

Mayor Katrina Foley and Mayor Pro-Tem John Stephens issue statements on reports of Newport-Mesa students saluting swastika on social media



CITY OF COSTA MESA

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FROM THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Mayor Katrina Foley

"There is no place for hateful symbols of swastikas and Nazi salutes in our community. Glorifying or even joking about these symbols contradicts the values we share as a diverse community. Normalizing these symbols as a joke is dangerous. We must challenge this kind of bias. We cherish our city's Jewish community, as well as people of all backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, genders and more. This abhorrent anti-Semitic activity is divisive, unbecoming of our community and leads ultimately to hate and discrimination.

While we take seriously and object to this hateful activity, I discourage vilification of these teens. Instead, we need to seriously address why teens in our community might think these types of hateful symbols are acceptable or funny and worthy of selfies. We must use this incident as an opportunity to work with our school district leaders to encourage schools to implement better anti-bias and anti-hate content in their curricula and in extra-curricular activities. In partnership

with the Anti-Defamation League, the Orange County Human Relations Commission, our faith-based organizations, and other leaders, we must develop comprehensive programming so that students can empathize with people different than themselves. Diversity is not a challenge, it's a strength."

Mayor Pro-Tem John Stephens

"The atrocities of the Holocaust and the sacrifices of our World War II veterans must never be forgotten, but apparently some of our children are not getting the message. That's a real problem. We cannot tolerate hate in our community, and we have to make a commitment to promote love and kindness in Costa Mesa."

Mayor Foley noted that the Newport-Mesa school district has issued an alert via email to district administrators and board members after reports of the event surfaced. District officials met with school administrators and a crisis team Sunday to determine a course of action. In response, the Newport-Mesa School District is holding an open forum for members of the Estancia, Costa Mesa, and Newport Harbor High School communities co-led by Dr. Sean Boulton, Newport Harbor High School Principal, Dr. Jake Haley, Costa Mesa High School Principal, Mr. Mike Halt, Estancia Principal and Rabbi Reuven Mintz-Chabad Center for Jewish Life. The event will take place at 6:00 p.m. Monday March 4 in the Newport Harbor High School Theater. English to Spanish translation will be available at the event.

Corona del Mar High School will host an event on that campus at 6 p.m. Thursday March 7.