



## Not In Our Town e-News

for ordinary people transforming their communities

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### NIOT: Silicon Valley Leaders Gather to Address Hidden Bias

On March 13, over 150 Silicon Valley leaders gathered in Palo Alto, CA to try to tackle a long-term problem that affects each one of us. They weren't venture capitalists or CEO's, engineers or tech gurus seeking to address the looming traffic jam on the web, or the effects of the economic temblors on high tech investment. They were citizens, school leaders, police chiefs, city managers and clergy members who came together to talk about how to deal with intolerance.



*At "Beyond Us and Them," LaDoris Cordell challenged Silicon Valley leaders to be heroic in the face of intolerance and bias. [Watch the video.](#)*

The half-day conference, called "Beyond Us and Them: Confronting Hidden Bias in our Community," was opened by LaDoris Cordell. Cordell is Vice Provost and Special Counselor to the President for Campus Relations at Stanford University, a former judge, and Palo Alto City Council member. She asked the crowd to be heroic -- not in the way that cartoon or movie characters are, but by confronting our fears and moving forward to take on hate, bigotry, and the deep divisions that many people don't want to talk about, much less deal with. [Watch a video of LaDoris's inspiring remarks.](#)

A diverse panel illuminated the effects of everyday acts of hidden bias. An African-American mother shared how her son became isolated from his peers at age 9, after her neighbors said they were afraid that her son might influence their children to

join gangs. A Muslim leader revealed alarming statistics about the hate crime increase towards Muslims after 9/11. She also told the crowd that many times, people don't look at her because she wears a hijab. A leader of a day laborers center talked about workers who are routinely picked up by people who hire them for construction jobs, then refuse to pay them and threaten to call immigration. A gay participant said he gave up on forming LGBT clubs inside local corporations because many employees were afraid to reveal their sexual orientation. A Sikh leader discussed what it's like to "appear to be Muslim" because of a turban in the light of 9/11, and the alarming number of Sikh cab drivers who have been killed in the Bay Area.

After hearing from their neighbors, the crowd got down to business and started discussing solutions. **These Silicon Valley leaders are working toward an American social innovation that will have a lasting influence on the health and strength of our country. They are working to build inclusive communities.**

To learn more about the conversations and next steps generated at "Beyond Us and Them," visit the [Not In Our Town: Silicon Valley blog, niot.blogspot.com](http://niot.blogspot.com).



*A video still of Palo Alto students' response to the killing of Oxnard, CA student Larry King.*

[Watch the video on YouTube.](#)

### **Not In Our School: Palo Alto Students Respond to School Shooting of Larry King**

A new Not In Our School video of Palo Alto High students' response to the tragic Oxnard, CA school shooting of Larry King is now on YouTube! [Watch this video -- and other short Not In Our Town videos from across the nation -- on The Working Group's YouTube channel.](#)

Now in its third year, the Not In Our School campaign in Palo Alto has become a new model for how schools can engage their students in learning, conversation, and action against hate, bullying, and bigotry. In April, The Working Group will document the Palo Alto Not In Our School campaign in a short film about how students can stand up when they are confronted with intolerance.

How has your school or community responded to this tragedy? Please send us a link to your YouTube video or [leave a comment on our YouTube site.](#)

### **Skidmore Students Launch "Not On Our Campus"**



## Campaign

In January, over 200 students, faculty, and staff members gathered at Skidmore College in Saratoga, NY to launch their school's first Not On Our Campus campaign. Patrice O'Neill, Executive Producer for [The Working Group](#), presented the Not In Our Town film and shared stories about other Not In Our School/Not On Our Campus efforts around the U.S.



*Skidmore students made this anti-hate sticker as part of their Not On Our Campus campaign.*

The audience, which included College President Philip A. Glotzbach and several of his cabinet members, engaged in an open discussion about how everyday acts of bias can surface on campus, how students can stand up to intolerance, and how Skidmore can be a model of acceptance and diversity. Skidmore students also created their own Not On Our Campus pledge, committing to speak up against hateful acts.

The idea for the Skidmore event got its start after sophomore Claire Solomon presented the Not On Our Campus model to her Hillel chapter. The previous year, swastikas and hate messages were found in one of the Skidmore campus dorms.

After the event, 30 students and staff members brainstormed next steps, including how students will use Facebook to spread the word about Not in Our Campus, how resident assistants can help dorms be safe and inclusive, and how more campus groups can get involved. We'll keep you posted on Skidmore events!



*Photo courtesy of Carlos T. Miranda/The Pantagraph*

### ISU Students and Labor Leaders Tell Hate Groups "Not In Our Town"

A cold, snowy February evening didn't stop over 250 Illinois State University students from marching together at a Unity Rally in response to hate literature found in their community. The students were joined by over 50 members of Laborers Local 362, who wore their hard hats and carried union banners in support. After the

march, students and community members rallied at the University Student Union, where ISU Campus president Dr. Al Bowman spoke about the university's ongoing commitment to diversity, and Not In Our Town: Bloomington-Normal leader Mike Matejka encouraged the marchers to keep the spirit going, and to speak up against everyday acts of intolerance. [Watch the Pantagraph News video about the ISU march.](#)

After KKK leaflets and racist graffiti were found in Normal restaurants and on the ISU campus, Carlin Daniels, a member of the ISU student group The Enlightenment, contacted The Working Group for ideas about how the community could respond. The Working Group's Executive Producer Patrice O'Neill put Carlin in touch with Not In Our Town: Bloomington-Normal leaders, who helped raise awareness about the Unity Rally.

"I praise the students for being there, for coming together in unity, and for not being scared," Matejka said.

### Patrice O'Neill Presents "Film as a Tool for Social Change" at Choosing to Participate Exhibit

In February, Executive Producer Patrice O'Neill led a conversation on "Film as a Tool For Social Change" at the Boston Public Library as part of [Facing History and Ourselves](#)' Choosing to Participate exhibit. [Choosing to Participate](#) is an interactive multimedia exhibition that tackles issues such as violence, racism and hate crimes while profiling the compelling stories of individuals and communities who have confronted these challenges and had to make choices.



*Stories and images from the first Not In Our Town film are part of the Choosing to Participate exhibit at the Boston Public Library.*

Patrice's presentation highlighted excerpts of The Working Group's films that have inspired communities around the country to respond to hate crimes in meaningful and constructive ways.

Former Billings, MT human rights leader Sarah Anthony, who was featured in the first Not In Our Town film, made a special appearance at the event. Over the years, The Working Group had lost touch with Sarah, but she reconnected with us after she learned about the Facing History exhibit. Today, Sarah is an attorney working in a restorative justice project on capital crimes cases in Durham, North Carolina.

Choosing to Participate will be on display at the Boston Public Library from January through May 2008.

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