

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Saturday, May 27, 2017**

Portland State University Community, Partners, and Community Members:

It is with immeasurable sadness that the Middle East Studies Center joins the Portland community and the world in remembering the heroic acts of Ricky John Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche in standing against anti-Muslim rhetoric and actions at the cost of their lives. The Middle East Studies Center's leadership and staff forward their deepest condolences to those impacted by this tragic event. Our thoughts are also with Micah David-Cole Fletcher and his family, as he begins his long-recovery.

The heartrending events of May 26, 2017 reminds us of the commitment that the Middle East Studies Center and our partners have in forwarding education and awareness to enhance cross-culture understanding and respect. The intrepid and courageous actions of the aforementioned community allies is a reminder of the importance for all of us to unite in an effort to safeguard our peaceful and inclusive community.

The families of Ricky and Taliesin will forever be altered by the loss of their loved ones, and their deaths reverberate through our community because they were not just family members and friends of those they leave behind, but heroes who sacrificed their lives by standing as bulwarks to injustice and discrimination.

As the families grieve the loss of their loved ones and as Micah begins his recovery, community members have set up the following donation pages. Please share these links widely to ensure that the families receive the necessary support they require during these difficult times.

- ❖ Micah David-Cole Fletcher Recovery Fund: [www.gofundme.com/tri-met-hero-recovery](http://www.gofundme.com/tri-met-hero-recovery)
- ❖ Muslims Unite for Portland Heroes: [www.launchgood.com/project/muslims\\_united\\_for\\_portland\\_heroes#/](http://www.launchgood.com/project/muslims_united_for_portland_heroes#/)