

# United for Peace

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

know that there are good people in Portland taking a stand to uphold equal rights for all people.”

The united voices for peace took place against the backdrop of recent shooting attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif. and their aftermath, both of which had Islamic extremist groups involved. These attacks have caused shock waves across the country, and have been used by some as a platform for xenophobia and Islamophobic sentiment.

One of the most high-profile voices condemning Muslim immigration and asylum has been Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who has called for a “total and complete shutdown” of Muslim immigration into the United States.

The local leaders condemned Trump’s proposal, reminding many that holding a diverse group of religious people accountable for the act of a few was prejudicial and ignorant – and could potentially cause a massive loss of life for Syrian refugees who stand to be turned away and returned to deadly conditions back in the Middle East.

Ned Rosch, an activist from the Portland chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, told a story of his own uncle being turned away from the United States during the Holocaust, only to be killed back in Europe.

“When we single out, malign, debase any one or any group in



PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

An interfaith news conference at Portland City Hall to speak out on Islamophobia draws the support of a dozens of local leaders, including the voice Kayse Jama (at podium), an original founder of Portland’s Center for Intercultural Organizing and a Somalian refugee himself.

our community we are much less and much uglier,” he said. “I congratulate the Portland City Council for doing the right thing.”

Kayse Jama, executive director at the Center for Intercultural Organizing in north Portland, said defending the rights of Muslim Americans and welcoming refugees was akin to defending freedom and the right to practice whatever faith a person wants.

“We affirm the universality of the anti-racist struggle and through it, equality in law, respect and dignity of all human beings,”

Jama said.

On Friday, Voices of a Thousand Angels, an Africa American Interfaith prayer group, held a special community wide service to promote a more peaceful and just world, regardless of our dif-

ferent beliefs.

E.D. Mondainé, the senior pastor at the Celebration Tabernacle issued the invitation to the program, which included poetry from local writer S. Renee Mitchell and a song of prayer from the local In-

digenous community courtesy of Fish Martinez.

“My team and I have responded to a national catastrophe across our great nation and today I sense an urgent call to respond with community prayer,” Mondainé said.



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