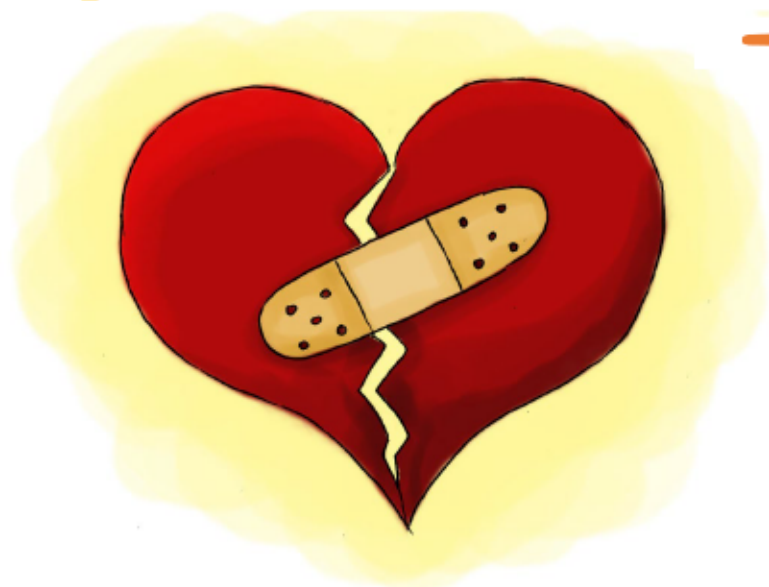


# When Will We Learn?

It's Not Their Heads,  
It's Their (Broken) Hearts

**A research-informed, healing-centered  
path that works for Black youth!**



---

***An equity-grounded presentation by***

***Dr. S. Renee Mitchell***  
A Visionary HeARTivist

*with guest presenters from*

***I Am MORE (Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday)***



## WHO AM I?

- **Award-winning former newspaper journalist for 25 years**
- **Former high school teacher**
- **Visionary founder of I Am M.O.R.E. (*Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday*)**
  - *3x SEL awardee NYC-based NoVo Foundation*
- **Creative Revolutionist™**, i.e., Poet Playwright, Artist, Author, Performer, etc.
- **Trauma-Informed /SEL expert**
- **2021 Gladys McCoy Lifetime Achievement Awardee – Mult. Cnty**
- **2019 Spirit of Portland Award**

[www.ReneeMitchellSpeaks.com](http://www.ReneeMitchellSpeaks.com)

[www.IAmMOREesilient.com](http://www.IAmMOREesilient.com)



# WHAT IS | AM MORE?

*What's intention?* It is a purposeful awareness of how you want to experience something.

- GROUNDING
- STORYTELLING
- COOPERATIVE LEARNING
- SHARE TOOLS & IDEAS
- ANSWER QUESTIONS IN CHAT, IF WE HAVE TIME
- EMAIL MATERIALS

A culturally n  
 evidence-ba  
 (PERSONAL & COLLECTIVE)  
 profound  
 transformative  
 of color mo  
 joyful and empow  
 for themselfe

Our  
 intention  
 creates  
 =our=  
 reality

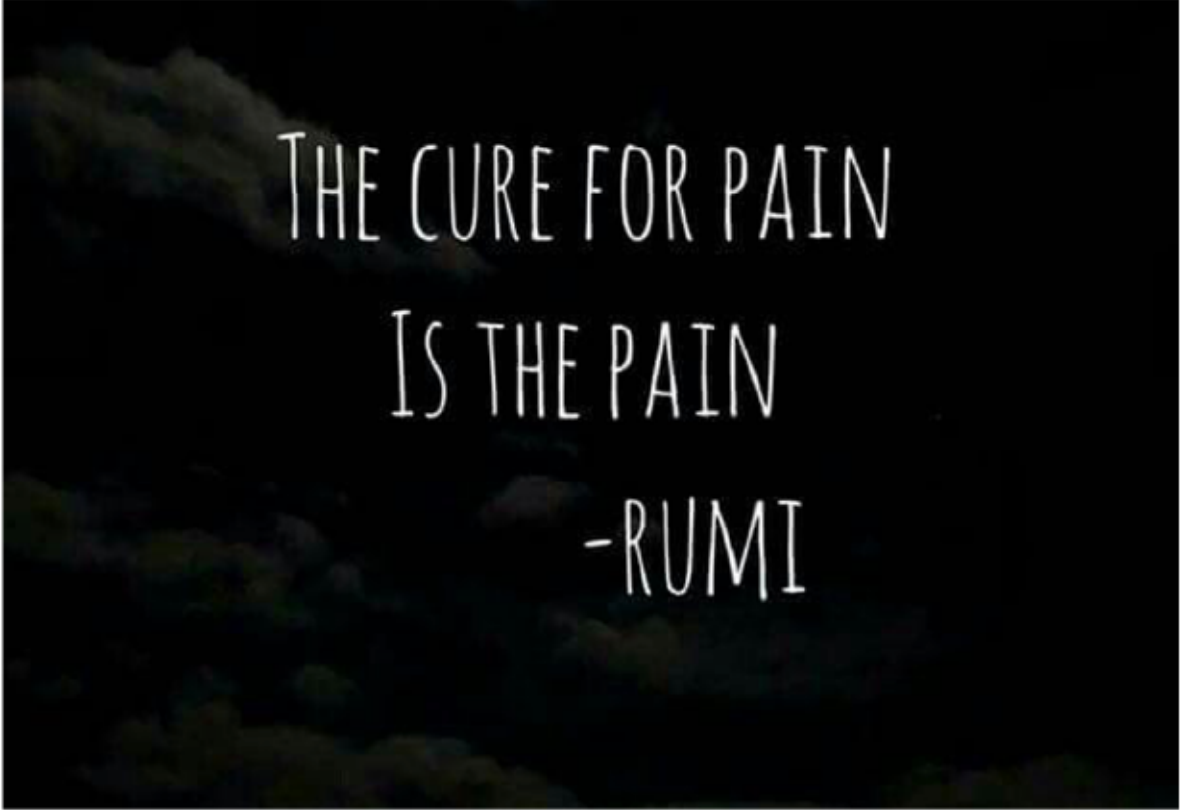
length-based,  
 m that invests  
 potentially  
 Please post your intention  
 hat helps youth  
 i.e.  
 the world as  
 red change agents  
 and for others.

*I will embrace change.*  
*I will act with courage.*  
*I will accept the challenge.*  
*I will do the necessary hard work.*



---

# LET'S GET PERSONAL



THE CURE FOR PAIN  
IS THE PAIN  
-RUMI

---

*It will further explain the WHY behind the programming.*



# Invisible ME

---

I was a middle child...a punctuation mark,  
always looking for a purpose to fill...

I was bullied at home & school for:

- Black skin
- Big lips
- Big feet
- Wide shoulders
- Coarse hair
- A gap in my front teeth





# I never fit in...



School was a place of constant suffering, trauma, and isolation.

1970-3  
The most important thing about my life is helping little kids and teaching them how to read and write. The best thing about life is doing what's right so you won't get in ~~trouble~~ trouble. When you are courteous and decent you will get more friends so one ~~two~~ half of our life is having fun playing sports like football. Sometimes there are parts in life when you have to defend yourself from bullies who are always picking on you. But the best thing about life is



# Grief & Trauma were constant companions



Region IX Deputy Director Joe Casillas (center) was guest of honor for a day of recognition at the Sonoma County, California, People for Economic Opportunity. Shown before the OEO/PEO booth display at Sonoma County Fair with Mr. Casillas are (left) CAA director Roy Mitchell and board chairman Pete Martinez.

## Age 11

Racism led to my father's untimely death in white-only hospital

## Age 13

First considered suicide, believing my life didn't matter to anyone



**My mother – who had been pregnant for nine years in a row - was emotionally unavailable.**



# Grief & Trauma Continued

*I smiled less & less*



## Age 14

Moved from northern California to rural Oregon  
I was spit on. Bullied. Shunned by white students.

Beat up by star football player while my  
homeroom teacher & classmates watched.

Was told by teachers that I was not college material.

## Age 15

Run over by a car  
at Unthank Park.  
In Emanuel hospital  
for 3 months. Very  
depressed, isolated.







### Age 17

Graduated with honors  
Received a full academic scholarship  
More surgeries on my leg

Moved on...  
Trauma followed  
Grief grew...



### Age 18

Had Black teachers for first time  
I finally felt a sense of belonging  
Kidnapped and raped by adult stranger



### Age 20

Felt isolated & deeply depressed  
I put a gun to my head  
I felt like no one cared

**Mother wound / abandonment**  
**Grief / Withdrawn / Sleeplessness**  
**Shame / Low self-esteem / Shy**  
**Imposter syndrome**  
**Mistrusting / Suspicious of others**  
**Emotionally Detached**  
**Pessimistic / Resentful / Angry**  
**Addictive negative habits**  
**Self-sabotaging / Depressed**  
**Distracted / Envious of others**  
**Anxious / Distrustful / Quiet**  
**Self-critical / Judgmental**



**THINK**

*Let's take a moment to  
acknowledge to yourself  
any commonalities within  
my journey that you have  
experienced yourself.*



Ever since childhood, my amygdala in my brain (*fight, flight, freeze, fiddle about, etc.*) has been in constant high alert.

**Now** imagine if I was in your classroom...

Or an abused teenager in any existing Portland youth-development programming...

Or a lonely, angry teenager who joined a gang just to fit in...



how would any of your existing tools helped me?

I didn't need more discipline, money, friends or outside approval to get my life on track...

I needed  
**HEALING**







BLACK YOUTH ARE  
THE MOST  
PRODIGIOUSLY  
TRAUMATIZED  
ADOLESCENT  
GROUP

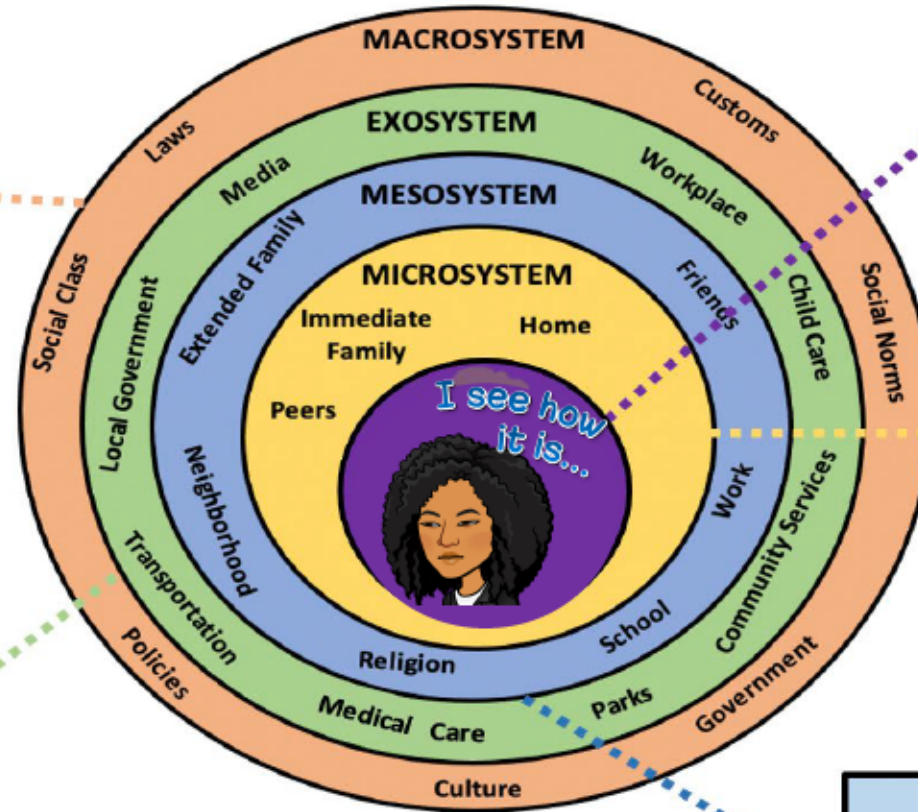
# Black children are set up to fail from birth. *When will the healing begin?*

## MACROSYSTEM

Society, laws, customs and policies are socially constructed to favor whiteness and justify racial oppression in the lie of Black inferiority. Government engages in financial disinvestment, negligence and injustice in employment, housing, health care, law enforcement, land use, child welfare, transportation, and privatization of public services. Gentrification disrupts historically Black neighborhoods. Prisons serve as free labor.

## EXOSYSTEM

Anti-Black messages are perpetuated in media. Black families work more hours and earn less. Schools lack sufficient resources. Affordable child-care centers are limited. Community services provided from deficit lens (*reduce violence, increase academic achievement*) that reinforces stereotypes. Bias of medical care providers contributes to health disparities. Absence or underfunding of community-based, culturally specific services. Limited access to safe, neighborhood parks. Over-reliance on public transportation.



## INDIVIDUAL

Anti-blackness organizes the social context of each Black child's life. *Impacts:* Prolonged grief, self-hatred, shame, hidden rage, aggression, helplessness, frustration. Unhealthy eating, sleep impairment, paranoia, alcohol & drug use, fatalism.

## MICROSYSTEM

Race based traumatic stress intensifies. Grief from repeated Black death. Poverty. Police bias. Family dysfunction breeds child abuse, sexual and physical abuse, divorce. Neighborhoods lack safe places to play. Subconscious racial bias of white educators make schools "a site of Black suffering." School to prison pipeline.

## MESOSYSTEM

Gang violence & peer victimization. Family dysfunction shuttles Black children toward a culturally deficit foster care system. Racially disproportionate health issues lead to higher death and infant mortality rates. Lack of connection to neighborhood and friends because of gentrification leads to depression and disconnection.

Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979).

**Sources:** Alim & Paris, 2015; Assari et al., 2017; Bennett et al., 2004; Brody et al., 2014; Carter et al., 2005; Coles, 2020; Comas-Díaz; Davis, 2008; DeGruy, 2017; Dumas, 2014; Evans, 2004; Hall & Neville, 2019; French et al., 2020; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2009; Gym 1994; Grills et al., 2016; Grinage, 2019; Gump, 2010; Hardy, 2013; Hyland, 2015; Jackson et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2019; Kaholokula, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1992; Legette et al., 2020; Love, 2019; Masten, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; Reuf & Fletcher, 2004; Roediger, 1994; Rucker et al., 2010; Shonkoff et al., 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2019; and Wilson, 2002.



**I AM M.O.R.E.**  
Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday



## **MY HISTORY OFTEN REPEATED ITSELF**

*As a child, I was often  
the ONLY Black student...*



*As an adult...*

Only Black reporter  
ONLY Black manager  
ONLY Black columnist  
ONLY Black teacher

# **I excelled in the ONE thing I knew how to do well – WRITE!**



Nominated TWICE for the Pulitzer Prize  
Named No. 1 newspaper columnist in 5 Western states  
Wrote and produced Portland's first jazz opera  
Became a mini-celebrity – but felt like a fraud

**While living, working and parenting  
with a stressed-out brain,  
my relationship with  
my only daughter deteriorated...**

---

**Adults “under too much stress feel like they are  
fighting for survival, and sadly, they experience  
children as the threat to their well-being.”**

~ brain researchers Daniel Hughes and Jonathan Baylin





**OUTSIDE:**  
Successful

**INSIDE:**  
lonely, sad,  
angry, tired,  
depressed,  
resentful,  
& drowning...

**BLACK WOMEN DEALING WITH TRAUMA AND  
SUFFERING.**



**\*SOCIETY\***



**"YOU'RE SO STRONG!!"**



*@Real\_Toons  
2020*





# BECOMING A TEACHER HELPED ME DEFINE MY PURPOSE

*I am rooted in offering culturally empowering healing-centered programming because...*

I have endured a lifetime of racial oppression & other forms of trauma.

And when I became the only Black teacher at Oregon's most diverse high school, I saw a similar woundedness in other Black youth.





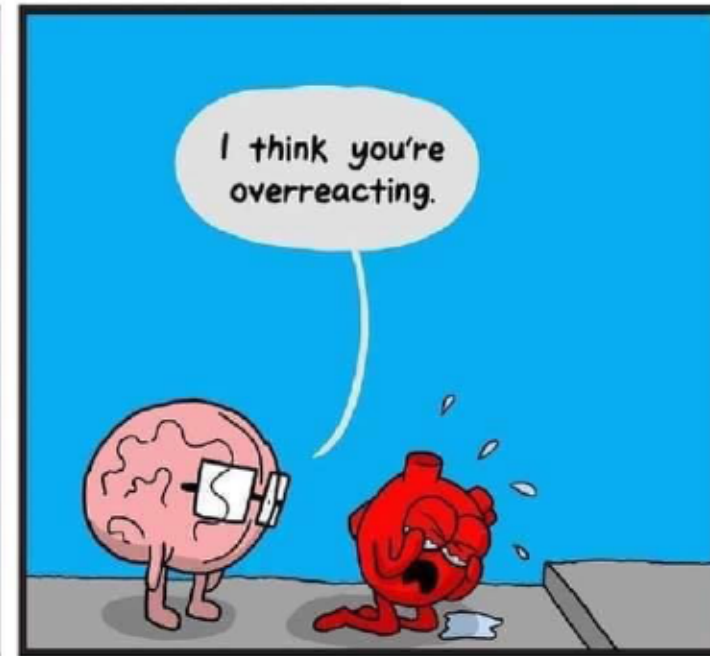
Then, while pursuing my doctoral degree, I started to understand that because of trauma, I had spent my whole life in survival mode, ignoring or coddling my woundedness instead of healing from it.



THEN, the pandemic happened.

And then, while bicycling  
in Sept 2020, I got  
hit by a car for a  
second time.

It was time for a change.





# BECAUSE...

unacknowledged trauma  
that is NOT  
addressed or healed  
*will keep showing up in  
our lives until we heal it.*

***Unresolved trauma  
is trauma transferred.***





## *Trifecta Seal of Approval*

- *Research Based*
- *Theory Based*
- *Evidence Based*

*Also, we are centered on:  
Healing. Connection.  
Creativity. Belonging.*



***I AM M.O.R.E.***

Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday



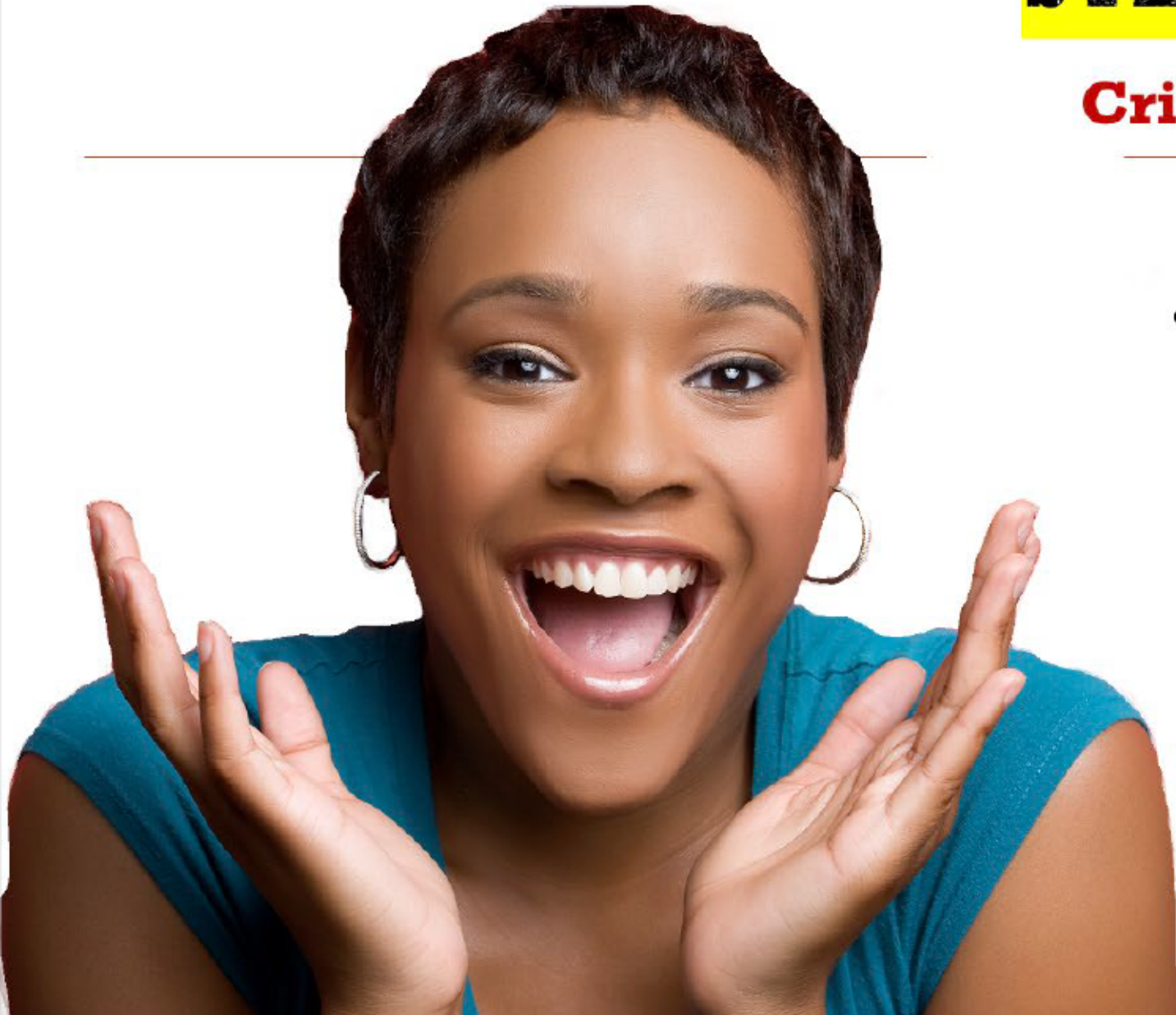
# STEP 1 – INSIDE-OUT

## Critical consciousness + SEL

Recognize that Black youth's **negative feelings are *justified*** & their inner rage can be rechanneled.

Help transform their relationship **with past trauma**, which can serve as signposts to their becoming.

Capitalize on students' **STRENGTHS** & stimulate their intrinsically motivated resilience.



## STEP 2 — OUTSIDE UP

**Critical consciousness + SEL** + Social Action

---

Set up a structure  
to help youth  
**find their sense of purpose.**

**Give them the tools**  
to critically analyze their  
**environment.**

Give youth an opportunity  
to **use their voice**  
**and wisdom**  
to create social change.







## STEP 3 – UP & BEYOND

Critical Consciousness + SEL  
+ social action + public sharing

Give youth public platforms  
**to share their knowledge  
and wisdom**

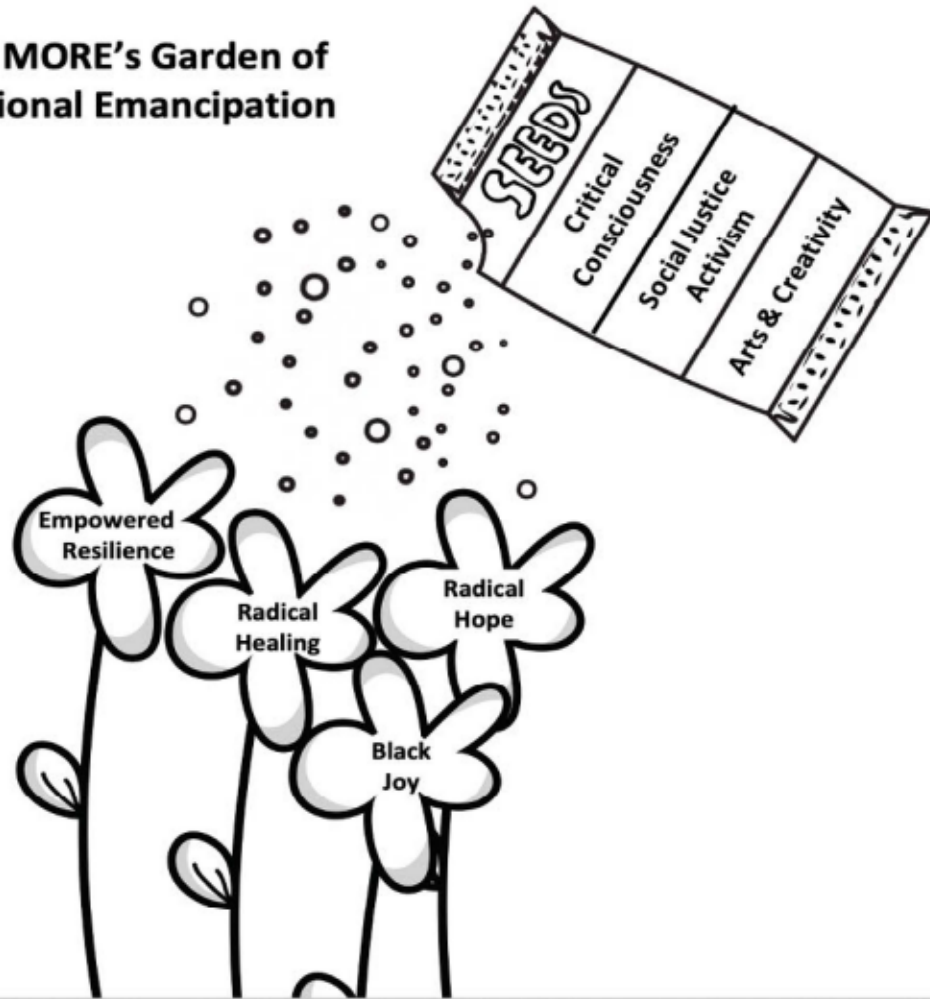
Hold a safe space  
for adults to see, hear & celebrate  
**youth voices at the center.**

Give youth PAID opportunities  
to **speak, train & facilitate**



# A PEDAGOGY OF ANTI SAVIORISM & PRO-YOUTH VOICE

I Am MORE's Garden of Emotional Emancipation



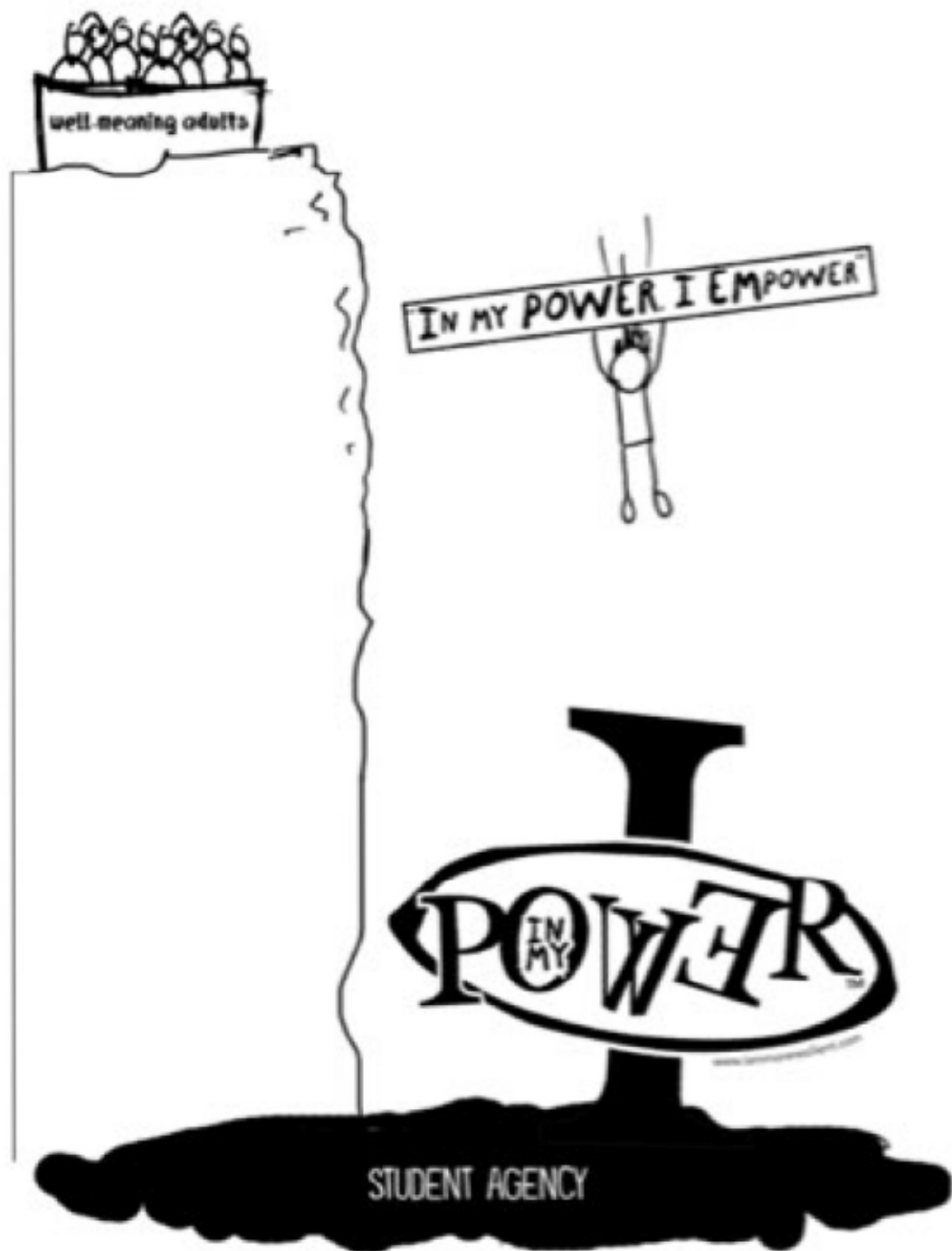
- “School officials will put everything before students’ actual mental health, not understanding that test scores cannot and will not increase until students **are healing from trauma** and/or mattering to themselves and their community.”

~ Dr. Bettina Love

REACH THE **HEART** FIRST AND THE **HEAD** WILL FOLLOW







**BUT, you can't produce EMPOWERED**

**RESILIENCE**

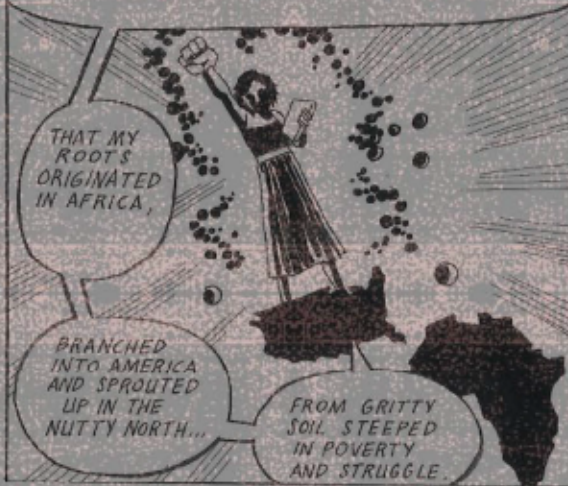
**from the outside in.**

**It's an inside out journey.**



# JUSTICE ENGLISH CO-FOUNDER

WHEN YOU - ONE DAY - TELL MY STORY WRITE THAT I WAS BORN TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE - BUT TO THRIVE



DEEPLY INTO MY SOUL AND SELF-ESTEEM THAT I'VE BEEN A VICTIM OF RACIAL PROFILING AND WITNESS TO GUN VIOLENCE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND BULLYING. WRITE THAT I'VE BEEN HOMELESS, PENNILESS AND DESPERATELY...



THAT EVEN AS A TEENAGER, I KNEW WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO WORK FROM EARLY MORNING INTO THE NIGHT RUNNING ON FUMES OF ENERGY SO I COULD HELP FEED MY BROTHER AND SISTER.



TELL THEM THAT I WENT TO ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL EVEN AFTER I WAS PUSHED OUT OF MY OWN NEIGHBORHOOD. I TRAVELED FOR HOURS EACH DAY TO ARRIVE AT A PLACE WHERE I WOULD LEARN...



AND TAP INTO MY PASSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TO BECOME AN ACTIVIST.



SAY THAT LIKE THE GREATEST - MUHAMMAD ALI - SAID: "IMPOSSIBLE IS NOT A DECLARATION. IT'S A DARE."



I AM JUSTICE SERENITY ENGLISH. SEE ME, NOTICE ME. REALIZE. THAT I. HAVE. ARRIVED.







# WHAT is DIFFERENT?

- *Community space*
- *Black elder mentorship*
- *Entrepreneurship*
- *Service learning*
- *VIBE-In Collective*
- *Full-time staff*
- *Year-round programming*
- *Publishing company*

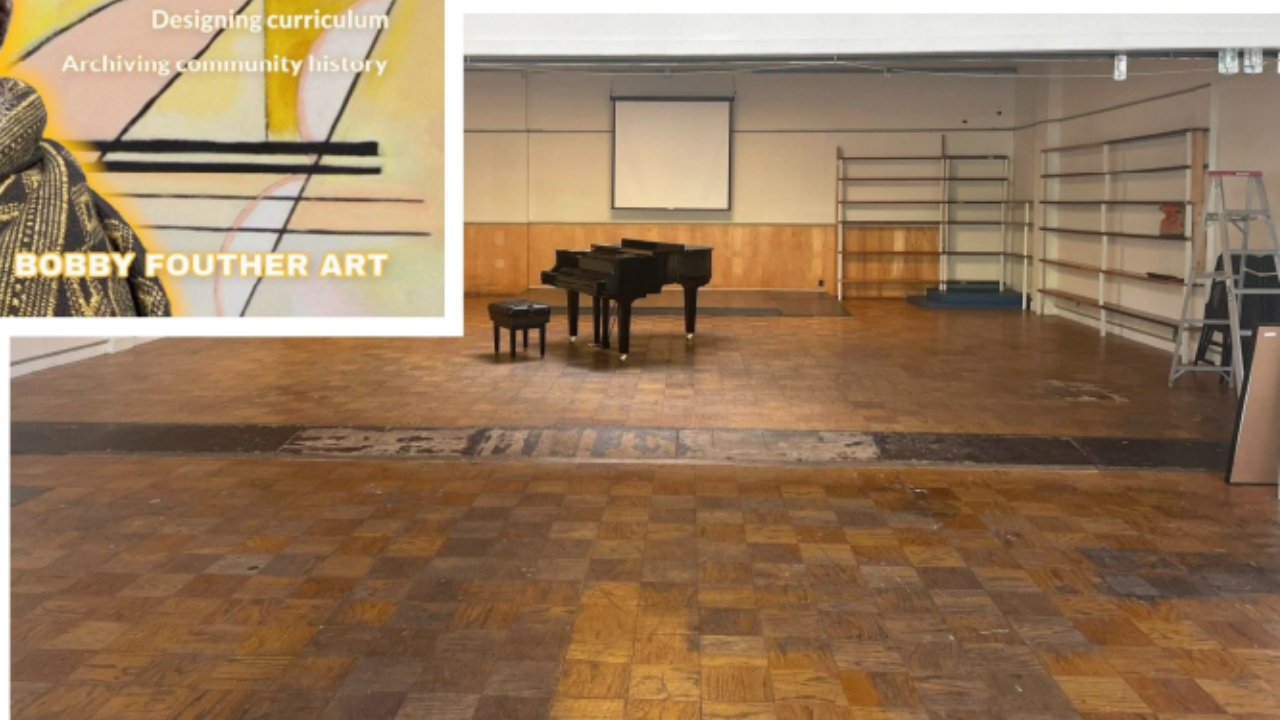




### PROJECTS

- Re-naming buildings after local artists
- Curating art in community spaces
- Creating community art sites
- Developing workshops
- Designing curriculum
- Archiving community history

**BOBBY FOTHER ART**







# WHAT is DIFFERENT?

- *Community space*
- *Black elder mentorship*
- *Entrepreneurship*
- *Service learning*
- *VIBE-In Collective*
- *Full-time staff*
- *Year-round programming*
- *Publishing company*



<https://bproud.shop>







# WHAT is DIFFERENT?

- *Community space*
- *Black elder mentorship*
- *Entrepreneurship*
- *Service learning*
- *VIBE-In Collective*
  - *Full-time staff*
- *Year-round programming*
  - *Publishing company*





Morrison  
Joy

Linda  
Mitchell-  
Duncan



Sunshine  
Dixon



Elias  
Moreno-  
Lothe

I am rooted in offering culturally affirming, healing-centered youth advocacy because my own healing came from being seen and heard by others...



Cole  
Reed



# OUR WORK ALSO IMPACTS THE GREATER COMMUNITY

- Developing Oregon's first culturally focused SEL curriculum
- Documenting and sharing inside-out as a path forward for Black children, *i.e., heart over head inspires achievement*
- Created the intergenerational **"Spreading the Black Joy Virus"** campaign
- [www.SpreadingBlackJoy.com](http://www.SpreadingBlackJoy.com)

"IN MY POWER, I EMPOWER"™







***I AM M.O.R.E.***

Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday

**ANY  
QUESTIONS?**





# Black Youth Leadership Fund

February 23, 2022

Niyati Desai, Director of Community Engagement

# OCF's Mission, Vision, and Values

## OUR MISSION

To improve lives for all Oregonians through the power of philanthropy.

## OUR VISION

A healthy, thriving, sustainable Oregon.

## OUR VALUES

COLLABORATIVE  
ACTION

WISE  
STEWARDSHIP

EQUITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION

SPIRIT OF  
COMMUNITY



---

# What does OCF do?

- Promotes philanthropy
- Builds permanent charitable resources
- Acts as intermediary organization
- Promotes community development and local leadership
- Supports nonprofit capacity building and sustainability



# The Impact of OCF in 2021



**\$156.4 M**

## HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Improving health and wellness and supporting essential programs for people in critical need.



**\$92.3 M**

## EDUCATION

Expanding educational opportunities that span early childhood, K-12, higher education and career development.



**\$47.1 M**

## LIVABILITY

Supporting conservation, educational, recreational and economic projects that preserve and protect natural resources and quality of life.



**\$20.2 M**

## ARTS & CULTURE

Sustaining creativity, building vibrant arts communities and supporting collaborative arts education.



**\$11.6 M**

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Mitigating inequities and increasing access to higher education.



**\$6 M**

## ECONOMIC VITALITY

Deploying grants, loans and venture capital to support youth, entrepreneurship and building a new natural resources economy.



**\$12 M**

## OTHER

Supporting a variety of other programs that advance opportunity and improve the lives of Oregonians.

**\$334.2 M**  
TOTAL



---

# Overview

- **OCF ROLE IN BLACK YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:**
  - Fund Setup & Gift Processing
  - Grant vetting and distribution
  - Staffing and Support
- **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- **REPORTING AND MEASURES**
- **BUDGET**

---

## OCF Fund Setup & Gift Processing

- OCF will set up a wholly expendable community advised fund to hold and distribute grant funding
- Fund's primary purpose is to distribute grants to eligible organizations based on youth developed recommendations via the Community Advisory Committee approval
- Fund will have a unique URL and will be open to additional philanthropic tax-deductible contributions, however OCF does not fundraise
- OCF will send gift acknowledgement letters to any donors who contribute to the fund
- Annual reports on additional contributions will be provided. Interim reports available upon request.



---

# Grant Vetting and Distribution

- OCF will provide vetting services of grant applicants and project grantees
  - Eligibility
  - Mission alignment
  - Confirmation of active status with Oregon Department of Justice
  - Contact information
- OCF will distribute Grant Award letters and grant funds to each approved grantee

---

## Staffing Support

- OCF will designate a relationship manager who will serve as primary OCF contact for this Fund and the appointed Chair and Black United Fund
- **Relationship Manager will:**
  - Participate in minimum of (2) Community Advisory Committee meetings
  - Support agenda setting and meeting facilitation, as needed
  - Move grant recommendations forward for OCF Board of Directors approval
  - Participate in project grantee review by City, as requested



---

# Community Advisory Committee

- **Roles and responsibilities:**

- Advisory Council functions as an advisory committee to the City of Portland and OCF Board of Directors.
- Support and guide the work of Black United Fund and Dr. Mitchell
- Review and approve youth-developed grant recommendations per R.I.S.E program
- Present grant recommendations to OCF Relationship Manager for Board approval

---

## Community Advisory Committee - proposed membership

- **Committee members are volunteers**
  - (1) City appointed member who represents the office overseeing these funds
  - (3-5) Community representatives
  - OCF relationship manager (non-voting)
- City will appoint a Fund Advisor/Chair who will serve as primary point of contact and liaison for Oregon Community Foundation, City of Portland, and Black United Fund
  - Chair will have access to OCF fund account to track incoming donations grant expenditures and fund balance



---

## Data collection and measures

- **Reporting:**

- End of year grantmaking report
- Annual fund balance statement
- *Interim reports upon request*

- **Measures:**

- # of grants distributed
- Total amount of funds distributed annually
- Total amount of additional funding secured

---

## Grant Budget

- **Total requested: \$196,750**
  - **\$5,900**
    - OCF Fund Fee 3%
    - Relationship management, programmatic support and participation in the advisory committee
  - **\$190,850**
    - Grantmaking per recommendations via Community Advisory Committee
    - Distributed upon approval by OCF Board of Directors