

WINTER 2012

# PCC

COMMUNITIES

College News  
Community Education Schedule  
Portland Community College

**Community Education  
non-credit class schedule**

Pages 9 – 63

**Enroll now!**

Classes starting  
January – March



## FABULOUS 50

PCC kicks off its 50th anniversary  
in Pioneer Courthouse Square  
and around the district

## Reunion

Bestselling author  
meets with instructor  
who inspired her  
book idea

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## Renamed

Building dedicated to  
education champion

Page 8

"PCC Communities"  
(USPS 001-624) Winter 2012,  
Vol. 25, No. 1,  
is published quarterly by  
Portland Community College,  
12000 SW 49th Ave.,  
Portland, OR 97219

Periodicals postage paid  
at Portland, Oregon.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes  
to "PCC Communities"  
at P.O. Box 19000,  
Portland, OR 97280-0990.  
[www.pcc.edu](http://www.pcc.edu)

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*"PCC's 50th anniversary is an achievement for the whole state of Oregon. Because of Portland Community College, over one million people have received the education they need to join the workforce as nurses, teachers, firefighters, small business owners and much more. Congratulations to PCC for its legacy of opportunity."*

*Jeff Merkley*  
United States Senator



Senator Merkley speaking at PCC's 50th anniversary kickoff in Pioneer Courthouse Square

# PORTLAND CELEBRATES 50

Not even the weather could keep people away from Pioneer Courthouse Square for Portland Community College's kickoff of its 50th anniversary. A large crowd gathered for the celebration on Oct. 7, which featured speeches from U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, District President Preston Pulliams, and three exceptional alumni, as well as exhibits from PCC programs and the launch of the Diamond Alum Awards (see page 69 for details).

"PCC is an absolute gem," said Sen. Merkley. "Its philosophy of opportunity then, opportunity now, opportunity to come, is what we need in our society, and PCC is providing that opportunity and doing it with affordable, accessible, quality education."

Showcasing that opportunity were three outstanding PCC alumni. Kheoshi Taylor-Mayes, a 2003 graduate, spoke about growing up in a single-parent home while her mother was in an abusive relationship.

A high school dropout, Taylor-Mayes found her way to PCC's Middle College Program. She left the program after her boyfriend was murdered, but a few years later, re-enrolled at PCC and earned an associate's degree with an emphasis on accounting. She then went on to complete bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration at Portland State University.

"What PCC did for me, with all their support and wonderful teachers, is they rejuvenated

Kheoshi Taylor-Mayes cited PCC Student Resource Specialist Regina Davis as being instrumental in her return to school.



The crowd cheered on the speakers as they praised PCC for its positive impact on the community.



Everyone in Pioneer Square was proud to support PCC and its 50 years of service.



# OPPORTUNITY

**PCC kicked off its 50th anniversary on October 7 with a celebration at Pioneer Courthouse Square featuring interactive exhibits, lively music, and inspiring stories from alumni** By James Hill

my love of learning," said Taylor-Mayes. "I'm the first one in my family to have a master's or a bachelor's, or associate's degree."

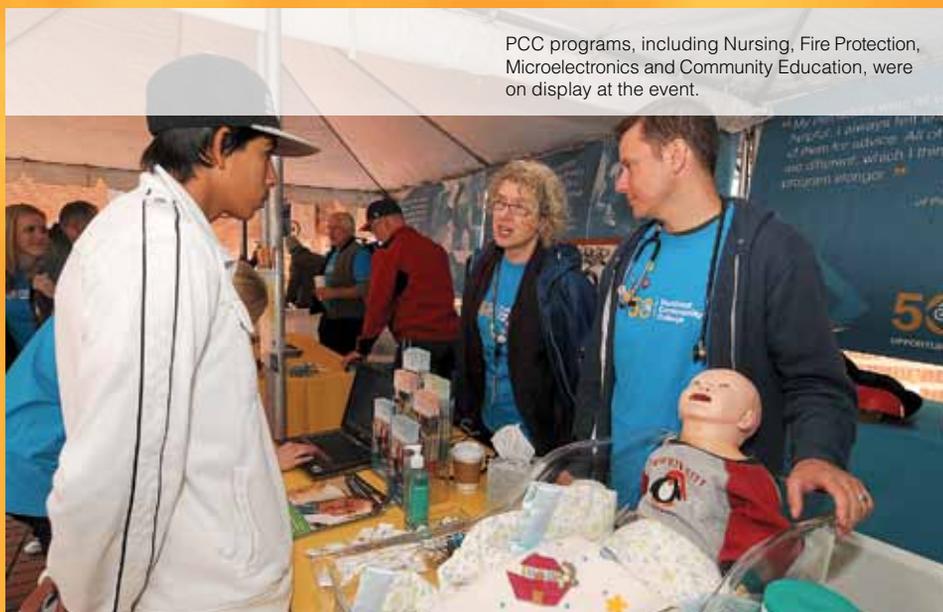
Hung Nguyen came to the United States in 1992 from Vietnam and barely spoke English. Thanks to a reference from his brother, and inspiration from his sister and wife (also PCC grads), he earned an associate's degree in automotive service in 1995. He found work at local dealerships, but dreamed of owning a repair shop and becoming his own boss.

"The dream came true in 1999 when I bought my first repair shop and last year I purchased another building and opened a second," he said. "Now, I have 12 employees and life is so wonderful...PCC changed my life."

Almost a decade ago, Tera Roberts was seeking a way to provide for her family after her husband left her and their eight children. With help from PCC student services, and scholarships from the PCC Foundation, she completed an associate's degree in nursing.

Roberts transferred to Oregon Health & Science University and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing. She is now in OHSU's graduate program and works as a public health nurse.

"I'm eight months from my doctorate," Roberts said to a big cheer from the crowd. "When opportunity knocks, open that door because it's PCC on the other side. The proudest thing I can say is that I'm a PCC alumna." ■



PCC programs, including Nursing, Fire Protection, Microelectronics and Community Education, were on display at the event.



"PCC changed my life." Alumnus Hung Nguyen earned an associate's degree in automotive service and now owns two repair shops.

Jujuba, an energetic band featuring a PCC instructor and student, excited the crowd.



"The proudest thing I can say is that I'm a PCC alumna," said Vernonia resident Tera Roberts.



Attendees signed large "birthday cards" for PCC with their own stories of opportunity.





# AROUND TOWN

**After the kickoff in Pioneer Square, the festivities continued throughout the PCC district as all three campuses and the Southeast Center held events to celebrate the 50th anniversary with community members, local business owners, students, staff and faculty**

Cascade Campus kicked off the anniversary at the dedication of the Margaret Carter Technology Education Building (see story on page 8). Senator Margaret Carter (pictured here with Algie Gatewood, Cascade Campus president) has been a part of PCC from almost the beginning, starting as a student in 1968, then joining the staff in 1973 as a counselor.

Rock Creek Campus celebrated the 50th at the student-sponsored Harvest Festival, a community event featuring a pumpkin patch, hayrides, a petting zoo and more. Guests enjoyed roasted nuts from Rock Creek's earthen oven as well as 50th anniversary cupcakes.



Sylvania Campus celebrated in the Performing Arts Center with music from Matices Latin Band and the start of a time capsule to commemorate this year. Linda Gerber, Sylvania Campus president, announced plans to plant 50 trees at the campus in honor of the 50th anniversary.



Southeast Center recognized Ken Turner, founder of the 82nd Avenue of Roses Parade, for exemplifying the PCC spirit of service to the community. Music from Chervona, featuring Southeast Center staff member Andre Temkin on vocals and guitar, kept the crowd dancing.

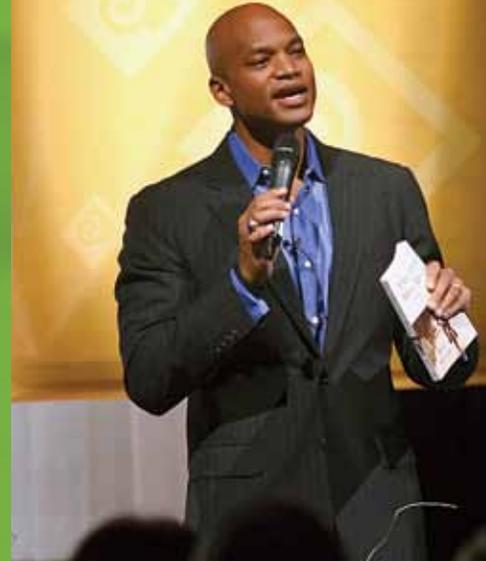


# REACHING OUT

**Author Wes Moore's address to faculty and staff sets the stage for a yearlong commitment to community service**

By James Hill

Opportunity -  
Then. Now.  
Always.



Wes Moore kicked off the 50,000-hour service challenge while stressing the importance of education and positive role models for young people.

When bestselling author and community advocate Wes Moore visited PCC in September to speak to faculty and staff and officially launch the college's 50,000-hour service challenge, he congratulated the college on its 50th anniversary and the decision to highlight community service.

"That is such a big deal, but not just because of the fact that it's been 50 years, but also for the fact of how you are approaching it," Moore said.

PCC has pledged to donate 50,000 hours of service to the community during its 50th anniversary year. While the college has always been active in community service, reaching this goal will involve doubling or tripling the number of projects it usually organizes in one year.

"I'm super excited that the college has committed to 50,000 hours of service," said Sarah Tillery, PCC's service-learning coordinator. "I think these events will be a great opportunity to be together and contribute something back to the community that keeps this place going and alive."

The campaign kicked off right after Moore's speech with nearly 100 faculty, staff and retirees cleaning more than 700 books for the Children's Book Bank, a Portland organization that distributes books to low-income children.

A second event in October at Tryon Creek State Park and Mt. Tabor Park found about 45 people contributing their time and effort to remove invasive species. This project added approximately 90 hours toward the college's service goal.

Other service events planned for the remainder of 2011 include: preparation of food boxes for the Oregon Food Bank at their Northeast Portland and Washington County locations; a much-needed

organization project at Chehalem Youth and Family Services in Newberg; and a holiday card- and placemat-making activity for homebound seniors served by Loaves and Fishes.

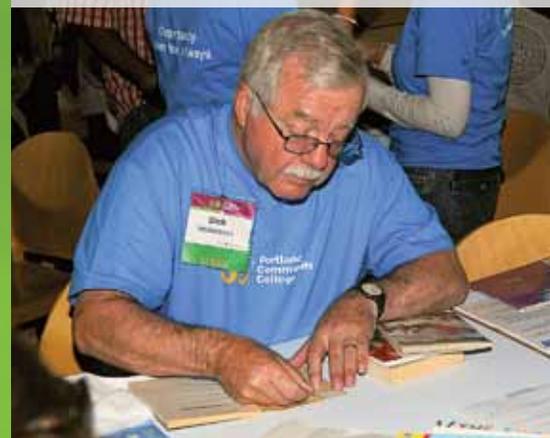
Moore is the author of the bestseller, "The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates." In 2000, The Baltimore Sun newspaper ran an article on Moore and how, despite his troubled childhood, he had been named a Rhodes Scholar. The paper also featured another man from the same neighborhood who had been arrested for the murder of an off-duty police officer. In an uncanny turn, he also was named Wes Moore. The book focuses on the consequences of personal responsibility and the imperativeness of education, community and positive role models in young people's lives.

Moore told the crowd he was a big fan of community colleges and education. And the fact that PCC wasn't just resting on its storied history and legacy of being the first and only community college in Portland, serving more than 1.3 million students in its five decades of existence, impressed him. Moore said he was excited that PCC was creating a way that people could make a difference.

"The fact that you're celebrating 50 years with 50,000 hours of public service is such a telling and beautiful way to celebrate what you are doing and what you are all about," said Moore. "The only thing we can ever do is to make sure that with every single day we try to do something to make it so that it mattered that we were ever even here." ■



Stay updated on community service projects and learn about the 50-hour service pledge by visiting [opportunity.pcc.edu](http://opportunity.pcc.edu)



Faculty, staff and retirees donated 856 books and cleaned more than 700 books for the Children's Book Bank.



PCC volunteers removed invasive species from Tryon Creek State Park and Mt. Tabor Park in October.

# NEWLY NAMED

## PCC dedicates building in honor of alumna, former staff member and education champion, Senator Margaret Carter

By Abe Proctor



Sen. Margaret Carter thanked her supporters and spoke about the important role education plays in strengthening the community and economy.



"Both PCC and Sen. Carter are true beacons of achievement for our state," Gov. Kitzhaber told the crowd.

More than 200 community members, local business owners, legislators, and Sen. Carter's family members and friends came out for the event.



The Cascade Campus kicked off PCC's 50th anniversary on Oct. 21 with equal parts style and substance. In a star-studded affair, the campus renamed and dedicated its Technology Education Building in honor of former state Senator Margaret Carter. The event marked the first time in PCC's history that one of its buildings has been named for a woman.

The festivities featured guest speakers Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber; U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer; former Margaret Carter Skill Center student and Sen. Carter's granddaughter Tamiko Phillips (now attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on a scholarship); and Oregon Historical Society Director Kerry Tymchuk.

"It is our great honor to name one of our buildings for Sen. Carter," said Algie Gatewood, Cascade Campus president. "She has spent her adult life advocating for the people of North and Northeast Portland. I don't think one can find a more committed proponent of education, nor a more dedicated champion for traditionally underrepresented communities."

Sen. Carter's personal and professional association with PCC dates back five decades, when she began taking classes at Cascade to support her baccalaureate studies.

"Portland Community College has been the access and success to the renewal of my life," said Sen. Carter. "I began my journey with PCC as a student in the fall of 1968. After completing my master's degree, I interned as a student in the spring of 1973. The rest is history."

Sen. Carter credits the forward-thinking PCC faculty and administration — particularly Bill Newborne and Dr. Amo DeBernardis, PCC's first president — for giving her the opportunity to work for the college.

Sen. Carter's successful stint as a counselor and instructor with the college, as well as her growing stature in the community, led the Louisiana native to seek public office. She ran successfully for the Oregon House of Representatives in 1984, becoming the first African-American woman to be elected to the Oregon Legislature. She followed that with a successful bid for the state Senate in 2000, where she eventually served as President Pro Tempore. Currently, she is Deputy Director for Human Services Programs at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

While in Salem, Sen. Carter was a vocal advocate for higher education in general, and for community colleges and PCC in particular. In 1989, she was instrumental in establishing the Cascade Campus Skill Center, which was renamed in her honor in 2007.

"Sen. Carter's history with the college and the campus is deep and abiding," said Gatewood, "and it's only fitting that we name a building in her honor."

Sen. Carter is delighted that her name will be forever associated with PCC.

"I came to PCC and moved on," she said. "My children came to PCC and moved on. My grandchildren came to PCC and moved on. And with 15 great-grandchildren, I am sure that PCC will help generate educational opportunities for a third generation of my family."

"Kudos to Portland Community College and its 'opportunity thinking.'" ■



For more information about the Cascade Campus, visit [www.pcc.edu/cascade](http://www.pcc.edu/cascade)

# PCC Programs

## Degree programs and credit classes

PCC is also your one-stop resource for the following credit programs. Go to [www.pcc.edu](http://www.pcc.edu) to learn more.

### Transfer Degrees

Associate of Arts, Oregon Transfer  
Associate of Science  
Associate of Science,  
Oregon Transfer, Business

### Other Degrees and Areas of Study

Oregon Transfer Module  
General Studies  
High School Completion  
English for Speakers of  
Other Languages (ESOL)  
Adult Education (ABE and  
GED classes) (Non-credit)

### Career and Technical Education Degrees and Certificates

Alcohol and Drug Counselor\*  
Apprenticeship  
Architectural Design and Drafting  
Auto Collision Repair Technology  
Automotive Service Technology  
Aviation Maintenance Technology  
Aviation Science Technology  
Bioscience Technology\*

Building Construction Technology  
Business Administration  
Accounting  
Management  
Marketing  
Civil Engineering Technology\*  
Computer Applications and Office Systems  
Computer Information Systems  
Criminal Justice  
Dealer Service Technology\*  
Dental Assisting\*  
Dental Hygiene\*  
Dental Laboratory Technology\*  
Diesel Service Technology  
Early Education and Family Studies  
Electronic Engineering Technology\*  
Emergency Management  
Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic\*  
Emergency Telecommunicator/911  
Dispatcher\*  
Facilities Maintenance Technology  
Fire Protection Technology\*  
Fitness Technology\*

Geographic Information Systems  
Gerontology  
Graphic Design  
Health Information Management\*  
Interior Design  
Landscape Technology  
Machine Manufacturing Technology  
Management and Supervisory Development  
Mechanical Engineering Technology\*  
Medical Assisting\*  
Medical Imaging\*  
Medical Laboratory Technology\*  
Microelectronic Technology\*  
Multimedia  
Nursing\*  
Occupational Skills Training  
Ophthalmic Medical Technology\*  
Paraeducator  
Paralegal\*  
Professional Music  
Radiography\*  
Sign Language Interpretation\*  
Veterinary Technology\*  
Welding Technology

*\*Program has special enrollment requirements.*

## Calendar of Events: A Look at What's Ahead in 2012

### January

Winter term classes begin on Monday, Jan. 9. For registration information call (971) 722-4933 or visit [www.pcc.edu](http://www.pcc.edu).

The Sylvania Campus Multicultural Center hosts PCC's 13th Annual Winter Powwow at noon on Saturday, Jan. 21. Native-American drum groups and dancers from around the region will meet in the HT Building gymnasium, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. Native-American craft vendors will be on hand to sell their wares. For more information visit [www.pcc.edu/powwow](http://www.pcc.edu/powwow).

PCC hosts its annual Financial Aid Day from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Jan. 21

at the Sylvania, Cascade and Rock Creek campuses and the Southeast Center to help students navigate through the financial aid process. For more information visit [www.pcc.edu/finaidday](http://www.pcc.edu/finaidday).

### February

The Cascade Festival of African Films, the largest African film festival on the West Coast, runs from Feb. 3 through March 3. The festival will feature more than 20 films from the African continent. Held at the Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St., and other Portland venues, it is organized entirely by volunteers and is free and open to the public. For more information visit [www.africanfilmfestival.org](http://www.africanfilmfestival.org).

Southeast Center hosts Asian New Year on Monday, Feb. 20, a festival honoring Asian, Chinese, Hmong, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese cultures. The event at Legin Restaurant, 8001 SE Division, features dancing, activities for children, and vendors selling items and food. For more information visit [www.pcc.edu/asian-new-year](http://www.pcc.edu/asian-new-year).

### March

The Theatre Arts program will present "Project 50," an original production to commemorate PCC's 50th anniversary. Performances are scheduled for March 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 and 11 and will take place in the Performing Arts Center at the Sylvania Campus, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. For more information call (971) 722-4949 or visit [www.pcc.edu/theatre](http://www.pcc.edu/theatre).



At 13,500 square feet, the PCC Newberg Center features five classrooms, administration space and a large commons area for students.

# INTRODUCING THE NEWBERG CENTER

**Years of planning and community involvement produce PCC's greenest building yet** By **Kate Chester**

"We've had a need for a community college here in Newberg for a long time, and it's great that PCC can fill that void," said Matt Comfort, a Newberg High School graduate now studying welding at Portland Community College.

Comfort — a recipient of the Newberg Steel Scholarship and a Chehalem Valley Scholarship — shared those sentiments at the grand opening celebration of PCC's Newberg Center on Oct. 22, which attracted nearly 400 attendees from the college and the communities of Newberg and Dundee.

Festivities included a barbecue buffet, live music by local band Gil Reynolds and Deep Blue, a community art project to be permanently displayed in the center, and a tour of the facility's many unique, sustainable features. In addition to Comfort, several college administrators spoke, and City of Newberg Mayor Bob Andrews offered District President Preston Pulliams a symbolic key to the city.

The college started its work in the area more than seven years ago, seeking to coordinate curriculum with the Newberg School District. That effort led to a challenge from the community for PCC to have a stronger local presence. When the college put forth its bond measure in 2008, Yamhill County voters were highly supportive because the bond included plans to design and build the Newberg Center.

"When the bond measure passed, we formed a local advisory committee and initiated comprehensive community relations from a variety of angles — and together, we worked toward creating what we have today," said Barb VanAmerongen, director of the Newberg Center. "It's incredibly fulfilling to see the project come to fruition after years of collaboration and planning."

That collaboration has led to more than 650 enrollments for the fall 2011 term at the Newberg Center — more than double the enrollment from last fall, when the college offered courses at the Chehalem Cultural Center while the Newberg Center was under construction.

More than being "just" new and modern, the building is unique because of its sustainability attributes. The Newberg Center is anticipated to be "Net Zero, Carbon-Neutral" — meaning it will generate the same amount of energy it expends — once additional solar panels are installed later this year. It currently is one of only a handful of academic facilities in the country considered "Net Zero-ready."

"The building's energy efficiency results from implementation of new technology to operate relatively simple building systems — like passive ventilation, radiant heating, natural daylight and solar energy," said Project Manager Gary Sutton. "This common sense approach enabled us to

eliminate conventional mechanical systems, such as air handlers and air conditioning units, which saves energy and money and helps to reduce carbon emissions."

Other "green" features include efficient, low-flow water fixtures to conserve water and use of thermal mass to control indoor temperature. The project is aiming for platinum level LEED-NC certification, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design with a special focus on new construction.

The center's grand opening coincided with PCC's kick off of its 50th anniversary.

"It's interesting to see the 'new' and the 'old' coming together simultaneously...the birth of something so remarkable and special — like PCC Newberg — being celebrated at the same time we're taking stock of the college's 50 years of accomplishments," said Linda Gerber, president of the Sylvania Campus.

"We have — literally — built a solid foundation here, given all the care and precision that has gone into the planning of this facility and our integration in the community. With that as our springboard, I have no doubt that together we'll achieve major milestones in the next 50 years, right here in Newberg." ■

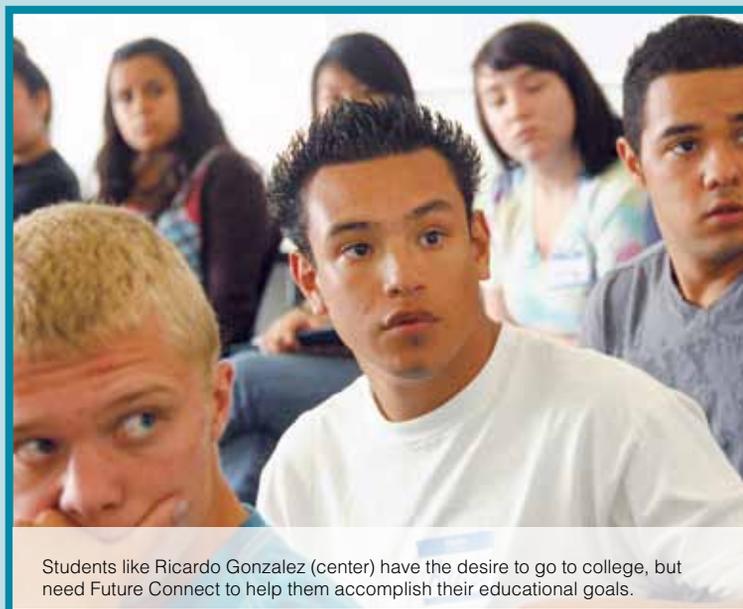


For more information, visit [www.pcc.edu/newberg](http://www.pcc.edu/newberg)

# Investing in Portland's



PCC Future Connect Manager Josh Laurie and college success coaches support students throughout their time in the program.



Students like Ricardo Gonzalez (center) have the desire to go to college, but need Future Connect to help them accomplish their educational goals.

Reyonna Barfield was losing her way.

After a traumatic death in her family, Barfield began skipping classes, quickly resulting in failing grades. She figured she was done with high school and dropped out her junior year at Trillium Charter School.

Even though her education was off track, she still hoped she could someday enroll at Portland Community College. So she pulled herself together and found her way to Helensview High School, an alternative campus, where she earned her high school diploma and became involved with New Avenues for Youth, a Summer Youth Connect program. Soon after, she was admitted to PCC as part of the Future Connect Scholarship Program.

Future Connect is a new program launched at PCC this past fall that takes aim at low-income yet high-potential Multnomah County teens who might not otherwise make it to college. Spearheaded by PCC and the City of Portland, Future Connect dedicates finances and resources to about 150 students each year.

"When I first heard about Future Connect, I thought, 'Wow, this will help me,'" said Barfield, 19, who works at the Nike Factory Outlet and hopes to transfer to a university

and study psychology. "I do have a fear of failure. I want support but I don't expect anyone to be on my back."

Many Future Connect students started high school at a disadvantage, but they tried hard, stayed on track, took part in summer enrichment programs, and graduated. Now that they are in college, they need more support.

"The thread across all the students is perseverance and persistence. These students want to go to college but they don't always know how they can succeed, and they get frustrated at some steps," said Josh Laurie, PCC's Future Connect manager. "When they bump into barriers, it almost makes them feel that college is not for them."

### Startling statistics

Only one-third of Multnomah County high school students attend college, and only half of those students will finish.

People with associate's degrees earn \$8,000 more per year than people with high school diplomas; those with bachelor's degrees earn \$17,000 more. Individuals who do not attend college have fewer opportunities to earn a living wage, and are more likely to need public assistance and to leave a legacy for their children that does not include higher education.

The effect on society is also considerable as individuals with college educations contribute more tax revenue and are less likely to rely on public assistance. Portland economist Joe Cortright estimates that if college degree attainment increases by just one percent, the region will see a \$1.6 billion increase in revenue to the local economy.

Native American, Latino and African-American youth are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school as white students; and white people in Multnomah County are twice as likely to have college degrees as people of color. Only 14.6 percent of Latinos and 18.1 percent of African Americans in Multnomah County have bachelor's degrees, compared to 40.2 percent of white people in the county.

Of the first cohort of Future Connect students, 75 percent are students of color and 95 percent are the first in their families to attend college.

### Changing the odds

The Future Connect team supports students by teaching them to navigate obstacles that might prevent them from finishing college. Future Connect students receive intensive advising and support, including a personal college success coach and access to career guidance services, academic



"I'm proud of myself for taking this step." Despite earlier setbacks, Reyonna Barfield is on her way to earning a college degree through Future Connect.



### You Can Help

The Future Connect Scholarship Program offers a unique opportunity to change young people's lives and create an educated and workforce-ready city.

To inspire contributions of all amounts, the City of Portland has offered a fundraising challenge. Any gifts to the PCC Foundation to invest in Future Connect will be matched by the city, up to \$500,000 each year. Donors such as U.S. Bank, Legacy Health Services, The Jackson Foundation, Pacific Power Foundation, Home Forward, The Autzen Foundation, the Yoshida family, and many others have made commitments to support this innovative program.

"The partnership between the city and the college offers a powerful new approach to solving our educational challenges," said Jeff Van Raden, president of the PCC Foundation and managing director of Columbia Industries. "It provides the community with a resource of educated and capable young employees and future leaders. By offering a range of services and resources, Future Connect bridges the difficult obstacles that often prevent bright students from achieving their educational goals."

Just as at-risk students need help to stay focused on their futures, PCC needs help to sustain this program. A gift to Future Connect will provide students with scholarships, as well as academic advising and services to ensure they will stay in school and earn a college degree. To contribute to the PCC Foundation and double your support for Future Connect students, visit [www.pcc.edu/foundation](http://www.pcc.edu/foundation) or call (971) 722-4387.

advising, job and internship resources and enrichment activities.

Laurie and his two college success coaches, Rebecca Moyer and Dara Khon, approach these students as part cheerleader and part taskmaster. They walk them through the financial aid process, placement tests, registration, and homework expectations, while routinely checking in with students by phone, Facebook, email or face to face to make sure they will not slip through the cracks.

"A huge part of Future Connect is getting to know the students we're working with," said Laurie. "When we set goals we talk about each student's dream in life, not just what he or she plans to do in college."

That ongoing support is combined with a financial scholarship, erasing another barrier that often keeps students from college. Based on several factors, including a family's earned income, most students receive \$500 to \$1,000 annually for two years.

Christian Miranda is the first in his family to attend college. As he finished up his last year at Gresham High School, a counselor steered him toward PCC and Future Connect.

"Here I have help every step of the way and I know I'll find college more manageable.

Plus I won't go into debt like I may have at a university," said Miranda, 18, who's taking a full load of classes while working part-time.

#### A stronger community

Portland Mayor Sam Adams said that the program will ensure that future Portlanders are well educated and can access well-paying jobs. In turn, this program will strengthen the city over the long run.

Mayor Adams and the City of Portland chose PCC to manage Future Connect because they are confident the college will provide the support these students need to reach graduation.

"These scholarships are being presented in partnership with PCC, which is renowned throughout the nation as the best community college, bar none, with multiple campuses, all focused on one thing — your success," Mayor Adams told Future Connect students last spring.

Barfield knows she was given a rare chance to excel in college and she is not about to squander the opportunity.

"I have so many emotions. I'm nervous and scared and anxious. But I'm mostly proud of myself for taking this step and going this far," she said. ■



"I was exactly the type of person a community college is for." Rebecca Skloot started on her path to becoming a bestselling author at PCC.

# FROM BIOLOGY CLA

## Author and PCC alumna Rebecca Skloot reunites with the science instructor who inspired her acclaimed book

By Christina Holmes

They sat drinking tea and talking about science, cells and life in between the nearly 23 years since she was a teenager in his class and he lectured on a topic that determined her career path.

When Rebecca Skloot and Don Defler met in a Portland hotel lobby in early October there was mutual admiration and appreciation for what each had given the other.

It was Defler who planted a seed that Skloot became obsessed with and researched for years. It was Skloot's still constant enthusiasm for science, just like the 16-year-old he remembers sitting in class at Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus, that made him proud to be an instructor.

Skloot is known around the world for writing about Henrietta Lacks, a poor tobacco farmer whose cells were taken without her knowledge and became one of the most important tools in medicine. While she died from cancer in 1951, her cells — HeLa cells — became the world's first immortal human cells grown in a lab. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine, gene mapping and in vitro fertilization.

Her book, "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," has been named by more than 60 critics as one of the best books of 2010 and now it's on its way to the big screen thanks in part to Oprah Winfrey. Skloot has also picked up numerous awards, among them being named one of the "Five Surprising Leaders of 2010" by the Washington Post.

Defler is in awe when he hears such accolades. "She was such a serious student and a good student and she was so sincere," he recalled.

Rewind to 1988 when Skloot was a student at the Metropolitan Learning Center (she dropped out of Lincoln High School her freshman year) and decided to take a college-level class. An animal lover whose

ambition was to become a veterinarian, she enrolled in a science class targeting students headed for a medical field. Defler was her teacher and she was the youngest person in the room.

One day he lectured about HeLa cells and attached a name to the cells. After class she rushed at him with questions: Did Henrietta Lacks know the importance of these cells? Did she have kids? She couldn't shake the woman from her mind. She also couldn't do much about it at the time.

Her plan was to take a lot of classes at PCC (she left with a nearly perfect grade point average) so she could transfer to Colorado State University, then one of the best veterinary schools in the country. She was a PCC student on and off between 1988 and 1994, taking everything from writing (her first creative writing class took place at Cascade) to veterinary technology at Rock Creek. She continued on with Defler as well, enrolling in many of his science courses.

"I was exactly the type of person a community college is for," she said. "The combination of PCC and MLC saved me."

She left for Colorado about the same time Defler retired from his 25-year career at PCC. Coincidentally, she attended the same university where Defler earned his undergraduate degree and in a sweet show of support he gave her some textbooks from his old college days.

After a few semesters at Colorado State, a professor told Skloot that there were other ways to make an impact in science without becoming a veterinarian. For one thing, her writing was outstanding and she could use words to change lives. Skloot went on to earn a degree in biological sciences and later a master's of fine arts in creative nonfiction. Her work on science topics has appeared in many national magazines and newspapers.

# SS TO THE BESTSELLER LIST

And, of course, she couldn't forget Henrietta Lacks. So began a decade long journey to research the story and gain the trust of the Lacks family.

"I was not going to give up on this story," said Skloot, who now lives in Chicago while her family remains in the Portland area. "That is my personality. When I decide to do something I will do it. The more I learned about the story, the more important it became and the more I knew I needed to write it."

Skloot has been on an international book tour for much of the last two years. She speaks to thousands of people each year, from large gatherings (more than 25,000 people at one university convocation) to more intimate settings with college writing or science classes. Her book is also this year's selection for PCC Reads, an initiative to encourage faculty, staff and students to read and discuss books with themes of diversity and social justice.

Defler's life away from teaching has taken many fascinating turns. He spent years perfecting his watercolor painting, playing classical guitar, learning Spanish and traveling.

"What I loved about PCC is that the administration didn't micromanage the instructors and we were able to teach," said Defler, who prided himself on coming up with a new lecture each day, not relying on canned notes. "I loved teaching and I do believe that I helped many, many students over the years. My whole life was teaching."

Once the meeting between Skloot and Defler ended, the proud instructor watched as his successful student went to her hotel room to prepare for that night's event where nearly 1,500 people filled a Portland church as she spoke about her life and that of Henrietta Lacks.

"What's happened to Rebecca is really phenomenal," he said with a smile. ■

Former PCC instructor Don Defler taught Rebecca Skloot about Henrietta Lacks and HeLa cells when she was his student in 1988.



## NOMINATE A DIAMOND ALUM

Rebecca Skloot is just one example of the incredible students that have attended PCC over the past 50 years. To honor these outstanding alumni and their achievements, PCC is introducing the Diamond Alum Awards.



The awards will recognize 50 alumni who have excelled in the areas of service, achievement, education, leadership, and economic development.

Anyone who has taken a PCC credit or non-credit class, earned a degree or certificate, or transferred their credits toward a university bachelor's degree is eligible.

Help us find our diamonds! If you know an exceptional PCC alumnus (or you are one), please submit a nomination online by visiting [opportunity.pcc.edu](http://opportunity.pcc.edu) and clicking "Diamond Pride." The deadline for nominations is January 31, 2012.



Below: Sally Croft, PCC retiree and Failing Elementary School alumna

Right: Students attend classes at PCC's Failing School, circa 1962.



## PCC Retiree Succeeded at Failing

**Sally Croft recalls PCC's first facility and the memories that went with it**

By James Hill

In 1961, the Vocational and Adult Education Division of Portland Public Schools officially became Portland Community College. And in 1962, PCC established its first college building by purchasing Failing Elementary School.

The school was closed down and the building abandoned. Despite the poor name for an education building, Failing provided PCC with 22 classrooms at a single location and a place for its new headquarters, which had been in a trailer behind Benson High School.

"It's a wonderful old building," said Sally Croft, a PCC retiree who worked 23 years at Failing School, known in later years as the Ross Island Center. "You can see it from the east side, it's the three-story brick building on the west end of the Ross Island Bridge."

As part of PCC's 50th anniversary, Croft, who worked in student records and eventually retired as the department's manager in 1999, took a stroll down memory lane by visiting Failing School. She recalled both her stint at the facility from 1972 to 1995 and her days as an elementary school student there from 1947 to 1950.

As PCC expanded, the Ross Island Center became the hub for personnel, Open Campus and business operations. In 1995 PCC sold it to the National College for Natural Medicine, which still owns it today, filling the school with offices, study areas and classrooms and keeping it alive with activity.

Croft remembers a lot from her days as a grade school student at Failing — such as the principal's name (Mr. Kraske) and hitting the bulkhead while skipping down the stairwell to see how much she had grown. And she recalls watching from a second-floor window as her future husband scurried across the street that is now Naito Parkway.

"I used to stand in the sixth grade classroom after the bell rang and see him barrel out of that house and run across to get into the school before he was tardy," Croft remembered. "You can see why I have great affection for all of this."

From her time as a PCC employee, Croft remembers the business office, student records, human resource office and the critical instructional materials office.

"In 1972, that's where we got all of our printed materials," Croft said. "We were not on computers. Everything was done by copying."

Through the years, Croft has been most amazed at how many people in the area have been touched by PCC's five decades of service.

"I have found that just about everywhere I go, everybody I meet, someone has taken at least one class at PCC." ■



Share your PCC memories at [opportunity.pcc.edu](http://opportunity.pcc.edu)



Community Education students learn ballet techniques from the professionals at the Northwest Dance Project.

# DANCE CARD FILLED

## Community Education students sashay into class at popular dance studio

By **Christina Holmes**

Back in 2009 when the Northwest Dance Project threw open the doors of its new studio on Shaver Street near Mississippi Avenue, Ann Van Orman was one of the first visitors to greet Sarah Slipper.

Slipper, a world-renowned dancer and Northwest Dance Project's artistic director, had relocated the studio to a permanent spot in the hip neighborhood after leasing space at other facilities around town. The studio, known for having the best spring dance floor in the city, had a following of students but this new locale presented plenty more possibilities.

Van Orman heard about the studio from Community Education Director Tonya Booker, who had seen dancers perform at a street fair. Impressed with what she saw, Booker talked to Van Orman about a possible partnership with the studio.

As the recreation and wellness program coordinator for the Community Education program, Van Orman is forever on the hunt for unique classes that might interest the tens of thousands of PCC students who favor the personal enrichment courses.

"We're always looking for new ideas and when we find a good idea we want to grow it," said Van Orman. "The partnership with Northwest Dance Project gives our community the opportunity to learn from internationally known dancers."

Slipper was immediately thrilled with the idea of collaborating.

"Our organization believes in community relationships and we're interested in being in touch with a variety of people — youth, adults and seniors," said Slipper. "Our classes are accessible and even if you haven't danced you can come into this environment and feel totally welcomed."

Community Education students register for the classes — everything from ballet, hip hop, jazz, core balance, Pilates and yoga — through PCC. Slipper knows she's reaching a wider audience because Community Education markets and publicizes classes to the entire Portland metropolitan area. She also knows that Portland boasts many dancers and those who appreciate dance.

"Across North America, Portland is known for its dancing because we have audiences who support dance," said the Canadian-born Slipper. "When a new work is performed on stage, people will show up and support the production."

Slipper wants to show would-be dancers how refreshing it is to learn how to dance.

At the Northwest Dance Project, Community Education students encounter professionals from around the globe who have danced for years in companies large and small. These expert instructors teach students the most

current dance techniques. National dance critics say the studio is "changing the way dance is created."

"In our business, good instructors get a following of students," said Van Orman. "This is what we do in Community Education: we find little pockets and open them up to the community. We have a good reputation and we have good outreach and marketing so this is a great win for each of us. This is a prime example of how Community Education meets the needs of the community."

Dance student Mira McDonald learned about the Northwest Dance Project classes by perusing the Community Education schedule. A longtime dancer who gave her ballet shoes a rest after an ankle injury about 10 years ago, she was ready to find her way back to the dance floor but didn't know where to turn.

"Not only is my goal to get my body back in line but I also want to become more appreciative of the arts," she said.

She's now at the studio for several hours on Mondays getting her dance card filled.

"I started off with beginning ballet and... I decided to take jazz as well," she said. "I get such enjoyment out of these classes." ■



For more information about PCC's Community Education dance classes, see page 35 or visit [www.pcc.edu/community](http://www.pcc.edu/community). For more information about the dance studio visit [www.nwdanceproject.org](http://www.nwdanceproject.org)

PCC mails this schedule of classes to households four times each year to let you know about upcoming Community Education classes and share what's happening at PCC. It is printed and mailed for about 22 cents per copy and can be recycled. Because it is addressed "Residential Customer" we are not able to remove individuals from our distribution route. We hope you find it informative and enjoy the stories inside.

# Project: YOU

with PCC Community Education

## Make YOU the project!

If you can dream it, Community Education's hundreds of classes can help you achieve it. Go online to [pcc.edu/community](http://pcc.edu/community) and get started on your own Project:YOU this winter.



**My Project:**  
Name: Mira McDonald  
Occupation: Research and  
Development Technician  
My Project: Rediscover my love  
for dance after injuring my ankle  
several years ago.  
Class I Took: "Beginning Ballet"  
And Now: I'm taking jazz as well  
as ballet, and I plan to try more dance  
classes in the future. PCC helped me  
get back on my toes!

**Community**Education