



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Lakayana Drury
Founder and Executive Director, Word is Bond
Lakayana@wordisbond.org
Phone: 1-608-843-5259

“I Got a Story to Tell”

Word is Bond – A storytelling campaign by young Black men

- Date: Beginning February 1 - ongoing through February 28, 2021
- Locations: Black-owned Businesses and Law Enforcement Agencies
- Ongoing schedule of participating entities, locations, dates, and times listed on the [website](#)
- Contact [Lakayana Drury](#) for media opportunities and interviews
- Program flyer and image attached

“The I Got A Story to Tell” storytelling campaign is about celebrating the living legacies of young Black men. We are very much alive, striving to be somebody, and we each have a story to tell. Young Black men seldom have an opportunity to tell their story as they see it.” -Lakayana Drury, Founder, and Executive Director

Word is Bond presents "I Got a Story to Tell," a storytelling campaign in celebration of Black History Month, to raise awareness of the experiences of young Black men. The campaign includes interactive storyteller exhibits, a poetry book, and online and community engagements beginning February 1st and running through the end of the month.

Word is Bond has invited 10 local Black-owned businesses, and 10 law enforcement agencies to host storyteller exhibits in their facilities for Black History Month. The storyteller exhibits are curated by Word is Bond's community ambassadors (youth who have participated in Word is Bond's programs). Each exhibition features a portrait of a different Word is Bond community ambassador, along with a storyteller profile and dream box that allows community members to engage with the exhibit. Community members are invited to patronize the featured Black-owned businesses and view the portraits. The community will have the opportunity to respond to a different prompt at each exhibit via the dream boxes. The dream boxes feature a QR code viewers can scan to answer the prompts

The “I Got a Story to Tell” exhibition will also include a Word is Bond community ambassadors giving teach-ins to each of the participating law enforcement agencies detailing the experiences of young Black men, anti-racism, and how law enforcement agencies can better engage and serve Black youth. The teach-ins are scheduled throughout February, mostly via Zoom. Some agencies have requested multiple teach-ins to different groups of their staff. There are 14 total teach-ins. **The teach-ins are not open to the public, please contact Lakayana Drury for media opportunities.**

Word is Bond will also release its debut poetry collection, “I Got A Story to Tell,” on February 1, in conjunction with the launch of the campaign. The collection features original poems from Word is Bond community ambassadors and police officers written during the Rising Leaders 2020 summer internship. The poems touch on topics of race, justice, police brutality, and the young Black male experience. The book is currently on pre-order on the Word is Bond [website](#).

Throughout Black History Month, community ambassadors will be engaging with the Black-owned business for various engagements including business visits, podcast episodes, and a poetry reading. Information, updates on events provided on the Word is Bond's website and social media.

To conclude the campaign, the portraits will be displayed collectively inside the atrium of the Multnomah County Court House at the end of the month along with the community responses to the dream boxes.

Participating Black-Owned Businesses: Po'Shines Cafe De La Soul, Deadstock Coffee, Monkey's Subs Lake Oswego, Cason's Fine Meats, Champions Barbershop, Enat Kitchen, Joe Brown's Carmel Corn, Killer Burger Cedar Hills, Steakadelphia.

Participating Law Enforcement agencies:

Law Enforcement Teach-Ins: Portland Police Bureau, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Multnomah County District, Attorney's Office, Lake Oswego Police Department, Oregon City Police Department, Hillsboro Police Department, Washington County Sheriff's Office, Gresham Police Department, Beaverton Police Department, and Tigard Police Department.

Note: Word is Bond is not affiliated with any of the participating law enforcement agencies. Participation in this campaign does not equal an endorsement from Word is Bond on any of these agencies' policies, practices, and or employees.

Project partners: Tom James Clothing Company, Champions Barbershop. Multnomah County Chair's Office

About Word is Bond

"Word is Bond is not an organization that tries to get young Black men to like police officers or change their minds on how they feel about law enforcement. We do not try to manage the stories our young men tell. We empower young Black men to speak their truths." -Lakayana Drury, Founder, and Executive Director

Our Mission: To rewrite the mission between young Black men and law enforcement through leadership development critical dialogue and engagement.

Word is Bond began in the summer of 2017 with the Rising Leaders summer internship program. The Rising Leaders program brings together a cohort of Black youth and a cohort of law enforcement officers to listen, learn and communicate through guided dialogue and engagement. Word is Bond's goal is to empower young Black man and create space for dialogue with law enforcement officers.

Word is Bond serves young Black men ages 16-21 in the Portland metro area and has two programs: Rising Leaders, our paid summer internship, and Word Up, our school year leadership program.

Word is Bond has engaged over 1000 youth in the Rising Leaders and Word Up programs over the past four summers. Over 600 officers and ten law enforcement bureaus have participated in our summer internship program, implicit bias training, and other engagements.

For more information: wordisbond.org

Contact:

Lakayana Drury
Founder and Executive Director, Word is Bond
Lakayana@wordisbond.org
Phone: 1-608-843-5259

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)
[YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)

#####