

The Respond to Racism's Board of Directors and Leadership Team strongly condemn Mayor Studebaker's remarks which perpetuate racism in Lake Oswego.

In an interview with KOIN TV on Monday, Lake Oswego Mayor Kent Studebaker said a racist sign incident that was in the news a few weeks ago, was a "one-off". He mentioned that Lake Oswego has been working on the DEI "thing" for more than a year and we're pretty far down the line on it. He acknowledged that the Black Lives Matter movement is a legitimate concern but that it has been blown out of proportion and he is sorry to see people using that issue as a way to loot and destroy property. Lastly, he says - "It's not just Black lives that matter, I think all lives matter—whether it's Black, Asian, white, whatever."

Mayor Studebaker disregards the racist things that have been and continue to happen to Blacks and other People of Color. He minimized their experiences and accepted no responsibility for the racism we see in Lake Oswego every day. The word "Nigger" was painted on an object on the street in plain view about two weeks ago. It's been written on a mailbox and on school walls. Young white boys made racist slurs at a Lake Oswego swim park with a Black family nearby, a man threatened BLM protesters in LO with his car. All of these have happened recently. This is not new. We are a city that must address its racism.

The Poinsette family is just one family that has dealt with the racism in this town for the 34 years that they've lived here. What happens to Blacks and other POC in this town seems to be an afterthought or inconsequential for this Mayor. Using "All Lives Matter" completely denies the longstanding struggle faced by black people in this country and in Lake Oswego. Unfortunately, Mayor Studebaker's words reinforce the nickname for our town - Lake No Negro.

Respond to Racism was established in 2017 with a mission to educate and empower Lake Oswego residents and institutions with the tools to combat racism and make LO a better place to live for residents of all races and ethnicities. We have held monthly community meetings bringing engaging educational programs and tools to our community for over three years. We host numerous events, have tools on our website and post about racism on our social media sites and in our local paper the LO Review. We publish stories and hear often from our BIPOC members of their terrible experiences in Lake Oswego. While hundreds of community members and some city leaders have participated in many of our meetings and events over the last three years our Mayor and a few of our Council members have not. Our doors are open - it's never

too late to start the work and we welcome you wherever you are on your journey to become less racist.

There are ample resources available to everyone in this community who wants to learn about and dismantle systemic racism and do their own personal work to become less racist. Systemic racism, upon which our community was built, has to be dismantled now. Silence is no longer an option. Respond to Racism will no longer be a quiet community organization.

It is the responsibility of everyone in city leadership and the community to step up. The anti-racism work the city is doing is quite limited and has only recently begun. The DEI Task Force is temporary and limited and, while it is a start, it is not even close to being sufficient in addressing racism in Lake Oswego. The community must demand more. The city must intentionally seek input from the BIPOC community in LO and stop making decisions through the lens of whiteness.

Lake Oswego deserves better leadership. We deserve leaders who represent all citizens, who value all perspectives, who intentionally seek out the voices of the marginalized. We deserve leaders willing to educate themselves and to participate in the opportunities to engage in discussion around race. We need city leaders who aren't just unafraid to say Black Lives Matter, because that's easy, but who will actually prioritize anti-racism and fight for LO's communities of color who have long been marginalized.

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Respond to Racism Board of Directors.