“The more you prepare yourself, the less manipulated you will be. Politics dictate ways of thinking. Be conscious. Don’t be a puppet.”
-David Bautista

“I am here to turn this world upside down. PTP has taught me how to practice in the fire—literally! I am here to radically confront inequity and the mistreatment of our black and brown students. I am here to defy their expectations of me and the community I represent. I stand on the shoulders of giants so I pledge not to be co-opted, not to drink the Kool-Aid, not become the enemy. I’ll do that by being accountable, teachable and connectable.”
-Nykki Martin

“Building equity and justice in our educational system is a lifelong struggle. There are no easy answers or smooth pathways. Revolutions get co-opted, as do organizations, leaders and teachers; even the language we use to articulate oppression can be co-opted and used against us. We must therefore, mix a recipe of resistance, critique, determination and hope—-to feed our students, our souls, our future.”
-Deborah Cochrane

The Strength of the PTP Community

One night in late November, PTP alum (2009) Richard Cha woke up thinking he heard a burglar. The noise turned out to be a fire that left him with only enough time to get his parents and brother out of the house. Gratefully, they were all safe, but the fire consumed everything they owned except a few dishes and clothes. Through the magic of the PTP alumni list serve, help started pouring in within a few days. Over 40 PTP alumni, many whom did not even know Richard, stepped up with mattresses, bed frames, appliances, towels, blankets, food, toiletries and dozens of other needed items, as well as cash and gift cards. In addition, alumni Curtis Wilson, Andre Hawkins, Tina Dang, student Mary Cha and the PTP director chipped in some hours to help move what little was left into storage space at Roosevelt High School (thanks to the principal Charlene Williams), and to help family members and friends scrub the dishes that had been salvaged. This overwhelming and quick response to a PTP teacher in need reflects the power of community that PTP has built over the past 25 years.
Why We Are Here: Thoughts from PTP Students...

“My purpose for being here on the PTP path is so that I can share the light that has been shown to me so that someday as a society we can find our way out of the darkness.”
-Alejandra Nava

“I am here because I want to bring my experience and knowledge to others, and at the same time, learn from others.”
-Cecilia Conroy

“I want to create a better educational experience for children, one which I did not receive.”
-temerza Mehretab

“I see the injustice around me to the people who look like me. PTP empowers me and keeps me strong in my beliefs and values.”
-Blanca Strode

“I want to be a role model for children and to give meaning to education.”
-Ruth Ponce

“My purpose is to give back to my community to be an educator with an equity lens.”
-Jason Correa

“I am here in PTP because I am tired of children of color being oppressed in our schools. I want to be a voice for them.”
-Anthony Lowery

“My reason for being in this program is so that I can help shape a better tomorrow. I want to promote social justice by making our students aware of our history and encouraging them to be who they choose to be.”
-Heidi Zepeda

“I am in this program because I believe that the education system is unfair, unjust and for so many people not a viable option. I believe that a change needs to start within in order to be spread to other so here I am, looking to change.”
-Sydney Melson

Guest Presenters:

The following leaders from our communities gave freely of their time this year to share information and wisdom with our future teachers. We thank each of them, and hope they will return to teach us for many years to come.

Wiley G. Barnett is a former Black Panther, a scholar, and one of PTP’s earliest supporters. He spent time at an October seminar to educate PTP students about the African Diaspora: the communities throughout the world who are descended through the historic movement of the people of Africa. Barnett talked about cultures being carried through diasporic movements, black pirates, the slave trade, slave rebellion and resistance. His lecture gave us insight on the history that is not always taught in mainstream education regarding people of African descent. He also gave us information about UNESCO’s Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty & Heritage. (Reporting by Allan Trinidad)

Small Community: Floricel, Mayra, Cora, Mary. Back: Emilie, Tobias, Eric

The 2014 graduates: Nichole Martin, Alex Buckner, Adrienne Howard, Alejandra Nava

“One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first.” Malala Yousafzai
Ms. Purcell, a community activist for 40 years, discussed some of the causes of the achievement gap for African American students, and talked about the importance of teachers of color and well prepared teachers. They called forth the memory of Bill McClendon with his words, “we must remain in a perpetual state of resistance.”

Bob Tom (Siletz and Grand Ronde elder) graced us with his presence during a PTP seminar. He taught us about Native history through various stories and concepts. He reminded us to be thankful and to honor everyone’s stories, history, and culture. Mr. Tom shared with us the profound idea of “horizontal” living—-that is, to understand that you must acknowledge everyone’s essential value as equal regardless of position, race, social status, education, title, etc. In a school building, the services of the janitorial staff, cafeteria servers, teachers and administrators, are all EQUALLY essential for the students education. One is not more important than another. As his father taught him, we humans need the earth, air, water, plants and animals to live, but none of those things need us for life to continue. We must remember our place with a sense of humbleness and gratitude. (Reporting by Allan Trinidad and DC).

He said the work is not about blaming, but about getting conscious and working together. He feels that we have made some progress, that many groups have finally stopped being invisible. We need “conscious, creative teachers,” he told us, “and democratic classrooms where students see themselves as thinkers.” Mr. Bautista modeled the PTP core value of humbleness as he spoke, and proved that one can be in a position of power but not forget the realities of who they are in power to serve. He also reminded us that we should be grateful for our failures, as they are great learning opportunities.

Carlos Chavez, Executive Director of the Morpheus Youth Project, spoke with seminar students in March about Chicano-Latino history, and in particular, Pachucos and Pachuco culture and the dialect of Calo, as well as the Zoot Suit riots and Cholos. An internal conflict and tension were created for many who had one foot in Mexico, and one foot in the United States, especially when they did not feel accepted in either place. This sparked a space for a unique identity with a full blown culture including language, hair, clothes and music.
Chavez showed slides of photos from the 1940’s that provided examples of this history. He also talked about his own experience, and how Acuna’s book, Occupied America (which is on the PTP reading list), changed his life.

Liz Rogers visited the seminar in April, and led the students through a number of activities and discussions to raise their awareness about the diversity of Asian cultures around the world. Using a game, she also helped them realize how very little they have been taught about the history of Asian people’s contributions to the development of America, as well as the inequities and racism that Asian people have endured in this country. Many students were shocked to find out about how Japanese citizens were held in horrible conditions at the Portland Expo Center site in North Portland during WWII. She made it clear that even stereotypes like “all Asian kids excel at math,” are not good, as they set false expectations and don’t allow people to be accepted for who they are. “Racism is happening right now,” Liz reminded students, and she gave current examples of national figures who perpetuate racism. To promote reflections on cultural identity, Chris Rose, PCC Writing Instructor; Tana Atchley, Tribal Workforce Development & Outreach Coordinator for Columbia River Inter-Tribal Commission & Jai Blair, PTP Student, did a panel discussion on multi-ethnic, multi-racial identities. They each shared their own personal histories of being bi- or multi-racial, and they gave examples of both the challenges they had faced, and the richness it has brought to their lives. Challenges include sometimes not being accepted by either of the communities you come from, or being pulled by both as you try to define your own self identity. Topics of discussion also touched on skin color and the privileges of lighter skin, as well as assimilation. Given the increasing numbers of multi-ethnic children, teachers must be prepared to honor every student and to acknowledge how he or she identifies. Teachers must also honor students who have one foot in one country, and one foot in America, and are searching to find a place to “fit in,” a place of their own identity.

Karen Kitchen

Karen Kitchen, Director of the Indian Education Program in Portland Public Schools, shared with the PTP family about the Native American experience. A high rate of Native American students as well as fellow students of color are disproportionately placed into special education.

This is why it is important and beneficial for our teachers to have a background in and understanding of the special education system. Kitchen works with Native students directly, helping them to learn about their historical roots, supporting them to obtain scholarships, and making sure that Native American parents are included. The Indian Education office at Jefferson HS has a library where students and future PTP teachers can learn more about Native culture, history, and their struggles. (Reporting by Allan Trinidad)

The seminar guest in February was David Bautista, Assistant Superintendent for the Oregon Department of Education’s Office of Learning & Equity, and formerly the Superintendent of Woodburn School District. He started out by reminding everyone that “equity does not come easy.” Mr. Bautista talked about education for Latino/a students, ELL issues, poverty in Oregon, and he presented data about achievement gaps.
The PTP Writing Project

With some special funds from the Dean of Instruction (Scott Huff last year and Kurt Simonds this year), PTP seminar students have been participating in a writing project with two outstanding writing instructors at Cascade Campus, Jane Zunkel and Chris Rose. During winter and spring terms, students schedule one on one writing conferences with Zunkel and Rose to go over drafts of their seminar papers. They have also been allowed to bring papers from other classes, and some are preparing to pass the writing section of the CBEST. The instructors work with each student to address individual writing concerns and areas that need improvement. They also work closely with the PTP Director to talk about assignments and how best to approach writing concerns. Overall, the quality of seminar papers is improving, and some students have rocketed from being poor writers to producing excellent, well organized and engaging work.

In addition to individualized conferences and collaboration with the PTP Director, Zunkel and Rose do mini-presentations in the seminars, often to address patterns of writing concerns they see in papers. This year, Zunkel gave an overview of MLA format and the concept of intellectual property. Chris put together the panel on cultural identity and collaborated with Deborah on a writing assignment designed around that topic.

Resistance and Hope

There is good news: kids are learning in our schools; they are being encouraged, loved and cherished by brilliant, dedicated teachers. Of course, there is still a mountain of work to do, and we need a lot of hope and energy to counteract the continuing and tragic inequities in our schools. Many PTP teachers lately have spoken of a crisis of conscious, a feeling that by working in a system so broken and destructive to children of color, that they are somehow complicit in the destruction. Many of our best teachers are weary from the constant demands and “new ideas” of policy makers who are disconnected from classrooms, who expect teachers to solve the problems of poverty and racism in programmed curriculum they had no voice in designing, and who expect teachers to insure that kids pass more and more tests that often have little to do with creative or critical thinking (but make policy wonks look good and bring big money to testing companies).

There are signs of positive change. As discouragement and frustration increase, there is the possibility for a groundswell of resistance. We saw it happen in Seattle last year with teachers rebelling against certain standardized tests. We see glints of more resistance across the country as people begin to question the corporatization of education and start to organize.

As we move forward, we need to develop an organization that authentically advocates for students and families who are marginalized.

It should be made up of the youth and parents who have been left out, and it should include courageous, practicing, effective, culturally responsive teachers who have a vision for a democracy of critical thinkers, of compassionate, creative, active, participatory citizens. We must find ways to provide clear, objective information to parents about policies that impact their children; we must give our young people a voice about what is working (and not working) for them in the learning process; we must bring meaning and purpose back to testing and assessment. We need an inclusive, community-rooted organization that holds schools, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers AND students accountable but that also supports them; we need an organization that can’t be bought, that critiques itself honestly, that insists on the constant debate of diverse voices, that celebrates the GREAT work being done in our schools, but simultaneously confronts injustice.
News Bytes

- The 2013 graduates were all hired very quickly last year by our partners, Portland Public Schools and Beaverton School District. Here is where they landed: Chelsea Fuller and Chris Riser are at Woodlawn; Yessica Mercado and Maria Hernandez are teaching at Rigler; Cicely Rogers is doing wild middle school math at Fabion; Antoinette Volley is changing the scene at Skyline; Sarah Shelton is working with the Community Transition Program; Carlos Laguardia and Celene Vargas were both hired at Scott; Mercedes Miller is at Franklin High School, and Isidro Interian was snatched up by Barnes Elementary in Beaverton School District.

- Other updates on alumni: Our beloved Margarita Portillo retired from full time teaching at Woodlawn but is available to sub, and is still actively involved in education and PTP; Oscar Gilson is now principal at Bridger Elementary; Natasha Cash is heading up the Open Meadows Middle School; Tracy Briggs took a temporary Student Management Specialist position at Woodlawn; Daphne Bussey is now teaching in Washington; Thu Truong is in her second year of being a full time teacher mentor for PPS;

- We welcomed the following new students to PTP this year: Alisha Carter, Ray Hopson, Kadizah Hunter, Robert McDonald, Temerza Mehretab, Cora Price, Lakrea Tills, Breana Vance, Emilie Walker, Leng Yang and Heidi Zepeda.

- PTP is moving! The Portland Teachers Program office will be moving in September of 2014 to one of the new buildings on the PCC – Cascade Campus. Our neighbors will include Headstart and the Teaching Learning Center.

- Team Teaching Presentations this year included: System Oppression (Tobias Witherpoon, Kamiko Jimenez, Leng Yang, Alisha Carter); Common Core Standards (Emilie Walker, Mary Cha, Heidi Zepeda, Cora Price); Freedom Schools (Jai Blair, Kawanna Bolden, Josh Kim, Felicia Buck); Poverty (Temerza Mehretab, Lakrea Tills, Robert McDonald); Standardized Testing (Sydney Melson, Breana Vance, Cynthia Otis); Race as a Social Construct (Ray Hopson, Allan Trinidad, Gabby Trinidad); Student Assessment (Kadizah Hunter, Kyron Barrow, Emily Montano) and Dance as Culture & the Power of Rhythm (Stefania Velazquez, Ronnie Walker)

- Khalil Edwards and Leila Hofstein with PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays, Black Chapter) put together an incredible panel in January to raise awareness about issues for gay, lesbian and transgender youth to help prepare our future teachers to be good advocates and to help create safe spaces for ALL students.

- PTP Small Communities engaged in service projects this year, from helping out in schools and classrooms, to volunteering with the Oregon Food Bank. They also found time for fun, watching movies, sharing ideas and supporting each other through tough times.

- Students were engaged this year in reflecting on the program and how we can move even closer to practicing what we preach (listen, learn, serve). Over the course of the year, we reviewed core values (and expanded the list); looked at scheduling and time commitments; sought ways to increase student success; and did a lot of brainstorming about how best to move forward. Also this year, each student chose a core value to work on each term.

Thanks to our Donors!

Portland Community College and Portland State University: for tuition waivers!

Thanks to Union Bank and Vice President Shawn Duburg, who presented PTP with a check for $5000. We also want to thank Tim Otani with Union Bank, for his encouragement, and his decades long commitment to social justice in education and housing. Please, support this bank!

Pastini Pastaria Restaurants and co-owner Susan Bashel for donating $50 gift certificates to the graduates AGAIN this year! This is a business that supports teachers, so let’s support this great place to eat!

Special Thanks to Mary Shaver for her $2500 contribution to PTP last year, and to Martin Gonzalez for his second $1000 contribution. Other contributors in 2013 include: Rob Johns, Kim & Angela Rodgers, Carole Smith, Jerome Colonna, George Perneinter, Kitty Haglund, Chris Knaus, Rui Neves, Jeanne Miller, Deborah Cochrane, Wiley Barnett, Huitzi Rios & Maria Ramirez

The AMAZING PTP Alumni who donated money to the PTP fund last year: Antonia Griffin, Esteban Ortiz-Lopez, Lucila Campbell, Margarita Portillo, Tina Dang, Thuy Nguyen, Rose Murdock, Irene Montano, Aaron Monteith, Tina Bruce, Sarah Gonzalez, Lindell Stone, Yolanda Gallegos, Curtis Wilson, Thu Truong, Francisca Alvarez, Adrianna Moyola, Jennifer Hernandez, Lionel Clegg, Mario Interian, Yolanda Flores, Keylah Boyer, Cathy Parker, Irma Ramirez, Celina Garrido Meyer, Silvia Lewis, Aaron Moreno, Khalil Edwards, Leeza Ferguson, Matt Ross, Adolfo Garza & Gina Bluebird

“The evil life is really the thoughtless life.” -The Dhammapada
Nationally, people of color represent 45% of the student population, while only 17% of teachers are people of color. -(National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

Appreciation Corner

- Beth Fitzgerald of the PCC Multimedia Program for believing in our work and recording our Celebration every year and to Keith Shuman (of Dragon Wehr Productions) for producing an AMAZING CD of the Celebration!

- Windy Wahlke for her work on the PTP Celebration invitation and the newsletter, as well as her help with the 2014 t-shirt; and Paul Gilmour for putting the 2014 T-shirt/invitation design together and making it print ready.

- Penny Thompson, for on-going support of the program and students; helping with the writing project; providing grammar assistance to ELL students; providing a sympathetic ear; and a host of other things.

- Jeanne Miller, for office supplies, endless bags of candy and fruit for students to munch on in meetings, seminars and study sessions in the office, for putting together the wonderful gift bags for graduates and seeking special gift certificates for them.

- Geoffery & Donna Brooks, for their love and contributions to the graduate gift bags and Chris Riser, PTP Alum, for copies of The New Teacher Book for each graduate.

- HUGE thanks to those alumni who have attending meetings and/or been active in trying to get a PTP Alumni Association started: Lionel Clegg, Lindell Stone and Luci Campbell who are serving as officers, Margarita Portillo, Andre Hawkins, Sarah Gonzalez, Adolfo Garza, Yolanda Flores, Jalia Campbell, Antoinia Griffin, Tracy Briggs, Chris Riser, Bud Mackay, Francesca Alvarez, Maria Hernandez, Yessica Mercado, Natasha Butler, Tina Bruce, Thu Truong, Cathy Parker, Aaron Moreno, Chelsea Fuller, Luis Lopez, Celene Vargas, Darryl Miles, Sylvia Lewis, Richard Cha, Celina Garrido, Shay James and others. Special thanks to Yessica & Chelsea for their work on the alumni newsletter.

- Hats off and much gratitude to those PTP alumni teachers who took practicum students this year or let students volunteer in their classrooms: Takiyah Williams, Cathy Parker, Lionel Clegg, Curtis Wilson, Tracey Briggs, Luci Cervantes Campbell, Yolanda Flores, Robbie Davis, Meriba Diaz, Shalonda McGhee, Gina Bluebird, Tina Dang, Ramman Turner, Carlos Laguardia and others. We also thank Bryan Chu at Lane Middle School for his activism and for taking on PTP student teachers.

- Thanks to Jackie Leno-Grant, who walked on in March, for her years of service to the Native American education community, for her leadership as the Chair of the Oregon Indian Coalition on Post Secondary Education, and for being a role model of grace, patience, compassion, hope and respect for how we must treat those around us. And to Lewis H. Merrick, who also passed in March, for the hundreds of students he pushed into college, and for all the lessons he taught us all about our responsibility to end racism and love life.
The Portland Teachers Program is a partnership among Portland Public Schools, Portland Community College, Portland State University and the Beaverton School District. It is committed to the development of an academically prepared, multicultural, multiethnic, culturally responsive teacher workforce that can ensure educational equity for all students. Our philosophy is: **Listen, Learn & Serve**

“We do a great disservice to students when we allow them to continue in a homogenous setting because this is not a homogeneous world.”

Nikki Giovanni