



VOL. 2, ISSUE 2

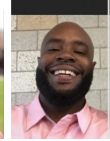
FEBRUARY, 2022



**CELEBRATING
BLACK HISTORY
MONTH**



**SPOTLIGHT ON
SUCCESS:
JONICIA SHELTON
MUHAMMAD RAHMAN**



**SPOTLIGHT ON
SUCCESS:
JASMINE LOCKE
JESSICA SLAYTON**



**SPOTLIGHT ON
SUCCESS:
SHARIF LIWARU
GERMAINE JOSEPH-
HAYS**

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Oregon Administrator Scholars Program is proud to celebrate Black History Month. This month provides a time to honor the contributions of Black people of the past as well as present-day leaders and others who have made significant contributions to the nation and world. The Oregon Administrator Scholars Program is proud to recognize some of our scholarship recipients in this edition of the newsletter.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:

JONICIA SHELTON

Jonicia was born and raised in NE Portland. As a young girl she attended Woodlawn Elementary, Whitaker Middle and Jefferson High School in Portland Oregon. She chose to leave Oregon to attend a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), Dillard University in New Orleans Louisiana while majoring in Psychology. Later receiving a Masters in Social Work from Portland State University with an emphasis in schools. Jonicia is currently receiving a (CSWA) Clinical Social Work Association certificate to receive her LCSW. As a Therapist, Jonicia enjoys listening, supporting and working collaboratively through their journey as her clients discover their strengths and develop a sense of hope and motivation to take action to improve their life situation, utilizing resources within and around them. Jonicia is very passionate about working with youth of color and their families faced with addressing concerns of mental illness and stress.

Jonicia Shelton is a business owner, social justice advocate, and a dedicated community member who also works as a Child and Family Therapist. She especially enjoys her role as a mother to two amazing teen girls Jonicia has her own private practice, "Talks with June" working primarily but not limited to adolescents and women around Depression, Anxiety and Trauma.

For the past 4 years, Jonicia has facilitated a parenting group that focuses on the reunification of parents with kids in foster-care. The group consists of 10-20 women for an organization called "Guiding Light." Jonicia has recently taken a position as an Adjunct Professor at Portland State University in their Masters of Social Work Program. She is also an Adjunct Professor at George Fox University where she teaches Cultural Foundations in social work. Her previous work experiences include Lifeworks NW as a Child and Family Therapist, Share Orchards Inn as an Advocate Coach and The Department of Human Services as a Social Service Specialist. Through many of her work experiences she has developed an unrelenting passion for assessing the needs of families and advocating on their behalf, many of which are African Americans in the community.

Jonicia has led several trainings throughout the state of Oregon. Some of her trainings include "Stop Marginalizing and Start Including: How to better support students of color" for the Oregon School Social Work Association for 100 guests, "Working from the inside out; Dealing with Depression, Anxiety and Stress for Calvary Missionary Baptist Church for 50 women of color and "Gentrification and Mental Health for The Department of Human Services for 30 guests and most recently "How to begin healing" for the Department of Human Services BEST and AMC team for 30+ guests. During Jonicia's spare time she enjoys teaching hip-hop dance to 15-30 adolescents and spending time with family and friends.

Her volunteer work includes but is not limited to helping "Why I Rock" (2018-2020), volunteering to prep teens for prom at Rosemary Anderson High School for 2 years, running a group for girls with high acuity for 20 students at Jefferson High School (2016), choreographing dances for "The Good N The Hood", Jefferson Cheer, Mt. Olivet Church and Highlands Pastor Appreciation Week, (PTA) Parent Teacher Association as the "Community Advisor" for Vernon Elementary for 2 years, Christmas Caroling with the ladies of Zeta Sigma Omega chapter (2018) and grief counseling for teachers that have lost a colleague (2021).

MUHAMMAD RAHMAN

According to my uncle upon visiting my birthplace of Detroit was that I was supposed to be a doctor. He explicitly stated that all I wanted to be when I was young was a doctor. Partially this was influenced by reading Gifted Hands by Ben Carson. Remember, I was young, and this was before the recent incarnation of Ben Carson from a respected neurosurgeon who was one of, if not the first, to separate conjoined twins at the head, to the head of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under former President Trump's administration, but I digress.

Growing up I wanted to be all the things: Spiderman (who didn't want to be him you might be asking), a fireman, a doctor, a graffiti artist, a break dancer, an architect, a rapper/singer, among other things. Teacher/educator was not on the preferred list, although my mother was a preschool teacher for a few years during my super early days and I always admired (most) of my teachers.

After switching off and on between the Lafayette Elementary across the street from me and Sister Clara Muhammad School due to ability to afford later, using an address to go to a middle school near UC Berkeley (Claremont Middle School), and attending a private boarding school through the A Better Chance (ABC) program, I decided to stay at the in state California State Hayward (now CSU East Bay...Blah) and major in Accounting and Theatre rather than go financially broke trying to make either New York University or USC (both for music business major) work with less than optimal financial aid backing. Sometimes I wish I went to the public high school (using a different address of course) that would've allowed me to get a higher GPA and perhaps more financial aid, but I digress (plus my S.A.T scores could've used quite the lift as well).

After taking time off from Cal State Hayward (Cal State East Bay now...blah again) to tend to stepdad's injury on the job and start a burgeoning "rap" career, I reentered the college atmosphere at UC Berkeley, eventually majoring in Ethnic Studies (after going through a few majors and not having the requisites to do Mass Communications).

During my time at UC Berkeley, I worked 5 jobs: I worked for Athletic Services and had the opportunity to set up athletic events and meet and take classes with future athletes/stars such as Yahya Abdul Mateen (the new Candyman and new Morpheus in Matrix), Marshawn Lynch, Aaron Rodgers, Deshaun Jackson etc.; I worked as Security in the Rochdale student living apartments, and of course my studies (at times). My 4th job was working for an After-school mentoring/tutoring program at an elementary school in Richmond with at risk youth, and my 5th job was being a friend/mentor/tutor for an autistic elementary student. I found both jobs on Craigslist one late night while trying to type a 30-page paper. I learned more from my mentees than I ever gave back. This was the beginning of my journey as an educator, and I learned a lot from both opportunities.

I also had the opportunity after college to volunteer in a 3rd grade classroom with my girlfriends' girlfriend and that helped in my development as an educator as well. Though I thought I wanted to teach 3rd grade I quickly realized I might be better off with a somewhat more mature grade level and that experience was well worth it. I decided upon moving to Oregon that I would pursue education and while working for both Friends of the Children and latter Floyd Light Middle School as an assistant in the Structured Learning Program-Behavior (SLP-B) I attended Concordia Portland at night for two years to secure MAT.

I've taught 8th Grade Math, US History, and Historical Film and coached basketball at Floyd Light Middle School for almost 11 years. If I wanted to break out freestyling about linear equations, I could. If I wanted to break out into dance or create a game where students had to dance across the floor to learn about Alternate interior angles I could. Basically, all the things I grew up wanting to be I can incorporate into my teaching practice if I so choose, and that is probably the most rewarding aspect of teaching for me. This current year I took a new position as Dean of Students at David Douglas Highschool. It has been a long circuitous journey that I've learned quite a bit from and continue to learn from as I traverse my career.

JASMINE LOCKE

For the past six years, I have been an educator in the Beaverton School District, teaching 8th grade Humanities, and presently High School English. Grounding my learning spaces in safety and inclusivity stems from my own experiences as a Black student within the Beaverton School District. Experiencing both equitable and inequitable educators motivated me to go into the education field, actively pursuing disruption of white supremacy culture in both practice and policy.

An inward reflection of my own beliefs and experiences as both a student and lead learner, as well as centering the experiences of our marginalized students; this year I have been working with our high school students around implicit bias reporting, not only for our school, but our district. This work aims to dismantle dominant culture and create a climate and culture of community for all, led by students for students. Continuing to support and amplify student voices, experiences, and perspectives I am also working as our schools Black Student Union advisor to center the voices of our Black students, staff, and larger community. As a part of the outward work, I have been an active participant on our districts Equity Leadership Team, Social Studies Cadre/Adoption Team, the Oregon Ethnic Studies K-12 Standards Adoption Team and Co-Chair our district's Superintendent Council. Working to connect and collaborate with equity-oriented folk outside of our district, I am also involved with two local non-profits. As a part of the WorldOregon Educators Council, educators from across Oregon come together regularly to collaborate around socially just practices bringing a global perspective and culturally relevant teaching practices to all Oregon students and schools. I am also a Board Member for the In4All Non-Profit, which centers community in an effort to bring collaboration between schools and businesses to offer hand-on learning experiences to students who are historically marginalized.

This past December, I completed my Master in Educational Leadership, as well as my Administrative License at Lewis and Clark College. My deepened and continued learning around uprooting systems of white supremacy in our educational systems has grounded my heart and practice in creating learning spaces centered around Black joy and liberation, sustaining creative and educational liberation for us all.

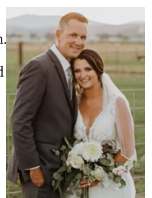
"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." - Marian Wright Edelman

JESSICA SLAYTON

My name is Jessica Oakley and I am a 3rd grade teacher in Klamath Falls. I have been teaching for 6 years and have been lucky enough to stick with 3rd grade the entire time! I always knew that I wanted to get into administration after being in the classroom. I believe that administrators are the ones who can make the steps towards change in the education system as a whole.

I was raised by a single mother after my dad passed away when I was 3. Growing up I never knew my heritage or where my father's side of the family came from. I am so incredibly thankful for the mother that I have because she raised me to be hardworking, dedicated, and driven. When it seems like she could have easily given up, she pushed even harder which in turn made me even more determined to make her proud. It wasn't until college that I found out where my heritage came from and since then I have been on a quest to learn more about myself, my family, and my background. I believe that finding out all of the parts that make up who I am has led me to develop a whole new vision and perspective in education.

Throughout my career I have found my passion in finding ways to create equity. I have always been the teacher that fostered meaningful relationships with my students and parents. Doing so has made me realize the inequalities that hide within the education system, and I have been doing my best to voice my findings in order to make a change. I plan on applying for administration jobs in the near future and cannot wait to get out of my comfort zone and give myself the opportunity to not only grow but to make a difference in the lives of many!



SHARIF LIWARU

I am Sharif Liwaru. I go by my last name, Liwaru. The name comes from the Maasai (maa) word for lion, olowuaru. I've been pushing to end racism and oppression through JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion) since my undergrad years as a Black Studies major in the Midwest. I've worked through Boystown and the Y, as well as in higher education and K-12 institutions. I've served in the Malcolm X Foundation and I am now doing my work in the Pacific Northwest. Much of my mentoring and service work are through ΦΒΣ Fraternity, Inc. Professionally I am a Director of Equity and Family Partnerships at Northwest Regional ESD. I am an American-born African, Husband, Father and M'Zee.

Mentoring and supporting youth is what has driven me for most of my career path. It has provided me with pleasure in my work and great satisfaction of carrying on the tradition of my ancestors. I share a long history of youth advocacy with my teaching-artist wife, and we've raised three children together.

Early on at age 17, through an after-school Junior Achievement program, I was tutoring Black-identifying youth and facilitating scholarly discussions, empowerment activities, African American history studies, and financial literacy. I was a senior in high school at that time and highly focused on my scholarship applications, college admissions, and all sorts of other college preparations. Being able to convey all those necessary college bound steps to younger boys in real time provided them with a young role model to look up to. They could see themselves in my shoes in just five or so years.

That same senior year, having just moved from California to Omaha Nebraska, I filled a need for leadership development by getting involved with and being voted in as 2nd Vice President of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation (MXMF) and was given a seat amongst elders from the community. I believed their mentorship and investment in me as a leader would fuel what I could give back to those younger than me as well as any community I was part of. Through my years of service and eventual presidency with MXMF, I had the opportunity to meet and gain insight from members of Malcolm X's family, celebrities, scholars, and international visitors paying respects at the home site of this civil rights activist. More important than that, I welcomed and participated in many service-learning projects with lots of groups of students from local elementary, middle and high schools, in addition to students from multiple colleges and universities.

A long-time priority has been building character and confidence in students, helping to amplify their voices by having them "at the table," just as I had been an empowered teen at the table of the MXMF board. I've co-led and sponsored enrichment activities for diverse young men in my fraternity's auxiliary group, the Sigma Beta Club. We recruited them to step up with their input on committees for a more student-led approach to our principles of "Brotherhood, Scholarship, and Service."

We can give in our communities in so many ways... time, talent, or treasure. I've been proud to do small meaningful things like greeting students in the morning a few times each month as they were dropped off at school. I've enjoyed storytelling and reading to students each quarter as a Goal Buddy. For almost four years, I learned insights from youth while co-facilitating a district-wide equity advisory group made up of bright and diverse high school students. Mentoring on Saturdays with The Blueprint Foundation in Oregon, I've grown with students as they explore future career options in construction and the environmental sciences. To love what you do and know that it matters, what could be more fun!



GERMAINE JOSEPH-HAYS

My entry into the world of school administration could not have happened at a more tumultuous time in public education. We are approaching the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects on students and families will perhaps be felt for a generation. In many ways, this first year as one of the assistant principals at Corvallis High School in Corvallis, Oregon has been trial by fire. I think there is now a broad consensus that the return to full-time in person school has been significantly more challenging than the almost eighteen months of virtual school. As I have reflected on what the experience has been like so far, and how I have navigated this new position, I view it as another sharp bend in the road that has been my journey as an educator.

I grew up on the small island of St. Lucia in the Eastern Caribbean and completed my university studies in Canada. I have lived in the United States for over a decade, working as a science teacher and raising two biracial and bicultural daughters with my American-born husband. I grew up being so keenly aware of what it meant to be St. Lucian, and more broadly, Caribbean. In St. Lucia, I felt at ease in my own skin; laughed loudly, spoke with a hint of a song on every word, in spaces from classrooms to offices. While many aspects of our education system were rooted in Eurocentric norms, there were cultural celebrations throughout the school year, teachers who looked and spoke like me, and a deep sense of collectivism. It was incredibly affirming to grow up in a collectivist society where I understood and appreciated that any achievements I would have in life, would be shared by my school, my family, and my nation. It motivated me and gave me comfort to know that I was being encouraged and celebrated by others around me. This collective mindset also made failure easier to navigate because I knew that responsibility would be shared by others. It decreased shaming and blaming and led to more vulnerability and openness, which in turn led to being less afraid to try new approaches.

As one of the few Black school administrators in the state of Oregon, I know how important it is for our black and brown students to see themselves in their leaders. They need to believe that they can aspire to not just exist, but to thrive in any spaces they are in. Several things about my background, perspective, and life experiences have shaped the school leader I am today. I want my colleagues and my students at my school to be grounded in who they are and all the wonderful things that their diverse cultures give them. In over a decade of being an educator in New Mexico and Oregon, I have seen students from groups that have been historically marginalized not reach their full potential as there is a daily struggle to navigate school systems where they often feel unwelcome. I know that my formative years in St. Lucia granted me the resilience to not shrink in the face of the dominant white culture in the United States, though this has been very challenging at times. Despite some of the Eurocentric norms that were valued in my schools there, I felt connected to my teachers and learning, and did not feel that my traditions made me lesser. This is something that I am working to help cultivate in indirect and direct ways at my school. Indirectly, I think about resisting subtle cues to laugh more softly, ask fewer people for input before making decisions, and to show up 'professionally' to meetings. I remind myself that many of these standards are rooted in white culture and it is up to me to show that acting professionally can and should include showing emotion, making connections, and having joyful moments in the midst of administrative tasks that need to be done. Directly, I know that I can be a voice on our leadership team for continuing district efforts to talk about race in classrooms and meeting rooms. I know that I have

to continue to embrace my various social identities and build relationships with people who hold viewpoints different from mine. Ultimately, I hope that when people look at my leadership, they see me in the fullness of all my identities and the life experiences I bring with me. I hope to lead from a place of joy and connectedness, essential elements of who I am at my core.



Oregon Administrators Scholars Program
Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission
250 Division Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

If you are interested in contributing to the Newsletter,
contact Kirsten Plumeau, OASP Program Coordinator
Kirsten.plumeau@oregon.gov
971.599.0605