

# SUNNYSIDE

## Neighborhood News

### June 2026

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
SunnysidePortland.org    board@sunnysideportland.org

#### News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Welcome to summer, Sunnyside! Long days and hopefully cool nights; it's the best! I can't wait for all the summer activities that Portland has to offer. Check this space next month for our annual guide to warm weather events in and around the neighborhood.

Now onto the news...

In May, the SNA held its Annual Meeting. It was a great time to reflect on the past year, look towards the next and elect Board members to serve for the next two years. You can view the presentation slides at [tinyurl.com/dzm2twn8](https://tinyurl.com/dzm2twn8) but I'd like to highlight a couple of accomplishments from 2025/2026. First, after a few years of fading paint, over 80 volunteers, led by Board member Tim Quayle, came out to freshen up the Sunnyside Piazza. We'll be out next year to do it again! In November, we had a meeting highlighting the need for a new Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) in Sunnyside and a community member responded! Shout out to newly-elected Board member Ophelia Schechter for stepping up and getting trained to be our newest leader of the Sunnyside NET! It makes me feel like the SNA can make a difference through not only our actions and projects, but by highlighting public needs.

Thank you to all who came out to run for the SNA Board. We had seven neighbors running for five Board seats! Congratulations to Ophelia, Tim, Dresden De Vera, and Lindsay Cogan Sant for stepping up to help your local civic association. I also got re-elected and look forward to continuing to work with this Board to bring you the local information

you need and projects to improve the community and help Sunnyside succeed.

In other news, there's a new crosswalk in the neighborhood! Thanks to neighbor advocacy, additional safety protection is now in place for those crossing Stark near 44th. This is not the end of the story. There's still so much work to do to improve safety on this arterial road, including increased speed enforcement and improving pedestrian light timing along the entire stretch of Stark through the Sunnyside neighborhood. Additionally, the speed limit on Belmont has been reduced to 20 mph. Please be mindful of the new, lower speed limit in this area. Together, we can protect all of our roads' users and make Vision Zero a reality.

That's it for now. Our next General meeting isn't until September, but the Board will be meeting in June and August to organize ourselves for the new term and continue working for you.

#### Wild At Heart II

Join us on June 25th from 6–10 p.m. at Foxtrot (3244 SE Belmont St.) for Wild Heart II, the second annual fundraiser and 5-year anniversary celebration for Sunnyside Shower Project, a volunteer-powered mutual aid organization serving unhoused and unstably housed neighbors in Southeast Portland.

For the past five years, SSP has provided free showers, hygiene supplies, clothing, laundry support, survival gear, snacks, and community care rooted in dignity and harm reduction. In 2025 alone, SSP provided more than 1,250 showers and supported nearly 2,000 visits, all powered by one staff member and over 80 volunteers.

#### Upcoming Meetings

**Location details and agendas are on [Sunnysideportland.org](https://Sunnysideportland.org).**

##### June

June 10th: Board Meeting, 7:00-8:30p.m.

June 17th: Land Use Transportation Committee, 7:00 p.m.

##### July

No General or Board meeting

July 15th: Land Use Transportation Committee, 7:00 p.m.

Wild Heart II is a community celebration to keep this vital program running. Expect music from Portland rock-and-roll DJ Wax Casket, food, drinks, raffle prizes, silent auction items, and a whole lot of people who believe in this community and the power of collective action.

Raffle and auction items include stays at Jupiter NEXT and Adrift Hotel, tickets to see Sleater-Kinney and Liz Phair, a haircut by GoodbyeHorseGirl, Freeland Spirits distillery tours and tastings, Skyhook Boulderling passes, gift cards to Bangkok Belly and Bread and Ink Cafe, and prizes from the North American Bigfoot Center alongside donations from some of Portland's most beloved community spaces and creators.

\$10 suggested donation. No one turned away for lack of funds. Visit [sunnysideshowerproject.org/wildheart2](https://sunnysideshowerproject.org/wildheart2) for more info.



*Ophelia Schechter and family.*

## **Getting to Know Your Neighbors**

*By Hannah Wallace, SNA Vice President*

### **A Q&A with Ophelia Schechter, team leader for Sunnyside's Neighborhood Emergency Team, and SNA Board Member.**

Ophelia Schechter and her husband, David, moved to Sunnyside in January of 2022. They'd been renting in the Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhood prior to that, but moved to Portland from San Jose, California in June 2018.

With three kids, the eldest of whom is a first-grader at SES, Schechter is a stay-at-home mom who is also involved in the school. Lately, that's meant "daylighting" the curbs around the school to encourage safer driving. Then, wanting to get even more involved in her community, Ophelia attended an SNA meeting a few months ago and heard we needed Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) volunteers. She promptly went to a city training and is now certified. After our May elections, not only is she the team leader for Sunnyside's newly revived NET team, she's the most recent addition to the SNA Board. We sat down with her on a recent Friday to find out what she loves about Sunnyside and what drives her involvement in the community.

#### **You have a big family. Tell me about them!**

There's Elie (short for Elijah), who is seven and goes to Sunnyside [Environmental School]. Izzy is four, and Ariya is two. Elie will be in 2nd grade. This year, his teacher is Wayne.

#### **How do you like SES?**

Sunnyside is great. I love how supportive the teachers are and how involved the community is. Everyone in my family absolutely adores the Harvest Fair. In early elementary grades I really don't think there's a huge difference from other schools—other than the gardening class. But from my understanding, our school spends less time on the computer than other schools do, which is an advantage for my family because my kids are low screen users. The principal and vice principal at SES are advocating for less screen time in the classroom. Additionally I am looking forward to when my kiddos are in upper elementary and middle school when they will have frequent field trips.

#### **So tell me how you got involved in NET training?**

I came to one of the Neighborhood Association meetings. I had heard something in passing about NET teams, and I didn't understand what that was. Then I went to the meeting, found out that we don't have a NET team and that there is a program through the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management where they train everyday citizens to volunteer in emergency situations and also ultimately train us to be ready to self deploy during the "Big One."

#### **What was your inspiration for wanting to be trained in that?**

I grew up in California. Understanding that a major earthquake could happen at any time was our default assumption. Then I moved here and I knew nothing about the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Since most

Portlanders aren't from here, they also don't know that we live in the Cascadia Subduction Zone. So I felt unprepared and I suspected most of the people around me were unprepared as well...So while I prepare my household and myself, I've had a lot of thoughts: Sure if I were to have enough water for that time that's great. But I imagine that most of the neighbors around me are not going to be ready. And I'm not going to sit around watching my neighbors suffer! So...

#### **How long was the training?**

First off, you have to watch two hours worth of videos in order to qualify for the training. Then the training itself is four weekend days from 9–3. Three hours are sitting and learning about how NET teams operate. A little bit of radio, medical, and some search and rescue. Those trainings give you a few skills that could help in the field. What if you come across somebody who is not breathing? What if you come across somebody who is bleeding out? What are you supposed to do? In the final training you do "cribbing"—how to save someone who is trapped. There is a dummy under a huge concrete block and we have to lift it so you can take the dummy out from underneath the block. (You and six other teammates are doing this together.) We did a stop the bleed training where you learn how to make a tourniquet, also wound packing. They teach you how to use a fire extinguisher.

After you're done with this, if you're interested in further training you can take additional classes like medical or radio. If you're interested in sanitation—because when the earthquake happens we're not going to have access to plumbing—we need to have sanitation. Then there's food, and there are so many other things for you to be trained in so you are better prepared as a community. From my understanding the Mt Tabor/Montavilla team has a specialized medical team. And Laurelhurst is well-resourced and well-trained. So my plan is to work with those groups.

My plans as Sunnyside NET team leader is to get our NET team going again and assess our strengths and weaknesses. Stage 2 is trying to pull more people into the team—especially folks already possessing the skills we lack. Stage 3 is to work with team leaders in adjacent neighborhoods. Especially during the Big One, we should be aware of their plans and all work together.

In the future, I would love to have a fundraiser to distribute supplies throughout

our community. My first priority would be to acquire lots of water jugs. Water is the most important supply and a huge challenge in disaster prep. They say you need to have one gallon per person per day and they want you to have water supply for 14 days. So it's a lot of water! I'm fortunate—I have a garage. It's so daunting—especially for people who live in apartments—to store all that water.

### **Why were you interested in getting involved in the SNA?**

I would say a third of it because I'm already going to be the Team Lead for NET. I think it'd be a lot easier to communicate with the Board if I'm on the Board. A second part is after having children I realized that when I grow up, I want to be a matriarch. Part of that is advocating for other people—and focusing on children, the elderly, and the vulnerable.

Being on the Board also gives me more exposure to the rest of the people in my community. I really see Portland through the lens of a parent. I go to parks, show up to community centers. I go to all these events. I know that's only one part of Portland, so I want to find ways that I can both see and advocate for other things.

Even in emergency management a lot of the literature out there assumes that you are an adult and that you are able-bodied. That's not the case for most people. That's part of the advocacy work, especially at the local level—reminding folks that not everyone is going to be capable of the things we're asking them to do. If we don't consider them now, they will be left behind in an emergency.

### **Do you have a cat or a dog?**

Both. Harley is the cat and Woz, the dog. He is named after Steve Wozniak. (Did I mention that my husband David is an IOS developer?)

### **What do you love about Sunnyside?**

The #1 reason why we chose Sunnyside is because of how walkable it is and how family friendly it is. I think it is a unique neighborhood because we are so central and yet it is quiet. I'm two blocks away from bars and 99% of the time we hear nothing. We also love the library and we are eagerly awaiting its reopening!

### **Is there anything you'd like to see change or improve?**

The thing that I would want to see improve about Sunnyside is making it feel even

more like a community. Having deeper ties between homeowners and renters is important. Also, a sense of pride about the area that we live in.

## **News From Sunnyside Environmental School (SES)**

*By Sarah Centerwall*

*Member-at-large and SES parent*

The school year is wrapping up this week. The last day of school is June 5th instead of June 12th, due to the sudden PPS budget shortfall this Spring. The final week of school will be filled with finalizing projects, cleaning desks and lockers, 5th and 8th grade promotions, and end-of-year celebrations. Starting June 6th, the park and playground will be open to the public until school is back in session at the end of summer. Feel free to grab a snack from the garden while you are there—at least up until August 21st. Don't forget to check out the outdoor learning space that was designed by our amazing middle school students! It's a great spot to sit and eat your garden snack.

### **Get Tech Out of PPS**

A new SES group is forming to petition PPS to restrict the adoption of AI tools and generative AI. PPS is spending millions of dollars on technological adoptions, while data shows that analog learning has higher success rates. This is especially concerning when the PPS school district is in the middle of a \$54 million budget shortfall and is in the process of cutting teacher positions, closing schools, and raising class sizes. Many advocates of public education feel that PPS is spending money in the wrong areas. If you are interested in supporting this effort you can send an email to [president@sespts.org](mailto:president@sespts.org).

### **Storyline**

Did you know that SES uses Storyline methodology as part of their English Language Arts curriculum. In great part due to the hard work of the SES Site Council, grades K-5 used Storyline this year. Storyline begins with an anchoring phenomenon such as, in the case of SES 4th graders last year, learning about Celilo Falls through a visit from Linda Meanus, a Warm Springs elder. Her stories sparked a line of questions from the students that later directed their research. The unit culminated in the 4th grade classes visiting the Senate Appropriations Committee and presenting cases in defense of Celilo Falls at the committee meeting. This type of education is what is so special about SES.

Learning that is based in real, and current topics that are student-led stretch beyond the classroom and enhance student engagement.

### **Drive Safely**

Please remember to drive safely and slowly around the school. This is especially important at the beginning and end of the school day as there are many students who walk and bike to school. There have been some close calls in the recent weeks. Be vigilant, drive slowly and follow the rules. Please pay attention to the crossing guards and the parking signs. Last month volunteers painted the curbs around the school yellow to promote traffic safety. Since many children play at the school during the summer months it's always best practice to slow down in school zones and be vigilant when driving through crosswalks.

Have questions about SES? Email [sunnysideenvironmentalnews@gmail.com](mailto:sunnysideenvironmentalnews@gmail.com) and maybe I'll answer them in a future column!

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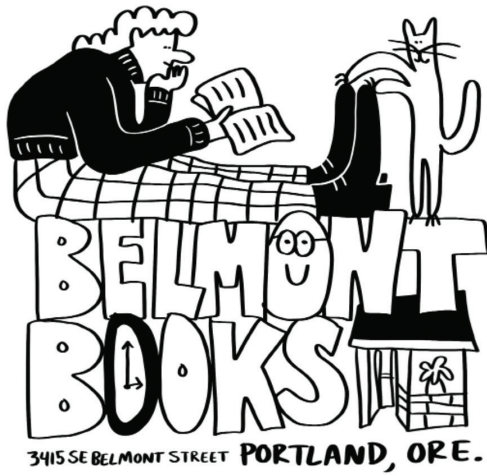
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Any opinions expressed, unless specified, are not necessarily those of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association or its board. **Sunnyside residents are welcome to submit articles for consideration that concern neighborhood issues, by emailing [newsletter@sunnysideportland.org](mailto:newsletter@sunnysideportland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



## Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

Live near any of the blocks marked in black below? We need your help!  
 Contact [fergex@gmail.com](mailto:fergex@gmail.com) to volunteer for our delivery service.

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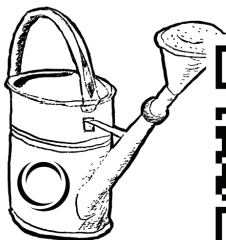
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