

Activist Remembers King's Lessons

Her aim is to save kids from gun violence

By **BEVERLY CORBELL**
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Laurie Palmer, a Black community activist who started a local organization to address the root causes of gang violence, remembers how much the message of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. affected her life and how she tries to carry his work for racial progress forward.

A motivational speaker and founder of the Go Get Your Child Community Violence Prevention Coalition, Palmer's vision is "to have a community that collaborates together to create safer options to violence."

Gang violence is rampant in Portland, she said, and Palmer's own son Jasmine was shot four times in 1995. He survived, but died of a heart attack five years later. Fighting against gang violence is something she has never stepped down from, even actively confronting young gang members, including her son.

"I used to go get my child

through all his gangbanging and all this foolishness... I was in the street with his little homies at night when they were running around, chasing them down, putting blessing oil on all their heads and telling them the blood of Jesus is against you," she said. "They knew me and some of them are cutting my grandson's hair now. I feel like I saved some lives."

But she hasn't slowed down and is constantly coming up with new strategies to help victims of violence and enable mothers to have the ability to get their child out of gangs.

With the help of grants and other activists, Palmer's latest efforts include reaching out to at least seven women who have lost a child to gang violence, to help them become stable, and have them in turn help other mothers. To learn more, go to gogetyourchild.org.

"If we start healing the women, we can heal this community," she said.

Palmer had a tough childhood, and remembers being inspired by King.

"Every house that I went in, from my mom's to my grandmother's to my great-grand-

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Black community activist Laurie Palmer, a motivational speaker and founder of the Go Get Your Child Community Violence Prevention Coalition, attends an event commemorating the lives lost to gun violence.

The world through his eyes.



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