**Press Release**

**For immediate release**

Contact:

High-definition photos available on request

**“KairosPDX opens August 6th to transform North Portland’s education landscape.”**

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**Portland, Ore. , 2014** -

In the center of North Portland, classrooms are being readied and educators are preparing innovative curriculum as the big day approaches: On August 6th KariosPDX Learning Academy will open it’s doors for its inaugural year as Portland’s first charter school dedicated to boost achievement for low-income children and children of color.

The KairosPDX Learning Academy will follow the Reggio-Emilia pedagogy and incorporate both STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and arts-based curriculum. These approaches are evidence-based models that are proven effective at preparing children with real life skills, and leadership. The Kairos Learning Academy will also be year round so as to maximize children’s learning.

KairosPDX will pioneer change to the educational environment in Portland that has made it possible for black boys to be expelled at four times a higher rate than their peers, as early as kindergarten. In the face of these statistics, school reform advocates agree that fundamental changes must be made to the way we educate our children, a challenge KairosPDX intends to meet.

Since their unanimous charter approval by the Portland Public Schools board seven months ago, KairosPDX leadership has worked tirelessly to fundraise the remaining funds needed before the school’s doors open in 3 weeks. According to Oregon law, charter schools receive $.55 on the dollar of public school funding. This means schools, like the KairosPDX Learning Academy, must find private dollars to fill the gap to keep their classrooms running. The overwhelming support has been steadily increasing, a reflection of the deep community commitment and strong leadership backing this endeavor. But the real work has just begun.

“For these parents and for our community, the K-5 Learning Academy is about changing the narrative for kids who are not succeeding in our current system,” explains Kali Thorne Ladd, founding Executive Director of KairosPDX. “We cannot expect different outcomes for our children without a different approach,” continues Ms. Ladd. “Here in Portland, the moment is upon us to try a different, proven model for how to educate our historically-underserved children.

KairsPDX will take a three-pronged approach consisting of wrap around services to connect families and caregivers with resources including an Early Learning Network; a Early Learning Center providing a Reggio inspired curriculum and environment for 3-4 year old students and the K-5 Learning Academy. Education leader, co-founder and 20 year teacher Zalika Gardner will be the Learning Academy’s Principal.

This August in three vibrant classrooms in North Portland – two kindergartens and one first grade – the tide will change in the achievement gap that continues to deny access to opportunity to thousands of youth. Opportunity that generations fought for . . . died for.