



Lakayana Drury

*Founder, Executive Director,
Chief Visionary Officer*

Black Star Porgam Director

Commissioner Lakayana Drury (He/Him/His) is the founder and Executive Director of Word is Bond. His inspiration behind founding the organization is a combination of his lived experience and the obstacles he overcame to discover his life path. Lakayana Drury is an educator, social entrepreneur, community organizer, and storyteller, who utilizes community engagement and various mediums of art, including poetry and photography, to uplift hidden stories and inspire others to collective action.

Lakayana has been featured on numerous podcasts including Oregon Public Radio's Think Out Loud podcast. He was recognized as part of the 2021 class of 40 Under 40, and the 2022 Executive of the Year by the Portland Business Journal, and the 2023 Community Leader of the Year at the 38th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute by the World Arts Foundation.

Lakayana Drury was raised in Madison, Wisconsin by his hardworking mother and is the eldest of three children. He experienced adversity at an early age, most notably a learning disability diagnosis in sixth grade and his father's absence for most of his adolescent years. He overcame these challenges and graduated from the University of Wisconsin Stout and went on to pursue a career as a teacher in both elementary and high school, which eventually brought him to Portland, OR.

Lakayana is of Sudanese and Irish ancestry and has done considerable work exploring his biracial identity. His lived experience drives his passion for culturally-grounded education, Hip-Hop pedagogy, mentorship, healthy masculinity, investment in Black communities, and reimagining community safety.

Lakayana's leadership commitments include serving on Portland's Local Public Safety Coordinating Committee (LPSCC) Executive Committee, the Center for Black Student Excellence (CBSE) Guiding Coalition with Portland Public Schools, and the Black Male Achievement Steering Committee. In 2023, Lakayana was appointed to the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs which works for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal, and political equality for Black Oregonians.

Lakayana is a visionary leader who believes in building a world based on compassion for all people, where every individual has the resources they need to thrive, and dismantling systems of oppression and replacing them with ecosystems that nurture the innate empathy of humanity.

