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March 2021

Standing in Solidarity



Dear Friends,

The past month has filled me with profound frustration, anger, and sadness as Asians and Asian Americans continue to be targets of racist violence around the country.

Earlier this month, the tragic murder of six Asian women in Atlanta was the latest incident in a long line of attacks that have not received adequate attention and response given the magnitude of the crimes. It is past time for us all to come together against racism, not only in support of our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities but in support of our collective wellbeing.

For people of color in our country, surviving racism and white supremacy is a daily struggle. People of color die every day because of racism. While this may be difficult for many of us to accept, this is our reality. In our country, race has always been an indicator of outcomes. We know, for instance, that in King County a person's race is an indicator of their life expectancy. In other words, if you are Black you are not expected to live as long as a person who is white.

Racism hurts us all. It separates and divides us. It pits us against one another. And it robs us of our humanity. I think it is important to acknowledge the pain, sorrow, grief, and anger that we all experience from the insidious, ubiquitous nature of racism. And in this moment, please join in me extending support and gratitude to our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The wounds and scars of racism are both deep and fresh. We must come together to heal so that we can remain together to create meaningful, lasting racial equity.

In Unity,



Bookda Gheisar

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

- In the wake of the mass shooting in Atlanta, the Port's Asian and Pacific Islander Advocates (employee resource group) held a virtual gathering of nearly 300 Port employees to process, mourn, support one another, and heal.
- Commissioner Sam Cho and Executive Director Steve Metruck [issued a statement](#) in response to the ongoing racist attacks against Asians and Asian Americans. Additionally, the full Port Commission released a statement – [Taking Action on Racism and Violence](#) – to express their support of the AAPI community and encourage us all to come together to fight for a more inclusive and equitable region and economy.
- To celebrate Women's History Month, the Port's Blacks In Government and Women's Initiative Network (employee resource groups) co-sponsored a virtual event on intersectionality, calling attention to the unique experiences and barriers of women of color at the Port. Additionally, the Port launched a project to create an archive of "[Herstories](#)," recognizing how many women have made history at the Port of Seattle.
- For the first time, the City of Seattle, Sound Transit, and the Port of Seattle are collaborating to support the regional effort to improve apprenticeship retention and further equity in workforce development and Priority Hire programs. Together, [they are investing \\$1.75 million](#) to reduce existing racial disparities in construction and in the larger community through access to family wage jobs, training, and support for workers.



The Port's Workforce Development department is providing entry-level SEA workers, who are predominately people of color, with professional training and development opportunities to move into high demand, living wage careers. The Aviation Maintenance Technician (AMT) program, which is operated by Port Jobs and funded by the Port of Seattle, is a great example of this. [Read more](#)

[about AMT](#) and the experience of a recent program graduate.

- Join us on April 8th from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. for Can We Talk? Closing the COVID-19 Gender Gap. Hosted by the World Trade Center Seattle, the event features Ryan Donahue (Nonresident Fellow, Brookings), Banu Ozkazanc-Pan (Professor of Practice in Engineering and the Founder and Director of the Venture Capital Inclusion Lab at Brown University), and Bookda Gheisar. [Register here](#).

Photo above: Jerome Cadelina is an Aviation Maintenance Technology student who benefitted from development opportunities operated by Port Jobs. Photo courtesy of Port Jobs.

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