

Portland Teachers Program
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LISTEN. LEARN. SERVE.

Spring 2012

“Competent teachers of color are not only understanding of differences but accepting, helping students celebrate who they are.”

-Daisy Martinez

The 2012 Graduates

“To speak a true word is to transform the world.” Paulo Freire

The 2012 graduates faced many challenges, lots of stress and more than a few seemingly impossible hurdles during their teacher education program, but they each showed incredible determination and grit. Each of these future teachers will provide their students with a positive role model for overcoming all barriers to success. They care about achievement for all students, and they promise to work for social justice in our education system. On the following pages are thoughts from some of them about teaching.

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Back: Andre Hawkins & Ramman Turner; Front: Sharde Dennis, Ashley Echang, Daisy Martinez & Ani Ponz

2 **"We need the courage to question the powers that be, the courage to be impatient with evil and patient with people, the courage to fight for social justice." -Cornel West**

"Early in life, I knew I wanted to be a teacher and work closely with kids. The most important component in teaching is to be able to connect with students and build positive relationships with them. I feel this is often missing in education. Many teachers don't spend enough time bonding with students, finding out their likes and dislikes, how they learn and what interests them. There is a disconnect with students because of a lack of engagement. My goal in teaching is to try and connect with students within the curriculum so that they are receptive to learning. I hope to make a difference by finding out how students learn and incorporating student learning styles into lesson plans."

Sharde Dennis, High School Spanish

"To me education is much more than teaching basic skills. As educators, I believe we must also help people become responsible human beings who value life and who practice humbleness, caring and integrity. I want to ensure the success of every student, but as a Latina, I especially want to make a difference for Latino students. I see many Latino students disconnected from school and I believe I can help them re-connect through language and culture, building relationships, creating a welcoming classroom environment and involving parents and families in the educational process. Parents, students and community members need to be made to feel part of the school by having their identity and culture represented. Competent teachers of color are not only understanding of differences but accepting, helping students celebrate who they are."

Daisy Martinez, Elementary

"Ever since I can remember I've wanted to help kids become successful individuals. Being an immigrant, I've experienced first-hand the prejudices that plague our schools, as well as the lack of resources needed for students to be successful. As a teacher, I hope to bring cultural diversity into the classroom and make sure that every student, regardless of race, has the opportunity to succeed in life. My goal is to do what I can as a teacher to lower the achievement gap and to see the graduation rate for Latinos, Native Americans and African Americans increase. As educators we must be familiar with instructional methods that speak to different learning styles and find opportunities to engage and motivate diverse students."

Ani Ponz, Elementary

"Education is overlooked, taken for granted and often just ignored. The time for caring, daring, determined teachers is at an all-time high. We owe it to our children to put the best educators in their lives now! I strive to be a lifelong member of the struggle, the revolution for educational and economic reform in this country. I want to teach the truth and to give children who look like me a real opportunity for educational success and prosperity. The system needs to incorporate the viewpoints of those from other cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints. Having a variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds ensures that everyone and their cultures will be shared, learned and hopefully valued."

Andre Hawkins, High School Social Studies

"Over the past millennia, humanity has struggled with the ignorance of what we truly are: self-aware sparks of consciousness in the midst of a universe of unlimited possibility. A consistent knowledge of ourselves and how we connect to the rest of the universe has been slow in coming. Frequent setbacks such as dark ages, crusades, genocides, slavery and book burnings have made our evolution painfully slow. A teacher's role is to continue the dialogue of the eternal scholar. It is this dialogue that will lead us to freedom. I want my students to be compassionate problem-solvers who will build a better society after the grossly flawed capitalistic "house of cards" comes tumbling down."

Ramman Turner, Elementary



"By academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right also implies a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true." -Albert Einstein



"PTP has changed my life. I've learned that there is so much more I have to learn about my own culture and others' cultures. PTP is a community where I can be proud of who I am and not be looked at badly." -Victor Morales

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Guest Speakers

Bob Tom

An honored elder from the Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes, Bob Tom, was a guest speaker in January. Bob uses stories and humor to engage students in a deeper understanding of indigenous culture, history and worldview, and he challenges students to be deeply reflective as future educators. He admits that he grew up the youngest in a family of 13, and was the "most spoiled."

He gave students some history about his parents' tribes and how they were force marched to relocate to their current locations. "I give thanks to those older people who carried the children," Bob said. "We need to know about our ancestors to help us be grounded. When we know who we are and where we come from, we can survive anything." As a child, Bob was told by his elders that "everyone is good at something. When you find out what that is, you have to perfect it and serve the people with it."

Bob asked students to consider their "cultural presence," which comes from your family and all the people you meet and observe. "You are not just you," he told us, "you are not your own creation." He also encouraged students to learn to be inter-dependent. Mainstream culture promotes independence, but "in our Indian world we believe in inter-dependence. You help people and you depend on others to help you."

Dr. Verenice Gutierrez

Dr. Gutierrez, the Principal at Scott K-8 School, was a guest speaker in February and she spoke with passion, seriousness, focus and an appropriate dash of humor. She shared a little bit about her life, growing up in poverty and a neighborhood famous for its gang activity where all of her girlfriends got pregnant in high school. A younger sister with learning disabilities motivated her to get her Master's degree in Special Education and she fell in love with it. Dr. G. also gave an overview of her philosophy of education and what issues she sees facing all students, as well as Latino students in particular.

Everyone needs to be held accountable for the success of students, she pointed out---teachers and parents. Her father worked 18 hours a day but he still had time for Verenice, so she feels confident in telling parents that there are no excuses---not poverty, illiteracy, language barriers or anything else; parents must make their child's education a priority. She has no tolerance for educators who don't make kids their priority, and she feels that every second that kids are in the school building should be an instructional second. Dr. G. is a fearless educator who left everyone feeling ready for the battle before us, and with a sense of hope that we can provide equity and excellence for all children.

Dr. Randy Depry

The new Chair of the Special Education Department at Portland State University, Dr. Randy Depry, was a guest speaker at a CT (Critical Thinking) Session in March. He gave an engaging overview of special education that included why it is important and who it serves. He also talked about some of the responsibilities SPED teachers have, such as coordinating individualized education plans, teaching and supporting students with disabilities, conducting assessments, working with families and with multi-disciplinary teams of professionals. PTP students were also provided with a look at the SPED programs available at PSU. Teachers with strong training in special education have many more tools to work with in their classrooms. Dr. Depry invited PTP students to visit him if they were interested in knowing more about SPED.

Liz Rogers

A longtime favorite with PTP students, Liz Rogers is a member of the APA Compass Collective that produces a monthly Asian and Pacific American public affairs radio program for KBOO. Liz works with PTP future teachers to enhance their perspective regarding Asian Pacific Islander populations. She always reminds us that she is not an expert on Asian culture, that we must agree to disagree and that we must respect other peoples' experiences ("Let them feel what they feel," she

Guest Speakers continued Page 4



Master Educators: Bob Thom, Dr. Verenice Gutierrez, Dr. Randy Depry, Liz Rogers & Shay James

"Those of us in education must continue to question what knowledge is, how it is constructed and validated, and who decides the worth, value, and meanings of knowledge and knowledge construction." -Michael Apple

Guest Speakers Continued from Page 3

Liz Rogers continued

explains). She makes students think about common assumptions and how they are formed. She also provides a look into the many contributions that the many Asian cultures have contributed to the development and history of the United States. Liz talked about the "micro aggressions" that people of color experience daily (comedian Margaret Cho calls them "paper cuts"), and how damaging stereotypes are to everyone.

Shay James

The principal of Franklin High School and PTP alumna (2000), Shay James, spoke with PTP seminar students in December about issues in education for African American students in PPS, and a range of topics related to that. Most importantly, she discussed strategies that can help close the achievement gap for students of color: providing college prep for ALL students (no gatekeeping); partnering with parents and other student advocates; intentional review of achievement data by race to help bring about equity; engaging in conscious and meaningful discussions around race and equity with all school staff and having culturally competent teachers. The Franklin High School staff is currently reading **Courageous Conversations about Race**. Ms. James answered questions from future teachers about the challenges of being a principal, and in particular, the challenges of being an African American principal.

"We have to love our way through it." -Gerald Bolden

Spring Term Colloquium

The spring term colloquium followed tradition and was a field day for students, completely planned and implemented by students. Games included Jeopardy, Build a Bridge and Protect a Cone. The talent show was spectacular, and included Jayme Causey and Chris Riser doing spoken word performances, Jimmy Boland doing beat boxing, Ramman Turner and Victor Morales doing old school break dancing; Nichole Martin doing a love song and Ronnie Perry doing a back flip that defied gravity.



"The intellectual tradition is one of servility to power, and if I didn't betray it I'd be ashamed of myself." -Noam Chomsky

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Portland Teachers Program 2011-12



Service Project: Scott School

PTP students gathered at Harvey Scott School one Saturday in January to put their philosophy (**Listen, Learn and Serve**) into action. Principal Verenice Gutierrez and Vice Principal Celina Garrido (a PTP alumna) made a long "to do" list for students. Working in teams, students cleaned and organized the gym and its storage areas, scrubbed hallways, painted the cafeteria and fixed the laminator. Some teams worked in classrooms with dedicated teachers (including PTP teachers Luci Campbell, Gina

Bluebird and Francesca Alvarez) who were willing to come in on a Saturday; they cleaned desks, organized books and completed other projects.

The day started out with the usual pot luck and coming together to break bread and socialize. This was topped by some inspiring words from Dr. Gutierrez about putting kids first, and then everyone was off to their jobs. Several PTP alumni dropped by to visit and some stayed to help make origami cranes to help meet the PTP goal of making 1000 cranes for peace. It was good to see Thu Troung, Richard Cha, Tina Dang, Sarah Gonzalez, Jalia Campbell, Maalaea Gustafson

and others who stopped by. Students left with a sense of accomplishment, energized by how much they were able to get done in a short time (the power of community!), and wanting to know where they could go next.

PTP student Mars Sails was dubbed the "paint bandit" that day, leaving her handprint on several folks, and the director was seen leaving with primary colors all over her pants. Other students went home with the memory of seeing and overcoming some oversized dust bunnies in dark corners.

A true journey, no matter how long the travel takes, has no end. Passage through space and time becomes only metaphor of a movement through the interior of being. -William Least Heat Moon

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Service Project Photos

Cesar Chavez Leadership Conference



Celene Vargas, Isidro Interian, Mayra Barraza, Victor Morales

PTP students Celene Vargas, Isidro Interian, Mayra Barraza, Victor Morales and director Deborah Cochran all attended the CCL Conference at Western Oregon University in early March. PTP students repeated the PTP Education and Social Justice workshop for Latino students from around the state. The PTP workshops provide an opportunity for young people to expand their awareness of social justice in the classroom and in education in general; it encourages them to consider using their voice to speak their truth.

"We allowed students to talk about things they don't usually talk about; it's on their minds but they often don't get opportunities to talk about their own education and what makes good teachers," PTP students explained. "It was important to make students think about their education and how it might be improved, and what I liked was that we used Spanglish. A lot of students don't get to speak their own language," said Celene. The high school students were incredibly insightful, aware and creative as they designed what they thought would be the best possible schools. Their maturity and clear perceptions can give us all hope that there will be good leaders for the future.

News Bytes

■ **New to PTP this year:** Andrew Guerrero, Tam Nguyen, Christine Padden, Dyklecia Plazola, Ruth Ponce, Angelica Ramos, Chrishana Retherford, Edward Moss & Eric Ruiz.

■ **Small Community Facilitators** this year were: Ronnie Perry, Celene Vargas & Chris Riser, Jason Correa, Paula Byrd, Yessica Hardin, Chris Wade, Alex Buckner, Alejandra Nava & Lolita Lincoln.

■ **Student Team Teaching Presentations this year included:**

Study Skills

Florice Negrete & Angelica Ramos

Immigration Issues in the Schools

Mayra Barraza, Blanca Strode, Ruth Ponce, & Mahura Gonzalez

Math Access

Chelsea Fuller, Victor Morales, & Eric Ruiz

Gender & Sexual Orientation

Chrishana Retherford, Paula Byrd & Tobias Witherspoon

Parent Involvement

Dyklecia Plazola, Chanell Hopson & Isidro Interian

Gentrification in Portland

Anthony Lowery, Ed Moss, & Jimmy Boland

Children with Disabilities in the Classroom

Adrienne Howard & Andrew Guerrero

Poverty

Marlene Sails, Tam Nguyen & Carlos Laguardia

News Bytes Continued Page 7

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).

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News Bytes Continued from Page 6

■ PTP visited several schools this year, including Wilson High School, Westview and Merlo. Student teams included Celene Vargas, Ronnie Perry, Jason Correa and Mayra Barraza. The director and a student team also gave a presentation to the students in the Multicultural Center at PCC Sylvania

A BIG PTP THANKS TO:

■ PTP alumni **Takiyah Williams** (1993) for providing a student teaching placement for future teacher Ashley Echang; **Anibal Rivera** (2000) at Franklin for taking **Andre Hawkins** as a student teacher; **Luci Cervantes Campbell** (2002) for providing office and special project supplies throughout the year. **Tracy Briggs** (2006), **Lionel Clegg** (1999), **Lindell Stone** (2004), **Aaron Moreno** (2006), **Richard Cha** (2009), **Cathy Parker** (2004) and others who took practicum students or allowed PTP students to visit/volunteer in their classrooms. And finally, to the PTP alumni who did interviews with PTP students.

■ **Beth Fitzgerald**, Multimedia Program, for the beautiful work she does to preserve PTP memories; **Penny Thompson**, Cascade Learning Center, for providing input on writing issues; helping our ESL students with grammar; finding math tutors and generally supporting the PTP program; and **Torie Scott**, Reference Librarian at the Cascade Campus, who created a DYNAMIC web page for PTP students with the recommended reading list and all kinds of links to important resources regarding diversity, teaching and education; and **Michelle Samuel** for artwork and support.

■ PTP student Ronnie Perry for all those hours he volunteered in the

office helping with everything from recruitment to planning the spring colloquium and to Maria Hernandez, who also volunteered many hours spring term. To Field Day planners: Alex Buckner, Chelsea Fuller, Yessica Mercado, Maria Hernandez, Dyklecia Plazola, Alejandra Nava, Jason Correa, Celene Vargas and Ronnie Perry. Eric Ruiz, who represented PTP at a Latino Parent Night in Beaverton and Alejandra Nava, who has been helping students enhance their writing skills. Chris Riser, Jason Correa and Yessica Hardin, who have been working on the student PTP web page.

Appreciation to our Donors:

■ Jennifer Lopez Nutter, PTP alumna, donated \$1500 to sponsor the 2012 Celebration of Students reception for PTP students, their families and our community leaders. Without her, the reception would not have happened this year!



■ PASTINI's RESTAURANT once again donated \$50 gift certificates to our hungry graduates. PLEASE---support this fabulous restaurant and thank them for supporting teachers!

■ Mrs. Nathan and the Nathan Family have been supporters for so many years and their very generous annual donation helps many future teachers.

■ Jeanne Miller gives us grocery bags, fruit and candy through out the year that nurture our hungry students. She also purchases and puts together

gift bags for the graduates as well as seeking donations to honor the graduates each year.

■ Geof and Donna Brooks contribute to the gift bags for our graduates, and also provide their love and support for what we do in PTP.

■ Narce Rodriquez, Beth Fitzgerald, George Pernsteiner, Dalton Miller-Jones, Maisie Gholson, Macarre Trayhnam, Chris Poole-Jones, Robert Mercer, Mike (Jeanne's BF), Kim Neves, Bob Everhart, May Pulliam, Melissa Saas & Deborah Cochrane

■ Alumni donors in 2011: Candice Vickers, Margarita Portillo, Luci Campbell; Thu Truong, Hoi Tran, Monica Estrada, Tina Dang, Esteban Ortiz Lopez, Lindell Stone, Lionel Clegg, Hung Trinh, Curtis Wilson, Sholanda McGhee, Tina Bruce, Alodie Lopez, Cathy Parker, Aaron Moreno, Yolanda Flores, Silvia Lewis, Aniscia McAdams, Selene Hall, Khalil Edwards, Leesa Ferguson, Rosina Hardy, Adriana Moyola, Heather Kelly & Maalaea Gustafson.

"Part of truly honing the genius of our children would be consciously to organize institutions and instruction inside and outside of school buildings that expose the children to their intellectual legacy; clarify their position in a racialized society; ritually express expectations for hard work and academic, social, physical, and moral excellence; and create alternative reasons for success other than 'getting a good job'--for your community, for your ancestors, for your descendants."
-Lisa Delpit

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

Nikki Giovanni!

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Program Assistants:

Celene Vargas, Jason Correa &
Ronnie Perry



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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, multiracial, multilingual, culturally responsive teacher workforce that can ensure educational equity for all students. Our philosophy is: **Listen, Learn & Serve**