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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
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Reply to:

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**RECOMMENDED RESPONSE AND PREVENTION OF
RACIAL/ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS TENSIONS IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES**

- 1) Review the school discipline code. Be sure that it addresses verbal assault as well as physical assault and that it is both constitutional and as strong as possible. These agencies are available to assist you:
 - Civil Rights Enforcement Section
Office of Attorney General, 717/787-0822
(Trent Hargrove, Esq., Director)
 - PA School Boards Association, Inc., 717/774-2331

- 2) Institute conflict resolution training for students and faculty/staff. These organizations are available to help you:
 - Lancaster Mediation Center, 717/397-1137
P.O. Box 1078, Lancaster, PA 17603
(They can provide you with a model school mediation program.)
 - National Association of Mediation, 413/545-3462
425 Amity Street, Amherst, Maine 01002
(They provide many resources for school conflict resolution programs.)
 - Human Rights Resource Center, 415/499-7463
30 N. SanPedro Road, Suite 1400
San Rafael, CA 94903
(They can provide models of successful school conflict resolution programs from all across the country.)
 - Office of School Equity, PA Department of Education, 717/787-3048
 - Fellowship Farm, 215-248-3343
2488 Sanatoga Road
Pottstown, PA 18464
 - Educational Mediation Services, 717/656-9498
37 North Hershey Avenue
Leola, PA 17540
 - PA Peer Helpers Association, 800/807-7337
 - The Pittsburgh Mediation Center, 412/381-4443
2205 E. Carson Street
Southside Carnegie Library
Pittsburgh, PA 15203-2107
 - Communities that Care Program, 412/983-1560
Sharon School District
335 Quinby Street, Sharon, PA 16146

- 3) Make use of the multi-cultural programming assistance you can get from:
- Mid-Atlantic Equity Center, 301/657-7741
5454 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1500
Chevy Chase, Maryland 10815
Jill Moss Greenberg, Coordinator of Multicultural Programs
 - Office of School Equity, PA Department of Education, 717/787-3048
Barbara Smith, Director
(Provides in-service training and printed resources))
 - Project Reach--A curriculum enhancing program, validated by the U.S. Department of Education, designed to increase multicultural knowledge and to increase attitudinal acceptance of others.
Reach Center, 206/284-8584
180 Nickerson Street, Suite 212
Seattle, Washington 98109
 - A World of Difference--An educational and media project that celebrates intergroup understanding from the Anti-Defamation League.
Also, the Anti-Defamation League Material Resource Catalog for the Classroom and Community
Anti-Defamation League, 215/735-4267
230 S. Broad Street, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
 - Restoring the Peaceable Kingdom: Pennsylvania Conflict Reduction Activities
The Pennsylvania Council for Social Studies, 412/357-2100
John Larner, History Department
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15705
 - Teaching Tolerance - A project of Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
 - The Green Circle Program, Inc. - A human relations program for Kindergarten through 6th
215/893-8400
1300 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
- 4) Develop student unity activities such as a Student Unity Pledge and a Peer Support Program.
- Pocono Mountain School District has been very inventive in this area. The contact person is Ms. Lettie Lladoc, 717/839-7121.
 - Project Harmony is a York County project initiated by students to increase harmony and sensitivity among students. Contact an adult advisor, Sally Soika at 717/741-0820.
- 5) Organize a human relations committee composed of administration, guidance, teachers, school board, students and parents. The Office of School Equity, PA Department of Education can supply models (717/787-3048). Designate an administrator to be responsible for the development and implementation of human relations programming.
- 6) Get assistance in affirmative action faculty/staff recruitment from the Office of School Equity, PA Department of Education, 717/787-3048.

- 7) Get copies of the booklet Multicultural Sensitivity: A Principal's Reference Guide from the PA Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (717/233-3001) for all principals, vice-principals and counselors.
- 8) Make use of the resource catalog, Human Relations Materials for the School from the Anti-Defamation League (215/735-4267). It is a gold mine of multi-cultural teaching and training resources.
- 9) Educate all staff and students about the Ethnic Intimidation and Institutional Vandalism Laws and how they apply to schools. Cooperate with the local police department in investigating and prosecuting hate crimes committed on school property or during school activities.
 - Contact the Heritage Affairs Officer of the PA State Police, Major Ronald Garcia for more information and training on these laws (412/830-2742).
- 10) Report hate group activity such as the distribution of hate literature and racial/ethnic tension situations that occur in the school or community to your local police and to the PHRC. PHRC can provide in-service training on organized hate group activity, its impact on schools, and positive school response (717/783-8886).
- 11) Contact the Center for School Safety, PA Department of Education, at 717/783-1661 for their manual entitled, Safe Schools/Safe Communities: Partnerships to Prevent Violence and for their consulting services on school safety issues.
- 12) Be a student of bigotry and an agent for positive change. Educate yourself about hate groups and about what you can do to set a moral tone that rejects bigotry in your community.
 - a. The Center for Democratic Renewal, 404/221-0025
"When Hate Groups Come to Town" - \$18.95
P.O. Box 548, Atlanta, GA 30302-0468
 - b. Southern Poverty Law Project - Klanwatch, 205/264-0286
400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104
 - c. The Anti-Defamation League, 215/735-4267
230 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 10017
 - d. Center for the Applied Study of Ethno-Violence-The Prejudice Institute
410/830-2435
Stephens Hall Annex, Towson State University, Towson, MD 21204-7097
 - e. National Conference for Christians and Jews, 215/536-3377
1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1206, Philadelphia, PA 19107
 - f. National Coalition Building Institute, 202/785-9400
1835 K Street, N.W., Suite 715, Washington, D.C. 20006
Lehigh Valley Chapter, 610/776-2002
P.O. Box 8834, Allentown, PA 18105
 - g. PA Alliance to Counter Bigotry and Hate, 717/632-7038
313 Pine Street, Hanover, PA 17331

- h. Check with the YWCA in your town for prejudice-reduction resources.
 - i. Education and Vigilance, 610/778-9809
P.O. Box 407, Coudersport, PA 16915
 - j. Institute for Cultural Partnerships, 717/238-1770
P.O. Box 5020, Harrisburg, PA 17110
 - k. Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 215/925-8090
18 S. 7th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106
- 13) Make use of How Can Schools and Communities Work Together to Meet the Challenge? - A Guide for Involving Community Members in Public Dialogue and Problem-Solving. Order from Study Circles Resource Center, P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258, 203/928-2616, (fax) 203/928-3713.
- 14) *Do not tell or tolerate one more bigoted joke.

Ann M. Van Dyke
PA Human Relations Commission
717/783-8438

SO NOW WHAT DO YOU DO?

1. Get together. Speak up. Form a unity coalition.
2. Define yourselves - unity, diversity, non-violence.
 - Unity Pledge - signed by community
 - Unity symbols - ribbon, poster
 - Build unity through fellowship
 - Publicize!
3. Persuade elected officials and government leaders to take a forceful, public stand against hate/intolerance and for unity/diversity.
4. Do not bite! When they are on your streets, do not interact, do not take their literature, do not confront.
5. Redirect energy and attention positively - community harmony events.
6. Make sure your school district has a curriculum that enhances intergroup understanding and cultural awareness/conflict resolution training for all staff.
7. Set up avenues for adult education...on-going!
 - Religious groups
 - Civic and community groups
 - Chamber of Commerce
8. Include youth.
 - Listen to them.
 - Plan with them, not for them.
9. Keep the police and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission informed of any hate activity.
10. Reach out to people who hate.
 - Support people who have been victimized.

DO ALL THIS BEFORE A HATE GROUP COMES TO TOWN.

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Local Unity Coalitions Are Effective Strategy in Community Action

It is probably because Pennsylvania has the fastest growing hate group membership of any state in the country that we also have a steadily increasing number of local unity coalitions. These truly grassroots groups tend to form in communities where the horse has already gotten out of the barn, for example, after the Ku Klux Klan has marched through town or after someone has spray-painted swastikas all over the high school cafeteria. It is not, however, just communities facing evidence of in-your-face bigotry that need unity coalitions. As with every issue of social change, proactivity is crucial. However, there is commonly much reluctance to acknowledge the characteristics of our hometowns which provide a fertile environment for hate. Before a community can form a viable unity coalition, it needs to

do some serious introspection and admission about these characteristics.

Signs of Trouble

The major characteristics of towns "in trouble" are:

- Those communities where there is an increasingly diverse population.

Most of Pennsylvania historically has been homogeneous communities; meaning, all White and with little religious diversity. U.S. Census statistics tell us clearly that the nation's demographics are changing markedly. Racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse communities will soon be the norm. Regardless of whether our town's population change has begun to happen or has yet to happen, it is coming. Hate groups do not create tension out of thin air. They feed off the resentment of everyday people... everyday people who

are angry about the changes in their town.

- Those communities with a strong sense of "insiders" and "outsiders."

The mentality is common: if "outsiders" move into our town, they'd better think like us and act like us and look like us; because if they don't, they will be bringing in a problem. That mind set fails to perceive the intolerance that lives in the heart of "insiders" and is simply brought to the surface by the presence of differentness.

- Those communities with a lack of connectedness among the different racial, ethnic, religious, economic and political groups.

It does not need to be a hostile separation; just a lack of communication will do. This disconnectedness represents a lack of commitment to provide an environment in which everyone is safe and respected.

- The presence of a struggling economy.

Throughout this nation's history, we have seen that when the economy goes down, hate group membership goes up. Groups

like the Klan are right there to provide the rationale to blame our economic and personal insecurities on some other racial or religious group.

- Community leaders who fail to address two things: the negatives of the presence of organized hate groups and the positives of becoming a diverse community.

- The visible presence of organized hate groups.

Whether it is hate literature showing up in school, anti-Semitic graffiti on an overpass or White Supremacist T-shirts in the mall, visible evidence of bigotry provides a model for young people to mimic and makes a clear, threatening statement to the targeted.

- The silence of good people.

This is the most powerful characteristic and the most difficult to overcome. Silence is the welcome mat for hate. If we ignore it, it won't go away.

Though deeply troubled by the number of Pennsylvania communities that have these characteristics, I am also heartened by the number of communities that understand it and are intentionally seeking to set a moral tone that rejects bigotry.

So what should a community do? Here are some recommendations.

1. Call the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

Your tax dollars can provide you with advice and resources, including a community seminar to aid in your unity organizing.

2. Get together. Speak up. Form a unity coalition.
3. Define yourselves as being for unity, for tolerance, for diversity, for non-violence. Write a unity pledge to be signed by the community and utilize unity symbols.

4. Persuade elected officials and government leaders to take a forceful, public stand against hate and intolerance and for unity and diversity.

5. Do not bite! When hate groups are on your streets, do not interact, do not take their literature, do not confront them.

6. Make sure your school district has a curriculum that encourages intergroup understanding and celebrates basic American democratic ideals through a multicultural curriculum. Make sure your school district provides cultural awareness and conflict resolution.

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Unity Coalitions

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lution training for all its staff.
7. Set up avenues for ongoing adult education; for example, through religious groups, commu-

nity and civic groups, and through the local Chamber of Commerce.

8. Include youth, whether they are among the victims, victimizers, or that big group of youth in the middle. Listen to them. Plan with them and not just for them.

9. Support people who have been victimized.

10. Reach out to people who hate. Remember that fear is the root of hate. And, most important, do all of this before a hate group comes to town.

ANN M. VanDYKE is the Human Relations Representative, in the Harrisburg Regional Office of the PA Human Relations Commission.