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### Homeownership group wins \$100,000 grant



MELISSA NAVAS

NORTH PORTLAND

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Proud Ground will use the money to help first-time buyers find affordable homes

By MELISSA NAVAS THE OREGONIAN

Proud Ground, a nonprofit that provides affordable homeownership opportunities, has received a two-year, \$100,000 grant from the Meyer Memo-

rial Trust to continue supporting first-time homebuyers.

The North Portland-based organization will use the money to increase its community outreach, homeownership education and counseling, and housing development activities.

Executive Director Jesse Beason said outreach is important, particularly to those who aren't searching for a home because they think they

cannot afford one.

"We want to reach people who have decided that they are already shut out of the American dream of owning their own home," Beason said.

The award will mean adding more than 150 permanently affordable homes in Portland by 2013, in addition to nearing its 200th first-time homebuyer, Beason said in a press release.

One of Proud Ground's priorities is to close the homeownership gap for communities of color. About 49 percent of the North Portland-based organization's families have been from those communities since it was founded in 1999.

Beason expects an increase in home purchases in 2011 and 2012 following a slow 2010. He attributes some of that to construction delays.

Proud Ground works with community partners, lenders and builders to prepare low-to moderate-income homes for first-time homebuyers. It also renovates existing homes and builds energy-efficient affordable homes.

The Meyer Memorial Trust, founded in 1982, has awarded nearly \$532 million to benefit community needs such as arts and culture, conservation and the environment, education,

health care, human services and public affairs.

For more information, visit the nonprofit's website, proudground.org.