

## Message from the Mayor: Hastings as a community of mutual respect

Fellow residents,

We know who we are as a community. We demonstrate that individually and as a group every day. Mutual respect, tolerance and generosity define us, and how we think of each other and this village we call home. We rallied just this December where the congregations of this community came together to support the move of a Syrian refugee family to town, and the community demonstrated it shortly later by raising the funding to ensure their transition has been smooth. We open our school doors every Thanksgiving week to hundreds of homeless, feeding them in a moment of warmth and comfort. We host a Martin Luther King breakfast that draws many in unity and strength.

And yet, just recently, anti-Semitic graffiti was sprayed on a house in town. The police are investigating and do not believe it was random. Without eyewitnesses or good leads, these crimes are hard to solve. If you believe you have any information, you are urged to call 914 478 2344. It may be difficult for us to see justice here, but if you can help with information, please do.

We will not be defined by those who sprayed vicious symbols of hate, swastikas, on a house targeting a Jewish family in our community. They may not realize the visceral response such an act can inspire in people – or care – but we all do. It's not who we are.

Crimes like this can be driven by hate or by sheer disregard for others. They can inspire distraught reactions and fear. But they must not. This community is not defined by that act – it doesn't represent the position of any group here and it's entirely foreign to what we're about. We reject it categorically.

All people of conscience in this village condemn this act. If the perpetrators are apprehended, they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Let it be clear that this village's door is forever open to everyone, regardless of faith, color or orientation. An act of hate against any of us is an act of hate against all of us.

Temple Beth Shalom is holding a public meeting this Thursday at 8pm where you can come to share your thoughts, as well as hear a spokesperson from the Anti Defamation League and various village leaders speak on this event.

You may also want to join in solidarity with others in this community at the Martin Luther King breakfast this coming Monday at 9:15am to 12:30pm (breakfast is served at 9:30) at the Community Center. If you email [geraldjer@optonline.net](mailto:geraldjer@optonline.net) for advance reservations, it's \$12 and children under 5 are free. (Advanced reservations should be made by Saturday. Put "MLK Breakfast" in the subject line.) Otherwise, it's \$15 for adults at the door.

We are united together to deny the power of this act, to show who we are, and to say that hate has no place here.

Thank you,

Peter Swiderski

Mayor

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