



Town of Danvers

Office of the Town Manager

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statement from Danvers Town Officials on Recent Incident

Danvers, MA – On Sunday, a resident reported homophobic graffiti at the softball field on Pickering Street. This incident is the latest in a string of similar incidents dating back to early November. The Town will continue to process these incidents, in partnership with Danvers Public Schools (DPS), the District Attorney’s Office, the individuals, and their families.

On a moving forward basis, the Town will no longer issue statement after statement every time a similar incident is discovered and/or reported. Our fear is that the constant attention created by doing so is simply encouraging more of the same, which in some cases simply may be attention seeking and in others truly may be statements of hate intended to do harm.

We will continue to document and investigate these incidents, communicate them to the appropriate authorities and local boards or committees, including the Human Rights & Inclusion Committee (HRIC), work with all parties involved, and take appropriate actions depending on the circumstances.

At last week’s meeting of the HRIC, the School Department made a detailed presentation on their past, current, and future actions and programs related to equity and inclusion – actions and programs that are being reviewed and modified in real time based on current events. Here is a link to the HRIC meeting: <https://youtu.be/aLuxQPZyPhk>, and here is a link to the DPS presentation: <https://danverspublicschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DEI-Next-steps.pdf>

The Town and Schools have also partnered with a number of local and regional partners, including the Lappin Foundation in Salem, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of Boston, the Essex County Community Foundation, the North Shore NAACP, and others. We are also actively recruiting the Town’s first Director of Equity & Inclusion – a position prioritized by the Select Board in October as one of their annual goals and which is designed to be a resource to the Town, the Schools, and the Library.

In the meantime, we would encourage parents to talk to their kids this holiday season about the power of words – and especially how words and statements rooted in homophobia, racism, antisemitism, bullying, etc., can do real harm. These can be very difficult conversations to have, but there are lots of resources available to parents looking for guidance. The ADL’s Table Talk: Family Conversations web page is a good place to start: <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>.

We have a great deal of work to do toward building relationships, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and recognizing that every individual is worthy of respect. We will need the help of community leaders, civic groups, and all individuals with a commitment to working together toward a common goal of abolishing hatred, learning to celebrate diversity, and simply being kind to one another.

Steve Bartha	Gardner Trask	Dee Djoko	Jamie Lovell	Lisa Dana	Eric Crane
Town Manager	Select Board Chair	HRIC Chair	Police Chief	Supt.	SC Chair

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