It is with heavy hearts and solemn spirits that we again must address a violent and deadly act of white supremacy in America. On March 16, 2021 a white man opened fire at three spa locations in Georgia and murdered eight people, six of whom were Asian women. At this time, we do not know the names of all who were lost. CNN has shared the names of four victims: Delaina Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, and Daoyou Feng.

Say Their Names.

We use this phrase often to remember and honor the Black lives lost to white supremacy, and specifically to police brutality. We repeat it today in solidarity with our Asian brothers, sisters and siblings who are hurting from this tragedy because we understand one important truth—this was a hate crime. Once again, we are faced with a white man targeting and murdering a group of people simply for existing. Once again, we are bombarded with news reports making excuses for the murderer’s actions, blaming mental illness and focusing on his past recovery efforts. Once again, we see little compassion in covering the lives of those who were lost. Once again, a community now has to grieve the lives lost while simultaneously having to justify their pain, existence and humanity.

Anti-Asian hate is not something new, and it is not something unknown in Southern Oregon. The oppression of Asian lives is woven into the fabric of the State of Oregon with the creation of internment camps during World War II. Over the last year, there has been a rise in targeted attacks against Asian people, usually Asian women, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Just recently, we saw a Medford business called out for perpetuating the dangerous misinformation of COVID-19 being a Chinese-created virus, a sentiment echoed by a Georgia police officer in the wake of this violent hate crime. This is not an isolated incident. This is a result of white supremacy. This is a part of the structure of this country.

SOEquity stands in solidarity with Asian communities both locally and across this nation. We are dedicating our upcoming blog posts and educational materials to addressing anti-Asian hate and harmful stereotypes. We will be reflecting and addressing ways in which anti-Asian bias may be unknowingly internalized within our leadership team and our membership. We will continue to identify Asian leaders and culturally competent organizations who we can uplift in our journey of solidarity and antiracism in Southern Oregon.
If you or someone you know has experienced a bias incident or hate crime in Southern Oregon, we encourage you to file a Bias Incident Report at www.soequity.org/report-bias.

With Love and Power,

SOEquity Leadership

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