

It's a Problem Here Too: A Conversation About Racism in our Neighborhoods

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INTRODUCTION

On Jan. 31st, PDC hosted a panel discussion about race and racism in our communities. For those that missed it, or haven't watched the 90 minute video (available at: bit.ly/pdc_youtube), we strive to share the salient take-aways here. This is by no means a complete transcript, and we welcome ongoing discussion on this topic by the speakers, the audience, and the community as a whole. This event addresses systemic racism right here on the Bay Area peninsula.

The program begins with examples of some of the real stories from our neighbors and how they have experienced racism in the past as well as right up to the present day. Some of the examples given were shockingly egregious to some (who hadn't experienced or heard such stories before). For this reason alone, we received considerable positive feedback about the

event, and consider it important to do follow-up work on the subject of racial equity, rather than consider this event a “one and done”.

In the second half of the program, elected and appointed community leaders addressed ways that they are working to break the cycle of racism, and what more needs to be done in this area (by electeds and community members alike). Over 200 attendees joined together online for this event. We would love to follow this up with another event to address next steps. If you're interested in speaking at and/or helping to organize a followup event on this topic, please let us know by emailing us at: pdcoalition@gmail.com

Story-Teller Portion

The first portion of the program was moderated by **Julie Lythcott-Haims**, an educator and author of three books on parenting, young adulthood, and living as Black and biracial.

The community members who shared their experiences on race are:

- **Nathasha Mejia** is a Palo Alto native and currently resides in Berkeley, CA. Mejia is a Policy Analyst at the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform in Oakland.
- **Lucinda Tinsmen** is a teacher, an editor, ghost writer, and executive director of classical music organizations. She resides in Menlo Park.
- **Nehezi Roberts** is a clinical social worker and consultant, alumni of University of Chicago, former Associate Professor of English, and currently resides in Menlo Park.
- **Dr. Terri Givens** is a political scientist, former provost at Menlo College, founder and CEO of Brighter Higher Ed, and author of “Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides.” She resides in Menlo Park.

Natasha Mejia's Main Points

Ms. Mejia gave a provocative account of the effect racism had on her growing up in Palo Alto as a biracial child. She felt although she is biracial, her mother identifies as White and her father identifies as Black, she was unpleasantly surprised to find that she was always only seen as Black. Ms. Mejia shared that she was called names, “African long neck” and made to feel “stupid” by her teachers. She internalized that Black was less than and ultimately she felt she was less than; she inevitably dropped out of Gunn High School and completed high school at a continuation school in Mountain View. In college she found the stereotype threat which is a social psycho predicament that can arise from negative stereotypes by one's own group and puts people at risk of conforming as a self characteristic to that negative stereotype. Ms. Mejia felt the stereotype threat is a long standing contributing factor to racial and gender gaps in academic performances and shed light on why she performed poorly in school and struggled with developing her own identity.

Moreover Ms. Mejia described the harassment that Black people experience by the Peninsula police by disproportionately pulling over Black people at a rate much higher when compared to

non-Black people. Ms. Mejia mentioned that if you cannot imagine Peninsula Police would take part in this take a look at the data that she learned while attending a webinar, on cannabis, equity and racial justice. Blacks in Palo Alto are 26 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana related charges.

Another compelling example Ms. Mejia shared was at age 13 after ditching a school dance with friends in Los Altos where she was the only Black child, she was the only one detained by police and all of her non-Black counterparts were free to leave on their own. She finds it imperative that people actively challenge their racial biases.

What Policy Makers Should Know:

Ms. Mejia urges policy makers to take in account how the history of oppression and racism is directly tied to current policies. She wants them to know we need concrete policy action and systematic change that rectifies the harm done to Black people and other people of color—in areas such as investment, housing, education, healthcare, jobs and the criminal justice system. Experience with discrimination ignited Ms. Mejia's passion to combat social injustices.

Lucinda Tinsmen's Main Points

Ms. Tinsmen, a long time resident of Menlo Park, provided a detailed account of a neighborhood incident that involved her family. She reports that she hired a (Black) behavioral therapist for her son diagnosed with ASD after pandemic-related school closings. One day the therapist shared that he had been stopped by the police after someone reported a suspicious man walking on the street with a (white) child. Ms. Tinsmen feels this is an example of conscious and unconscious bias. Every single day the behavioral therapist would walk with her son in her Menlo Park neighborhood, the Willows. It took the behavioral therapist over a week to report this incident because he reports that this is a common occurrence for him.

Ms. Tinsmen was livid and shared this incident on NextDoor. She was even more enraged at the neighborhood response which she felt was dismissive, unsupportive and biased.

Ms. Tinsmen found it astonishing that there is no transparency with police calls, thus lack of accountability. Ms. Tinsmen urges police data transparency and would like to see a process that will screen calls weaving in bias and racism. Ultimately this event led to the therapist resigning and taking a job in another school district.

Nehezi's Roberts Main Points

Ms. Roberts shared that she and her partner are new to Menlo Park and initially lived for several months in a hotel near downtown Menlo Park while consulting with a local hospital and found that she was constantly met with deep curiosity that soon felt uncomfortable. She was even asked who was paying for her accommodations. She shared a journal entry she wrote shortly after moving to the Willows:

Enter Menlo Park

My skin color is my resume, my CV and my cover letter

My skin color is criminal and triggering

My skin color is a trigger to those with less melanin

My skin color welcomes violent threats, cruel name calling

My skin color welcomes defacing of Black Lives Matter signs and theft of property

When I enter the world I thought people saw me as resilient, saw me as beautiful, disarming

And unfortunately since being here that's not so true

Ms. Roberts's story starts with a frustrating night and posted the following **"Open Letter to Menlo Park"** on NextDoor where she followed it up with a part two several months later:

Open letter to Menlo Park and Surrounding Areas, by Nehezi Roberts:

My partner and I (we are a heterosexual couple) identify as Black Americans that joyfully relocated to Menlo Park from the "mean" streets of Chicago. My consulting gig brought us here. Unfortunately we have been met with such blatant racism, hiring discrimination and an overall sense of not being welcomed by our non-Black neighbors and potential Silicon Valley startups and employers. We were lured here by faux promises of diversity and inclusion. We were lured here by the promise of "coming" affordable housing. None of this is reality. I know this is a difficult discussion coupled with a complicated history. We've been harassed by non-Black neighbors. BLM signs have been defaced with dog feces. Neighbors have yelled unkind words to us. Neighbors have called the police on us thinking we didn't belong in the neighborhood and were up to "no good". Employers have overlooked us. So...neighbors can you embrace us as a Black couple and help us navigate employment, home purchasing and harmony among neighbors? This is heartbreaking to us that our experience has been riddled with negativity and unwillingness to accept us as individuals that deserve appropriate employment (I have an advanced degree from University of Chicago) and deserving of a healthy environment to raise a family and prosper. Please advise.

Open Letter to Menlo Park #2 (Includes edits made after this was posted on NextDoor)

Dear Menlo Park,

It's been over a year since we relocated here. Not much has changed. The narrative feels the same. We feel less safe. I am receiving a plethora of angry messages blaming me for the current racial climate in Menlo Park. I am predictable; I will always meet aggression with patience.

We do not have plans to move from the Willows. It is clear to me that a shift is already happening and we should continue the momentum. The "R" word (racism, racist) is ugly and often used inappropriately; but it is clear that racism and white supremacy reside here in Menlo Park.

Let's define white supremacy, racism, bias, segregation, and reparations so at minimum we all have the ability of being on the same page with the basic definitions of very polarizing words.

White Supremacy:

*The belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular black or Jewish people. **Redlining is one example.*

Redlining:

The systematic denial of various services or goods by federal government agencies, local governments, or the private sector either directly or through the selective raising of prices.

Racism:

The inability or refusal to recognize the rights, needs, dignity, or value of people of particular races or geographical origins. More widely, the devaluation of various traits of character or intelligence as 'typical' of particular peoples. The category of race may itself be challenged, as implying an inference from trivial superficial differences of appearance to allegedly significant underlying differences of nature; increasingly evolutionary evidence suggests that the dispersal of one original people into different geographical locations is a relatively recent and genetically insignificant matter.

Bias:

Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Segregation:

The enforced separation of different racial groups in a country, community, or establishment.

Prejudice:

Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Reparations:

*The making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged. This is what is needed and owed currently to African Americans. (An analogy is the reparations the German government paid to the state of Israel and to some survivors of the Holocaust - a link with more information is included in the **Resources** section at the end of this article.)*

Menlo Park according to census has approximately 4.5% African Americans and 1-3 African American businesses. Menlo Park has a complex history riddled with redlining and school segregation. I am aware that change is difficult and the truth about American history seems even more difficult for folks to digest or even seek the truth about.

My belief is that accountability is key and radical empathy could be a therapeutic process for some that feel challenged and angry.

*My question is **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?***

Both letters were met with overwhelmingly supportive responses overall but was privy to gaslighting with comments questioning if she is deserving of employment in the Peninsula and perhaps a better fit across the bay in Oakland. Some neighbors even questioned her education and made assumptions; Ms. Roberts shared how a neighbor defended her by pointing out that the University of Chicago (where Ms. Roberts' received her Master's degree) and Stanford University are equivalently ranked at #6.

Ms. Roberts also challenged racial labels such as "Black" American due to the oppressive actions of the US Census. She passionately conveyed the imperative need for lanes to wealth to open and the importance of understanding the needs of those that identify as African American in this area. She shared that the last thing we need is yet another Boys and Girls club or a "welfare to work" program. Moreover she shared the need for a city wide reparations effort similar to one initiated in Evanston, Illinois. She feels relying on the federal government may continue to be a lagged process and at least initially reparations could be facilitated on a city level. Lastly she conveyed the sentiment that a sense of belonging is imperative in a new neighborhood.

Dr. Terri Givens's Main Points

Dr. Terri Givens story started in Spokane, WA in the 1960's and 70's where there was less than 1% African American population. Dr. Givens went on to Stanford in 1983 as a first generation undergraduate student. She shared that her parents were a part of the great migration from Louisiana to California as she researched her history in great detail. She found that similar to other storytellers, that herself and family have experienced a great sense of internalized oppression. Dr. Givens' parents tried to assimilate and had the same expectation of their children. Dr. Givens shared that she has since developed an issue of self-loathing she thought she left behind after leaving Stanford. She reflected back to the time she lived in East Palo Alto and noticed the way highway 101 divides the communities and this haunted her.

Not long ago Dr. Givens returned to the Peninsula to have an active and engaging role in the community and to also afford her two teenage sons with similar opportunities. Dr. Givens conveyed the pervasive divides that exist in the area. She shared that students from Ravenswood school district do not have the same advantages as other students including her own sons that reside in West Menlo Park.

Dr. Givens went on to convey how frightened she is for her own two teenage sons who both have darker skin; often discussing what to do if pulled over by police and the profiling of men of color wearing hoodies.

She recalls one of her sons experiencing microaggressive behavior at school when he mistaken for being a Tinsley transfer:

The **Tinsley Voluntary Transfer Program** is a 1985 [settlement](#) of a lawsuit in which school districts surrounding the [Ravenswood City School District](#) in [East Palo Alto, California](#) agreed to accept up to 135 minority students entering grades Kindergarten through second grade from within the boundaries of the Ravenswood City School District. The surrounding school districts accepting transfer students under this settlement include:

- [Palo Alto Unified School District](#): up to 60 students each year^[1]
- [San Carlos School District](#): up to 26 students each year^[2]
- [Menlo Park City School District](#): up to 24 students each year^[3]
- [Las Lomas Elementary School District](#): up to 12 students each year
- [Portola Valley Elementary School District](#): up to 8 students each year^[2]
- [Woodside Elementary School District](#): up to 5 students each year^[2]

Dr. Givens urges everyone to understand we all have internalized biases; we live in a sea of biases. She goes on to describe segregation in Menlo Park, having only a handful of African Americans in West Menlo Park. She feels Menlo Park has a generalized explanation of ‘we can all pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and, like Ms. Roberts, feels reparations is a good place to start.

Julie Lythcott-Haims’s Main Points

Julie Lythcott-Haims, the moderator for the storytelling portion, recalls numerous racist incidents that she has experienced, including: being followed around Stanford Shopping Center, asked for identification when writing a check at Safeway when the white person before her writing a check was not asked, and even included a horrific experience as a seven year old child when a parent hauled their white child out of a pool because she was in it. Ms. Lythcott-Haims described attending, where her children attended. This fundraiser was in a neighbor’s backyard and she vividly recounts a white woman showing up to the party in Black Face. Ms. Lythcott-Haims scanned the eyes of fellow attendees and was horrified that all she observed was a bunch of laughing, inebriated white folks. Ms. Lythcott-Haims shared that she is yet to receive an apology from anyone in the community.

Q&A

Ms. Roberts introduced the topic of housing and severe landlord harassment; sharing that a rope was found in a tree in front of her residence and received resistance when she asked the landlord to remove it. She followed up with conveying her approach to racism by stating that she will not meet aggression with aggression; she will meet aggression with patience. Ms. Roberts then shared that it is hard to defend yourself against everyone and the need for new blood in local politics. She recounts racist name calling as early as kindergarten; a similar experience that Ms. Mejia shared. The storytelling panelists were asked three questions from the audience:

1. **What have you seen as your response when you call out racism from non-people of color?**
2. **What is Black Face?**
3. **What would reparations look like?**

The panelists have found that, when calling out racism, non-people of color call it **gaslighting**, stating they do not mean it in that way; conveying that racism also lives on because people of color are expected to let racism roll off their backs. Dr. Givens described Black Face as it was utilized in the 1900s as an act of violence that diminishes African Americans, citing that it's worse than cultural appropriation because it is violence. Ms. Mejia recommends that folks take a look at the Black New Deal and listen to the 1619 podcast—an episode that talks about Black Face. (Both of these are included in the **Resources** section at the end of this article and will appear on the website: PeninsulaDemocrats.com)

Policy-Maker Portion

The second half of the event featured elected and appointed policy-makers and community leaders. This portion was moderated by **Ray Mueller**, Menlo Park city councilmember and former mayor. Ray is an environmentalist, is dedicated to diversity and inclusion, and works as an attorney in the Emergency Response and Services sector.

The policy-maker speakers included:

- **Lisa Gauthier** is a councilmember and former mayor of East Palo Alto. She recently worked as the Government Affairs Manager where she supported a community-funded free college initiative, and mom of 3 young adults.
- **Davina Hurt** is a two-term councilwoman and past mayor of Belmont, an attorney, an environmentalist, and a parent.
- **Neysa Fligor** is a councilmember and Mayor of Los Altos and past board member on the El Camino Healthcare District. She works as Division Counsel at HP.
- **Rev. Kaloma Smith** is a Palo Alto human rights commissioner and Reverend at the University AME Zion church.

Councilmember Lisa Gauthier's Main Points

A great deal of the recent “Black Lives Matter” activism we’ve seen was inspired and motivated by the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many other Black people at the hands of police. The upside of this is that it drew much-needed attention to the systemic police brutality that has been happening to Black people in this country for so long. Additionally, diverse members of the community came together to protest, not just Black people. We know that Black men especially are stopped by police for no reason, and are deemed suspicious for things that are common and non-suspicious by a white person, such as wearing a hoodie. This should not be punished. Black men and boys should be able to go out in the community and come home safely to the same extent that white people do. The problem we face is how do we protect and police our communities with fair representation regardless of race. Part of the answer is that we need to have real conversations on implicit bias and build bridges with the police force and the community.

Councilmember Davina Hurt's Main Points

We need each other to bring an end to this problem of racism. For example, her own Belmont neighbors have found her suspicious merely because of her race. When they say they “don’t recognize her”, they are assuming that she can’t possibly live in Belmont based on her race.

Poet James Baldwin (1924-1987) said, on the subject of being considered suspicious by appearance of race alone, that:

“To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time.”

This state of constant rage is a common feeling by Black people even today, and is not unwarranted, especially once you look at the data and really listen to the common stories of Black people today.

This applies not just to one Black person, but to whole families, as well as our Black neighbors. These experiences of pervasive racism are not isolated incidents. Yet all too often, Black people are told not to talk about race or racism (as if it wouldn’t exist if we just stopped talking about it). But rather, we need to take community action. This is why she serves on her local City Council. Now we have an opportunity, a willingness to talk among different groups. Yet the perception prevails, the belief that racism is a thing of the past, and it only exists when we talk about it. An example of systemic and pervasive racism is, e.g., “I’m not racist but I believe...”, followed by any number of commonly held racist beliefs.

Some ways we can dismantle this include:

- Democrats, liberals, and progressives alike: We need to hold up a mirror to ourselves, and recognize harm that even unintentional messages inflict, and work to actively correct these messages and behaviors.
- We need to protect and uplift the voices that speak out to challenge the current system.
- We need to actively increase self-awareness, have difficult conversations, call out racism every time we see it, and support those that call it out.
- As in the message of author **Ibram X. Kendi**, we all need to work together to challenge racism before it starts. We need to recognize its pervasiveness based on the history of its occurrence, and take action **BEFORE** it occurs again. This applies not just to police violence, but also applies to healthcare, job opportunities, our educational system, housing, and the environment. People who have been oppressed can’t pull themselves up by the bootstraps if they don’t even have access to boots or laces.

Councilmember Neysa Fligor's Main Points

The City of Los Altos has a population of roughly 30,000, and less than 1% of Los Altos residents identify as Black or African American. Recently we have seen an increase in local

community members speaking about racism in Los Altos at city council meetings, especially current and former students. Much of this was new information to the members of Los Altos City Council - they had not been aware of these common experiences before. The outcome of this was that the City held a town hall comprised of Los Altos residents and other local community members. Listening to these issues resulted in the creation of a new **Policing Task Force**, consisting of two councilmembers, nine Los Altos residents were appointed, and two police captains. The taskforce resulted in the council giving direction to implement the following changes:

1. Eliminate SROs (school resource officers) police at Los Altos High School
2. Move up the timeframe for the police department to provide accurate arrest data
3. Staff improved the citizen complaint process, including complaints about the police
4. Additional implicit bias training has been incorporated into the police training curriculum, above and beyond what is currently required.

After this effort, members of the community that had previously been discriminated against were pleasantly surprised at how supportive the Los Altos community was in response.

To follow up, we need to:

- Continue listening to our residents
- Be sure to follow through with actions
- Measure the effectiveness of these actions
- Create a safe space to listen to the community members and recognize actions that local elected and appointmented leaders can take

This is necessary so that, regardless of if you are part of the majority or the less than 1% (the minority), all can also feel equally valued and so that different voices are represented. RHNA housing allocations can lead to affirmative housing, where priority is given to increase diversity and increase access to high-resource areas. In short, support community leadership, listen, and take action.

Commissioner Rev. Kaloma Smith's Main Points

One positive aspect to this movement has been the peeling back of the myth of liberal bastion where no racism exists. We as a community now recognize that there is an active and high level of racism, e.g., as evidenced on comments on forums such as NextDoor, Daily Post, newspapers, verbal bullying at school board meetings, and other platforms. Due to Covid, more people are now watching local politics and calling in on discussions and votes related to policies that affect racism. It reveals the racism that has already been there - it is now coming to the surface. We need to STOP treating Black and brown people as broke, uneducated, needing a handout, and that the only issues that relate are those of crime, drugs, and arrests. Black and brown people here are lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, Google, and Facebook executives - we need to recognize this not as an anomaly. Palo Alto police had 18 hate-based incidents last

year, including placement of White Lives Matter signs, Black Lives Matter signs being defaced, and even the extreme that two churches were desecrated with racist messaging.

Policies: We need radical transparency from police, access to real data on what is happening. Police unions need to stop hiding bad actors. We need to suspend officers who have a recurring bad record related to citizens based on race. We need to hold officers and community members accountable. Calls to Palo Alto police are 70-80% false calls, most of which essentially amount to, “I see a Black person walking or at the park”. This results in a community perpetuation of violence, and the police are enforcing this racism against Black and brown people. We need to enforce a consequence for such false calls. A fair and just society cannot demean people that are created equally.

Q&A

1. How can we hold elected officials accountable?

Rev. Kaloma Smith: Call out racism AT THE TIME that it occurs (including speech, actions, or omissions). One example at a city council meeting while discussing police reform, a speaker pushed back against police reform with the example of asking a question about what happens if someone comes to town that is “on drugs.” We need to stop and call out that we will not accept this “bogeyman” stereotype that the presence of people who are Black and Latinx is equivalent to violence or deserving of a violent response by police. This behavior is unacceptable and we need to call out elected leaders who condone this type of language or actions as normal or acceptable. If our leaders show a pattern of a low grade fever of bias, we can no longer tolerate this from our elected leaders. Community members should use their power to comment publicly, in newspapers, write letters, speak at council meetings, and organize to vote out racist leaders.

Councilmember Davina Hurt: We need to create policy to fix problems in our community and follow up to track the effectiveness of these policies.

2. Given RHNA (Regional Housing Needs for Allocation), will multi-family housing address racism and help create a more equitable community?

Councilmember Neysa Fligor: We won’t have a choice, we need to look at zoning and determine changes we need to make to meet the RHNA numbers. There is no way to do this with only single family homes.

Councilmember Lisa Gauthier: Additional housing can’t be concentrated only in certain areas, it has to be spread out and equitable. People should be able to feel comfortable living in any city on the peninsula.

Rev. Kaloma Smith: We benefit from living in Silicon Valley and near Stanford University, and we have a responsibility to create affordable housing. We need real housing reform for real

people. Business hiring will suffer if the Bay Area doesn't increase housing availability for workers.

3. How can we keep this momentum from fading, to keep racial justice and policy goals, such as eliminating the “no-knock warrants” at the forefront?

Councilmember Davina Hurt: We need to continue conversations like this, not just during Black history month. We need to invite others, so we have diversity in voices we're hearing from. We need to focus on housing and red-lining. The environment is not a separate issue from housing, when lower priced housing is purposely put in areas with worse health outcomes. We need to change the police, and having diversity in who we elect will keep this conversation going.

Councilmember Neysa Fligor: We need to hold electeds accountable, not just in setting the policies, but also in tracking the effectiveness of existing policies and policy changes, so that we maintain these issues at top of mind. We need to partner to find solutions that work.

Councilmember Lisa Gauthier: Setting policy at the city council level, and ensure that the legislative calendar brings issues back to assess their effectiveness. Not just create the policy and assume it's effective and never revisit the issue again.

4. The Tinsley Transfer Program was a “bandaid” for regional inequality in educational funding and is long overdue for replacement. How can we address education equity regionally, rather than the status quo?

Rev. Kaloma Smith: Tinsley is not a program that was created to help poor people - the design of the program was to increase diversity in schools. It's about equity, it's not charity. When it's viewed as charity (as it's commonly viewed currently), the pervasive effect is one in which districts look down on students who participate in the program. This does a great disservice to our Black and brown students. Our communities were designed intentionally to be 1% Black and 4% Latinx - it is racist in its rules and structures. Our goal is to build diversity - NOT because Black and brown students need charity from other school districts. The goal needs to be to treat human beings as equals.

Councilmember Lisa Gauthier: Students in East Palo Alto shouldn't have to travel to other districts to receive an equal education. We need to invest in our community education so that it is accessible, we need to remove barriers that will provide students with equal footing.

Councilmember Davina Hurt: An example is that city councils can provide WiFi equitably, and increase housing diversity to provide educational equity.

SUMMARY

Both portions of this event were summarized by **Julie Lythcott-Haims**. She expressed gratitude to our community for this focus on equity and kindness to one another, and especially people of color.

Emotional stories were shared about being arrested as a Black child leaving a school dance (when none of the white children were arrested). Police were called on a young Black man who works as an aide with a young white child with autism - and it's so common, it happens to him all the time, that it is the norm for him. We need to be able to find out who is placing these false calls, so that these people can be held accountable. Divisiveness faced by Black students in our public schools is frightening - Black boys shouldn't be punished for wearing a hoodie. "Walking while Black" is not a crime.

Black people in our communities are continually faced with false assumptions - see Nehezi's "**Open letter to Menlo Park**". We can rise above this kind of racist behavior, we can meet aggression with patience. And also we need to open lanes to create wealth - as this is necessary after over ten generations have been oppressed and prevented from participating in American society, economy, and democracy.

The murder of George Floyd brought much-needed attention on a community in which a young Black boy asks, "Why did God make me Black?" Imagine if your child felt this way. Walk a day, a moment, or a mile in our shoes.

All city councilmembers here on the peninsula should watch the video from this event, available at: bit.ly/pdc_youtube. If leaders ask Black and brown people what they see and feel, we will share our experiences, and electeds need to listen and do something about it. Solutions are needed at the individual level, including conversations about confronting our own implicit negative biases.

We need to talk about this at city councils, at our workplaces, places of worship, in our communities, our neighborhoods, and undo bias where it exists in law enforcement. We need to call out people who report walking or driving while Black as a crime. A young man in Los Altos who is Black was pulled over by police 17 times in the first 18 months after he got his driver's license. It shouldn't take this long before local police realize that this driver is a young man who lives in our community, and is simply driving to or from his home. This kind of racism is unacceptable, and we all need to declare: **Not in Our Town**. We must commit ourselves as a community to the change needed to policies in housing, policing, healthcare, schools, and the environment.

When we know better, we can do better. And we will rise!

RESOURCES

A number of books, articles, films, podcasts, groups, and trainings were compiled as part of this event. Many thanks to Nathasha Mejia for compiling many of the resources in this list, and to all the speakers and participants in this event that contributed to this list of resources.

<http://bit.ly/resources-on-race>

These resources will also be made available on the the PDC website: peninsulademocrats.com

NEXT STEPS

Many thanks to Ollivette Smith for originating this event, and to all of the speakers and moderators. We've done our best to summarize the main points of the panelists, but this is not a transcript. If you missed the event, we urge you to watch the video in full.

The PDC is committed to carrying forward this work on understanding race, bridging the racial divide, and building racial equity. If you are interested in speaking at and/or helping to organize a follow-up event on this topic, or have other speakers to suggest or resources to share, please let us know by emailing us at: pdcoalition@gmail.com