

KIDMORE ROW

WW PRESENTS: 2009'S SKIDMORE PRIZE WINNERS

BY MEGAN BRESCINI | PHOTOS BY MIKE PERRAULT



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FOUR SKIDMORE PRIZE WINNERS AND TWO RUNNERS-UP! PICTURED ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT) IS JENNIFER GILMORE, BRANDI TUCK AND JENN COHEN. MEET FOWZIA ABDULLE, CARY CLARKE AND AMY SACKS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES. GIVE TO THEIR NONPROFITS AT WEEK.COM/GIVEGUIDE.



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THESE SIX PORTLANDERS ARE MAKING THE CITY A BETTER COMMUNITY. ONE NONPROFIT AT A TIME.

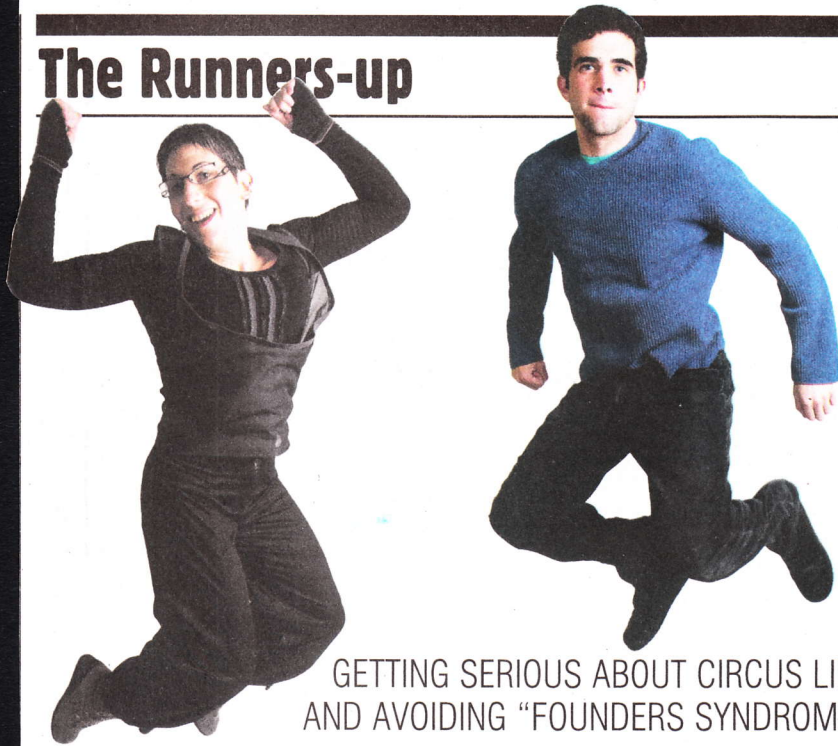
Imagine this promising young lawyer: Fresh out of law school and facing a mountain of student debt, she decides to take a job representing clients who can't pay. Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Well, that's the kind of crazy Give!Guide lives for—the kind that shows courage, imagination and chutzpah. Without this kind of crazy, Portland would be a far drearier place.

That's why we've honored four local do-gooders this year with the Skidmore Prize. Each is 35 or younger. Each works for a local nonprofit. And each does fabulous work. The intent of the prize is to encourage the winners to keep at their nonprofit work longer than they might otherwise and to hold them up as examples to others. Each will be honored at an awards ceremony at the noon meeting of the Portland City Club on Friday, Nov. 20. There they'll receive personal grants of \$4,000 each, along with handsome plaques.

Making Portland a better community for the rest of us is hard work that has only gotten harder in the past year, as more individuals, children and families affected by the recession are forced to rely on the resources nonprofits provide. This year's Skidmore Prize winners don't just keep at it; they all love—and can't get enough of—what they do. In fact, each winner gives the impression that nothing—debt or otherwise—could persuade her to give up her mission to improve our city.

CONT. on page 11

The Runners-up



GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT CIRCUS LIFE AND AVOIDING "FOUNDERS SYNDROME"

JENN COHEN CIRCUS PROJECT

Jenn Cohen started the Circus Project in 2007, and it's been a one-woman show ever since.

Cohen is also a therapist with a master's degree in process-oriented therapy. "I had been circus artist for many years," she says, "and I thought that at-risk and homeless youth had some amazing stories to tell. So, I thought that artistically it would be a great opportunity for the world, for Portland, to hear their stories through the arts."

All it takes is one good idea to get something off the ground, and in Cohen's case, it's sent kids flying through the air on trapezes.

"Why circus? There is something for everybody," Cohen explains. "Whether you're a clown, or you're graceful, or not graceful, or you're strong, or a comedian—for whatever type of personality that comes in and wants to express itself, there is a role in the circus."

While circus has clowning, it's not all goofing around. Teaching such demanding skills to this population comes with serious challenges. Some of the kids Cohen teaches drop in off the street; others arrive by referral. "A lot of these kids don't have a huge attention span, and they haven't grasped onto more traditional forms of theater and arts," says Cohen. "But the degree of risk in circus

really catches them and brings their attentiveness to the program.

"The nature of circus is very physical. I had [an experience] in the beginning where I was spotting kids, and they would keep falling. They had the strength to do the moves. So I had a meeting with them and asked, 'What's going on?' And they said, 'We just wanted to be held. We knew you'd catch us.'"

CARY CLARKE PDX POP NOW!

For Cary Clarke, a bittersweet moment has come. He is leaving the board of an organization that he helped create—PDX Pop Now!, which under his tutelage and hard work has grown into an icon of the local music scene.

"Everyone who's built a nonprofit will tell you, be careful of 'founder's syndrome,'" he says. "It's a big danger that nonprofits become entirely dependent on the people that put them together."

PDX Pop Now! started with an email list and a group of dissatisfied music enthusiasts. There soon followed a three-day, free, all-ages, local music festival that was successful enough to repeat—and grow. Though Clarke is leaving the organization he spearheaded, we've decided to make him a runner-up for his years of dedicated effort.

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What \$25 w

Twenty-five dollars may get you some sweet swag... wondering what it does for the fine folks you're giving... green turns into real-life goods.

THE CIRCUS PROJECT

\$25 = a week's worth of

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to sustain students during drop-in aerial class

COMMUNITY CYCLING CENTER



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