

PARENTING/GIVING BACK

No Place for Hate in the Pacific Northwest

Anti-Defamation League teaches school communities to examine and resist bias

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PHOTO: Courtesy ADL

Anti-Defamation League (<https://www.adl.org/>) was founded to resist the climate of growing antisemitism and bigotry in the United States in the early 20th century. Schools often bring in the ADL to help guide the response when there has been a racist incident, but increasingly, administrators and educators are seeing the wisdom of proactive anti-bias education. Since the death of George Floyd last year, the ADL's programs that used to reach a few thousand students a year are now reaching more than 30,000. It's a challenge the organization is excited to take on.

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"In the Pacific Northwest, we've had a real interest in understanding the role that bias plays, and so schools have turned to ADL," says Scotland Nash, education director with ADL Pacific Northwest. With a presence in the Pacific Northwest for the past 70 years, ADL PNW has decades of experience providing free anti-bias education resources, training and situational response assistance. ADL serves all parts of the community, but most powerfully, they teach kids to be advocates for change.

No Place for Hate

The No Place for Hate School Climate Initiative (<https://www.noplaceforhate.org/>) encompasses programs for K–12 school communities, including students, families, teachers and staff. Workshops begin with attendees exploring their own identities and biases, then encourage and facilitate them to connect with their differences.

"Ultimately our main goal is to get them to champion justice," says Nash.

Although there are complementary workshops for adults, what's unique about No Place for Hate is that the program is student-led.

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"We know that the impact of peer-to-peer influence is significant, and to prevent bullying and negative behaviors it's more effective coming from peers than from staff," says Nash. And adults often have a harder time than students recognizing bias in their community.

“The reality is that we all have to first acknowledge that we do have bias. It’s part of human nature – it’s how our brains work. When people deny that they have bias, there’s an opportunity to miss the impact they’re having on others. It’s about understanding those biases and how they’re showing up and preventing them from showing up negatively,” explains Nash.

Egregious events such as the [recent blackface incident in Idaho](https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/northwest/idaho/article251015164.html) (<https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/northwest/idaho/article251015164.html>) are fortunately rare in the Pacific Northwest, but when students of color, LGBTQ+ students or students who are part of any community that has been oppressed are asked, many of them share instances of stereotyping, microaggressions or bullying.

“It doesn’t need to be this horrific instance,” says Nash. “There are things that are happening that we [adults] don’t even realize are happening. It’s oftentimes unintentional.”

But if we don’t act against biased behavior, we’re continuing to perpetuate it. And history has shown that biases left unchecked can grow until horrific instances become commonplace. No Place for Hate helps students begin to take action by forming a school leadership team that is representative of the student population.

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“Sometimes it’s pulling students who aren’t typically seen as leaders but who have the opportunity to lead so that they can talk about the antibias process,” says Nash. The leadership team works with the school to develop a No Place for Hate pledge, identify what isn’t working in the school and lead activities to help change the school climate to one in which everyone feels they belong.

Middle and high school students can participate in ADL’s powerful peer training program. Through 18 hours of training, students dive deeper into understanding different aspects of bias and the ways that it shows up in our actions; they practice responding to negative situations and learn to lead their own No Place for Hate workshops.

Virtual Youth Summit

This year, ADL is hosting the first-ever virtual No Place for Hate Youth Summit (<https://www.npfhsummit.org/register>) on May 23. It will feature two keynote speakers: Washington Sen. Joe Nguyen (<https://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/nguyen/>) and social activist Niko Battle (<https://www.instagram.com/nikobattle/?hl=en>). Students will attend two interactive breakout sessions which they will select in advance from among 10 options, including:

Constructive Conversations: Engaging Your Racist Uncle at the Dinner Table

Allyship in Action: Supporting LGBTQ Youth

Preventing Gun Violence in Your Community: The Power of Youth to Make a Difference

The three-hour-long event is accessible, free and open to any student in grades 8 through 12 who is curious about social justice and interested in participating in conversations about equity.

Getting involved

In addition to No Place for Hate, ADL offers Holocaust education and educational resources such as family table-talk guides, and lesson plans and curriculum guides for teachers. ADL programs and resources are offered free of charge. Resources can be downloaded from the national website (<https://seattle.adl.org/resources-and-tools/>) and programs can be requested by faculty, parents' groups or students themselves on the ADL PNW website (<https://seattle.adl.org/>). Nash encourages schools and parents to reach out to her directly by email (nash@adl.org (<mailto:nash@adl.org>)) to begin a conversation about how ADL can best serve your school community.

If you go

Where: [ADL PNW 2021 Virtual No Place for Hate Summit](#)

(<https://www.npfhsummit.org/>)

When: May 23, 2021; 12–3 p.m. PDT

Tickets: Free by [advance registration](https://www.npfhsummit.org/register) (<https://www.npfhsummit.org/register>)

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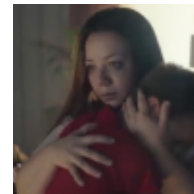
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