

Portland United Against Hate mobilizes to improve reporting and tracking of hateful acts and support communities in need

Vigil and public announcement

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

5:30 PM to 6:30 PM

Da Vinci Middle School

2508 NE Everett St., outside on east side of building, Wheelchair accessible

A community initiated partnership of community organizations of color, neighborhood groups, and the City of Portland are building a rapid response network – Portland United Against Hate – that combines reporting and tracking of hateful acts and provides support and protection our communities need in this uncertain era.

A vigil and [public announcement](#) on the creation of the partnership will be held along with brief statements from community and neighborhood leaders and local elected officials on Tuesday, February 14, from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, at Da Vinci Arts Middle School located at 2508 NE Everett St. The event is being held at the school due to its symbolic proximity to several graffiti hate tags in the Kerns neighborhood, which have already been removed.

To date the coalition includes Africa House, Asian Family Center, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Causa Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization), Latino Network, Teatro Milagro, Native American Youth and Family Center, North Portland Neighborhood Services, Office of Neighborhood Involvement City of Portland, Portland African American Leadership Forum, Portland Two-Spirit Society, Q Center, Resolutions Northwest, Southeast Uplift, Unite OREGON, Urban League of Portland, Verde, YWCA of Greater Portland. Others are invited to join. The Kerns Neighborhood Association is mobilizing neighbors to attend the vigil to say no to hate in their neighborhood.

The partnership grew out of several community organizations approaching the Office of Neighborhood Involvement after this November's election asking for assistance in convening organizations to collaborate in building a response to the negative forces that undermine our city and communities. In recent months, many community organizations have reported increasing incidents of hate crimes and intimidation, including bullying and violence stemming from racism, xenophobia, religious bigotry, islamophobia, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, stigma, and misogyny.

Representatives from over a dozen organizations have been meeting since then to craft a joint statement and develop intentional collaborative strategies to protect vulnerable communities from hate. Key commitments to collaborate on include:

- Working with area municipalities, starting with the City of Portland, to build community capacity to improve the reporting and tracking of hate crimes;
- Mobilizing and training organization constituents to participate in grass roots actions to support and protect community members targeted by hate in our city.
- Coordinate volunteer and training opportunities to combat and speak out against hateful, harassing or intimidating acts.

In the past three months since the election the City of Portland's Graffiti Abatement Program, within the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, reported a significant increase in "high-priority" graffiti removals compared to previous years. Since Nov. 8, 2016 there have been 23 hate and 60 political graffiti removals compared to zero hate tags reported in the same time period in the past two years and only one political tag in the same period in 2015-16.

Community leaders are aware of an increasing number of incidents meant to harass and intimidate neighbors such as the recent verbal attacks on Latino parishioners at St. Peters Church on SE Foster Rd. and a brick thrown through the window with a Black Lives Matter message at In Other Words bookstore on NE Killingsworth. We applaud and commit to coordinating with other community-based initiatives already mobilizing to support and protect immigrant and refugee, Muslim, LGBTQ, people with disabilities and others targeted by hate.

Numerous organizations the Office of Neighborhood Involvement partners with have already taken the initiative including Latino Network working with the Oregon Law Center to develop a Protect Your Family resource guide, Unite Oregon collaborating with the ACLU Oregon to file a lawsuit seeking an injunction against President Donald Trump's controversial executive order on immigration, and Concordia, Montavilla and Creston-Kenilworth Neighborhood Associations that have already adopted statements or organized community forums in support of targeted community members.

Additional organizations are invited to sign on to the joint statement and work with this growing partnership. We are reaching out to other organizations to invite them to participate. Numerous neighborhood District Coalitions are considering joining at their next board meetings.

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