

Open letter to our community – July 2018

From RJOC and organizations representing people of color in our community

In these times of national crisis, where we face racism, misogyny and blatant appeals to hate and division, we know that many members of our community are angry and frustrated and are looking for ways to make a difference. There are often efforts to hold marches and rallies to express that frustration. Many people attend, and then there is another event a few weeks or even days later. It is great to see so much participation, but it also can be confusing to know how to build off of these events to create sustained effort to effect change.

We applaud all of those who want to organize events and all of those who show up to stand against the outrages of our time. It is essential that good people rise up to demand justice.

Now it is time to channel that anger and frustration. The Racial Justice Organizing Committee are committed allies and accomplices working hand in hand in strategic alignment with organizations representing people of color in the greater Salem-Keizer area. We work together to build actions and learning opportunities to fight racism and its impact in our community. All these organizations are understaffed, underfunded and stretched thin in these difficult times. So, you may not be aware of the hard work being done every day on the ground by organizations representing people of color in this community. Often, organizations representing people of color are not consulted as events are being planned, but then called upon later to provide speakers or other supportive activities. We all need to be more strategic.

The RJOC coordinating committee and members of the advisory committee representing people of color urge all who are interested in the long-term fight for racial justice to join RJOC. RJOC is building deep relationships with our organizations and we call upon RJOC members to show up and take action in line with the strategic work we are doing every day. Through RJOC you will be regularly informed of support for actions and volunteer needs that work to advance our strategies. You will also be informed of learning opportunities to deepen your understanding of racism and its impact on our community, and of strategies to be effective allies and accomplices.

Let's fight institutional racism and structural inequality together. Join RJOC today.

Paul Krissel, Jan Montes: Racial Justice Organizing Committee

Andrea Williams: Causa

Levi Herrera Lopez: Mano a Mano Family Center

Navneet Kaur: Salem Sikh Community

Sandra Hernandez-Lomeli: Latinos Unidos Siempre

Reyna Lopez: PCUN

Benny Williams: Salem Keizer NAACP

Annalivia Palazzo-Angulo: Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality

Additional organizations represented on the advisory committee of RJOC:

Salem Islamic Center, COFA Alliance National Network

Micronesian Islander Community, Oregon Marshallese Community

Ethnic Affairs Committee of the Salem Keizer Education Association