothers in the film "Sinners."

Jordan beat out nominees Cynthia Erivo, DoeChii, Kendrick Lamar and Teyana Taylor for the top honor. Last year's entertainer of the year winner was Keke Palmer.

During his acceptance speech, Jordan became emotional while acknowledging late actor Chadwick Boseman, his friend and "Black Panther" co-star.

White Bird and The Reser Welcome Versa-Style



(Photo courtesy of White Bird)

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ute integrates digital elements to recognize figures such as Rennie Harris, Damita Jo Freeman, and Toni Basil, as well as late icons Stephen "Twitch" Boss, Voodoo Ray, and Marjory Smarth. This heartfelt work

uplifts the stories and pioneers that define the past, present, and future of Versa-Style and street dance worldwide.

As part of White Bird's commitment to community engagement, Versa-Style Street Dance Company's visit will include a free, public panel discussion

with the artists on Wednesday, March 18, from 7:00–8:15 PM at The Reser.

White Bird is committed to making world-class dance accessible to all. Through its NEST Program, nonprofit health and human service organizations receive complimentary subscriptions for their clients, helping to remove barriers to the performing arts. The organization also thanks the Autzen Foundation for its generous support of NEST throughout the 2025–26 season.

Tickets start at \$18 and are available online at whitebird.org or thereser.org. They may also be purchased in person at the White Bird Box Office, 900 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 100, with no added fees, or by phone at 503-245-1600 (a \$3 processing fee applies per ticket). Discounts are available for groups, students, seniors, working artists, and Oregon Trail Card or SNAP recipients.

Industry Leader Recognized for Driving Technology and Resilience

Architect of PGE'S Grid Modernization Strategy Announces Retirement

Portland General Electric (PGE) today announced Larry Bekkedahl, senior vice president of Strategy & Advanced Energy Delivery, will retire on March 31, 2026, after more than four decades of leadership in the energy industry.

Bekkedahl has been widely recognized as a visionary leader and innovator, shaping the future of the electric grid through groundbreaking technology and strategic partnerships. Since joining PGE in 2014, he has spearheaded initiatives to modernize Oregon's grid, integrate renewable resources and enhance system resilience against wildfire, cyber threats and extreme weather.

"Larry's contributions to PGE and the broader energy sector have been extraordinary," said Maria Pope, president and CEO of Portland General Electric. "His leadership and innovative approach have positioned PGE at the forefront of building a smarter, cleaner grid, while keeping affordability for our customers at the center of every decision. Larry has proven that innovation isn't just about progress, it's what allows us to keep costs low while transforming the grid for tomorrow."

Throughout his career, Bekkedahl has



Larry Bekkedahl

championed collaboration between industry and academia, earning prestigious honors such as the Distinguished Industry Advisor Award from Stanford University and being named one of Energy Central's Leaders in Innovation Champions for his work on grid modernization. His efforts have advanced technologies like two-way grid connectivity, large-scale energy storage, and flexible load management – critical components of a cleaner, smarter energy system.

Bekkedahl was instrumental in the planning, development and construction of PGE's Integrated Operations Center, a core piece of the smart grid's nerve center

and critical to PGE's strategy to deliver reliable, affordable, clean energy to customers. The IOC houses operating processes that enable the smooth operations of the distribution and transmission systems, cybersecurity, wildfire operations and other key systems.

"Larry has been a trusted partner and thought leader in shaping a more resilient and sustainable grid for the West," said Elliot Mainzer, president and CEO of the California Independent System Operator. "His vision and commitment to innovation have strengthened regional collaboration and set a high standard for our industry."

Before joining PGE, Bekkedahl held senior leadership roles at Bonneville Power Administration, Clark Public Utilities, PacifiCorp and Montana Power Company. He serves on numerous advisory boards, including the Electric Power Research Institute Research Advisory Committee, Stanford University's Bits & Watts Advisory Council, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the Office of Electricity for the U.S. Department of Energy.

Bekkedahl's retirement marks the culmination of a career dedicated to strengthening and modernizing the electric grid. His vision for a smarter, cleaner, and more resilient system has shaped PGE's strategy and positioned Oregon to meet growing energy needs while advancing a clean energy future. His legacy of innovation and collaboration will continue to guide PGE as we work to deliver reliable, affordable power for decades to come.

Cascadia Health Celebrating 45 Years with Annual Gala

Event will Honor Founding CEO Leslie Ford, Build Momentum for Critical Services

The 9th annual Culture of Caring gala—an event benefitting Cascadia Health's Whole Health services—is coming April 9, 2026. Cascadia invites community members to register and join this night of celebration, inspiration, and giving.

For the last 45 years, Cascadia has built a foundation of hope, housing, and healing for thousands in our community. But its work is far from finished. The theme of this year's event is "momentum," reflecting how community support is integral to Cascadia's enduring success.

Cascadia serves more than 20,000 individuals and families yearly, providing trusted health, housing, and recovery services for all, regardless of ability to pay.

"Cascadia's strength comes from its deliberate investment in serving people with the highest needs in our community," said James Schroeder, President and CEO of Cascadia Health. "But we can't



Leslie Ford

do it alone. Our annual gala emphasizes the importance of local partnerships and connection in achieving our mission. Together, we can create lasting change and build on the momentum at the center of Cascadia's work—not only today but for decades to come."

The gala will feature exciting performances, as well as the stories and voices of clients and staff, demonstrating the impact of Cascadia's life-saving services. The 2026 Honoree, founding CEO Leslie Ford will be recognized for her legacy of healthcare leadership and innovation in Oregon. Ford is a Licensed Clinical So-

cial Worker who received her MSW from the University of Washington in 1979. She has held leadership roles in behavioral health provider agencies in Virginia, Washington, and Oregon. One of the driving principles throughout her tenure has been her focus on the development of integrated services.

There will be a special performance. The night's featured performer will be Jessica Lind, an American ballet dancer best known for her career with Oregon Ballet Theatre, where she rose to the rank of Principal Dancer after joining the company in 2011. Known for her strength and expressive artistry, Jessica brings rich experience and heart to her captivating performances.

The event will run from 5:30-9 p.m. at The Redd on Salmon, 831 SE Salmon St, Portland, OR 97214. All funds raised are critical to Cascadia's continued ability to meet the growing needs of the region. This celebration will include a three-course dinner brought by Art of Catering, Stories about the impacts of our work, Art & entertainment and a Live raffle. For more information and to register, visit www.cascadiahealth.org/gala2026.

BIDS/CLASSIFIEDS



Equal Housing Opportunity

Wait List Openings

Notice is hereby given that Vancouver Housing Authority will open the following HUD Multi-Family waitlists on Wednesday March 4, 2026 through March 25, 2026.

Arbor Ridge Apartments: HUD Multi-Family
Located at 9503 NE Hazel Dell Ave., Vancouver, WA 98665

These 1-bedroom units are in a non-smoking building that is designated for person(s) age 62 and older. Income of households must be less than \$43,450 for a family of one or \$49,650 for a family of two.

Fort Vancouver: HUD Multi-Family
Located at 2509 Columbia Street, Vancouver, WA 98660.

These 1-bedroom units are in a non-smoking building that is designated for individuals who are chronically mentally ill. Income of households must be less than \$43,450 for a family of one or \$49,650 for a family of two.

Applications will be available online beginning March 4, at 9:00 AM ending on March 25, 2026 at 4:00 PM. You can access our applicant portal by going to our website at www.vhausa.org.

Paper applications are available upon request at our office located at 2500 Main Street, Vancouver Washington from Wednesday, March 4, 2026 until March 25, 2026. Our offices are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. You can drop off completed applications at our office or mail them to us at the address listed above.

Units are offered to qualified applicants based on the date and time of application. For more information, visit our website at www.vhausa.org or call (360) 694-2501.

Vancouver Housing Authority welcomes qualified individuals/families of diverse backgrounds and, in accordance with various Federal and State laws or regulations, does not discriminate against anyone based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, familial status, creed, veteran's or military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

Vancouver Housing Authority will make reasonable accommodations to individuals whose disabilities require accommodation in order to enjoy full and equal access to our programs and services. This includes the application process, the informal hearing process and the residency period. Please contact a staff member if you need a reasonable accommodation.

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Workforce Scholarships Strengthen Talent Pipeline

Labor-backed Funding Helps PCC Train Job-Ready Graduates

A new U.S. Department of Labor-funded scholarship initiative at Portland Community College is helping students move faster into high-demand careers in semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and welding, all fields that are essential to Oregon's economic growth and where employers continue to struggle to find skilled workers.

The grant-funded scholarships will support 40 PCC students this academic year, distributed evenly across four programs aligned with regional workforce needs: Electronic Engineering Technology, Machine Manufacturing, Mechatronics and Welding. Ten students in each area have been selected to receive awards of \$2,062.50 to cover tuition and fees for up to 13 credits, reducing financial barriers that can slow or prevent entry into technical training.

"Those companies don't just need workers: they need workers with the specific, high-level technical training found in our Electronic Engineering Technology and mechatronics programs," said Christiaan Desmond, dean for PCC's Advanced and Applied Technologies Pathway.



Student creating in the Mechatronics Lab (Photo courtesy of Portland Community College)

Desmond noted that the region's labor shortage is expected to intensify as semiconductor and advanced manufacturing investment expands.

"By funding 10 students in each of these four disciplines, we are delivering a balanced, work-ready cohort that hits the ground running," he said.

Each scholarship supports students preparing for technician and production roles central to modern manufacturing operations. In PCC's Machine Manufacturing Program, student-machinists use computer-aided manufacturing software to control and manage precision computer numerically controlled machines, producing high-tech components and tools.

PCC's Mechatronics, Automation, and Robotics Engineering Technology area of concentration builds on the college's historically strong Electronic Engineering Technology Program, developing technicians through hands-on training in electronics, digital systems and automation, with pathways to bachelor's degrees.

"Partnerships like this with support from the Department of Labor are at the heart of how we respond to workforce needs in our region," said Sage Learn, PCC executive director of College Relations. "By working closely with employers and investing in targeted training, PCC is helping students move quickly into high-need, high-wage careers while giving local industries the skilled talent they need to grow. These

scholarships are about opportunity for students, for employers and for the long-term economic health of our community."

The initiative arrives as funding pressures mount statewide. Oregon has documented worker shortages across key sectors, and legislators are considering mid-biennium cuts to community college budgets due to a poor economic forecast, reductions that could affect the very Career Technical Education programs relied upon to fill in-demand roles. PCC's impact is significant: an economic impact analysis found the college generates \$2.3 billion in added income and 25,314 jobs in the region, and students see an estimated \$5.10 in higher future earnings for every \$1 invested in education.

For students, scholarship support can also help cover the upfront costs of required gear. In welding, for example, personal protective equipment and tools can total \$1,300 to \$1,600.

With strong hiring outcomes in semiconductor-focused programs, including nearly 100% hiring for Microelectronics Technology graduates with employers such as Intel and Lam Research, PCC leaders said maintaining training pipelines is vital. Starting salaries for many of these programs typically range from \$56,000 to \$65,000, with schedules that can offer compressed work weeks and improved work-life balance.

"This was a super cool scholarship for welding," said Matt Scott, PCC welding instructor and high school liaison. "The students can easily use their financial aid or grants and they get it so quickly."

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