

ALBERTA STREET 2014 PROJECT Cultural Resource Inventory with Recommendations

During the summer of 1992 six Portland high school students, African-American boys and girls age 14 to 18, were employed for six weeks to research and document a comprehensive cultural resource inventory for the Alberta Street neighborhood. Their efforts culminated in a 150-page report containing detailed maps, tables, and photographs documenting local conditions at that time, and supporting their recommendations for making a better future for N.E. Alberta area residents and businesses.

Now, 22 years later, the original developers of the 1992 report are proposing to replicate the exact methodology used by the original report authors to document and consider current conditions along Alberta Street. Too, there is a resulting opportunity to do a detailed comparative analysis and evaluate changes in the neighborhood a generation later – and to consider added recommendations, including such current issues and concerns as neighborhood gentrification, gang violence, and “Last Thursday” cultural events.

There were two principal objectives in doing the original 1992 report: to provide a meaningful employment experience for African-American students that would give them enhanced technical and communications skills for improving individual academic and employment opportunities; and to produce a valuable and useful tool for attaining desired future conditions in the Alberta Street and greater Portland communities.

Since the creation of the original report to the present time there have been significant changes in both the Alberta Street neighborhood and in the technologies and methods of communication routinely used by students today. The 1992 report was created with a single computer, a camera, a tape recorder, and a copier; today’s students routinely use texting, email, internet search engines, websites, GPS receivers, and smartphones in their daily lives – none of which even existed in 1992. With these modern tools focused on replicating scientific methodology and conducting field research, project participants will build from the existing recommendations to better serve current and future Alberta Street businesses and residents.

Life-long scientists, entrepreneurs, and educators, Dr. Bob Zybach and Michael “Chappie” Grice designed the curriculum and instructed the student-employees that produced the original Alberta Street report. They have now rejoined forces and respective organizations in this current effort to update and build from that seminal accomplishment. The intent is to produce a proven model for other urban areas to enhance local youth employment opportunities and better consider alternatives for revitalizing their own neighborhoods.

Number of student employees: 7-16 African-American males (8-12 total) and females (4-8 total).

Length of employment: June 30 to September 18, 2014.

Student sponsorship: \$7,500 per student; including all wages, insurance, supervision, equipment, etc.

Project Deliverable: An authentic, evidence-based and comprehensive story. That story, characterized by written, documented, and website-ready reports with project findings, analysis, conclusions, recommendations and detailed written methodology, offers a proven model and a replicable template for future projects to be carried out by young people in other neighborhoods and communities.

Current collaborators: Oregon Websites and Watershed Project, Inc.; World Arts Foundation, Inc.; Cascade Pacific Council, Boy Scouts of America; and the Portland Development Commission.

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