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Committed to Cultural Diversity

Nonprofit helps homeless, youth

Summer event set to reclaim city streets

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Pastor Dwight Minniweather worries about vulnerable young people and those who have no home, and like so many other members of the Black community he grows ever more concerned about the violence impacting youth and others on our city streets.

But Minniweather does more than worry: He takes action. Through his nonprofit Straightway Services, the Portland pastor, with his wife Cassandra, regularly volunteer and recruit others to distribute free food and supplies to homeless camps. Until the Covid pandemic hit last year, they sponsored a midnight basketball program for young people in cooperation with neighborhood police.

Now with public health restrictions easing with the distribution of COVID vaccines, the couple is taking community activism a step further with a major event set for this summer when a “Reclaim Oregon” day is held



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Through their nonprofit Straightway Services, Pastor Dwight Minniweather and his wife, Cassandra, take action to help vulnerable young people, the homeless and other members of the Black community.

on Saturday, July 10 at Pioneer Courthouse Square, downtown, from noon to 9 p.m.

The name reflects on a desire to see Portland cleaned up from the debris and vandalism

of a year of protests, but also to progress politically, addressing some of issues impacting people

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Experienced Teacher Raises Achievement Bar

‘We want to support the Black educators, that’s first and foremost.’

BY S. RENEE MITCHELL
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Kevin Bacon, the new president of the Oregon Alliance of Black School Educators (ORABSE),



Kevin Bacon

had a calling early on to become a public school educator.

As a young boy, Bacon would make lesson plans for a group of friends in his apartment building about the adventures they would discover together. As a fourth-grader, he’d find himself taking mental notes on what worked or didn’t work with the ways teachers interacted with students or taught their subjects.

Then after school, Bacon would regularly settle in front of the family television set to watch

the now-late actor Lloyd Haynes portray the charismatic and well-loved Black teacher Pete Dixon on “Room 222.” This popular, half-hour television series about a multiracial Los Angeles high school ran for 113 episodes, from 1969 to 1974. Bacon often found himself daydreaming about having a career like the character Dixon.

“It was one of the first TV shows that portrayed African American characters in a positive way,” Bacon said. “That had an impact on me.”

Those collective group of clues pushed Bacon toward a career path as a middle school teacher in the 1980s, pseudo school administrative positions in the 90s, and ultimately a principal at all three levels elementary, middle and high before he retired in 2018.

Bacon says one of the reasons he was drawn to take over ORABSE was his interactions with other Black educators during his first year as a Portland Public

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