

Taliesin's mother chooses love in aftermath of her son's murder

By John Darling For the Tidings

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It has been a rough time since the stabbing death of her son Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, but Asha Deliverance is back working at her dome factory in Ashland and has become increasingly dedicated to the vision her family believes in — peace, diversity and equality.

“I adored him. He had such great ideas and was enthusiastic like a puppy dog,” says Deliverance, adding that she and her family felt his presence around them in the days after his May 26 murder on Portland’s light-rail MAX train. He was slashed by a knife while trying to protect two teen girls — one a Muslim wearing a hijab — from a man shouting racist epithets. One other man was killed in the attack and a third man wounded.

“My main solace is that my son stayed very close to me. We all felt his love, incredible love. We all felt he went somewhere so beautiful, where there was a huge celebration because of his contribution here.”

Far from feeling overwhelmed by the tragedy, Deliverance says her response is “quite the opposite.” With support in Ashland, Portland and from all over the world, including many Muslims, she has shifted from a cup half-empty to a cup half-full.

“I’ve felt like a queen to them (Muslims). They’ve been so heart-full and caring. It blew my mind.”

Deliverance said she has received so many emails and paper messages from all over the world — as well as contributions — that she had three people on her staff answering all of them personally and sharing in “all that beauty ... and compassion.”

Deliverance referred to a rap song her son wrote, as well as an essay written at Reed College, where he graduated last year, and how they seemed to presage the present conflict in America's politics and culture.

In the song, he talked about the "warmongers" and that "peace is stronger" — and his mission in life was "to bring life and meaning" here — and not to counter "a viper with a knife."

While Deliverance pointed out the sources of the nation's polarization, she emphasized that politics is not her message.

"Taliesin studied economics and climate change. He and my other children grew up without TV. They grew up with music, instruments and outdoor education. They ate fresh, organic vegetables and have strong bodies and minds. They grew up right across from the Japanese Garden (in Lithia Park). It's beautiful there. They went to John Muir School (at Ashland Middle School)."

Deliverance said she and her family chose his name after Taliesin, a poet and bard in the courts of kings in the 6th century who sang and taught of the unity of all life.

She says her family's liberal, humanitarian politics and inquisitive nature come in large part from her father, a Dutch biochemist and pioneering engineer in the field of electromagnetic engines. Like other members of his family, he fled Hitler's holocaust, landing in Indonesia and Argentina, where her mother was a social worker.

Deliverance and her children have followed in those footsteps — for example, bringing many of her domes to Haiti after the devastating 2010 earthquake, to serve as clinics, birthing centers, cafeterias and other uses.

Deliverance sees the energy of her movement emerging as a global organization she terms "We Choose Love." It has a mission statement honoring diversity and underlining the need not just for meditation, but for activism toward a positive society.

In the bigger picture, Deliverance says, "My son left me with a job. ... He knew we would carry through with all this. ... I believe the true heart of this planet is going to find a way. We need to crack it open so the love can flow in."

— John Darling is a freelance writer living in Ashland. Email him at
jdarling@jeffnet.org.



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