



September 11, 2017

We are so proud to live, work and play in this beautiful diverse community we call home. However, recent events at local schools and an individual's home reflect a sad and shameful time in our history, and they point to a disturbing realization that we are not as far along the path of reconciliation and unity as we had hoped.

Sadly, for some members of our community, what others might view as isolated incidents represent a sentiment they frequently experience in their daily lives. These symbols of hate hurt those targeted and our entire community. These overt acts by individuals acting in a hateful way or by hate groups must be rejected; they do not represent who we are in Muskegon.

At a time when hostility seems to be spreading, Edmund Burke's words, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing," move us to step forward. We realize that silence appears to be acceptance, and we also recognize that we can and must stand against those who seek to tear down our community through hatred and bigotry. We do not accept hate, and we will not be silent.

Yes, we are speaking against hatred and bigotry—but, just as importantly, we are speaking for love and respect. **LOVE LIVES HERE.** Being silent when another is attacked verbally, physically, overtly or passively is not acceptable. We cannot, and we will not be silent.

Hatred and bigotry are not welcome in our neighborhoods, our schools, our workplaces or our community. Our economic wellbeing rests on our interconnectedness; we cannot thrive if anyone is excluded. It matters not your race, ethnicity, faith, or sexual/affectional orientation—we are all here on this earth for a purpose, we all share our love for our families, we all want to live the American Dream, we all aspire to be the best that we can be. We must acknowledge that any differences we have with those that do not look or speak or love the way we do are greatly outweighed by what we do have in common.

Today and always we stand against hate and for each other. **LOVE LIVES HERE.** We commit ourselves to difficult conversations that bring better understanding

and cohesiveness to our community. We commit to active listening that respects other viewpoints without belittling or degrading.

We commit to not just one event or action, but to continuous respectful behavior, compassionate listening, and recognition of our individual and collective responsibility to harmony and justice in the Greater Muskegon community.

The Rotary Four-Way Test is a guide for thoughts, words, and actions to develop respect and understanding within our community and beyond.

Of the things we think, say and do:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

We remember and affirm Elie Wiesel's words: "We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

We echo LaToya Booker of the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance that "there is comfort in knowing we are not alone, and there is strength in our coming together."

Therefore, we invite you all to be part of **LOVE LIVES HERE**, respecting a variety of conversations and cultures, where everyone feels welcome to share their contributions, making us all stronger together, and moving forward with hope and in peace.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, stand together renouncing hate and bigotry and affirming our interconnectedness. **LOVE LIVES HERE.**

SIGNATORIES

1. Adam Bayne, Superintendent – Holton Public Schools
2. Andrew Cutler, President – Muskegon Brake & Tire
3. Arn Boezart – Westwind Construction
4. Bethany Christian Reformed Church
5. Bishop Nathaniel W. Wells – Holy Trinity COGIC
6. Board of Muskegon County Commission
7. Bob Szymoniak, Superintendent – Fruitport Community Schools
8. Brenda Moore – Muskegon County Drain Commissioner
9. Brianna T. Scott, Owner – Brianna & Scott & Associates, PLLC
10. Byron Turnquist, City Commissioner – Muskegon
11. Center for Spirituality Action & Transformation
12. Chief Jeffrey Lewis, Director of Public Safety – City of Muskegon
13. Christine McGuigan, President – Community Foundation for Muskegon County (along with its Board of Directors)
14. Christine Robere, Director – United Way of the Lakeshore
15. Cindy Larsen, President – Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
16. Covenant Community Church RCA
17. Curt Babcock, Superintendent – North Muskegon Public Schools

18. Dakota Crow, Chief Professional Officer – Boys & Girls Club of the Muskegon Lakeshore
19. Dale Hilson, Prosecuting Attorney for Muskegon County
20. Dan Wheat – Choice One Bank
21. Dave Alexander – Downtown Muskegon Now
22. David Manley – CORE Realty Partners
23. Deacon James J. Schiltz – Prince of Peace Catholic Church
24. DeAnna Burt, Vice President of Academic Affairs for Baker College
25. Debra Griffin, President – Progressive Democratic Women’s Caucus & Board
26. Diane Fleser, Executive Director – Disability Network of West Michigan
27. Diane VanEpps – Comerica Bank
28. Dr. Dale Nesbary, President – Muskegon Community College
29. Dr. John Severson, Superintendent, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District
30. Eric Hood, President – NAACP
31. Erica Poulin – Skeetown Crossfit
32. Faye Brown & Board of Muskegon Heights Housing Commission
33. Former State Representative Marcia Hovey-Wright
34. Former State Representative Mary Valentine
35. Frank Peterson, City Manager – City of Muskegon

36. Fred Johnson, Chief Public Defender – Muskegon County Public Defender’s Office
37. Gary Foster – Muskegon County Commission
38. Gary Nelund, Mayor – City of Norton Shores
39. Greg Helmer, Superintendent – Mona Shores Public Schools
40. Harbortown Unitarian Universalist Congregation
41. Jake Eckholm, City Manager – City of Muskegon Heights
42. James Line – Kent Record Management
43. James Schiltz – Added Value CFO, LLC
44. Jeanette Hoyer, President – Goodwill Industries of West Michigan
45. Jeffrey W. Johnson, Superintendent – Montague Area Public Schools
46. Jennifer Barnes, Chair – Muskegon County Democratic Party
47. Jeremy Williams – Community United Methodist Church
48. Jim Fisher – Jim Fisher Consulting, LLC
49. Jim Neilson, Superintendent & Matt Vandervelde, Director – Orchard View Community Schools
50. Joan Schmitt – Bel-Aire Motel
51. Joe Bush, Chair – Muskegon County Republican Party
52. John Fleske for Muskegon Covenant Academy & Covenant Academies Foundation
53. John Snider – Muskegon County Commissioner

54. John Vanloon, Superintendent – Ravenna Public Schools
55. Jon Covington- MOCITI
56. Justin Jennings, Superintendent – Muskegon Public Schools
57. Kate Kesteloot-Scarborough, Executive Director – Mediation & Restorative Services
58. Kathy Brubaker-Clarke, President – Muskegon Rotary Club (along with over ___ members)
59. Kathy Moore, Director – Muskegon County Health Department
60. Kay Olthoff and Pete Brown – West Michigan Symphony
61. Kay Shabazz, CEO – R.O.A.R.R.
62. Kelly Richards, Director, Muskegon Area District Library
63. Ken Johnson, City Commissioner, Muskegon
64. Kent Record Management
65. Kimberly Sims, Mayor – City of Muskegon Heights
66. Kristy Sweet – Systema Funeral & Cremation Services
67. Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance
68. Linda Medema – Frauenthal Center
69. Lisa Hegenbart, Executive Director – Big Brothers & Big Sisters of the Lakeshore
70. Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
71. Marianne Harris-Darnell, President- Black Women’s Political Caucus

72. Mark Eisenbarth – Muskegon County Administrator
73. Mark Meyers, City Manager – City of Norton Shores
74. Marty Ferriby, Director – Hackley Public Library
75. Marty Gerencer – Morse Marking Connections, LLC
76. Marty Systema – I' MOVE
77. Melissa Moore, Director – READ Muskegon
78. Merica Dobry – Dobry Law Offices, PLLC
79. Muskegon Catholic Schools
80. Muskegon County Cooperating Churches
81. Muskegon Heights Public School Academy
82. Nancy Peters, President – Coalition for Community Development
83. Nancy Waters – Muskegon County Clerk
84. Oakridge Public Schools
85. Our Savior's Lutheran Church
86. Pam Babbitt – Babbitt Sports Center
87. Pastor Duane Bennett – Mt. Zion COGIC
88. Pastor Mark Miller – Central United Methodist
89. Paul Allen Billings, General Manger – WUVS-lp 103.7 The BEAT & WMMT-lp 106.1
90. Rabbi Alan Alpert – Congregation B'Nai Israel

91. Reeths-Puffer Schools
92. REVEL
93. Reverend Lily Marx, St. Gregory's Episcopal Church
94. Richard Houtteman – Consumer's Energy
95. Robert Jackson, Assessor, City of Muskegon Heights
96. Robert Scolnik – Muskegon County Commissioner
97. Senator Geoff Hansen
98. Sheriff Michael Poulin
99. State Representative Terry Sabo
100. State Representative Holly Hughes
101. Stephanie King-McAllister, President – Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Muskegon Heights Alumni Chapter
102. Steve Gawron, Mayor – City of Muskegon
103. Susie Hughes – Muskegon County Commissioner
104. Tim Demumbrum – Muskegon County Surveyor
105. Watch Muskegon Committee
106. Whitehall District School
107. YMCA