

From: Annessa Hartman [mailto:annessa.hartman@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 2:27 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@ci.gladstone.or.us>; Jacque Betz <betz@ci.gladstone.or.us>
Subject: Listening Session Statement

Thank you everyone for having this session. I also have a written statement.

My name is Annessa Hartman. My pronouns are she/her. I want to first begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of the Molalla, Kalapuya, and Clackamas Natives. It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought us all to reside on this land, and for you to seek and understand your place within that history and how you intend on owning that to change the future.

I am a First Nations woman, my people are from the Six Nation of Iroquois, and I am Cayuga Native. My family and I moved here to about 6 years ago from Southern California and for the first time in my life, I was told that I was lucky because I am able to pass as white. I am bringing this up because as early as 7 I can remember the first time a teacher looked at me surprised and said how well I spoke English. At 10 kids were constantly asking me why my skin wasn't red and would only say hi by saying "how". At 13 when I challenged my history teacher to elaborate on what happened to the Natives when you know who sailed the ocean blue. I was removed from the class since it was sensitive material to me. At 15 we were told by our basketball coach that the ethnic girls were to escort their white friends to the bathroom when we were playing in what he deemed "the ghetto". When I graduated high school and was met with the constant questions of "Did you get your college paid for?" "Are you going to work for your casino?" Additionally, I witnessed my friends of color being called names like "Burrito Boy, Oreo, Twinkie, Dot Head" "Being asked "What are you? You're so interesting looking" My Asian friends constantly having to fend off the requests for tutoring. You might be asking yourself why is she telling us about experiences that did not happen in Gladstone, it's because I want you to know that this is by no means a new current racial issue; this is an issue that has been going on forever.

Racism and prejudice behavior begins at a very young age and it is taught. The subtle and insidious actions that happen during childhood is why I am speaking today. Because now we as a community have the opportunity to change these behaviors for the next generation so that in twenty years someone like Zora or Sierra doesn't have to re-live even the tiniest of traumas to still try and convince people that systematic racism is real.

I have to ask myself why we as a city are just now talking about racial equity and social justice? Based on the stories I have heard over the past two months this has been an issue for a long time. To me, every single person has the ability to be racist and prejudice, thus everyone has an opportunity to grow and relearn. And if you do not accept that, if you think you have no need for this kind of growth or that this is a waste of your time; then I am here to tell you that you do indeed support the basis of white supremacy. Because that would mean to me, that you do not feel and are not willing to accept the pain and suffering of the marginalized people in this community.

You need to know as people of color that we begin our discussions on racism with our children early in their lives. Imagine the power if ALL families had the same conversations with their children as early as we do. To teach them about what real equality looks like and to stand up for those who are less privileged. Now I know that word, privilege, tends to trigger an emotion in some. So I am going to give you some examples of what I believe are my privileges. I have the privilege over my black friend because I get to pass as being white; I can literally choose to hide my ethnic identity should I ever need to. I have

the privilege over my Salvadorian friend to receive better care and pain medications at the hospital while giving birth because I am viewed as white. I have the privilege of receiving a call back after submitting my resume, with the same qualifications and the same experiences over my Muslim friend because my name reads as white. These are just some of my privileges, so if I as someone who identifies as a person of color can admit that they have some privileges over others, so should you. So when you hear "white privilege" know that it means that while your life may have been challenging, your skin color was never one of the things that attributed to those challenges.

So I empower you to end the oppressive legacies of the past and change the future for ALL of our children. Give our little ones the diverse representation they deserve, so that they too can see someone that looks like them be the hero of a story, be an inventor who changed the world, be a politician who paved the way. But also so that each and every other child can understand that other kinds of children can be teachers, scientists, and space explorers. I'm not requesting that this happen in the shortest month of the year or right before Thanksgiving, I am talking about every single day embracing and honoring every ethnicity, their history, their culture, and they as a human being. Our children should be proud of who they are and they should never be afraid to embrace that.

I will use this newfound privilege of mine to uplift and create an environment where people feel safe and welcome. I hope you truly take what this community is telling you to heart and make the necessary systematic changes that are needed to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

Thank you,

Annessa Hartman

Tami Bannick

From: Simona Gherghisan <f8nj4ever@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 7:52 PM
To: Tami Bannick
Subject: 7/28/20 - Zoom Gladstone community listening meeting

Dear Tami,

Here is my statement from the Zoom Gladstone community listening meeting for your records.

“I’ve lived in Gladstone for more than 10 years minding my own business, working hard to provide for my mom who is ill and lives with me, paying taxes, going to church.

Then I woke up one morning to the picture of a knee on George Floyd’s neck! It was a shock that reverberated throughout my whole body! How can this be? I left a communist country where I was oppressed by my own people to come to America In pursuit of freedom and justice for all!

What happened I ask you? Where is the justice for all? Have we forgotten the history? And how we come to be here? We don’t have to dig deep in history to find out! Where are the Native Americans? Oh that’s right they are what is left of them on reservations! Why do we even call it reservation? Where is the justice for the Natives?

Can you hear drums?

Then hard work and manual labor had to be done and here comes the Black folk brought against their will to work for the white man!!! We don’t have to dig deep just 60 years back to the 60s when they had enough and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the Civil Rights Movement!

Can you hear the chains?

We want a better history? You have the opportunity to make it happen! Be the change!

I’ll bring it close to home! We want to be proud to live in Gladstone but are we addressing the racism that is going on right under our nose? My friend who is black chose to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation told me how her children were treated differently in school and how her daughter’s boyfriend was slammed to the ground by the police in front of her house for no apparent reason. Why is this happening I ask you?

Yes I want to be proud of the city I live in where everyone is treated the same! I appeal to your humanity and ask that you reflect and take action to ensure our friends and neighbors in our Gladstone community will not be mistreated anymore because of how they look or how they are different!

Change comes by listening!

I ask that you honor your position and the community who elected you by bringing forth a change that addresses equality and reforms that benefit everyone.

Can you hear the drums ? Can you hear the chains? Can you hear the voices crying out for justice?

Thank you for listening!

Simona Gherghisan
Gladstone resident

My name is Jack Stone. I am a retired educator and have lived in Gladstone for 20 years. I am here tonight in two capacities - first as a concerned Gladstone citizen and second as a member of the administrative body of the Baha'i community.

I want to thank the Gladstone City Council for providing this safe space for community members to address this most challenging issue of racism.

As a privileged white male I have not experienced the kind of bias and prejudice personally that people of color deal with every day.

However, when my daughter married a black man 26 years ago, I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing first hand how this happens. They had come to visit us in another community where we were living at the time. Her husband and I had gone out to run errands and in that short time he experienced two instances of not so subtle racism. I was first so shocked that something like this would take place, I couldn't respond and didn't have the presence of mind to call it out. I was angry, not only towards the person who perpetrated the act, but at my self for not having the courage to call it out.

Since that experience I have tried to educate myself, be more observant and be prepared to call it out when I see it happen. My own history of shortcomings in this area have been made very clear to me and I don't want to repeat them.

I'm also here tonight as a representative of the Baha'i community of Gladstone. The Spiritual Assembly, our administrative body, has asked me to let the people of Gladstone know that we are here to support efforts that work to eradicate racism in our community. To that end we have created a safe space by having a bi-weekly dialog on racism in Gladstone using Zoom and welcome your participation. You can email morphetbrown@gmail.com for the link.

“Racism is a profound deviation from the standard of true morality. It deprives a portion of humanity of the opportunity to cultivate and express the full range of their capability and to live a meaningful and flourishing life, while blighting the progress of the rest of humankind. It cannot be rooted out by contest and conflict. It must be supplanted by the establishment of just relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions of society that will uplift all and will not designate anyone as ‘other.’ The change required is not merely social and economic, but above all moral and spiritual.” - excerpted from a Baha'i World Center statement - 22 July 2020

Thank you.

Good evening Gladstone City council members, and all others in attendance. My name is Monica Dahrens, I have been a resident of Clackamas County, my entire life. I grew up primarily in the Oak Grove area, and attended Rex Putnam High School, however I moved to Gladstone in or around 1997.

I am a mother of two mixed race daughters, Shalie whom is now 26, and Karina 20, both attended Gladstone schools from Kindergarten, and both graduated from Gladstone High School. As for myself, I am mostly Caucasian, but I am also a proud member of the Spokane Tribe of Indians. My family has had a residence in Gladstone for more than 40 years, to which my daughter Shalie resides in the present day. Throughout my time in Gladstone and the surrounding metropolitan area, I have witnessed, and or directly experience prejudice and racism. I will begin by speaking about a few of my own experiences, racism, and prejudice I find is not always blatant. As a mostly white women, I admit that I was naïve, and often blinded, until made aware by friends and or relatives. I have received comments such as “we don’t have what you want” before being offered a menu at a restaurant I visited with my boyfriend at the time who was black. In downtown Milwaukie, my daughters’ father was punched in the face, for sitting as the perpetrator felt, was where, we did not “belong”. I have been pulled over while driving on numerous occasions in Gladstone, simply driving while having black passengers, and questioned as to what we were doing, where we were going, and false allegations of my headlights, or tail lights were made as an excuse to pull me over.

The flag that hung in the laundry mat on Portland Avenue that backed the blue, while down the street in our schools, our minority students were ignored by white adults, and hurt in silence.

I witnessed prejudice, while my daughter Karina whom attended Gladstone Schools, was admitted into ESL classes for students where English is their second language, however English was my daughters ONLY language, and I noted so, but can only assume based on her surname of Herrera, it was assumed she spoke Spanish.

In speaking with my daughter Shalie, she spoke of her time in the Gladstone schools where little history was taught, nor offered that provided students with ethnic, and or cultural content. Although Shalie, could not pinpoint specific occasions, she noted that she had not been prepared for college by the school, or counselors, and far more attention was offered the minority male athletes, than minority females. Shalie has expressed that on many occasions, she was told by white male students, they would NEVER consider dating a black woman, and black women are not pretty enough.

Admittedly, not all of the examples I presented occurred within the city limits of Gladstone, however all occurred within the State of Oregon. Whether some or all of you choose to believe that Gladstone officials ignore prejudice, or racism in my opinion is not why we are here. We are here to bring light, not only to the City government, but to the residents of Gladstone, the parents who teach their children to be racist, or allow their children to post photos wearing black face, to stop. It is time as the late Representative John Lewis once said, Gladstone it is time to start some “Good Trouble” and put an end to hatred in Gladstone.

I will ask my daughter Karina to offer a few more examples, from her own words. Thank you.

Tami Bannick

From: Kyle Donovan <kylecone7@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2020 10:44 PM
To: Tami Bannick
Subject: Re: Speaking at listening session tomorrow

Hi Tami - Here is my written statement from tonight's listening session:

Hello. I'm Kyle Donovan. My family has lived in Gladstone for 5 years. Thank you for taking this necessary first step in addressing racial injustice in Gladstone through this listening session. I'll keep this brief because this session is to listen to our Black and People of Color community members.

My hope is that this listening session isn't just a "check the box" moment for our city, but an opportunity to rise to the occasion to listen, believe and reflect on racial injustices that have undeniably occurred in our schools and on our streets. Once you can hear these stories in your heart, only then will we be able to move forward as a community. As white people, understanding systemic oppression of marginalized communities takes work. And this type of work doesn't come from checking off a box, taking a class or holding a meeting. It comes from an authentic engagement with those who have had these experiences and letting them guide us on how to be better. I hope that by taking a hard look at our own individual and collective role in racial injustices, we'll live up to the authentic and community spirit that we mention in our town's rebrand.

As a white woman, I will continue to involve myself on a civic and educational level to ensure that our Black and People of Color community not only have a seat at the table, but also have a voice in the decision-making that occurs on all levels. I expect to see Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as an agenda item in each of our council meetings moving forward and that we'll appoint a Black and/or person of color, with expertise in facilitating these actionable conversations. Gladstone's children and community deserve this platform to feel safe and welcomed in this town. Thank you.

