

BERKELEY, CA
Mayor Jesse Arreguín

United Against Hate

In the summer of 2017, following months of extremist groups protests, and a week after the tragic white supremacist events in Charlottesville, the City of Berkeley prepared for another wave of planned hate group rallies. In an effort to visibly reject the groups' messages, Mayor Jesse Arreguín and staff sought a way to engage all residents in standing up to the growing threat of hate. Their initial response was the printing and distribution of Berkeley Stands United Against Hate posters which spread quickly and spontaneously in communities throughout the East Bay, with each community adding their own focus to their message. In two days, 20,000 posters were distributed throughout the City. UAH posters have since become an icon of unity and inclusiveness and are still in high demand throughout the region.

Building on the poster initiative, the city leaders and community activists who raised money and spread the message of solidarity in East Bay communities gathered together with the help of Not In Our Town (www.niot.org), a project dedicated to combating hate and building safe and inclusive communities that was launched in 1995 by The Working Group, an Oakland-based nonprofit. This meeting produced the inaugural United Against Hate Week, which was launched in 2018 with the goal of providing local residents with the tools, resources and support they needed to take locally-driven action to stand against growing intolerance.

East Bay cities were at the epicenter of this first regional anti-hate initiative; 24 cities, counties and campuses and 13 school districts were involved. Community leaders voiced their support and promoted the event on city websites, social media, and other media outlets. During this inaugural week of action, 35 events engaged local residents and students in rallies, film screenings, art projects, speakers, community dialogues, marches and storytelling workshops. An additional 25,000 posters were distributed to homes, businesses, houses of worship and workplaces.

The impact of this first week-long event was reflected in survey responses from 13 film screenings in which attendees gave overwhelmingly positive ratings for films viewed and their treatment of topics. These attendees said they were more likely to stand up to hate (94%), more likely to speak up in response to bigoted remarks (95%), felt more engaged with community members different from themselves (95%), and better understood the need for change in their community (97%).

The 2nd Annual United Against Hate Week was November 17-23, 2019. As part of this second year's initiative, communities organized film screenings, "Pop the Hate" contests, performances, and unity walks – events occurring across the Bay Area which officials say are designed to serve as a reminder of the love and inclusion that the community stands for and values deeply, and that provide a dynamic way to increase engagement in and support for standing up to hate across communities. Over 35 jurisdictions in the greater Bay Area participated and officials say the project has "grown organically" to reach Los Angeles, small cities in New Jersey, and Framingham, MA.

The goal of the United Against Hate movement is to provide communities with the tools, resources, and support they need to take locally-driven action to stand united against growing intolerance. Beyond raising awareness of the dangers of hate and the need for respect and civil discourse, the week of activities and follow-up events is

designed to help community members build the stronger connections with civic leaders, businesses, and schools that enable deeper engagement year-round.

Details on the United Against Hate initiative, including 20 Ideas for Action, an Action Kit, a Social Media Toolkit, and many additional tools, are at www.unitedagainsthateweek.org.

Additional information is available from Jacquelyn McCormick, Chief of Staff, Office of Mayor Jesse Arreguín, at jmccormick@cityofberkeley.info or 510-981-7101.