

Monday, November 16, 2020

CAMP Rehoboth Dismayed and Shocked by Three Incidents of Hate and Harassment.

CAMP Rehoboth is dismayed and shocked by three recent acts of harassment and bullying against members of the Rehoboth/Lewes LGBTQ community in Sussex County, DE. In one instance, a same-gendered, interracial couple who lives in Wolfe Pointe, outside of Lewes, DE had their yard vandalized on Friday, November 13, 2020. The couple had a Black Lives Matter sign, a Biden/Harris sign, and an Inclusion sign all posted in their front yard. Someone chemically burned "Trump" in five foot tall letters into their yard. This occurrence is both unlawful and disturbing. The Mayor of Lewes has met with the victims and a community response is being planned for this coming weekend. Charlotte King, one of the two women in the couple whose property was vandalized observed: "It is the entitled and willfully ignorant individuals who are working against our fundamental American values when they choose to commit acts of crimes like this." Her plea to those people: "Please leave America alone and stop destroying our ability to be united so that we can return to being the strong and powerful United States of America."

A second case took place after a show at the Blue Moon Restaurant in downtown Rehoboth Beach when the Assistant Fire Chief of Lewes, DE, William Buckaloo, made comments on his Facebook page using hateful and offensive language. Blue Moon owner, Tim Regan said "For nearly 40 years the Blue Moon has been an icon for inclusivity; welcoming everyone and treating our guests, staff and entertainers with respect. We are deeply offended when a member of our family is disrespected. We won't tolerate hate within our walls and we condemn anyone who demoralizes another person, especially a member of the Blue Moon family, in person or virtually."

It is our understanding that William Buckaloo has been suspended pending a full investigation of this matter. CAMP Rehoboth appreciates the quick response from the Lewes Fire Department and will continue to work with them on this and on rebuilding trust in our community. CAMP Rehoboth already offers cultural competency training to several local law-enforcement departments and will be extending that offer to the Lewes and other area Fire departments, in light of this incident.

In a third situation which occurred, this one taking place on Sunday evening during a Live Zoom presentation on LGBTQ History for another community center, Fay Jacobs, the Editor of Letters from CAMP Rehoboth, and her audience were "zoom bombed" by three individuals wearing MAGA hats and spewing hateful, anti-gay, anti-Semitic, and racist language. Jacobs, with a distinguished career as an award-winning author said: "I was horrified at first. It felt like a home invasion. But the incredible support I've gotten from posting the story has far eclipsed my fear from the incident."

David Mariner, Executive Director of CAMP Rehoboth echoed the resilient attitude expressed by Jacobs: "We draw strength from the incredible progress that has been made since CAMP Rehoboth was founded 30 years ago, and incidents such as these only serve to make us recommit to the important work of making Rehoboth, and our surrounding communities, places that are safe and welcoming, and with room for all."

CAMP Rehoboth recognizes how these types of events can feel very unsettling. If you find yourself in need of support, please reach out to CAMP Rehoboth. Confidential, short-term counseling to individuals in need is available by calling: 302-227-5620. "We are deeply concerned about the incidents that have occurred in the area these last several days." said Chris Beagle, Chair of the CAMP Rehoboth Board of Directors. "CAMP Rehoboth pledges our steadfast support to all of those impacted by these acts of hatred, and we offer our assistance and support to the authorities addressing these matters moving forward."

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About CAMP Rehoboth: CAMP Rehoboth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community service organization dedicated to creating a positive environment inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities in Rehoboth Beach and its related communities. It seeks to promote cooperation and understanding among all people, as they work to build a safer community with room for all. www.camprehoboth.com