



Ockley Green students Kenya Vasquez (left) and Marissa Pasaye-Elias, discuss their understanding of the George Zimmerman trial and the process of re-enacting the case with their Mock Trial team.

## All Lives Matter

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authority figures, and how racism increases the dangers of walking around at night, no matter how wellintentioned.

The students share stories of



Students of the Ockley Green Middle School Mock Trial Team designed their own hoodies to honor the life and death of Trayvon Martin. Pictured are (from left) Laceigh Jones, Kaiya Laguardia and Toni Duan.

**19 YEARS OF SERVICE** 

Emmett Till, a black teenage boy who was violently murdered in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman. They talk about Martin Luther King Jr., the great civil rights activist assassinated in broad daylight in the 1960s; the recent high-profile death of black teen Mike Brown, killed by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer; the police attack on Rodney King two decades ago; to Eric Garner's death, the African-American whose last words were "I can't breathe" as a police officer strangled him on camera.

White children joined in, describing their fears for their black and Latino peers, worrying about the prejudices and injustices facing their community.

The outreach last week by the trial team came on the heels of performing a re-enactment of the Zimmerman trial earlier in the school year. Oregon Appeals Court Judge Darleen Ortega and Multnomah County defense attorney Audra Kaleta guided the students through the process, along with attorney

other high-profile killings, like late Charles Washington, publisher of the Portland Observer.

In the mock trial, the Okley Green students confidently found Zimmerman guilty, but their judgment on the case did not give them lasting satisfaction. The students found it difficult to return back to a world in which Zimmerman walked free. This spurred the desire to host the assembly and brainstorm with other students about ending racial profiling.

Students from other Portland area schools were invited to attend the assembly and join small student-led workshops to tackle the issues. Each group almost universally requested that racial profiling be curbed, and called out authority figures, especially police, to take more caution when confronting people of color, especially asking that guns not be drawn so quickly.

The students of the Mock Trial team now vow to reconvene and plan another assembly to follow up on the goals they composed. They hope the next gathering will occur in six weeks, symbolically matching the time it took after Martin's death Rakeem Washington, son of the tocharge Zimmerman with murder.