



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Regena Warren of the Portland-based group Black Women for Peace talks to spoken-word artist Jesse Jones who will perform at the group's annual Peace Festival on Sunday, Aug. 24 at Benson High School.

# Ambassadors <sup>for</sup> Peace

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

from this community have stepped up to address those areas, and I think we just found it was time we say and do something about the concerns for young people in the criminal justice system," Warren said.

Black Women for Peace was founded as a non-profit to offer vision, input, strategies and support to promote peace in the community. The organization had its founding five years ago when former Multnomah County Commissioner Barbara Willer and current County Commissioner Loretta Smith called upon 50 black women to meet together, share their efforts at combating youth violence, and catch up on what has been done in the past.

The group didn't stick together

at that large size – but at least five of the original members regrouped and formed the organization. Since then, Black Women for Peace has honored Smith and Willer as its first peace champions.

Last year, County Health Department Director Joanne Fuller and Mary Li, Community Services Division manager for the Multnomah County Department of Human Services, were also celebrated for the work they had accomplished for youth in the community.

The people who work with Black Women for Peace make the following PEACE pledge: "Protect the liberties of others as well as my own; Educate myself towards being the best me I can be; Actively listen to others rather than judge; Choose to give grace rather than take offense; and Extend myself to others sincerely

without seeking anything in return."

And it's not just youth or participants who can take the pledge – ambassadors, or community members who just want to spread the peace message, are encouraged to take the pledge as well.

Youth from across the Portland area, from ages 12 to 24, will display their skills and talents at Sunday's festival, scheduled for a 3 p.m. start. Key performances are scheduled from Toni Qi, Sarah Steele, Jesse Jones, Sarah Steele, KyShae Marshall, Alayah Salmon-Sykes, and Imani Washington.

Those interested in learning more, donating, or volunteering for the festival or become an active part of Black Women for Peace and their community outreach are encouraged to visit [blackwomen4peace.com](http://blackwomen4peace.com).



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