

## Downtown

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land Business Alliance. In response, the city launched the “Shop. Eat. Play” promotion the following Aug. 24, with free parking on the street and at SmartPark garages, as well as complimentary Biketown rentals and a number of promotions at local shops and restaurants.

**“We’re here today to help take back our city**

The day was meant to be a bright spot after a weekend marked by fear, according to Mayor Ted Wheeler.

“We lost something else,” Wheeler said at a press conference held in front of Travel Portland’s newly opened Director Park Visitor Center on Aug. 21. “We lost the ability to be in our city, in our home, and to enjoy it and experience it the way we should be able to on an August Saturday. We’re here today to help take back our city.”

Some minority-owned businesses were enough outside the fray, and are less dependent on a leisurely customer base, that they didn’t notice an interruption to business on the day of the protests. Nor did they notice an uptick in sales last Saturday. Lenora Hall, who owns G Station American Diner inside the Greyhound Station downtown, said that because most of her clientele are Greyhound riders, she didn’t close her restaurant. She also said she was not aware of the “Shop. Eat. Play” initiative.

And while many business owners appreciated

the effort, some said they wished that the city had done more to promote it – and given them time to promote it as well.

“I don’t remember hearing or seeing any brands or businesses talk about it,” Ian Williams, owner of Deadstock Coffee on NW Couch Street, told *The Skanner*.

Williams decided to keep his shop open during the rally.

“That day ended up being really, really, really slow, to where I was mad we were even open,” Williams said. “But if we had closed, we were going to be giving power to (the far-right rally). We would’ve been succumbing to what they wanted.”

Like Hall, Williams said he did not feel personally threatened by the presence of White nationalists downtown, and said he felt the rally was largely “a lot of noise.” His coffee shop acted as a check-in point for an activist friend who attended the counter-protest, and as a venue for the local Age to Come Apparel’s pop-up shop. Williams regrets that the latter did not get more foot traffic, and that another local business – Kate’s Ice Cream – canceled plans to temporarily set up outside.

Williams appreciates the city’s effort, and hopes it sets a precedent for assisting with future interruptions to business.

“It was cool that they did that, but nothing was done when we had all the snow a few years ago,” Williams said. “There was no ‘Hey, let’s make parking free for a week!’ or whatever. We drop down to 25% of our business.”

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## Loaded Back to School Drive

Kiauna Nelson, passing out tennis shoes at the first annual Loaded Back to School Drive Aug. 21 on NE Beech and Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. More than 300 pairs of Adidas shoes, along with backpacks, EarPods, dental kits and hygiene essentials were distributed. Vendors also provided free food at the event, which was held in conjunction with Planned Parenthood’s annual block party.



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

## Bruce

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about his death – and the trial and sentencing of Russell Courtier, who was convicted of Bruce’s murder in March and sentenced to life in prison in April, and Colleen Hunt, who pled guilty to manslaughter in March and was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The family has not seen it – it aired on British television Sunday and Monday, but has yet to air in the U.S. or be posted to the BBC’s streaming services, though an extended audio clip from the film is available. On the heels of the trial and their advocacy for change in Oregon’s hate crime statute, the Bruces are now working to help other families affected by racist violence.

Larnell Bruce Sr. and Natasha Bruce formed the nonprofit Larnell Bruce, Jr. Foundation last year to advocate for better hate crime laws, educate the public about hate crimes and advocate for culturally competent therapy for victims of hate crimes.

“I didn’t have a place to release the negative energy,” Larnell Bruce Sr. told *The Skanner*. “It would be hard to talk to a White counselor. I couldn’t be myself.” After looking for a year, he said,

he just gave up, though he still struggles periodically with feelings of intense grief and anger.

The family also wants to use the foundation to provide and advocate for material assistance they needed and didn’t get during the immediate aftermath of their

**“It would be hard to talk to a White counselor. I couldn’t be myself**

son’s death and the trial of his killers, as well as victim’s advocates in the courtroom, and assistance with things like parking and meals.

Better advocacy might also have helped keep the family and killers apart in the courtroom: Larnell Bruce Sr., was banned from the court room for six months, the family said, after lunging at Courtier, who was walked past him every day on the way to trial.

One reason for the lack of advocacy specifically around hate crime trials is that offenders often accept a plea deal, avoiding

trial altogether, Natasha Bruce said.

The Bruces are proud of the impact their son’s legacy has had so far: as an organ donor, they said, he helped save five lives. The state’s hate crime statute has been renamed from intimidation to bias crime and situations like the Bruce murder would be a felony, rather than a misdemeanor. The state has also added “gender identity” to its list of protected categories, and is tasked with better tracking hate crimes and creating a hotline for reporting.

“They fought and fought for a hate crime [charge]. All the time I thought there would be more punishment for him,” Natasha Bruce said.

The family is also hoping to create more awareness of White supremacist groups. Natasha Bruce told *The Skanner* that during the pretrial hearings and the trial process, she received an extensive education on the history and proliferation of hate groups in the Northwest.

“We’re hoping we bring some awareness to what’s going on and help people speak up for their neighbors,” Natasha Bruce said.

## Woke

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listened to because if people want to persuade them that’s the best way to persuade them.

**TSN:** If I told someone in Portland, Oregon that this person is a racism skeptic, they wouldn’t want to listen to them at all.

**DC:** Well, people need to get over that. Yes, they wouldn’t. That’s precisely the problem. The problem is that people who think of themselves as woke or down or understanding or allies, they think that the best way for them to effectuate change is to read people the riot act and become all condescending, and give people lectures about racism when somebody manifests either racist attitudes or just racially ignorant attitudes. And it turns out that is precisely the opposite of what needs to be done.

If you want to think of yourself as really helping the cause as opposed to just making yourself feel good, then you need to do what’s most effective.



Dr. David Campt

And what is most effective is not [act] with your impulse which is to be harsh, condescending and superior to people. That’s precisely what doesn’t work. So, yeah, that’s why

they should do it. I mean you can do that, you can make yourself feel good about ‘I just read somebody the riot act’... Who are you helping? You’re not helping people of color by doing that. You’re just making yourself feel good.

**TSN:** Why are the principles of the White ally toolkit so important in a city like Portland, Oregon – one of the Whitest cities in the country?

**DC:** People here can be really complacent. They can be complacent about being part of a better future and also

incredibly nervous. They don’t know what to do, a lot of people will be like ‘I’m woke, I check my privilege so I guess I’m doing what I can.’ They got cousins either here or in other places that have racially problematic views,

**“Well, I’m woke. I check my privilege. I’m done.’ No, you are not done**

but they don’t want to talk to them, so they isolate themselves in this little bubble and don’t do anything. And you can do that in a place like Portland, but you still got cousins you’ll see at holiday time. Part of what we’re trying to teach is – no matter where you are or who you are – if you know people in your broad circle of influence, or circle of contact even... who have racially problematic views, you can do something to achieve, to pursue racial equity.

You shouldn’t just sit up and decide ‘Well, I’m woke. I check my privilege. I’m done.’ No, you are not done. You need to be talking to Brett or Hannah or Skyler, or whoever you know, whatever white name you know, you need to be talking to them if you want to feel like you’re really doing something. You can start doing something tomorrow. You can start engaged, learning compassion-based skills and using them and start practicing them, so that when [racially problematic] stuff comes up... you can start engaging it. We have a culture here that’s way too wokity woke. [The White Ally Toolkit is] about talking to your cousin when he says that racially problematic stuff so that you can move him. Portland is a great place for that to ripple out within the anti-racist, woke community. This is like Woke Central so people really need to learn this... so they can influence other people.

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