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'Put Your Guns Down'



Urgent plea for peaceful path forward

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Gang-related shootings are on the rise and the mourning families of shooting victims are urgently asking for an end to the violence and a peaceful path forward.

Black mothers of gang-related shooting victims came together Thursday to make their plea at Bethel AME Church in northeast Portland.

Joined together by the sorrow of having lost either a son or daughter to gang-violence, about a half dozen moms spoke of their hopes for positive change in the community.

Among them was Gizelle Holiman, mother of the recently deceased Quintrell Holiman, who died during a fraught manhunt with police after running away from a federal prison halfway house.

She shared her concerns about some false reports regarding her son's death that could trigger violent acts aimed at police.

"I just need to make it clear that my son took his own life," she said. "There are rumors about people wanting to hurt the police, I don't want that. Leave the police alone."

Portland police officers said when they were in pursuit of Holiman, he fled on foot and was eventually found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound near Shimmers bar.

His mother described him as a hard worker who would be up at 5 a.m. with a cup of coffee in hand, dancing, and ready to start his day. "He would always tell young men, 'Don't do as I do, do better than me,'" she said. "He was fun, and loving."

In a tearful plea, she urged warring community members to put their guns down and think twice before acting violently.

What I want is everybody, gang members, non-gang members to put your guns down. And before you put your arms up to shoot somebody, put your arms up and

PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Pastor Herman Greene leads a group of mothers and family members in prayer as they mourn the loss of sons and daughters to gang violence and ask the community to find a way out of the violence and a peaceful path forward.

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