



## Cartoon cut-up

**SPREADING THE JOY**

Mike Bennett's fun and educational art installations give people a reason to get out and explore. **PAGE 8**



**GIVING IT THEIR BEST SHOT** LeCare Pharmacy owners keep community healthy. **PAGE 4**



**GROUNDBREAKING EFFORT** Project aims to renew thriving Black presence in N/NE Portland. **PAGE 16**



**ANIMAL WELFARE**

**PAW Team** helps people in need take care of their pets. **PAGE 17**

**TIME TO SCRUM**  
After the pandemic pause, Eastside Tsunami Youth Rugby players off and running at a camp held at Grant Bowl. **PAGE 10**



**LIGHTS ARE BRIGHT ON BROADWAY** Business district bustles with new and old shops. **PAGE 14**

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**★ STAR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**



BY JANET GOETZE

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**PLAN FOR JEFF HIGH KEEPS 1909 BUILDING**

A proposal for modernizing Jefferson High School is scheduled to go to the Portland Public Schools board on Jan. 13. The proposal, developed over several months in gatherings with community members, alumni and stakeholders, would retain the 1909 main building and add new structures on the campus.

The planning outline would retain the main building's steep steps for ceremonial occasions at the original front entry, but the steps aren't designed for easy access. Therefore, the proposal headed to the school board has a new entry off North Commercial Avenue, where school buses and other vehicles already drop off students.

The new entry would lead into the school and to an auditorium, south of the main building, that would be available to community groups as well as the school.

The option was outlined for community members and alumni at a four-hour open

house in mid-November.

Answering questions and taking comments were members of Bora Architecture & Interiors and LEVER Architects and Colloqate Design, the leader for the community engagement process.

The 1928 gym, considered a historic element, was considered for use in early proposals, but it had little interest among alumni and community members, the architects said. However, wood and other elements from the building could be retained and used in the upgraded structures.

While many wanted to retain the 1964 gym, possibly for the memories of events it held, it doesn't meet current school standards. A new, larger gym is proposed south of the main building along North Kerby Avenue.

A modernized Jefferson would provide classrooms for general education, electives, science labs and a library. But it also would remain a focus option school with an emphasis on the arts to attract students outside its usual attendance area. For that reason, it would have a large theater, space for choral and instrumental music with storage areas, photography, fine arts and space for dance.

Students would remain on campus during construction to continue middle college programs at Portland Community College, across Killingsworth Street from the high school. A first phase of construction would begin in late 2024. A second phase would begin in late 2026, with all construction completed in 2028.

In the meantime, a Design Advisory Group (DAG) will be formed to provide public ideas for design details. Those interested in serving on the group may apply online at [www.pps.net/JeffersonBond](http://www.pps.net/JeffersonBond). Updates on the project also are on that website. To join the project mailing list, go to [JHSBond@pps.net](mailto:JHSBond@pps.net).

**VIGIL TO HIGHLIGHT TRAFFIC CHALLENGES**

The Beaumont-Wilshire neighborhood will remember a neighbor hit and killed by a car while Christmas shopping last year and, at the same time, bring attention to the visibility challenges on the busy Fremont Street business district.

A candlelight vigil in remembrance of Vivian "Gayle" Phillips will be held from 5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Dec. 21 at Northeast 44th Avenue and Fremont Street, said Patty Nelson, the neighborhood association president.

All are invited to bring a candle, a lantern or a light and meet at the northwest corner of the intersection.

"As we remember Gayle, we will also bring attention to the busy corridor and the need for caution as pedestrians cross to find their way

to our businesses and neighborhoods," Nelson said.

Gayle, as she was called, and her husband, Dennis, were doing last-minute shopping when both were hit by a car.

"Dennis spent the next month in the hospital recovering as he mourned the death of his wife," Nelson said. "The tragedy occurred on



Gayle Phillips

the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. This means it is very dark during the evening commute, creating visibility challenges for pedestrians and vehicles alike."

In the past year, the neighborhood association and the Beaumont Business Association

have worked with the Portland Bureau of Transportation to improve lighting at the intersection. The neighborhood association is in discussions with the bureau for additional lighting, but higher accident corridors in the city also need bureau resources, according to the neighborhood newsletter.

The bureau also has designed bump-outs, or curb extensions, at crosswalks near Northeast 44th, 46th and 47th avenues to improve sight lines, slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

**REALTORS TO COLLECT NEW WINTER COATS**

Living Room Realty is collecting new coats through Dec. 14 for babies, children, adults and seniors, in cooperation with Impact NW, which provides services for early childhood, youths and seniors, and housing assistance for individuals and families.

"We've collected and donated more than 1,500 new coats over the past seven years," said Cristen Lincoln, a broker and coat drive coordinator. The realty company assists Impact NW, she said, in its goal "of preventing homelessness by supporting and empowering people."

"By donating brand new coats," Lincoln said, "we're not only sharing warmth with kids and community members in need but helping support their self-esteem."

New coats with tags may be dropped off at Living Room Realty offices in Portland: 421 S.E. 10th Ave.; 7830 S.W. 35th Ave. or 2050 N.W. Lovejoy St.

**NECC DIRECTOR PLANS RETIREMENT IN 2023**

Kim Montagriff, the executive director of the Northeast Community Center for the past

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**Places to pick up the Hollywood Star**

**Libraries:** Albina, Gregory Heights, Hollywood, Kenton, and North

**Grocery stores:** New Seasons on Interstate, Williams and Broadway/33rd

Fairleys Pharmacy and 42nd Street Station

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10 years, has announced she plans to retire in 2023.

The board of directors is beginning the recruitment process to replace Montagriff, who has shepherded the center through changes and growth. The center weathered the COVID-19 pandemic, providing virtual programming and special programs. It also has a team that greets members and visitors, teaches classes and workshops for all ages.

"With our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, we now have a clear path forward to be a truly

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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**★ STAR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

inclusive, welcoming, equitable community center," said Deborah Stein and Virginia



Kim Montagriff

Durost, the board co-presidents, in a written statement.

The center, at 1630 N.E. 38th Ave., is a not-for-profit organization in a building that the YMCA opened in 1925 as transitional housing for men and boys. It began offering co-ed programs in the 1930s.

When the YMCA announced plans to close the building in 2004, a group of neighbors raised funds to purchase it and, as the website states, "create a center of fitness, wellness and connection" for all ages.

The center offers programs in aquatics, fitness and other activities. [www.nocommunitycenter.org](http://www.nocommunitycenter.org).

**FOOD BANK PLANS UPDATED OPERATIONS**

The Oregon Food Bank will outline how it is modernizing its infrastructure and how it plans to provide more fresh foods in a virtual event from 3-4 p.m. Dec. 8, said CEO Susannah Morgan. Sign up for the virtual event: [mobilize.us/oregonfoodbank/event/542205](https://mobilize.us/oregonfoodbank/event/542205).

Panelists will share plans to distribute freshly harvested food and to reduce the environmental impact of the work, Morgan said in a news release. The food bank also

plans to improve its response to extreme weather events, she said.

**IFCC TO BE CENTER FOR ARTS, DIVERSITY**

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, usually called IFCC, will be reactivated over the next two and a half years with artist residencies and public programs, City Commissioner Carmen Rubio, the IFCC Community Advisory Committee and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation announced.

The former firehouse was constructed in 1910 at 5340 N. Interstate Ave. and was used until 1959. It became a cultural center in 1982 by City Commissioner Charles Jordan, the commission's first Black member and the parks commissioner at the time.

The structure was renovated to contain a theater, gallery and rehearsal and dance studio.

An entity called IFCC Inc. operated the theater and arts programs until May 2010 when the nonprofit ceased operation. In August 2010, Ethos Inc. managed it until December 31, 2014, when the organization decided to move in other directions.

The Parks Bureau took over management on Jan. 1, 2015. In 2018, a Community Advisory Committee was formed to develop a vision and recommend a sustainable operating model for the building. The committee report said program operations are unsustainable due to the building's size, space constraints and unreinforced masonry (brick) condition.

The committee recommended that the



Students worked with artist and activist Salomee Souag to paint a mural, titled "The Shirley," on a building at 6517 N. Interstate Ave. (Global Works Community Fund)

building be an arts and culture center to honor the African American community's roots in the structure, to celebrate Portland's diversity and to advance the city's commitment to racial equity.

The advisory committee continues to meet monthly to "develop a strategy for culturally specific creative spaces" and to provide "short term affordable leases for interim uses ahead of future development."

To join the Zoom meetings, contact Maija Spencer at [maija.spencer@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:maija.spencer@portlandoregon.gov). Information is at [portland.gov/parks/interstate-firehouse-cultural-center](http://portland.gov/parks/interstate-firehouse-cultural-center).

**STUDENTS PAINT MURAL EXPRESSING HEALING**

The Arbor Lodge neighborhood has a new mural, expressing healing, growth and power, created by students on the north side of a building at 6517 N. Interstate Ave., across from a Rosa Parks Way MAX station.

The students in the youth leadership organization, Global Works Community Fund, worked with artist and activist Salomee Souag. The mural, painted in calming shades of blue, shows two figures planting seeds while a river runs between them.

Souag, who titled the mural "The Shirley," said: "I think coming out of the pandemic, many of us can relate to feeling isolated. It was important for me to talk to the students about

how safe space and a sense of community can help us heal from trauma."

Global Works completed the mural through the Public Arts Mural Program of the Regional Arts & Culture Council. The program provides up to \$5,000 in matching funds for murals that reflect style and media diversity, according to the Portland Office of Community and Civic Life.

**SENIOR CENTER GAINS NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

A new activities and events coordinator and a new center manager have been named by The Community for Positive Aging and Hollywood Senior Center.

The new activities director is Kate Holly, a registered yoga teacher who plans to produce welcoming events that support healing, growth, connection and community for people of all ages. In her free time, Holly said she enjoys spending time with her two kids, two cats and two ukuleles.

Kaylyn Peterson is the manager of the senior center at 1820 N.E. 40th Ave. She grew up in Portland, attended Linfield College and has planned vendor markets for small businesses. For the past 15 years, she has worked at community pools as aquatic manager, lifeguard and swim instructor. Peterson enjoys crafting and exploring the outdoors with her family, she said.



Students worked with artist and activist Salomee Souag to paint a mural, titled "The Shirley," on a building at 6517 N. Interstate Ave. (Steve Morgan)

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★ STAR FEATURE

# CARING *for* COMMUNITY

LeCare owners Sandy and Thanh Le help others while growing a successful pharmacy

By Nancy Varekamp  
nancyvarekamp@star-news.info

The COVID-19 pandemic may not have been the optimal time to open a new business, but Sandy and Thanh Le have leveraged the circumstances to succeed at their independent pharmacy.

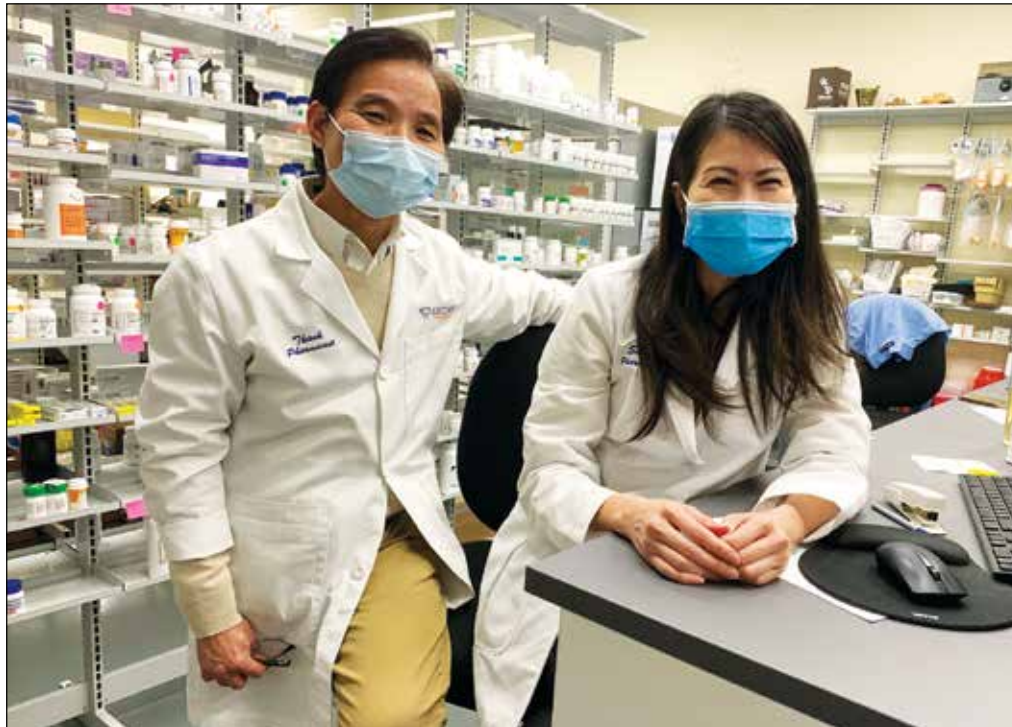
By the end of October, they had administered about 64,000 COVID vaccinations and boosters, more than any other pharmacy in Oregon. Those were at LeCare, their pharmacy in Hollywood, at vaccination clinics, and they have traveled as far as the Oregon Coast to inoculate cargo ship crews.

That summer 2021 trip to Astoria was the first — and most adventurous — of the couple's assignments from Multnomah County 211. The two pharmacists reached the four cargo ships in a small boat, and Sandy vaccinated the crews.

A back injury benched Thanh in the taxi boat, and petite Sandy fought the strong winds to climb up and into the ships. It was a long day that required closing the pharmacy and not returning home until 1 a.m. The seafarers otherwise would not have had access to immunization, according to Sandy.

Frequent requests from 211 are closer to home and take them to hospice and other homebound patients.

The partnership between LeCare and 211 began with Sandy's cousin making an introduction. The pharmacy had opened



TOPS IN SHOTS

Sandy Le was one of 50 pharmacists recognized in August for her commitment to inoculating people against COVID-19, and to the number of people she has served.

The award came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of Immunization Managers. One pharmacist from each state was recognized for delivering more immunizations than any other in their state.

At the time of the award, LeCare Pharmacy had delivered more than 45,000 immunizations.

Thanh and Sandy Le last year found the pandemic a challenge when they opened LeCare pharmacy in Hollywood. They turned it into an advantage by administering more COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters than any other pharmacy in Oregon. (Nancy Varekamp)

Feb. 1, 2021, and business was slow. Paulsen's Pharmacy, just 1½ blocks away, closed two days before LeCare opened, and prospects were not looking good.

"Sandy, do you still want to do it?" Thanh asked her. She did. They'd signed a lease April 1, 2020. Getting permits and building out the former chiropractor office had taken longer than they expected.

So Sandy asked her new Multnomah County contacts about administering COVID vaccinations. She received guidance on the glut of forms she had to complete before receiving federal distributions of the vaccines.

"I had nothing to do, so I did all the paperwork," she said. Initially, Sandy asked for 800 vaccines to last for two weeks, and the supply was gone within days.

"It was crazy. It was like never a quiet

moment," she recalled during that first round of vaccinations "Day by day, it was a learning process."

One lesson she learned in the first week — one that big box pharmacies haven't — is the efficiency of serving drop-in patients instead of making appointments. "It was a pain to schedule appointments and manage appointments and no shows," she said.

So the pharmacy moved to drop-ins and some of the people who have stood in line at LeCare are overflow from other pharmacies.

How long are those lines? Thanh said that, even when they reached Halsey from the pharmacy door at 1619 N.E. 42nd Ave., waits didn't exceed 45 minutes. He calls a day of 200 to 300 injections "easy."

Another factor that sets LeCare apart from other pharmacies is splitting its staff into two groups. One, managed by Thanh, handles vaccines and Sandy leads the business of compounding and dispensing prescriptions.

Burdening a pharmacy staff with both responsibilities tends to cause what Thanh calls "COVID fatigue." Adding to the pressure, he added, "There were a lot of pharmacists who were about to retire, and they retired."

The couple's original business plan called for Thanh to continue three years working for a

Kaiser pharmacy — until LeCare could support the Le family. Instead, he left that job nine months after their pharmacy opened.

That was in December 2021, when LeCare needed more pharmacists to keep pace. The Oregon Health Authority — which partners with the pharmacy for pop-up vaccination clinics — sent pharmacist Allan Wright to help.

"With Allan helping us, we were able to take on so many clinics," Sandy said. "We can't do it alone."

What keeps the couple going? It's in the name of the pharmacy — "Le," their own name, and "care" — describes what they want to do for the community.

Social media platforms have exploded for nearly two years with praise for the pharmacy and its owners. The business' website declares, "Family Owned, Locally Loved" and "Proudly caring for our community."

Thanh said their tireless efforts are a way of giving back. Both left Vietnam for life in the United States, Sandy as a child.

Thanh said their efforts to fight COVID are rewarding. Comments from patients like "Oh my God, thank you so much," he said, "This is where I get my energy.

"If I don't do it here, where shall I send them?"

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★ STAR DEVELOPMENT NEWS



BY PHILL COLOMBO

PHILLCOLOMBO@STAR-NEWS.INFO

POTENTIAL FUTURE OF ROSE CITY PARK'S LADY OF LAVANG PROPERTY REVEALED

A mid-October request for early assistance with plans to develop the four-square-block former home of Our Lady of Lavang Catholic Church in Rose City Park shed light on what the property eventually may become.

As described in public records, "The proposed project consists of two, four-story apartment buildings wrapping around a central outdoor parking court." The proposal will total 286 apartment units with 165 parking spaces in an outdoor surface parking lot with amenities to include a roof deck overlooking downtown Portland, a fourth-floor club room, ground-floor fitness room and outdoor recreation space with swimming pool and play area.



Rendering of the Hollywood Hub affordable housing project that will add 222 apartments to the Hollywood Transit Center. Construction is expected to start in 2024 with occupancy in summer 2026. (Holst Architecture)

The request goes on to say that the existing walls around the site will remain and that both pedestrian and vehicular access to the site will be provided from Alameda Street. Also proposed is enhancement of the existing intersection plaza at Northeast Sandy Boulevard and 54th Avenue, along with a connection to the existing pedestrian crossing at the southeast corner of the property.

There was no mention of what the future of the buildings on the property might be. One building was a 1960s parish worship area and the other dates back to the early 20th century and was the home of a former girls high school.

DEVELOPERS GIVE UPDATE ON HOLLYWOOD HUB PROJECT

Representatives from Hollywood, Grant Park, Laurelhurst and Roseway made up about half of the more than one dozen people attending a Hollywood

Neighborhood Association November virtual meeting. The others were representatives for TriMet, Holst Architecture and Bridge Housing who gave an update on the affordable housing project planned for the Hollywood Transit Center.

The six-story, 222-unit project will be sited in two buildings, one L-shaped and the other C-shaped, as seen from the light-rail tracks looking north toward Northeast Halsey Street. Those listening were told that about 40 community meetings have been held since planning began in 2020.

"This is not the first meeting, and it won't be the last," said Bridge Housing's Sarah Schubert. Currently in an advanced design and funding stage, construction is expected to begin in 2024 and completed in 2026.

The project will be funded by a collaboration of Portland's Housing Bureau, the state of Oregon, Metro and Home Forward. TriMet will retain property

ownership and hand operation over to Bridge with a long-term lease. During the meeting, concerns were raised over pedestrian safety, westbound bus stops and potential tent pitching by homeless individuals.

More information, visit www.hollywoodhubpdx.com.

OVERLOOK TO GET 63 NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Groundbreaking in mid-November at 5020 N. Interstate Ave. kicked off a year of construction of a six-story, mixed-use building offering members of the Black community high-quality rentals with on-site services. Co-developed by Self-Enhancement Inc., and Community Development Partners, the project is part of a larger SEI/CDP effort to renew a visible,

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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thriving Black presence in North and Northeast Portland.

In his comments at the event, SEI president and CEO Tony Hopson Sr. shared how he grew up in this area.

“I went to Beach Elementary, and my mother still owns the house at Humboldt and Mississippi. I remember when I-5 went in, and I could no longer walk down Humboldt to get to school,” he said.

“So when I think about what used to be here and the people who used to be here — who are no longer here — to have the opportunity to be a part of partnerships like the one we have with CDP, helping to provide low-income housing for some of those folks, so they can have a pathway back, it is just really, really important and meaningful.”

The new, affordable rentals for households earning 60% or less of the area median income will help fill Portland’s critical need for housing — most acute among low-income residents. SEI and CDP hope, through an innovative blend of design and on-site services, that 5020 N. Interstate Ave. will support Black families, strengthen community connections and expand economic opportunity.

The 5020 N. Interstate project funding includes \$9.2 million from the Metro Regional Affordable Housing Bond approved by voters in 2018, \$14.7 million in Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credits and Transit Oriented Development Grant funds from Metro.

**AQUATIC CENTER GETS FUNDING BOOST**

Portland Parks Commissioner Carmen Rubio has designated an additional \$5 million from Parks System Development



There were smiles all around at the November groundbreaking of SEI and CDP's 5020 North Interstate housing project. The six-story building will add 63 affordable apartments to Overlook. (SEI)

Charges for the design and construction of a North Portland indoor aquatic center, bringing total funding for the center to \$16.7 million.

In addition to \$16.7 million from development revenues, the city also had secured \$15 million from a state grant spearheaded and supported by state Reps. Travis Nelson and Maxine Dexter, bringing the current allocation to \$31.7 million.

In addition to development funding, the Portland City Council authorized a contract with ELS Architecture and Urban Design to lead the design team and provide support for site selection, programming, schematic design and land-use permitting services for

the center.

A full-service indoor aquatic is seen as meeting a critical need for North Portlanders’ health and well-being, as it is expected to serve approximately 22,000 households.

“Water play, water fitness and swim classes are instrumental parts of increasing our mental and physical well-being,” said Portland Parks & Recreation Director Adena Long. “It is exciting to move forward on the new aquatic center with more funding and with a design team on board.”

Find more information about the aquatic center project at <https://www.portland.gov/parks/construction/north-portland-aquatic-center-project>.

**METRO OKS \$9 MILLION FOR THREE PARKS PROJECTS**

Three Portland Parks improvement projects will move closer to completion with approval from the Metro Council for \$9 million in funding.

Approximately \$4.86 million was approved to fund a North Portland Greenway Trail from North Columbia Boulevard to Portland Parks & Recreation's Columbia Park.

The Greenway is a regional trail providing a continuous route for active transportation, recreation, access to nature and to residential, industrial and commercial areas. It will help fill some of the gaps in North Portland’s Greenway and create a safe, accessible bicycle and pedestrian connection between Chimney Park and Cathedral Park.

Metro also approved Parks & Recreation’s \$2,271,691 Marine Drive Trail project to help fill a nearly one-mile segment in the 40-Mile Loop, providing trail users unparalleled views of the Columbia River and Mount Hood on nearly 14 miles of uninterrupted off-street trail along the Columbia River from Northeast 33rd Drive to the Sandy River in Troutdale, replacing dangerous on-street bike lanes with a designated bike path.

To complete the triple project funding, Metro approved \$1,897,908 for the North Portland Greenway in Kelley Point Park, a historically and culturally significant place because of its location at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers and the future northern terminus of the planned North Portland Willamette Greenway Trail.

Much of the trail already is built within the

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**★ STAR DEVELOPMENT NEWS**

park, but a 1,400-foot gap currently forces trail users onto the road. This project will fix this by extending the trail to the 40-Mile Loop and Marine Drive Trails.

Portland Parks & Recreation Director Adena Long had high praise for the interagency collaborative funding. "Partnerships like this, where the city and Metro work together, make our community stronger," Long said. "These trails make it easier and safer to travel, to enjoy our greenspaces, and they foster connections citywide. I'm thankful for the efforts of our planning team and our partners at Metro."

**VENTURE PORTLAND AWARDS BUSINESS DISTRICTS \$50,000**

Among Portland's 23,000 small businesses that provide more than 300,000 jobs, there were smiles all around as Venture Portland announced financial grants to assist with 2022's holiday activities and staffing costs. The number of applications was overwhelming, and the Grants Committee was forced to get creative to fund as many projects as possible.

A significant portion of the grants were given to North and Northeast business organizations aimed at engaging holiday shoppers with public art, lighting, decorations and family-friendly activities. Included in the list of grant-funded activities are the Beaumont Business Association for holiday lighting and Williams Vancouver Business Association for its holiday events series.

The Central Eastside Industrial Council, Lloyd Community Association, Historic Mississippi Avenue Business Association and Montavilla-East Tabor Business

Association also received funding for staffing.

The highly competitive round of grants prioritized projects that would have the greatest impact on small businesses located in all the city's geographic quadrants.

Bridgid Blackburn, Venture Portland Grants Committee chair and co-owner of Cargo, said: "It's so rewarding to be able to fund programs and lift up communities all around the city ... to energize and unite Portland's neighborhoods this winter at an essential time for small business and the unique districts in which they are located."

Venture Portland Executive Director Joy Church expressed gratitude: "Thanks to the consistent commitment of Mayor Wheeler and Prosper Portland, we were, once again, able to award dollars to aid small businesses in their long road to recovery by funding meaningful projects that benefit our great city. I look forward to seeing these grants in action."

**IRVINGTON ARTIST AIMS TOWARD POSITIVITY**

Irvington artist Jerome Sloan has brought one of his works back home. Titled "Growth," the mural will be on display through March at the Open Signal Arts Center, 2766 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Growth documents the struggle to become a better person based on personal experiences during Sloan's long period of incarceration.

At age 19, Sloan was sentenced to life without parole and spent 28 years developing and leading cognitive strategies in prison to assist former gang members to change their lives. These efforts were

coupled with teaching art classes, and, in early 2022, Gov. Kate Brown commuted Sloan's sentence, citing the effect he had on the young men with whom he worked.

Bringing his message to Irvington where he grew up, Sloan said, "A great piece of art should compel you to take some action or change the way you think."

Asserting that it is his job to be a positive example, he added, "I send my art out with the hope that it changes people or moves them in a positive direction."

More from the artist can be seen at [www.jeromesloanart.com](http://www.jeromesloanart.com).

**APPLICATION FILED**

In Roseway at 7229 N.E. Sandy Blvd., Roseway Contract Holding LLC of Philomath is seeking a permit to deconstruct the 7,000-square-foot Roseway Theater. Built in 1929, the theater structure was destroyed by a fire earlier in the year.

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★ STAR FEATURE



# PUBLIC JOY CREATOR

## Mike Bennett educates, entertains with his fun, pop-up art

By Nancy Varekamp  
nancyvarekamp@star-news.info

Spend half an hour with Northeast Portland artist Mike Bennett, and you'll probably hear the word "fun" pop up often. In fact, when it comes to fun pop-up art, he reigns as king.

Wherever you find him, Bennett will be in his ever-present ball cap with the bill tipped upward, clothing daubed with paint, crystal blue eyes crinkling and a smile that confirms he enjoys what he's doing. Part of that enjoyment is knowing people have fun seeing his creations.

That's why Bennett has chosen the job title Public Joy Creator. Drive down any neighborhood street to see his assorted signs of quirky animals imploring drivers to slow down. Added to that is a newer line of signs, "Poop Happens," that ask dog walkers to clean up after their pets.

Bennett's art began catching on with locals in summer 2020, when he mounted large plywood cutouts of imaginative animals at street corners around town. He'd move them every few days, so you'd never know when or where you'd encounter one.

Also that summer, he created Albertasaurus PDX with dinosaur cutouts dotting the sidewalks of Northeast Alberta Street.

Bennett moved to Portland six years ago from central Pennsylvania, which he didn't find supportive for aspiring artists.

Wife Michele encourages his pursuit of fun. She knew when they met that Bennett was an artist. "He drew a sweet little panda



Mike Bennett claimed the title Public Joy Creator after scattering painted creatures around town and in his King neighborhood front yard. Now he's renting venues for his themed exhibits. His December offering — Snow Day — celebrates wintry holidays in a building downtown. (Nancy Varekamp)

Lawn Museum. Each day for 26 days he painted an additional animal until the entire alphabet was represented.

"It turns out, people were using my yard as an escape from the monotony of early pandemic days. It was then that I knew I had a responsibility," Bennett said. That duty included a daily video of each newcomer to his zoo, posted online to spread the fun beyond Portland borders.

Then the Itsy Bitsy Bug Museum with authentic insects merged into the crowd of A-Z animals. Again, they sported



Bennett's trademark whimsical style. Neighbors and passersby never knew what to expect next, including the A-Z displays of cryptids, monsters and mythical beasts. More displays offered extinct

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

for me on our first date," she said. "I was wanting to be an artist, but not really knowing how or if it was possible," Bennett said. He liked what he'd heard about Portland, and even what he'd seen in episodes of "Portlandia."

"Portland seemed pretty fun to me," he said. Buoyed by the popularity of his pop-ups and Albertasaurus, Bennett began decorating the front of his King neighborhood yard with the A to Zoo Family

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★ STAR FEATURE



Adjacent to Wonderwood Springs — described by Mike Bennett as a “delightful and humorous immersive adventure” — the theme is continued in his coffee shop. (Nancy Varekamp)



animals and sea creatures.

“It got way too popular,” he said, describing the hordes who visited his Family Lawn Museums. So, his newer displays are located elsewhere.

The latest had a Nov. 25 opening at a pop-up store at 403 S.W. 10th Ave., the same day as the tree-lighting ceremony in Pioneer Square. He’s dubbed it Snow Day, and his cutout creatures reside in a wintry wonderland of trees and snow.

The space includes a gift shop with wrapping paper, tree ornaments, gift bags, lawn decor, beanies, shirts and more.

The pop-up display closes Jan. 31.

Continuing on a more permanent basis, however, is Wonderwood Springs at 8811 N. Lombard St. It opened a few months ago and spins Bennett’s tale of a mythical town. He calls it a “delightful and humorous immersive adventure” through which guests can have fun wandering the town of Maplewood where the villainous tree wizard is seizing power.

He plans for Wonderwood Springs and adjacent coffee shop — featuring fun themed beverages — to evolve through different chapters of the story he’ll write.

“There’s just something fun about thinking about worlds that might exist,” Bennett said.



Townpeople in Mike Bennett’s mythical village of Maplewood are held prisoner by a villainous tree wizard who is seizing power. It’s part of his Wonderwood Springs adventure in St. Johns. (Nancy Varekamp)

The St. Johns space is the same venue where he created a pop-up monster museum last year when he decided to move his displays outside his neighborhood.

The largest display to date, however, was the summer Dinolandia downtown. Fifty species of authentic — yet funny — dinosaurs of all sizes filled the 22,000-square-foot, two-story walk through.

For a look at those and other creations, visit [mikebennettart.com](http://mikebennettart.com) or @mikebennettart on Twitter.

“I’ve been entertaining families with my colorful and immersive art creations for the past few years with the goal of giving people a reason to get out, to see art, to smile and to experience something special,” Bennett said.

“I also get to create artwork for some of my favorite local businesses and organizations. I never imagined it could be this big.”



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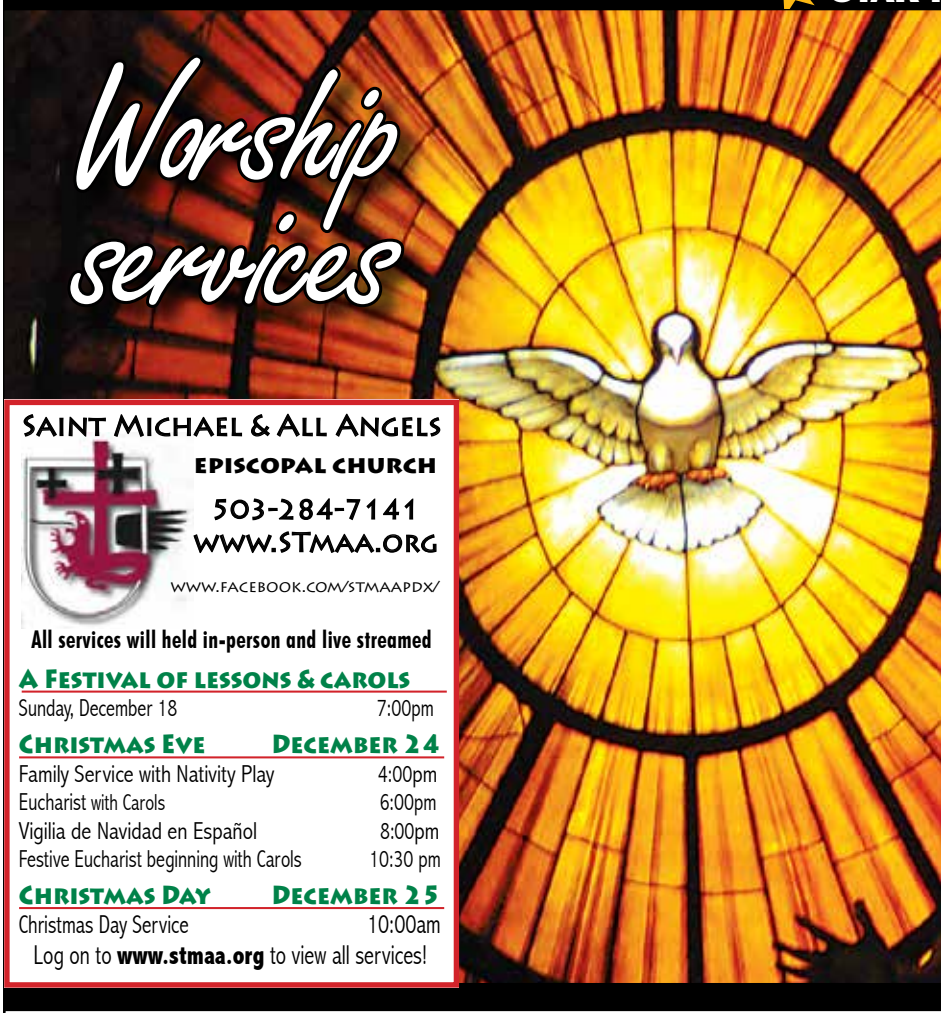
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At the invitation of the Eastside Tsunami Youth Rugby program, members of the Seattle Seawolves Major League Rugby team held training camps in November at Grant Bowl. Some 140 kids, from third grade through high school, attended the camps. (Jen Grover / Radiate Photography )

# Rugby teams return from COVID closure

By Janet Goetze  
[janetgoetze@star-news.info](mailto:janetgoetze@star-news.info)

Rugby is returning from the pandemic, according to coaches of youth teams that extend from Portland through the Willamette Valley and over to Bend, plus Clark County, Washington.

Rugby, usually thought of as a British Isles sport, has been organized for young people in Oregon since 1999, said Jonny Dallas, who has been playing the game since he was 8 years old in Ireland. He has been coaching for nearly 10 years in the United States.

The game is a combination of, soccer and wrestling, with teams of 15 players each. There's a lot of running, but if a player gets the ball, he or she may be tackled and wrestled to the ground, Dallas said.

The ball, shaped like an American football, is passed backward, and a team advances by passing or kicking the ball. The game has more details, but those are best explained on the field.

In mid-November, the Eastside Tsunami Youth Rugby program invited the Seattle Seawolves, a Major League Rugby team, to conduct camps in the Grant Bowl for about 140 prospective players from third

grade through high school, said Dane Bevan, a coach and administrator for Eastside Tsunami.

Eastside Tsunami includes teams on the east side of the Willamette River. The winners of last spring's junior varsity and varsity championships in Oregon and Southwest Washington came from the group, Bevan said.

It serves as a steppingstone for players on college teams, he said, including two Grant High School graduates who have been offered rugby scholarships to attend Western Washington University.

Girls as well as boys play the game, the coaches said. It's attractive to many families not only because it costs less than other league games, but also because it fosters a culture of polite sportsmanship.

"Parents tell us it has a positive impact," Dallas said. "The coaches can't yell at the kids, and the kids can't talk back to the coaches."

Kai Lund, 10, a Richmond School student, carried his rugby ball in the Grant Bowl, telling a bystander about its shape and size.

During a skills session, Hannah Kofoed, 17, a Heritage High School student from Vancouver, Washington, tossed a ball to Josiah Alanis, 16, an Evergreen High student, who deftly passed the ball backward to another player in their circle.

Rugby Oregon, the governing body for youth and high school rugby in most of Oregon and Southwest Washington, is accepting registration now for practice starting in January with games in the spring.

Information is available at [rugbyoregon.com](http://rugbyoregon.com) or [eastsidetsunamerugby.com](http://eastsidetsunamerugby.com) or from coaches: [dbevan@gmail.com](mailto:dbevan@gmail.com) or [jonnydallas@yahoo.com](mailto:jonnydallas@yahoo.com).

Kai Lund, 10, explains that his rugby ball is slightly larger than an American football. (Janet Goetze)



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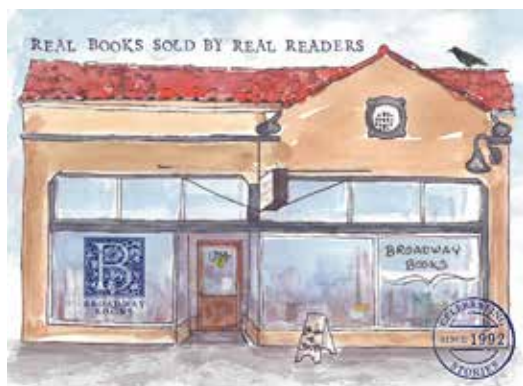
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Crisp fall leaves whirl down the sidewalk as Portlanders wander in and out of shops and restaurants along Broadway.



The street runs all the way from the Southwest Hills to Madison South, hosting a wide array of local shops and eateries on nearly every block.

Just between Northeast 15th and 33rd avenues, Broadway offers a package-free grocery store, multiple photo-worthy patisseries and numerous fun spots for local families and pet owners. To prep for the upcoming

# Bustling BROADWAY

holidays, grab your loved one a gift card from Plumeria Nails and Spa or some fun art supplies from The Color Shop. To embrace the holiday cheer even further, cozy up with some

baked goods from Twisted Croissant or a hot beverage from Saint Simon Coffee Company. Definitely don't forget your furry friends, either, who would certainly love some holiday-themed treats

and toys from Pets on Broadway. Escape the winter cold with a venture to any of the great spots Broadway has to offer. Here are a couple of the street's newest additions.

## THE REALM REFILLERY

The Realm Refillery officially opened its doors in May 2022 in order to bring a zero-waste shopping experience to Portlanders. "We got into this business after being frustrated with the lack of a space in which we could limit our waste while grocery shopping in as much of a one-stop shop as possible," says Ryan Knowles and Brittany Snipes, the store's co-owners. "We were surprised to find that there wasn't something like this that existed in the city already, so we took it upon ourselves to create this space for our community."

As the first package-free and plastic-free grocery store in all of Oregon, visiting Realm Refillery is certainly a one-of-a-kind experience. Customers can take as little or as much of a product as they need and be confident in the ethics of their shopping choices. Plus, the friendly workers and vibrant wall art within the shop are a bonus in an all-around pleasant shopping experience.

On top of prioritizing environmental sustainability, the business also invests



Bulk grocery shopping is all about saving money, reducing waste, and being better stewards of the environment. (Tyler Carey)

in the community by supporting local BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ owned farms and companies. "We focus on creating a circular economy that uplifts our community," Knowles and Snipes say, "we are on a mission to make this way of shopping more accessible to all." Wanting to make sandwiches for dinner, but only want to buy the exact amount of



The Realm Refillery offers plastic- and package-free shopping where you can buy as much or as little as needed, creating less food waste. (The Realm Refillery)

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deli meat you need? Need to refill your dish soap, but don't want to buy another large plastic bottle? Stop by Realm Refillery to check out all the benefits of the zero-waste shopping experience for yourself. ADDRESS: 2310 N.E. Broadway PHONE: 503-954-1407 WEBSITE: therealmrefillery.com DON'T MISS: the Cold Bar – which makes the Realm Refillery the first business in the United States to offer perishable products in a sustainable bulk setting

## THE COLOR SHOP

Located between Coco Donuts and Plants on Broadway, The Color Shop is a great spot for finding art supplies, home decor, gifts and opportunities for creativity. With consistently rave reviews, store owner Molly Eaton has been using her artistic

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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The home decorating possibilities are endless with some creative inspiration from The Color Shop. At the Open Paint Studio Workshops, you can bring in your own piece and customize it. (The Color Shop)

Below: The Color Shop owner Molly Eaton. (The Color Shop)



The Color Shop also offers home goods, furniture and gifts, along with seasonal decor. (The Color Shop)

background to help Portlanders pursue and navigate creative projects for years.

Unique to the store, The Color Shop is best known for Chalk Paint, a versatile water-based product that requires no need for sanding or priming. Since the paint works on almost anything — including wood, metal and concrete — it's both versatile and beginner-friendly.

"It literally holds endless creative possibilities in a can," Eaton says. "I know I can paint a dresser, bicycle, flooring, you name it, and the outcome will be fabulous."

In addition to the great multi-use product, shop visitors also love the variety of artisan-created home decor, furniture and gifts. With The Color Shop, possibilities to customize and reimagine one's home are almost endless.

"Most all of our paint and creative supplies



can only be found in independent shops like ours and not on Amazon," Eaton says.

Raised in the Hollywood neighborhood, Eaton is a proud Grant High School alum invested in her local community. The quality of the customer service certainly goes to

show for it.

If you're hoping to get some new supplies, a couple of items to spruce up your home, or even just looking to bounce ideas off another creative, stop by The Color Shop to meet Eaton and the team — they'll be eager to ensure your visit is worthwhile.

When new customers come in, Eaton says she hopes that they exit with "a new idea, perspective or, better yet, a spark of creativity."

So, if you're in a home-renovation mood after a visit to Plants on Broadway or curious to explore the funky spot next door to your favorite doughnut shop, pay a visit to The Color Shop and see where your creative intuition guides you.

ADDRESS: 2751 N.E. Broadway PHONE: 503-206-6554 WEBSITE: thecolorshoppdx.com DON'T MISS: the Open Paint Studio workshop, where you can bring your own piece for customizing.

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# PAW Team supports pets and people in need



BY LISA LAKES

LISALAKES@STAR-NEWS.INFO



The PAW Team provides food, leashes, toys and other supplies to pet owners experiencing homelessness or extreme poverty. (PAW Team)

The Portland Animal Welfare (PAW) Team is a nonprofit organization that offers veterinary care and other pet necessities for those experiencing homelessness or living in extreme poverty.

The organization was started by a group of veterinarians who volunteered their time to help families in need. Today that spirit continues as the entire organization is maintained largely by volunteers and a small staff. PAW Team currently services 1,500 pets residing in 1,000 homes.

Vaccinations and wellness checkups are offered through frequent drop-in clinics. For

other medical needs, wait times can be extensive since the team receives about 75 new requests for care each week. The team is not able to provide emergency or urgent care.

Three times a week, the team opens a pet food bank, where qualified neighbors can receive pet food, leashes, toys and other supplies. As is the case with other philanthropic organizations, PAW Team has experienced a huge increase in need over the past couple of years.

Last year the organization served 2,750 families, about 25 neighbors daily. To date

4,450 families, about 45 people per day, have accessed the pet food bank. In 2022 PAW Team has distributed 30,000 pounds of dry food and 10,000 cans of food.

The organization has initiated a major drive for cash and donated goods (new or gently used). Donor incentives for contributions as small \$10 are offered (see links below for details). Cat food (dry or wet), cat box litter, dog coats and harnesses for medium and large dogs are especially needed this season. The team will accept open or closed packages of pet food.

Sunday, Dec. 11 the PAW Team will host pictures with Santa Paws. Participants may choose from a variety of holiday costumes to make sure their pet looks spiffy while sitting with Santa. There also will be a family-friendly DIY craft station, snacks, hot chocolate and mulled wine.

## RESOURCES

- PAW Team: [www.pawteam.org/](http://www.pawteam.org/)
- Donations for PAW Team: [giveguide.org/nonprofits/portland-animal-welfare-paw-team](http://giveguide.org/nonprofits/portland-animal-welfare-paw-team)

Participants may purchase a raffle ticket for a gift basket. Suggested donation for the event is \$10 per family or the equivalent of items to our Pet Supply Bank.

Nicole Perkins, executive director of development and operations, is grateful for the community's support. "PAW Team provides our community with the best care and resources we can give, and we truly can't do it without our community's support. We're all in it together."

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★ STAR COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## KIDSTEENS AND FAMILIES

### BABIES ENJOY BOOKS

Dec. 7. 11:15 a.m. Book Babies, from birth to toddler with a favorite adult, enjoy songs, rhymes and sharing a book together. Baby has the opportunity to hear lots of language and the adult gets to know other families of youngsters. Free. 503-988-5123. Gregory Heights Library, 7921 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

### VIEW SOCIAL JUSTICE

Dec. 8. 7-8 p.m. Middle school students, in grades 6 to 8, may join an online group to discuss contemporary themes of social justice through recent literature. Free. Email libraryevents@multicolib.org for details on how to join.

### BUILDING LANGUAGE

Dec. 10. 10:15 a.m. Children from birth to age 6, with a favorite adult, enjoy books, songs, rhymes and movement activities while building language and literacy skills. Maximum of 20 people; first come, first seated. Free. 503-988-5123. Kenton library, 8226 N. Denver Ave.

### EGGS WITH ST. NICK

Dec. 17. 9-11 a.m. Breakfast with Santa includes dining on eggs and sausage with Jolly Old St. Nick. No tickets but donations are accepted. Bring cameras or cell phones to capture the picture with Santa. Rose City Park United Methodist Church, 5830 N.E. Alameda, a half-block off Sandy Boulevard.

## ENJOYARTS

### ART IN SMALL SIZES

Dec. 1. 11 a.m. 5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Show continues to Dec. 31. The 22nd annual Little Things show features 51 artists who have created art that is 7 inches by 7 inches or less, including frames or stands. The mediums include paint, glass, fiber and mixed media. Purchases may immediately go home with the buyer or buy directly online. Have it shipped, with buyer paying for shipping, or pick up the packaged art. Guardinogallery.com. 503-281-9048. Guardino Gallery, 2939 N.E. Alberta St.



"Future Wishes," by Susan Freedman, collage on cradle panel (Guardino Gallery)



"Strawberry Flower and Raspberries," by Wayne Jiang, acrylic (Guardino Gallery)



"Vessel/bowl," by Amy Ruedinger, raised copper (Guardino Gallery)



"Compulsive Eating," by Jill McVarish, oil painting (Guardino Gallery)



Helen Raptis portrays humorist Erma Bombeck in Triangle Productions' "Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End" (Triangle Productions)

### SHE CHAMPIONED WOMEN

Dec. 1. 7:30 p.m. "Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End" presents the story behind the beloved humorist who championed women's lives. Continues to Dec. 17: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays; 2 p.m. Dec. 4 and 11. Stars Helen Raptis,

directed by Don Horn. Please wear a mask. Tickets \$15 to \$35. www.trianglepro.org. 503-239-5919. The Sanctuary at Sandy Plaza, 1785 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

### 40 ARTISTS IN MARKET

Dec. 3. 5-8 p.m. A holiday art sale and market

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Expose your baby — from newborn to toddler — to books, songs and more while meeting others with young children at the Gregory Heights Library. (The Library Foundation)





**★ STAR COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

includes works on paper and art objects from more than 40 artists. They include prints, jewelry, apparel, games, holiday decorations and more. info@oregoncontemporary.org. Oregon Contemporary, 8371 N. Interstate Ave.

**STUDY CRIME, COMEDY**

Dec. 5. 7 p.m. Movie Madness University, the education program of the Hollywood Theatre, offers a four-week crash course in films by director Sofia Coppola, with no lectures or homework. \$30. Dec. 6 at 6:30 p.m. begin four weeks of "Iconic Queer Ancestors: Marlene Dietrich," tracing the life and work of the gender-bending goddess of the silver screen. Tuition \$75. Dec. 7 at 6:30 p.m., begin viewing four weeks of "The Genealogy of Comedy: Sketch," drawing from Movie Madness' collection of televised sketch comedy. Tuition \$75. Dec. 8 at 7 p.m., begin seeing four weeks of British crime films from post-war to the eclectic insanity of the "Cool Britannia" era. Tuition \$75. Registration required: hollywoodtheatre.org. Viewings in the Movie Madness theater, 4320 S.E. Belmont St.



Learn more about film star Marlene Dietrich in a four-week Movie Madness course. (Movie Madness)

**FOR SENIORS**

**TECH HELP OFFERED**

Dec. 2. 11 a.m. A technology workshop, led by Portland Youth Builders, offers information on downloading and using apps on mobile devices. Students and staff are available to troubleshoot issues and answer device-related questions. Free. Registration required: 503-288-8303 or email staff@hollywoodseniorcenter.org. Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave.

**HOT LUNCH SERVED**

Dec. 6. Noon-1 p.m. Continues Tuesdays. Meals on Wheels serves hot lunch. Register on-site on Tuesdays. Suggested donation is \$9.05, but no one is turned away for lack of funds. Information: 503-288-8303 or email staff@hollywoodseniorcenter.org. Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave.

**FOOD PANTRY OPENS**

Dec. 6. 1:30-3 p.m. Continues Tuesdays. A food pantry is available in-person, with donations from local grocers. Free. Information: 503-288-8303 or email staff@hollywoodseniorcenter.org. Hollywood Senior

**BACH FOR THE HOLIDAY**



Conductor Ralph Nelson (Bach Cantata Choir)

Dec. 16. 7:30 p.m. The Bach Cantata Choir presents a baroque holiday concert, featuring J.S. Bach's "Magnificat" and "A Newborn Child." The concert also features works by composers who influenced Bach, including Michael Praetorius, Heinrich Schutz and Friedrich Zachow. The 45-voice choir and soloists are accompanied by a 15-piece orchestra.

Conductor is Ralph Nelson. Tickets \$30 from brownpapertickets.com. Rose City Park Presbyterian Church, 1907 N.E. 45th Ave.



It may be winter, but Neighborhood Tree Stewards still has a busy schedule of tree plantings, meetings and more. (Neighborhood Tree Stewards)

Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave.

**LEARN ABOUT 'VILLAGE'**

Dec. 8. 1-2:30 p.m. Learn about activities and services offered by Northeast Village PDX that support seniors opting to remain in their own homes and stay engaged in their community. The member-led organization serves Northeast neighborhoods, with lots to enjoy as a volunteer, member or both. Information: 503-895-2750. Hollywood Library, 4040 N.E. Tillamook St.

**ROYAL BLUES TO SING**

Dec. 13. Noon-1 p.m. A holiday concert by the Grant High School Royal Blues ensemble presents lively tunes of the holiday season. Free. 503-288-8303. Sponsored by the Portland Hollywood Lions Club at Community for Positive Aging - Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave.

**INGENERAL**

**ENJOY FREMONT FEST**

Dec. 2. 4-7 p.m. Fremont Holiday Fest features selfies with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a serenade by the Royal Blues ensemble from Grant High School, wreaths for sale, and drinks and snacks. Several businesses remain open for shoppers and greetings on Northeast Fremont Street east of 40th Avenue. Photos with

Santa are at Frazier Wealth Management, 4020 N.E. Fremont St.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



**★ STAR COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**LIONS TO RING BELLS**

Dec. 3. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Hollywood Lions Club will ring bells for the Salvation Army at the Hollywood West Fred Meyer store, 3030 N.E. Weidler St.

**TREE TALK SLATED**

Dec. 13. 6-7:30 p.m. Neighborhood Tree Stewards, and anyone interested in community trees, meet The Grove in the first of a series of quarterly meetings. Sign up for winter park tree planting events and discuss community goals and ideas. North Portland Library, 512 N. Killingsworth St.

**OPERATE THAT DEVICE**

Dec. 14. 2 p.m. Drop in to gain tech help with a phone, tablet or other device. First come, first served. Other times and locations are available at multicolib.org. Click on events and classes, scroll down to find



*Taize participants may receive prayers, to pray silently in the pews, or light a candle. (Westminster Presbyterian Church)*

come, first-served. 503-988-5123. Hollywood library meeting room, 4040 N.E. Tillamook St.

**TAIZE OF THE SEASON**

Dec. 20. 6-7 p.m. A Taize service of healing and wholeness marks the Longest Night as the season changes. The service includes songs, an opportunity to receive prayers, to pray silently in the pews or to light a candle as the winter solstice approaches. Information: 503-287-1289, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 N.E. Hancock St.

**MUSIC IN SERVICES**

Dec. 24. 7 p.m. A family service of carols, choir and organ. At 10:30 p.m., a candlelight service will feature carols, solos and organ. The Rev. David Weekley shares a message at both services. Rose City Park Methodist Church, 5830 N.E. Alameda St., a half-block off Sandy Boulevard.

time and subject. Free. 503-988-5123. Hollywood library, 4040 N.E. Tillamook St.

**GAIN JOB HELP**

Dec. 14. 2 p.m. Gain help in finding a job. Free. First-

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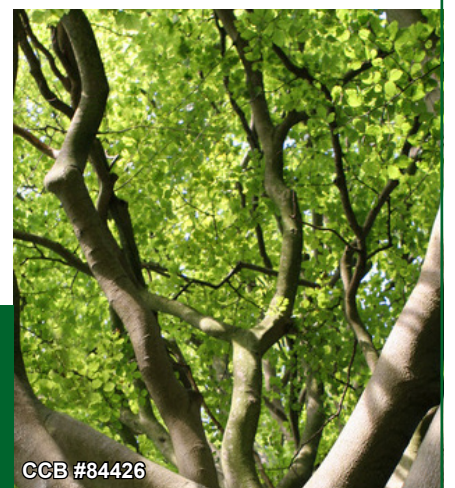
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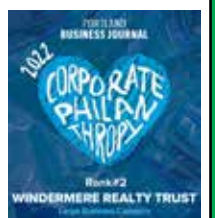
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With every home sale, we provide a direct contribution to the Windermere Foundation, giving back to the communities where we live and work. Windermere Realty Trust's long-term nonprofit partners include New Avenues for Youth, William Temple House and Bridge Meadows, along with other local grass-roots organizations

As part of Windermere's long-standing commitment to help those in need, our offices throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington will be collecting new or gently used adult-sized coats and twin-sized blankets NOVEMBER 7 THROUGH DECEMBER 16, M-F, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Visit [www.helpsharethewarmth.com/](http://www.helpsharethewarmth.com/) for donation locations.

**Happy Holidays** FROM THE COON TEAM