

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

November 2024

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
SunnysidePortland.org board@sunnysideportland.org

News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Hi Sunnysiders! By the time you receive this newsletter, the election season will be over (or nearly so) and we'll know who will be in charge of our city government from the new city council to the mayor (and beyond). I don't know what the results will be, but I am hoping that all those elected have the ideas, strength and ability to help this city continue to grow and recover from the recent difficult times and to enable all Portlanders to live and thrive in our beautiful city. All elected officials will need our support and guidance, so keep on making your voices heard, starting at the hyper-local level with your neighborhood association which is a collective voice to your government.

On to the news...

In October, the SNA Board discussed a letter of support for the upcoming pilot of the pedestrian plaza at 37th and Hawthorne, by 3 Doors Down and Buffalo Exchange. Representatives from Buffalo Exchange and Gold Door Jewelry & Arts joined us and expressed some reservations about how they would handle deliveries if automobiles could not park on that street. They expressed tentative support for the project, but are hoping for some accommodations for their businesses' needs. Given the concerns from these constituent businesses and the fact that several Board members were not able to attend the meeting, the Board decided to table the decision on a letter of support until November. The first design workshop is on Nov. 2nd from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Southeast Uplift. (You can drop in any time.) If you miss it, please reach out if you have an opinion on this new proposed neighborhood space.

On the lighter side, did you see that *Time Out* magazine rated our neighbor to the northwest, Kerns, as the fifth "coolest" neighborhood in the world? Congratulations, Kerns! I don't want to start an inter-neighborhood fight, but really, let me tell you why they overlooked an even better neighborhood: Sunnyside! You want great coffee? I give you Tov, Never Coffee and a multitude of others! A fun bar with great food? Alto Lounge, Bar Loon, Gold Dust Meridian, Horse Brass Tavern and on and on. Vintage stores? Take a stroll down Hawthorne any day! Delicious local bakery? Tabor Bread! Lovely homes on tree-lined streets? We have that in spades. As *Time Out* says, 28th is "the heart" of Kerns, but I posit that Sunnyside gets to have two hearts, each with its own character and amenities. I feel so lucky to live with all of you in this neighborhood and hope to for a long time to come.

Finally, we'd love to see you on Wednesday, November 13th when Representative Rob Nosse joins us for a discussion on the upcoming legislative session. Bring your questions!

Have you emailed the SNA but not gotten a reply? If so, we sincerely apologize. We identified an issue that seems to block some emails (without any notification) to our board@sunnysideportland.org email address. Until we resolve this issue, please feel free to reach out to me directly at my personal email cjwaldmann@gmail.com. Talk to you soon!

Upcoming Meetings

All SNA meetings are now on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Location details and agendas on Sunnysideportland.org.

November

Wednesday, Nov. 6th,
SNACC meeting 6:00–7 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 11th, LUTC meeting
7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 13th,
General Meeting 7–8:30 p.m.;
SNA Board meeting 8:30–9 p.m.

December

Monday, Dec. 9th, LUTC meeting
7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 11th,
SNA Board Meeting 7:00–8:30 p.m.



The Sunnyside Shower Project

Making a difference one shower at a time

www.sunnysideshowerproject.org

- Join a crew of 35+ fabulous volunteers
- Meet your houseless neighbors
- Help connect folks with essential hygiene services

Email Hannah at hannahwallace@gmail.com for more info!

Donate to Sunnyside Shower Project Here: 



Troy Douglass at Back to the Basket, which has been on Hawthorne Blvd. for 4 years. (Photo: Dresden deVera)

Getting to Know Your Neighbors

By Dresden de Vera,
SNA Board Member

Q&A with Troy Douglass, co-owner of Back to the Basket.

Troy Douglass, who is half Native American (from the Grand Ronde tribe) and half Filipino, was born in Portland and raised in the suburbs in Rivergrove. Growing up, his parents loved the Blazers. Troy was always watching games on BlazerVision; he remembers manually changing the cable box from channel 3 all the way up channel 52 [BlazerVision] to get his fix. He grew up in the '90s, which was the Jordan era. Not only did he love the game of basketball, he was good at it. He played throughout his childhood and at Lakeridge High School and also played on Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball teams. He currently lives in downtown Portland with his partner, Sydney, and their son, Taj, who also loves basketball. He and his friend Jalen Thomas started Back to the Basket in 2020.

What's the story of this place?

This store has been around for four years. Actually, October 12th is our official four year anniversary. But really, it's allowing my 12-year-old self to stay alive. This is exactly what my inner 12 year old wanted. This store is telling the story of basketball from the perspective of someone that's becoming past their prime. That was the original ethos of the business, which is why it was first called "Ball Was Life." That

name was a tongue-in-cheek satire of the name "Ball is Life," which is a big company in Los Angeles. They ended up sending us a cease and desist letter because they said our name was too similar so we had to pivot—get the basketball reference?—and change our name to Back to the Basket.

You mentioned the ethos was basketball from the perspective of someone on the decline?

A lot of times, at least in athletics, you have that reflection moment when you look back at your career. So a lot of the stuff that we do is vintage, old-school stuff.

What is it about basketball culture that's special?

I think it's transcended the world. I think the game of basketball has an ability to connect people. I went to the Philippines in 2015 and played barefoot in Manila. On the court at four o'clock, the hoops get pushed out to the middle of the street, and the jeepneys and the tricycles move around the game. They respect the game so much that the flow of traffic moves around the game. It was the most beautiful thing I ever experienced, just being in the middle of the city and watching everything give way to basketball.

How did this store come to be?

I had another store at Lloyd Center that I opened in 2018. It was called Cultural Blends. I sold sports gear—football and baseball and streetwear type stuff—but I was just filling the space because it was 1200 square feet. I learned I only really liked selling things that I feel passionate about. I've been to Timbers games but I couldn't tell you the Timbers players. But I was selling Timbers gear, you know? I didn't feel good about selling it. Someone would come up and be like, "Oh man, this player, blah, blah, blah." And I was like, "Yeah..." I say that to say I didn't like that feeling. I just wanted to focus on things that I was truly passionate about. And the game of basketball—I speak that language fluently. So I felt comfortable opening up a buy-sell-trade store that was focused on something that I was truly passionate about when I was 12 and what I'm passionate about now. That love of the game hasn't gone away.

What is it about Portland that contributes to your success?

I think the eclectic nature of the entire city. I think this shop bodes well in Portland because the city has a basketball culture.

You really feel the passion, and you can really sense that basketball nerds live here. I think that bodes well because it's cool, but it's also not pretentious cool.

What do you love about being in Sunnyside?

Oh, I love it because you have a super eclectic neighborhood and I think we fit in well. We're the basketball guys, but we're not the basketball guys who get shunned, you know, like, "Oh man, those jocks!" It's not like that. We are a part of the community, and we definitely represent basketball in a way that I think bodes well for the future.

So you're trying to help locals by giving basketball fans a bigger canvas on which to practice their alternative selves.

One hundred percent. This is a place where a basketball geek can nerd out, a sneaker head can nerd out. This is a place where a lover of the game could be like, "Oh, this place is cool!" and it's definitely a good place to build community.

Tell me about the communities you're developing.

We host an event called Hoops in the Park. It's basically pickup basketball but with nodes of networking. We encourage people to shake hands, to talk to each other, and really build a network. I used to go to networking events, and there was a lot of thinking like, "Are you going to be of value to me?" I thought that wasn't the right approach. Instead, I want an approach of getting to know somebody, what they're interested in, and then ask, "What do you do?" Human first, endeavor second.

Human first, endeavor second. Dang, that's tight!

That's the most important thing. You've got to know the human because... I don't know, that's the way. I don't know how to describe it, but that's the way.

You can follow Back to the Basket on Instagram at [@backtothebasketdotcom](https://www.instagram.com/backtothebasketdotcom)

The store is at 3405 SE Hawthorne Blvd. It is open Mon–Sat. 11–7 p.m. and Sun 11–5 p.m.

Winter Clothing Drive

By Hannah Wallace,
SNA Vice President

For the fifth year in a row, the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association Community Care committee is organizing a Winter Clothing Drive for our houseless neighbors. The drive will be on Sunday, December 8th in the basement of the Sunnyside Methodist Church on 35th and Yamhill. A crew of volunteers will be on hand to collect clothing donations from 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m. The main event will be held from 1–5 p.m. the same day.

We especially need:

- Winter coats and raincoats
- Pants, jeans, and sweatpants
- Sweaters and sweatshirts
- T-shirts—long and short-sleeved
- Long underwear
- New underwear (both men's and women's)
- New or lightly worn socks (wool preferred)
- Boots and shoes
- Tarps, tents, sleeping bags (especially important this year as the City is no longer providing)
- Warm hats, gloves, scarves, and belts

Please do not donate children's clothing, toys or dressy/formal clothing.

We will be promoting the event to our shower guests, partner agencies, and local businesses (and on Instagram at @sunnysideshowerproject). If you would like to help publicize the event or if your workplace wants to donate gear, clothing, or gift cards, please reach out to Valerie Ross at valerie.e.ross@gmail.com.

News From Sunnyside Environmental School (SES)

By Valerie Kahn, Member-At-Large

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Harvest Fair. We loved celebrating autumn with you and hope you enjoyed seeing a little bit of our school.

¿Por Qué No? fundraiser

¿Por Qué No?'s Hawthorne location has kindly agreed to donate 10% of its November 6th sales to the SES PTSA! This money will be used to support SES's garden, music, and field studies programs. ¿Por Qué No? was recently chosen as both the Best Taco and Best Mexican restaurant in Willamette Week's 2024

Reader's Poll, and I can personally attest to how good their food is. For anyone like me who can't eat gluten, they have a large number of gluten-free options, their staff is very knowledgeable about cross-contamination, and they will take a variety of safety precautions if you tell them your meal can't have any contact with gluten. Swing by for some delicious Mexican food on November 6th to support!

Alice in Wonderland

Come support our young thespians! Please join us for SES's musical production of Alice in Wonderland on November 15th and 16th. Under the direction of the Portland Drama Club, a cast of SES 5th-8th graders have been rehearsing after school for three months to put on a show you won't forget. Each performance is 60 minutes and includes singing and dancing with lovely costumes and sets. All performances will be held at SES's auditorium, which may be accessed from the front of the school at 3421 SE Salmon St. Shows are at 6:30 p.m. on November 15th and 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. on November 16th. To buy tickets (\$10), go to our Facebook page (SES PTSA) or our Instagram profile (@ses_ptsa.)

Fruit Box and Pie Pickups

If you bought a fruit box or a pie for one of our fundraisers, please remember to pick them up at school on November 8th between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. (fruit) and November 13th between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. (pies).

What is a focus option school?

A reader asked to learn more about what it means to be a focus option school. In the Portland Public School District ("PPS" or "District"), focus option schools are those that provide separate district-recognized programs structured around a unique curriculum or particular theme. SES's theme is its environmental curriculum. One of the things that makes it possible for SES to provide these unique educational opportunities is the curriculum waiver it receives from the District. PPS has a standard "base" curriculum that includes benchmarks for students at each grade level, as well as standard materials for teachers to use to help students reach those benchmarks. Focus option schools must meet those same benchmarks, but they are allowed to use different methods for doing so than non-focus option schools. So instead of using a district-adopted textbook to teach about natural science, SES may, for example, teach about ecology by bringing students to different natural

environments to learn about ecological systems in person. These experiences provide a canvas upon which elements of history, environmental education, scientific and biological relationships, culture, mathematics, economy, literature, and art are used to help children authentically make meaning of the world around them.

Donations needed

As an underfunded public school, we find ourselves perpetually in need of a variety of things. If you happen to have any of these items to donate, we would greatly appreciate it! Please reach out to board@sespts.org.

- Nutrition Services is looking for regular dining spoons.
- A Special Education teacher could use a computer monitor for her office.
- Our fourth graders need an aquarium suitable for salmon eggs.
- All grades need noise-blocking headphones as well as fidget toys (that don't make sound.)

Have questions about SES? Email sunnysideenvironmentalnews@gmail.com and maybe I'll answer them in a future column!

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Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing newsletter@sunnysideportland.org. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior.** Many wonderful volunteer Sunnyside residents distribute the Neighborhood News.

