

Advocacy Work Transforms Young Leader

Now 27, Whitten's efforts addressing inequities grows

BY DANNY PETERSON
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Cameron Whitten's advocacy work for marginalized communities in Portland has taken many forms over the years, from being an organizer of the Occupy Portland movement, to co-founding Portland's Resistance in response to the election of President Donald Trump, to starting a non-profit to leverage community grounded initiatives to make justice and economic prosperity a lived experience for black, brown, and indigenous people in Oregon.

Now, as the executive director of the Q Center, the largest LGBTQ+ center in the Pacific Northwest, he's continuing that fight using a lens of intersectionality—a term that denotes the multiple identities that people hold, and the sometimes compounding affects of oppression that go along with that, coined by black civil rights advocate and scholar Kimberle Crenshaw.

"Intersectionality affects me every



PHOTOS BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Cameron Whitten, the recently named permanent executive director of the Q Center, located at 4115 N Mississippi Ave., is taking his activism background to a new level, helping the non-profit's mission of providing safe spaces, community building, and empowerment for those in the LGBTQ+ communities.

day. Every day I know that somebody somewhere will look at me and either I will be not black enough, too black; not queer enough, too gay. I'll be too loud, too quiet; too direct, not radical enough. And because of this I've been denied so many opportunities," Whitten told the Portland Observer.

Named the permanent executive director of the Q Center, located at 4115 N Mississippi Ave., back in December by its board of directors, Whitten has already brought many successes to the organization since joining as interim executive director in July.

He has been credited with helping expand staff and volunteer opportunities at the center, partnered with the group's development manager to raise more than \$134,000 at their annual fundraiser, SHINE, and worked with the board to develop strategic planning documents and host regular town hall meetings, among many other accomplishments.

The Q Center, which has been around since 2003, provides safe spaces, resources, and advocacy for people "at the intersection of identities," Whitten said.

Originally from northern Virginia,

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"We may have all come on different ships,
 but we're in the same boat now."
 — Martin Luther King Jr.

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